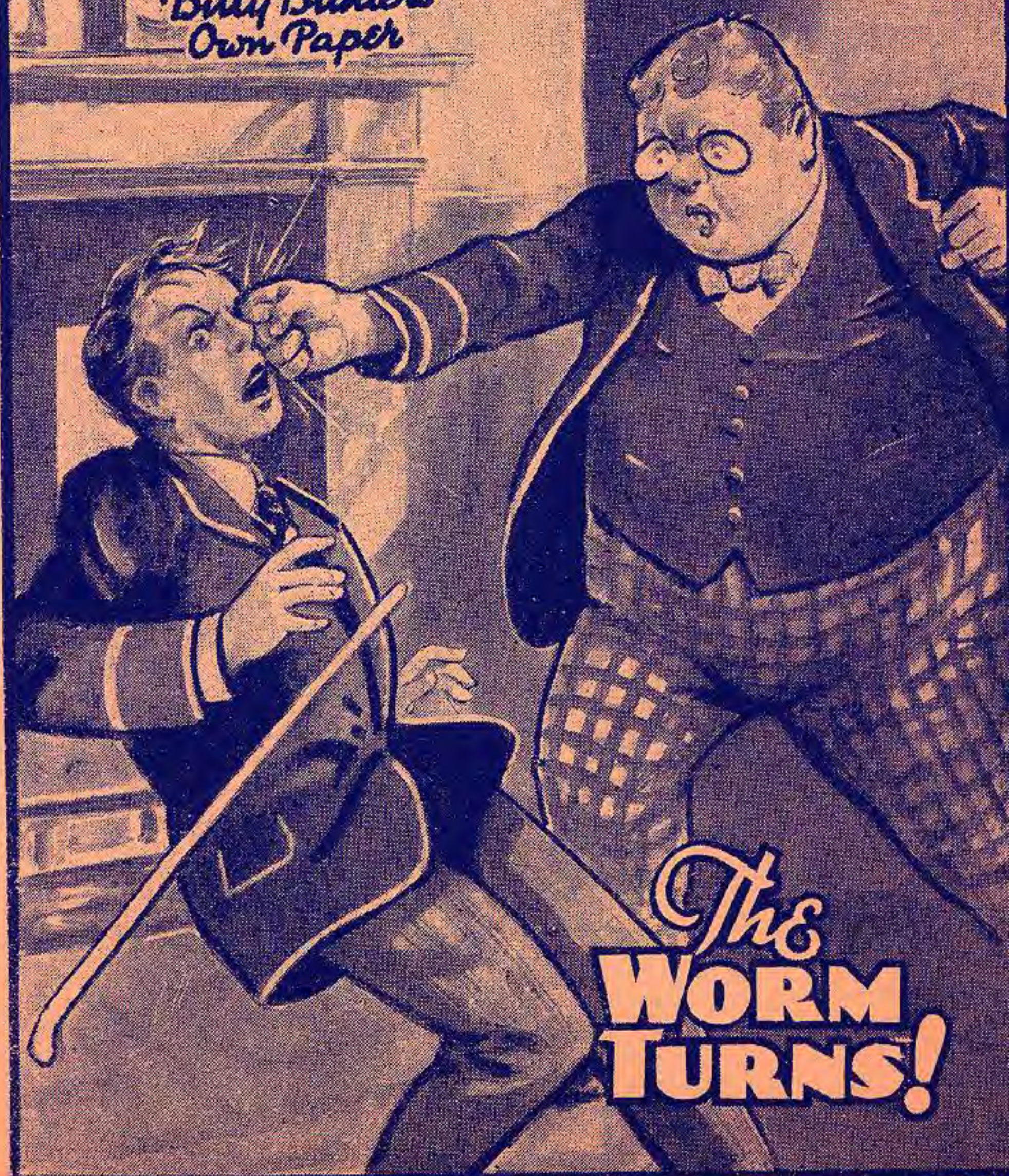


MORE FOOTBALLS FOR READERS . . . See Inside

# The Magnet <sup>2<sup>D</sup></sup>

Billy Bunter's  
Own Paper



The  
**WORM  
TURNS!**



**A** 8 the one-time star orther of the "Greyfriars Herald," you will nacherally eggspect me to fill this page with briliant and sparkling stories. But I am, unforchuntly, in a sollum frame of mind. I am in dire aggerny, and suffering from a severe dose of Loder of the Sixth.

He is a booby and a broot. It wasn't my fault, that I happened to unerth his rotten racing paper while I was clearing up his study to-day. You can't touch his study anywhere without unerthing something shady. But he bent me over and adminnisttered a hart-rending whopping. The cane stung like a skorpion, and bit like a nadder. I am in deep angwish. Wow!

In the sicks, it wants a bit of doing to keep my mind on this job. Most of my thorts are concerned with a skeem of vengeance, in witch a tin pan, a gallon or ink, and a studdy door are prominent feeders.

If you see a nigga of the deepest di in the Sixth Form passage to-nite, it will be Loder.

## KONFESSIONS of a JEENIUS!

In his request for this page of copy, the Editor wrote: "Please do not confine yourself to works of fiction and blood-curdling shockers. Tell my readers something about yourself and your school life."

I need hardly say I was very surprized to find that a man of the Editor's eminent position should be ignorant of the way to spell even the kcommonest words. He ort to take a phew lessons from a Third Form man.

There is nothing much to say about my skool life. Silly old Twigg konsistently tries to skore off me, but I put him in his placu evvery time. If he attempts to whop me, I give him a studdy glaruce rite in the eyeball, and say: "Go and eat koke!" That makes him wilt, until he farely crinjes.

The other day he told me to take a thousand lines.

"Ha, ha, ha!" I roared, holding my sides with merriment. "Jolly good joke of yours, old been!"

He looked discomforted.

"You yung blighter!" he hissed, grinding his teeth, "if you try to thwart me, I'll be the death of you!"

"That'll be awl from you, Twigg," I replied koldly. "I regret I kannot spare the time to do your silly lines, as I am a bizzy man. Now hop it, before I lose payshence with you!"

He sneaked away like a whipped kur, muttering pbeerful threats under his breth. I just larfed skornfully and skattered a box of tin-tax on the seat of his chare. I kan tell you, I've got the old ass simply feeding owt of my hand!

(EDITOR'S NOTE.—Fat lot of use asking Dicky not to write works of fiction. Eh?)

In order to prove that I am a genius of no uncommon order, I will write a story, an essay, and also draw a picksher. A fello who can do all that must have plenty of tallernt witch, of corse, I have.

No doubt you rekwire just wan small masterpiece of St. Sam's. I have often been arsked what made me start riting these yarns. Well, some time ago I invented a skoolmaster named Dr. Birebemail as a sort of kartoon on old Twiggy, and I used to rite tales about him in klasses and pass them rownd to the other men, who wanted somethink to take their minds off Latin and similar rott. Then Wharton got

hold of a sample and put it in the "Herald" for a joak. The brilliancy of the riting attracted so much attenshun that he asked for some more.

Originally, the names of the kads of St. Sam's were Tonwhar, Gentnu, Nonver-Smith and setera, but the Remove rotters bluepencilled these names, and I have had to kut them owt. Gentnu minor, the hero of the yarns, was changed to Jack Jolly.

Snarler and his cronies turned as white as snow at the noon. They rushed across to the Head's studdy, just in time to see his venerable figger borne away to the Sunny-torium by 1-a-duzzen prefects.

"Ho, ha, ha!" yelled Jack Jolly & Co. in grate delight, as the proseshun payed them.

A week later the Head was out of the Sunny, and two minutes after that Snarler & Co. were there instead.

It will be a long time before Snarler tries his tricks again on the chums of St. Sam's, and still longer before Dr. Birchmell Kou-  
discentes any more hampers what don't belong to him.

THE END.

## ESSAY on LODER!

Loder is a beast and a booly. I hate him with an ever-lasting hatred. He ort to get the boolet from the skool. Yah! To my certain knowledge he backed a horse named Somnolent last week. I heard him telling that broot Carne abowt it. The orful kad! Why, I thort it must be good; and put two



**This is how I deal with Twigg.**

hobb on Somnolent, and the beest was nowhere. I'd kick a rotter like that rotten rotter Loder rite owt of this skool for leed- ing a yungster astray in that fashun. My major, Frank, gave me a good hiding when he heard I'd backed the creecher, so I lost two hobb and gained a licking, just bekause Loder duzzen't kno a winner when he sees one. Beest! You wate till to-nite! I'll give him Somnolent! He won't feel like backing horses with a gallon of ink all over his chivvey. Revenge is sweet!

And now eggscuse me, dear readers. The deadly deed must now be did. Loder is owt somewhere. When he comes back and opens his studdy door, there will be a musikab klang, and Richard Nugent will be evenjed.

OFFY-VOOR!



# NUGENT MINOR SECOND FORM

Dicky Nugent is a youngster of queer character. Sometimes he is sulky, selfish, utterly inconsiderate, lazy, troublesome, and a thorough young scamp. At other times, he can be a cheery, cheeky, happy-go-lucky young fag, without a care in the world. Dicky has plenty of brains and plenty of talent, if he chose to use them in the right way. He is in his element when writing school stories of St. Sam's and its villainous white-bearded headmaster, Dr. Birchmell. In fact, it is rumoured that he has nightmares featuring Dr. Birchmell, as suggested by our cartoon. But in class, his brains are conspicuous only by their absence. He will not learn, and Mr. Twigg, his Form-master, despairs of ever making him. It is, of course, a deliberate laziness. Perhaps, when Dicky grows older, he will see the folly of his conduct and realise that every boy must toe the line and work if he wants to make a success of life.

(Cartoon By H. SKINNER.)

R. Nugent

"PAY UP, OR I'LL SPLIT!" When Aubrey Angel broke one of the most stringent rules of the school, little did he guess that he would be caught in the act by a rascally blackmailer! But that is the fate of—

# The SPORTSMAN of the FOURTH!

By FRANK RICHARDS



Mr. Squidge's foxy eyes peered at Aubrey Angel. "I fancy your schoolmaster don't know you walks out at this time o' night, what?" he said.

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### Bunter's Latest!

"YOU don't mind—"

"Dry up!"

"If I borrow a stamp or two?"

"No; some in the desk. Shut up while I finish this letter."

"I'll settle for them, of course, when my postal order comes—"

"Shut up!" roared Harry Wharton.

The captain of the Greyfriars Remove was seated at the table in Study No. 1, scribbling fast. He had nearly finished that letter when Billy Bunter butted into the study.

It was a letter home, and Harry Wharton was dutiful in such matters. On the other hand, his friends were waiting for him on the Remove landing, so he was in rather a hurry to get through. That letter was getting written at something like express speed, and Wharton did not want interruptions.

Billy Bunter rolled across the study and blinked into the desk through his big spectacles.

It was not unusual for Bunter to want to borrow a stamp. In fact, every time Billy Bunter wrote a letter he wanted to borrow a stamp.

Harry Wharton did not mind if he borrowed a stamp, or a couple of stamps. He had a sheet of them in his desk. But he did mind being interrupted when he was pressed for time.

"I say—" Bunter blinked round from the desk.

"Ring off!"

"Yes, but where are the stamps?" asked Bunter.

"In the desk, fathend! Shut up!"

"Well, I can't see them! I think—"

"Shut up!" howled Wharton.

"Beast!"

Wharton scribbled. Bunter rooted through the desk. He found the stamps under the blotter, just as Wharton finished his letter, slipped it into the envelope, and proceeded to address the same.

Bunter rolled to the door.

Wharton stepped to the desk for a stamp for his letter. He lifted the blotter and gazed at an empty space

**Super 35,000-Word School Story of HARRY WHARTON & CO., of Greyfriars.**

where a sheet of stamps had lately reposed.

There were eight stamps in that sheet, each of the value of three-halfpence—a bob's worth! Bunter, apparently, had helped himself to the lot!

The captain of the Remove stared at that empty space for a moment, then he spun round and glared at a fat figure that was rolling rather hastily through the doorway.

"Stop!" he roared.

"I—I'm in rather a hurry, old chap!" stammered Bunter, over a fat shoulder. "I've got to see Angel of the Fourth—I mean, I've got to write some letters."

Harry Wharton made a jump across the study.

He grabbed a disappearing fat shoulder, and jerked Billy Bunter back into the study before he had time quite to disappear.

It was a sudden jerk. It had a lot of force in it. It tipped the fat Owl of the Remove over backwards, and Bunter unintentionally sat down. He sat down hard and heavy, and roared.

"Ow! Beast! Oh!"

"You fat villain!" exclaimed Wharton. "Hand over those stamps! I want a stamp for my letter."

"Beast!" gasped Bunter. "You said I could borrow a stamp or two."

"Not the whole lot, you burbling burglar! Cough them up!"

"If you're going to be mean about a few stamps, Harry Wharton—"

"I'm going to boot you round the study if you don't hand over those stamps, you bloated brigand!"

Harry Wharton drew back a foot. Billy Bunter bounded to his feet and dodged round the study table.

He did not cough up the stamps. He seemed to want those stamps. He eyed the captain of the Remove across the table, with a wary blink through his spectacles.

"You howling ass!" hooted Wharton. "Shell out those stamps! I've got to post this letter, fathead! Do you think this study is a post office?"

"Look here, you said I could borrow some stamps," argued Bunter. "I asked you first, didn't I? I've got to write some letters—"

"You've got to write eight letters?" hooted Wharton.

"Ye-es—exactly!" said Bunter. "Just eight. You see, I was pretty liberally

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tipped at Christmas by a lot of my titled relations, and a fellow's bound to drop a line—"

"You fat chump!"

"You mean beast!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came a cheery roar in at the doorway, as Bob Cherry's ruddy face looked in. "You ever coming, Wharton? We shall never get over to Cliff House at this rate."

"Haven't you finished that letter yet?" asked Frank Nugent, looking in over Bob's shoulder.

"You're taking your time, old man!" said Johnny Bull.

"The timefulness is terrific, my esteemed Wharton!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I've finished the letter, fathead!" snapped the captain of the Remove. "I've got to stamp it, and that fat scoundrel has just bagged all the stamps—the whole bob's worth I got yesterday!"

"You said I could borrow them!" howled Bunter. "I say, you fellows, fancy a fellow making a fuss about a stamp or two, after saying that a fellow could borrow them."

"I said a stamp or two—not the whole lot, you bloated burglar! Now, hand them over!"

"What the thump does Bunter want eight stamps for?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, in astonishment. "Can't be writing to eight people in one day, I suppose."

"Yes, exactly," declared Bunter. "Just eight. You see, there's my Uncle William, who gave me a fiver at Christmas; and my Uncle George, who sent me a tenner; and my Aunt Georgina, who sent me a couple of pound notes; and—"

"Oh, my hat! And out of all those fivers and tenners and pound notes you haven't enough left to buy your own stamps?" asked Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I want just eight stamps, and Wharton said I could have them, and—"

"I said one or two!" shrieked Wharton.

"If you're going to be beastly mean, I shall pay for them, of course," said Bunter disdainfully. "You've only got to wait till my postal order comes—"

"Wharton won't want the money then," said Bob, shaking his head. "He will be getting his old-age pension by that time."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bunter can't be writing eight letters," said Frank Nugent. "What's his game?"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

There was a snort from Johnny Bull. "Bunter isn't writing any letters at all!" he grunted. "He's been trying to borrow a bob all day, and this is his latest."

"Oh!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Tain't!" yelled Bunter. "I've got to write to a lot of my titled relations—a whole lot of letters to get off. I've got to—Yarooooop!"

The fat Owl of Greyfriars broke off with a roar, as Harry Wharton reached across the table and grabbed a fat neck.

"Now cough up those stamps!"

"Ow! Beast! Leggo! I tell you I've got to write to my titled uncles—I mean, my uncle aunts—that is, my—Wow! Ow! Leggo! Stop hanging my—wow!—nose on the table, you beast! Yow-ow-ow!"

Tap, tap, tap!

Billy Bunter's fat little nose tapped on the study table. The table was hard. So were the taps! Bunter wriggled and roared.

Remove fellows at Greyfriars expected

to be "touched" for stamps and such trifles by William George Bunter, but they did not expect to have to supply stamps on a post office scale. Why Bunter wanted so many stamps all at once was a mystery—till Johnny Bull elucidated it.

Bunter had wanted a bob all day, and failed to borrow one. This was his way of solving that little difficulty. "A stamp or two" might, by a stretch of imagination, mean eight. So Bunter had borrowed eight—obviously with the intention, not of writing eight letters to relations, titled or untitled, but to turn the same into cash.

Tap, tap, tap!

"Ow! Wow! Yow!"

Tap, tap!

"Leggo!"

"I'll keep this up as long as you like, Bunter—"

"Ow! Beast! Wow!"

Tap, tap, tap!

"Ow! Oh, my nose! Wow! My boko! Ow! Beast! Here's your beastly stamps! Wow!" yelled Bunter.

The fat little nose was getting a pain in it. Bunter grabbed the sheet of stamps from his pocket, and pitched it on the table.

Bunter was badly in need of a bob, but it looked like costing him the skin of his nose at this rate, and he gave up his plunder.

Harry Wharton, laughing, let go Bunter's neck, and picked up the sheet of stamps. Bunter rubbed his nose, and spluttered. Wharton detached one stamp to stick on his letter, put the rest of the sheet into his pocket, and walked out of the study with his chums.

"Urrgh! Beast! Wow!" roared Bunter, his dulcet tones floating down the Remove passage after the Famous Five.

Unheeding, they went on their way. Billy Bunter was left spluttering, and rubbing his nose, stampless and bobless, with nothing but a pain in that fat little nose to reward him for his astuteness in thinking out this new wheeze for raising the wind.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### The Way Of The Transgressors!

"ROT!" said Johnny Bull.

That was Johnny's opinion, and he stated it.

Johnny Bull came from Yorkshire, a county where, as he sometimes told his friends, people know their own minds, and say what they think.

Johnny knew his own mind, and he said what he thought. And Johnny was right. His friends knew that, but it had, as it happened, a rather exasperating effect on them.

The Famous Five had walked over to Cliff House School to see Marjorie & Co. there—now they were back for the new term. Naturally, they had had plenty to say, and naturally, also, they had left it a little late for their return to their own school. They had left it, in fact, a little too late, and on the towpath by the Sark they realised that they would never get in in time for calling-over, which was early in the dusky winter days.

The shortest way home was by the river, and they went at a trot. But trotting, they realised, would not save the situation—galloping would hardly have done it. A short cut was available from the towpath, and a short cut was exactly what they wanted to see them through.

But that short cut, unfortunately, was out of bounds—very severely and very strictly out of bounds—for it was the little lane that ran through the grounds of the Cross Keys.

There was a public right-of-way by Cross Keys Lane. It was all right, so far as that went. But any Greyfriars fellow spotted within the borders of the Cross Keys was booked for trouble—deserved trouble.

On the other hand, short cuts were made to save time—and all that the Famous Five wanted was to save time. They did not want to drop in and see Mr. Lodgey about the Wapshot races, as the Boulder and Skinner sometimes did. They just wanted to get in at Greyfriars in time for roll, and escape Mr. Quelch's frown, and, still more, lines from Quelch.

Four members of the Co. thought it a good idea. One member thought it rot, and said so.

"You want lines from Quelch?" asked Bob Cherry, with sarcasm.

"I'd rather have lines from Quelch, than a report to the Head for public haunting," answered Johnny stolidly.

"We're not stopping for a whisky and soda," said Bob, still sarcastic.

"We've got to get in," said Harry Wharton. "Come on!"

"Rot!" said Johnny. "We did this once before, and got spotted. Quelch took our word that we only wanted a short cut, which was decent of him. Expects it not to happen again."

"Blessed are those that don't expect," said Bob. "They never get disappointed."

"Are you coming, fathead?" asked Nugent.

"Rot!" said Johnny.

"The rotfulness may be terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But the wastefulness of the time is also great. At this absurd rate, we shall be home with the milk in the morning."

"If we go round, we shall be jolly near half an hour late," said Harry. "You're talking sense, Johnny, but you should have done it a bit earlier. Now we've got to take the short cut. Come on, you men!"

The captain of the Remove settled the matter by opening the gate from the towpath.

He stepped through, and three fellows followed him. Wharton held the gate open, and glanced back at Johnny.

"Coming?" he asked.

Grunt, from Johnny.

"I'm coming if you do," he answered. "If we get into a row, serve us jolly well right. I think—"

"You do!" ejaculated Bob.

"Yes, I do! I think—"

"First I've heard of it."

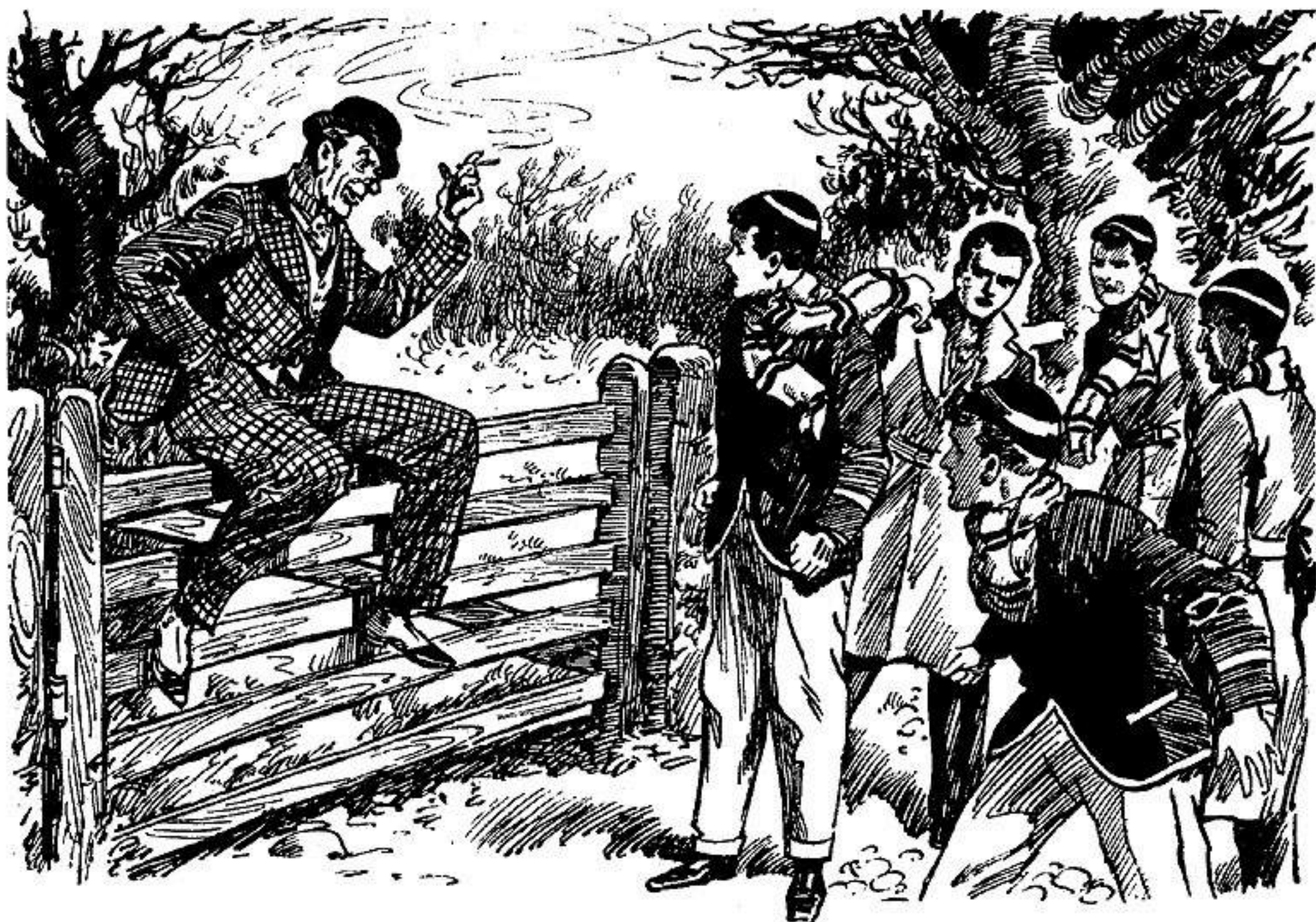
"Look here—" roared Johnny Bull.

"No time, even to gaze on beautiful objects," answered Bob. "We've got to scud. Use your legs instead of your chin, old man."

Johnny Bull, with an emphatic snort, followed his friends, and Wharton let the gate swing shut.

The five tramped on, at a good rate, by the muddy, weedy lane through the ill-kept grounds of the disreputable inn.

Ahead of them, through the falling January dusk, the lights of the Cross Keys glimmered from windows, through leafless trees. They had to pass quite near the forbidden building to get out into Friardale Lane. They rather hoped that they would not fall in with any of the habitues of the place before they got clear.



"Worth a quid to you, I fancy, not to be given away to your schoolmaster!" grinned Mr. Squidge, waving a greasy hand.  
 "Make it a pound and Tommy Squidge is going to forget that he ever saw you at a pub!"

That hope proved unfounded, however. The dusky lane was solitary enough; but at the end, where it joined up with Friardale Lane, there was a gate, and on that gate, which was shut, a man was sitting, smoking a cigarette.

He eyed the juniors curiously as they came up.

He was a stranger to them, but they could see, at a glance, the kind of man he was—one of the hangers-on of Wapshot races, probably putting up at the Cross Keys while the race meeting was on in the neighbourhood.

He was not a nice man to look at. He was fairly well dressed, in a rather flashy way; and his diamond pin must have been worth a great deal—if it was worth anything at all. His face was sharp and cunning. He had a bowler hat set at a rakish angle on one side of an oily head; his teeth and his fingers were deeply stained with tobacco, and he had a general appearance of having been up late o' nights, and of having forgotten to wash in the mornings.

His sharp, twinkling eyes watched the schoolboys as they came trotting up with evident interest.

Just before they reached the gate he raised a hand, which obviously had no acquaintance whatever with a nail-brush, and signed to them to stop.

They came to a halt.

They were naturally anxious to get clear of those precincts as quickly as they could. But as the man was sitting on the gate, they did not care to swing it open till he moved.

"Old on!" said the man on the gate.

"We're in rather a hurry," said Harry Wharton politely. "Please let us open the gate."

"Old on a minute!" said the oily man, watching the juniors rather like a cat. "I know them caps. You belong to the big school up the road."

"What about it?" asked Bob Cherry, staring at him.

"Might be a lot about it," said the oily man, grinning. "I fancy you wouldn't like your headmaster to know where you are this very minute, and chance it."

The chums of the Remove looked at him. His statement was perfectly correct. They would have disliked Dr. Locke to know precisely where they were, that minute, very much indeed. They were doing no harm, it was true. They were only taking a forbidden short cut; but appearances were against them.

"No bizney of yours," said Nugent curtly.

"Might be," said the oily man. "You telling me that your schoolmaster allows you in places like this 'ere?"

"Find out!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Mebbe I don't need to find out, my young gentleman," said the oily man coolly. "I ain't no fool. Tommy Squidge has been called a lot of names, in his time, but he ain't never been called a fool."

"Will you let us open that gate, Mr. Squidge, if that is your name?" asked Harry Wharton quietly.

"Not jest yet," said the oily man. "You're on the right side of this 'ere gate for me, you are. I'll ask you for your names."

"You can ask!" snapped the captain of the Greyfriars Remove contemptuously.

"I'd know your face agin, name or no name," said Mr. Squidge, peering at him. "I fancy I'd know all your

faces agin, if it was my dooty to let your schoolmaster know wot you been up to."

"You cheeky blackguard!" roared Johnny Bull. "We're taking a short cut through here."

Mr. Squidge winked.

"You tell your schoolmaster that," he answered. "It ain't no use telling me. Not Tommy Squidge. Tommy Squidge ain't no fool, even if he's had 'ard luck on the 'osses. Mind, I ain't the man to be 'ard on a young covey what kicks over the traces now and then. Not Tommy Squidge. But don't you try pulling my leg. It ain't to be done. Not Tommy Squidge's leg."

Evidently Mr. Squidge did not believe that the Greyfriars fellows were simply taking a short cut. Possibly he had seen Greyfriars caps before in those precincts on less respectable heads! Probably, too, his way of life did not encourage the simple faith which the poet tells us is more than Norman blood!

He gave the schoolboys another wink. "You want to go through this 'ere gate?" he asked.

"Yes," answered Harry, "and at once."

"It'll cost you a quid," said Mr. Squidge agreeably.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### The Heavy Hand!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. stood staring at the oily man on the gate blankly.

He had seemed to them at first simply an unpleasant sort of person, who seemed to have a desire to make himself more unpleasant than he naturally was!

Now, however, they realised that there was more in it than that. This oily, disagreeable rat of a man was on the make.

He knew, as well as if they had told him, that they were out of school bounds. He did not believe that their motive was an innocent one; anyhow, they were out of bounds in a very disreputable quarter. It meant trouble for them at their school if it became known! Mr. Squidge saw a profit for himself in it—blackmail of a particularly petty and miserable kind.

He waved an oily, greasy hand, leaving a trail of cigarette-smoke in the air.

"You get me?" he asked.

"I think so!" gasped Harry.

"Worth a quid to you, I fancy, not to be given away to your schoolmaster," grinned Mr. Squidge. "Whackings all round, what—or mebbe the boot? Frightfully pertickler some schoolmasters is! Make it a pound, and Tommy Squidge is going to forget that he ever see you at this 'ere pub."

"Will you get off that gate?" asked Harry Wharton quietly.

"Ain't you making it a pound? Why, that's only four bob each for the lot of you!" said Mr. Squidge.

"Get off that gate!"

"You giving Tommy Squidge orders?" jeered the oily man.

"Yes! Get off that gate or I'll knock you off it!"

"My eye!" said Mr. Squidge.

The Co. stood silent. They could not help feeling dismayed. Certainly they did not think, for one moment, of giving in to an impudent demand for money. But it was certain that Mr. Squidge could give them trouble if he liked, and little doubt that he would

like if his demand was not complied with.

Johnny Bull gave an angry grunt. He had been against taking that short cut and placing themselves in suspicious circumstances. Now that it had been done, however, he was the least likely of the party to crumple under a threat from a man like Squidge.

He stepped towards the gate, passing Wharton. His brows were knitted and his face had the expression of a bulldog. All the Yorkshire in Johnny was roused now.

"Getting off that gate?" rapped Johnny in a deep growl.

"Not jest yet, young feller-me lad," said Mr. Squidge. "I— Oh!"

Johnny Bull hit out without waiting for him to finish. He gave Mr. Squidge a thump on the chest that almost lifted him off the gate.

Squidge went backwards. His cigarette flew in one direction, his rakish hat in another, as he threw out his hands wildly and clutched at the air. He naturally found no support in the empty air, and his legs flew up as his head flew down.

Bump!

Squidge landed outside the gate, his shoulders hitting the ground with a heavy bump, his head tapping it a moment later with a hard tap. He sprawled on his back and yelled:

"Ooogh!"

Johnny opened the gate.

"Come on!" he said.

The juniors passed through quickly. They were glad enough to get on the right side of that gate.

Mr. Squidge scrambled to his feet. His oily face was red with rage.

He made a quick movement towards Johnny Bull, who faced him grimly,

the other fellows lining up to lend a hand. Johnny was a sturdy, stocky fellow and a good man with his hands. But he was hardly a match for a man, though he would certainly have given a good account of himself had Mr. Squidge laid his dingy hands on him.

But Squidge dropped those dingy hands as he faced five fellows. Singly they could hardly have dealt with him, together they could have mopped up the earth with him, and that fact dawned on Mr. Squidge.

He paused in time and stepped back. "Orl right!" said Mr. Squidge. He spat out the word. "Orl right! You get back to your school, you young rips—with me arter! I'll show you!"

The juniors started up the lane towards Greyfriars. After them walked Mr. Squidge, hastily grabbing up his hat and jamming it on his greasy head.

"Trot!" said Bob.

The Famous Five trotted.

Behind them came a patter of feet. Mr. Squidge was trotting, too.

When they reached the stile in the lane, half-way to the school, Harry Wharton paused and glanced back. A squat figure and an oily face loomed in the falling dusk. Squidge was keeping pace.

"Come on, old bean," said Frank Nugent. "We shall be late!"

"Hold on a minute," said Harry quietly. "That man isn't going to follow us to the school."

"Ain't I?" came Mr. Squidge's voice. "Ain't I just? Ain't I going to let your schoolmaster know where I see you? Ain't I just? Ho!"

The Co. halted with Wharton.

Evidently it was Squidge's intention to follow them to Greyfriars. The way Johnny Bull had helped him off the gate had evidently annoyed Squidge! He was going to give all the trouble he could!

Probably, too, he expected that the required quid would be produced before the school was reached.

It was quite likely that the oily rascal had dabbled in blackmail before and had found his victims generally amenable to threats. But in the Famous Five of Greyfriars he had, so to speak, woke up the wrong passengers.

"Go back, please," said Harry Wharton.

Mr. Squidge chuckled.

"Not 'arf!" he replied. "Ain't I got a right to walk on the 'ighway? Go back, says you. Not Tommy Squidge, and you can lay to that!"

"Collar him!" said Harry.

"But," gasped Nugent, "we can't prevent him—"

"Oh, yes, we can, quite easily! He can butt in at the school any time he likes to tell tales, but he's not coming along with us! I don't think he'll feel up to a walk after he's sat in that ditch."

"Oh, my hat!"

Mr. Squidge jumped back.

"'Ere, 'ands off!" he roared.

But it was not hands off—it was hands on! It was five pairs of hands on, and with vigour.

Mr. Squidge was spun off his feet in a twinkling. He struggled and yelled and hit out wildly.

But in a moment or two he was spun to the side of the lane opposite the stile towards the ditch.

It was a deep ditch. There was mud in it and half-frozen water and plenty of snow! Mr. Squidge went spinning over the edge, and crashed into the middle of the ditch.

A frantic howl came from him as he squashed in snow, struggling and kicking and stirring up mud.

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"Now give him a few!" said Harry. Snowballs were gathered swiftly. There was plenty of snow about. As Mr. Squidge strove to drag himself from the ditch snowballs crashed and smashed on him, and he went slipping back, sprawling again in the middle.

"Go it!" chortled Bob Cherry. "Give him a few more!"

"Give him beans!"

"Give him terrific jipfulness!"

Crash! Smash! Bang! Squash!

It was improbable that Mr. Squidge was going to feel like a walk to Greyfriars after that experience. He sprawled in snow and mud and ice and muddy water, while snowballs fairly rained on him. Frantic yells and howls came from the dusky ditch.

"I think that will do," said Harry Wharton breathlessly at last. "Come on; we shall have to put it on now!"

The Famous Five cut off up the lane at a rapid trot. Mr. Squidge was left to sort himself out.

It was a horrid, muddy, draggled and dismantled object that crawled, panting and gasping and spluttering, from the ditch after they were gone.

And Mr. Squidge did not follow the schoolboys farther. He had had enough of them—more than enough—at close quarters. He crawled back to the Cross Keys, gurgling as he went.

Harry Wharton & Co. kept up a rapid trot till the school gates were in sight. The gates were not yet closed; the short cut had saved them, after all, in spite of the time they had lost on Mr. Squidge. They dropped into a walk.

"All right now," said Harry.

"Think so?" asked Bob, with a rueful grin. "I rather fancy we shall hear something more from that sportsman."

"Quite likely!" answered the captain of the Remove. "He's a blackmailing rascal, and there's only one way to deal with that sort—if a fellow gives in to a threat, it won't be long before he hears another!"

"Sure thing, old bean!" agreed Bob. "He got what he asked for—but I hardly think it can have made him feel nice and friendly! Bet you he will give us away to Quelch or the Head."

"Let him!" said Harry. "I'd rather face a flogging, or the sack, than let a rotter threaten me and get by with it."

"Hear, hear! All the same, it means a row."

"If we hadn't taken that short cut—" began Johnny Bull.

"We did!" interrupted the captain of the Remove.

"I told you—"

"Give us a rest!"

"It was bound to lead to trouble," said Johnny Bull calmly. "And I told you so."

"Then, for the love of Mike, don't tell us again! Cut in before Gosling shuts that gate on our noses."

The Famous Five cut in—the last fellows in, before Gosling shut the gate. They joined the crowd going into Hall for call-over. They were in good time to answer "adsum" to their names when their Form-master, Mr. Quelch, called the roll in Hall. Which was so much to the good—though they could not help thinking of Mr. Squidge, and that it might have been wiser, after all, to go the longer way round instead of taking that short cut.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

### On The Instalment System!

"L END me a bob, Toddy."

"Seven!" said Peter Todd.

Billy Bunter turned his big spectacles on his studymate in a glare of surprise.

"What do you mean—seven?" he demanded.

"I mean that you've asked me seven times to lend you a bob to-day," answered Toddy. "I'm keeping count."

"You silly ass! Look here, will you lend me a bob?"

"Eight!"

"Will you lend me a bob or not?" howled Billy Bunter.

"That's nine!" said Peter cheerfully.

"Carry on, old fat man! I'll say no as often as you like."

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter turned to his other studymate, Tom Dutton. Prep was over, in the Remove, and Dutton was putting away his books.

Tom Dutton was probably the only fellow in the Remove who had not heard Billy Bunter ask for the loan of a bob that day. And that was only because Tom was deaf!

Bunter, for some reason, seemed fearfully in want of a bob. It was not a large sum, and generally Bunter could count on at least one Remove man being good for such a moderate loan.

But there seemed a dearth of cash in the Remove—or, at least, a dearth of lenders of the same. Smithy had plenty of money—but he took plenty of care of it. Lord Mauleverer had lots—but Mauly had already made the fat Owl several loans in the first week of the term, and seemed to have gone on strike. Up and down the Remove that day had Bunter gone in search of a humble bob—and after prep, he was still bob-less.

It was fearfully selfish of the fellows, of course. Bunter could not help feeling disgusted. But, selfish or not, lots of fellows seemed to prefer spending their pocket-money themselves, instead of handing it over to Billy Bunter for that purpose.

Tom Dutton was almost the only fellow Bunter had not yet asked. It was rather a bother to ask Dutton, as he was deaf. But Bunter wanted a bob, and Bunter was bob-less, owing to the failure of his astute stratagem in Study No. 1 with the sheet of stamps. So he turned to Dutton, and gave him a poke in the ribs to draw his attention.

"Ow!" said Dutton. "Don't puncture me, you fat ass!"

"I say, old chap, lend me a bob."

"Don't be an ass!" answered Dutton. "Nothing snobbish in telling you not to puncture me, is there, fathead?"

"Eh? Who said there was?" howled Bunter.

"Well, what did you call me a snob for?"

"Oh crikey! I didn't!" roared Bunter. "I asked you to lend me a bob. A shilling! Hear that? I want a shilling!"

"Oh, rot!" said Dutton. "You want kicking—but who says you want killing?"

"Shilling!" yelled Bunter. "Oh, you deaf ass! Shilling! See?"

Tom Dutton looked round him.

"No, I can't see a shilling," he answered. "Have you dropped one?"

"I want you to lend me one."

"Send you one? Who's going to send you one? Do you mean that postal order you're always talking about?"

"Will you lend me a bob?"

"What utter rot!" said Dutton, staring at him. "Somebody might send you a shilling, but nobody would send you a knob. Do you mean a knob of coal? There's some in the coal-box, if you want one. But what do you want a knob for?"

"Oh crikey! Not knob—bob!" yelled Bunter, red in his fat face with his

exertions. "Lend me a bob, will you?"

Dutton heard that. If a fellow put steam on, Dutton could hear. He shook his head.

"No!" he answered. "And don't roar at me, either! I can hear when you don't mumble! No need to yell."

"Beast!"

"Well, you wouldn't get much of a feast for a bob," said Dutton. "Besides, why should I stand you a feast, even if you could! You never stand a spread—you never even stand your whack in the study, or hardly ever. Catch me lending you a bob for a feast."

"Oh, go and eat coke!" howled Bunter.

"I don't see the joke! What do you mean?"

But Billy Bunter gave it up at that. There was no bob to be extracted from Tom Dutton, and he was not going to expend his lung-power for nothing.

"I say, Toddy, old chap—" gasped Bunter, turning again to the grinning Peter.

"Ten!" said Peter.

"I wasn't going to ask you for a bob, you beast!" yapped Bunter.

"Oh! Still nine, then!" said Peter. "Leave it at nine, what?"

"Lend me a stamp! I've got to write home," grunted Bunter. "I've promised my minor, Sammy, to do the letter home this week. You can lend a pal a stamp, Peter."

"Glad to get off so cheap!" answered Peter affably, and he sorted out a stamp and handed it to the fat Owl.

Bunter sorted out an envelope and addressed it. But he did not stick the stamp on it. He put the stamp into a waistcoat pocket, and left the study with the addressed envelope in his hand, shutting the door after him.

Peter Todd stared at the door. It was rather unusual for a fellow to borrow a stamp to stick on a letter and then stick it in his waistcoat pocket instead of on the letter. It was still more unusual for Billy Bunter to take the trouble to shut the study door after him. However, Peter was not fearfully interested in the proceedings of the fat Owl, and Bunter went on his way unheeded further.

His way led him to the next study, No. 6, where Wibley, Morgan, and Micky Desmond had just finished prep.

"I say, you fellows," Bunter blinked into the study, and held up the addressed envelope. "I say, can you let me have a stamp? I've got to get this letter off."

William Wibley found a stamp, and handed it over.

"Thanks!" said Bunter, and he shut the study door before he put the stamp into his waistcoat pocket, along with Toddy's.

The door of Study No. 4 opened, and Herbert Vernon-Smith came out with Tom Redwing.

Bunter hurried down the passage to them.

"I say, you fellows! Got a stamp?"

"Lots!" answered the Bunder.

"Lend me one for this letter—"

"Rats!"

"Beast! I say, Redwing, old chap, you're not so mean as Smithy!" said the fat Owl. "I say, I've got to get this letter off! I say—"

"Here you are, fatty!" Tom Redwing good-naturedly sorted out a stamp, and then went down the passage with his chum. His back being turned, he naturally did not observe that that stamp went into Billy Bunter's waistcoat pocket.

Billy Bunter grinned serenely. He

had three stamps now—he was well on the way to that much desired bob.

His raid on Wharton's sheet of stamps had been a frost. But he looked like having better luck on the instalment system!

Having waited till Smithy and Redwing had gone down, he inserted a fat face and a large pair of spectacles into Study No. 3.

Russell and Ogilvy, in that study, spoke simultaneously:

"Buzz off!"

"I say, you fellows, I only want a stamp! I can't catch the post with this letter without a stamp!" explained Bunter. "If you've got a stamp, one of you—"

"Oh! Not a bob, this time?" said Russell, laughing.

"No, just a stamp! My mater's expecting this letter, you see, and—"

"I'll see if I've got one!" said Ogilvy. It turned out that Ogilvy had one, and he handed it to the fat Owl.

The astute Owl stepped back into the passage, and added the fourth stamp to the collection in his waistcoat pocket. From Study No. 14, at the end of the passage, three juniors came along—Fisher T. Fish jerking along with his jerky steps, Johnny Bull and Squiff coming after him.

"I say, Fishy, got a stamp?" squeaked Bunter.

"Yep!"

"Lend it to me, will you?"

"Nopa!"

Fisher T. Fish jerked on.

"I say, you fellows, got a stamp?" asked Bunter. He blocked the way of Johnny Bull and Sampson Quincy Illey Field, holding up the addressed envelope. "I say, my mater's expecting this letter. If you've got a stamp—"

Squiff had a stamp and produced the same. The two juniors walked on, leaving Bunter with a collection of five stamps.

Bunter's fat head was next inserted into Study No. 12, where Lord Mauleverer gave a dismal groan at the sight of him, and Jimmy Vivian picked up a cushion.

"I say, you fellows, I only want a stamp!" said Bunter hurriedly. "I say, I've got to catch the post, and my uncle's expecting this letter, and—"

"Give him a stamp, Jimmy, if he'll go away!" said Mauly.

Jimmy gave Bunter a stamp, and, to Mauly's great relief, he went away. It was probably the first time on record that Bunter had let that study off so lightly!

Study No. 13 was Bunter's next objective. Bob Cherry, Hurree Singh, Mark Linley, and little Wun Lung were in that study, putting their books away after prep.

"Anybody got a stamp?" asked Bunter. He held up the unstamped envelope. "I say, I hate borrowing things, as you know, but I promised my aunt I would write, and I can't post the letter without a stamp."

Bob Cherry found a stamp. Billy Bunter rolled down the passage happily, with a total of seven in his waistcoat pocket. Undoubtedly he was getting on!

Wharton and Nugent were coming out of Study No. 1. The fat Owl rolled up to them breathlessly.

"I say, Wharton, hold on a minute! You've got lots of stamps, I know. Haven't you?"

"They had a narrow escape from a burglar this afternoon," answered Harry. "But I've got them all right."

"Oh, really, Wharton! I say, you

might let me have one—just one—for this letter to my Cousin Wally—"

"Not the whole lot?" inquired Wharton sarcastically.

"Just one, old chap!" said Bunter persuasively. "I can't post this letter to my father without a stamp, can I?"

"Are you going to post it to your father, as well as to your cousin Wally?"

"Oh! I—I mean—my cousin father—that is, my father Wally—I mean, my cousin Wally!" stammered Bunter. "Just one stamp, old fellow!"

Harry Wharton detached a stamp and handed it over. Then he went down the Remove staircase with Nugent.

Billy Bunter grinned cheerfully as he added an eighth stamp to the collection in his waistcoat pocket.

He had a bob's worth now. There are people who think that it is high time that the Postmaster-General revived the penny-postage of happier days. Billy Bunter did not agree with them at the moment. He would have had to collect twelve stamps instead of eight—and his luck might not have held out.

Bunter did not stick any of those stamps on the envelope. He shoved the envelope carelessly into his trousers pocket; it had served its turn, and the unscrupulous Owl was done with it now! He rolled away cheerily to the Fourth Form passage, knocked at Aubrey Angel's door, and blinked in at the sportsman of the Fourth.

"I say, Angel, old chap, I haven't got the bob—"

"Get out, then!" answered Angel, old chap!

"But I've got it in stamps—"

"Oh, stamps are all right!" said Aubrey.

"Here you are!"

Billy Bunter rolled away from Angel's study, with a happy grin on his fat face, and a slip of paper in his pocket which bore the mystic word "Blarney."

He had drawn that slip from an old hat in Angel's study, which contained many others.

And hope was strong in Bunter's podgy breast that Blarney was going to prove the winner in the Fourth Form sweepstake, got up by that eminent sportsman, Aubrey Angel of the Fourth!

If Blarney won, Bunter was going to roll in bobs, and if Blarney didn't, Bunter did not stand to lose much—only eight stamps that belonged to eight different Remove fellows! Not one of whom suspected—as yet—that he had been furnishing Billy Bunter with the wherewithal to plunge as a bold, bad sporting man!

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## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### The Reward Of Wisdom!

"I TOLD you so!" remarked Johnny Bull.

Johnny made that remark in break the following morning.

Great is truth, says the proverb, and it must prevail! Johnny was speaking the exact truth—he always did! But the effect on Johnny's chums seemed to be extremely exasperating.

Seldom did the famous Co. "row." But on four faces there were expressions that hinted, very strongly, that a row was in the offing.

The Famous Five were not in their usual cheery spirits and ease of mind that morning. Everyone had realised, by that time, that Johnny Bull had been absolutely right the day before; that it would have been miles better to take the long way round, and take

lines from Quelch for getting in late, than to cross the forbidden parlieu of the Cross Keys at Friardale.

In the hurry and haste, and the natural anxiety to dodge lines, it had not seemed so clear to them at the time as it had to Johnny's practical mind. And probably, but for the butting-in of the unpleasant Squidge, they would have dismissed it from mind and forgotten all about it. Now it was not to be dismissed or forgotten.

Not one of them regretted for a moment the way they had handled the unpleasant Squidge. He was a black-mailing rascal, hase enough to attempt to extort money by threats. If they had any regret on the subject of Squidge, it was that they had not delayed a little to give him some more!

That was all right! But it was fairly certain that the disappointed and mishandled rascal would do them damage if he could—and obviously he could.

On a previous occasion, when they had taken that very short cut for the very same reason, Quelch had heard of it, and taken their word on the subject. But as Johnny had sapiently pointed out, he expected it not to happen again. It had happened again, and if Quelch heard of it, what was he going to think?

It was quite likely that he would hear of it—from Mr. Squidge! On the other hand, the rascal might think he had had enough and steer clear. He might even be gone—it was obvious that he was only a bird-of-passage in Friardale, and his blackguardly business might have taken him elsewhere. It was a disagreeable state of uncertainty for five fellows.

In these circumstances, the fact that Johnny Bull had told them so was no comfort. His drawing attention to that fact was quite exasperating. The Famous Five were all loyal pals, and stood shoulder to shoulder as one man; but, at the moment, four of them looked like giving the fifth something of the same kind that had been handed out to Squidge!

"I told you," resumed Johnny Bull, "that it was rot! Well it was rot! If a fellow's found in a rotten place, it looks as if he's there for rotten reasons. No good saying we're little tin angels and above suspicion. We ain't! Smithy could say the same, if he was copped getting his putrid cigarettes at the back door of that den! Would Quelch believe him?"

"Our reputation's a bit different from Smithy's!" snapped the captain of the Remove.

"It won't stay different, if we go to the same places—even to take short cuts! I told you—"

"If you say 'I told you so' again," said Bob Cherry, in concentrated tones, "I'll jolly well hit you in the eye!"

"That won't alter facts!" answered Johnny Bull calmly. "Talk sense! We've played the goat—at least, you fellows have, and I stood in with you. Now let's go to Quelch and tell him."

"And get a hundred lines each—perhaps two hundred—"

said Nugent.

"And very likely six on the bags!" growled Bob Cherry.

"The esteemed Quelch would be infuriated, after letting us off last time!" remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"The sixfulness on our unfortunate bags would probably be terrific!"

"Haven't we asked for it?" said Johnny Bull calmly. "What's the good of fancying we haven't, when we know we have? If Quelch hears it from us, he will know there was no harm in it, at any rate. If he hears it from



As Mr. Squidge strove to drag himself from the ditch, snowballs crashed and smashed on him, and he went slipping back. "Go it!" chortled Bob Cherry. "Give him a few more!" Crash! Smash! Bang! Squash!

anybody else, he won't know that! We want him to know."

"All very well!" said Harry Wharton. "But very likely that reptile Squidge will let it drop—and if we gabble to Quelch, we get into a row for nothing."

"Not for nothing!" Johnny pointed out gently. "We've broken school bounds in a rotten place. That's not nothing."

"Br-r-r-r-r!"

Johnny Bull was talking solid common sense, as usual. There was no doubt that if the juniors went direct to their Form-master and told him what had happened, and took their gruel for the same, Squidge's teeth would be drawn. Quelch might—in fact, would—be angry; but he would know that there was no real harm in what they had done.

On the other hand, if he learned from another source that they had been at the Cross Keys, he had to judge them as he would have judged any other fellows who had been spotted at that disreputable resort. It might be a matter of going up to the Head!

Nevertheless, solid as Johnny's common sense was, it did not appeal much to his chums! There was always the chance that the unpleasant Squidge might not take the matter any farther.

Respectable citizens who saw school-boys out of bounds in such a place, might report them from a sense of duty. But there was no danger of that from Squidge! Really, he was very unlikely to be troubled by anything in the nature of a sense of duty!

The question was whether malice would cause him to take the trouble to cause them trouble in their school. And all the time, it was quite possible that he was no longer in Friardale at all!

"Least said, soonest mended!" said Bob.

"Rot!" said Johnny Bull.

"Speech may be silvery," remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "But silence is the cracked pitcher that saves a bird in the bush from going longest to the well! There is terrific wisdom in proverbs, my esteemed Johnny."

"Fathead!" said Johnny.

"That dingy rascal will think twice before he barges in at Greyfriars," said Harry Wharton. "Let it drop."

"Rot!"

"Well, I'm not going to Quelch!" said Wharton tartly.

"Same here!" said Nugent.

"The samefulness is terrific!"

"Minority of one, Johnny," said Bob, "so ring off!"

"Oh, all right!" said Johnny Bull. "Keep it dark till it comes out, if you like! You know I was right yesterday—and to-morrow you'll know that I was right to-day! I told you—"

"Chuck it!"

"That there'd be trouble, and I'm telling you the same thing again now, and—"

"Ring off!"

"Well, don't say I never told you so!" said Johnny.

With all his solid common sense and clear judgment, it was possible that Johnny was a little lacking in tact. Certainly he seemed blind to the signs of a gathering storm!

The storm broke suddenly! That final "I told you so!"—seemed to give the final touch to the exasperation of his friends. Like one man, they closed in on Johnny, and grasped him on all sides.

Johnny Bull's feet were swept from under him. He roared, as earth and sky swam before his eyes.

"Bump him!" roared Bob.

Bump!

"Yoo-hoop!" roared Johnny, as he smote the quadrangle.

"Give him another!"

Bump!

"You silly asses— Yow-ow-ow! Whoop!"

"And another—"

Bump!

"Ooooooooooh!" spluttered Johnny.

"That," said Harry Wharton, "is a tip, old man! There's lots more of the same next time you tell us that you told us so."

"Lots and lots!" agreed Bob.

"Ow!" gasped Johnny. "Wow! You blithering idiots—wow!"

He gurgled for breath. His chums left him to gurgle. He gurgled and gurgled and gurgled.

"He, he, he!" A fat cachinnation apprised the chums of the Remove that Billy Bunter had witnessed the transaction. "He, he, he! I say, you fellows, having a row? He, he, he!"

"Who's having a row, you fat chump?" snapped Harry Wharton.

Johnny had been bumped for his own good; and no member of the Co. liked to hear it described as a "row."

"He, he, he! Ain't you?" chuckled Bunter. "I dare say he asked for it, old chap—he's rather a beast, ain't he?"

"What?"

"Serve the beast right!" said Bunter. "I say—leggo! Wharrer you up to? I'm backing you up, you silly fatheads! Yaroooh!"

Bump!

The Co. seemed to have no use for Bunter's backing in a row with Johnny. They signified the same by collaring the fat Owl and bumping him down on the hard, unsympathetic quadrangle.

"Yarooop!" roared Bunter. "Boasts! I say— Yoo-hooooop!"

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Bunter roared, and Johnny gurgled. And the Co. walked away, and left them to roar and gurgle. And they did not go to Quelch!

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### Brought To Light!

"HENRY'S got his hair off!" murmured Bob Cherry, when the Remove went in for third school that morning.

Needless to say, Bob did not let that remark reach the majestic ears of Henry Samuel Quelch, his Form-master.

Henry—otherwise Mr. Quelch—looked very severe, not to say grim. All the Remove noticed it at once, and wondered why.

Vernon-Smith wondered rather uneasily whether a fellow in a Greyfriars cap might have been seen in the vicinity of the Three Fishers! Skinner and Snoop wondered whether Quelch might have been up to the Remove passage and noticed a smell of smoke in one of the studies.

Fisher T. Fish felt a qualm on the subject of certain moneylending transactions among the fags. Billy Bunter blinked at his Form-master very uneasily, in dread that he might have heard something about a "sweep" in the Fourth, in which a fat Removite had taken a shilling ticket!

Other fellows had doubts in their minds. But there were five fellows who had little doubt. Five members of the Remove, as soon as they saw that grim look on Quelch's face, guessed at once that word from Mr. Squidge had reached the school.

Mr. Quelch, as he glanced over his class with a grim eye, did not single out any special member. But it was clear that something was coming! Quelch had something to say to his Form before lessons started.

"Before we proceed," said Mr. Quelch, after a brief pause, during which quite a number of fellows felt uneasy, "I have a question to put to my Form."

"Oh erikay!" murmured Billy Bunter.

The fat Owl wished that he had not that slip of paper, bearing the name of "Blarney," in his pocket.

"The headmaster has received a telephone call from Friardale!" said Mr. Quelch. "It refers to five Greyfriars boys."

Billy Bunter breathed again. This, clearly, could have nothing to do with Aubrey Angel's sweepstake. Other fellows felt relieved. Five fellows felt anything but relieved.

"A person in the village," went on Mr. Quelch, "has informed Dr. Locke that yesterday evening five boys in Greyfriars caps were seen by him within the precincts of a very disreputable public-house, the Cross Keys."

There was a deep breath in the Remove. Certain fellows in the Form knew the Cross Keys too well! Smithy was glad that he had dropped in at the Three Fishers instead of the Cross Keys!

"This—er—person," went on Mr. Quelch, "stated that he considered it his duty to report the incident to the headmaster, as was undoubtedly the case—if true. The names of the boys could not be given; but from the description, they appear to have been junior boys."

Nobody glanced at the Famous Five. Had it been a case of ragging Coker of the Fifth, or putting up a booby-trap in the study of Loder of the Sixth, they might have been suspected. But "pub-

haunting" had never been supposed to be in their line; and no one thought of them.

"The headmaster," continued Mr. Quelch, "has requested all masters of junior Forms to question their boys, and ascertain whether there is any truth in this report. I can hardly suppose that such boys are to be found in my Form; but I have my duty to do."

The Removites looked as virtuous as they could.

"I must ask you, therefore," said Mr. Quelch, "whether any boy in this Form entered the precincts of the establishment I have mentioned yesterday. Any such boys will step out before the Form."

For a moment no one stirred.

Johnny Bull's chums certainly wished that they had acted on Johnny's advice, and gone to Quelch in break. But it was too late to wish that now. The question was, whether to walk out under the chopper, so to speak.

A fellow was not bound to accuse himself. If the matter ended there, it was all right.

But what if Mr. Squidge—for it was clear that that telephone-call had come from Squidge—pushed the matter farther? He did not know the names of the five juniors, but he knew their faces; and if he had the nerve and the impudence to come to the school, he could identify them easily enough. And no member of the Co. could think of adopting a line of defence in Skinner's style—telling lies about it.

For a long moment the five remained in doubt.

Johnny Bull settled the doubt by rising from his place, and walking out before the Form. After which there was nothing for his chums to do but to follow his example.

Every other Remove man jumped. Mr. Quelch very nearly jumped. He stared at the head boy and the rest, as if not understanding—so great was his surprise.

"Wharton! What—what does this mean?" he exclaimed testily. "Why have you left your place?"

The next moment he understood. Surprise gave place to thunder in his look.

"Wharton! Is it possible—am I to understand—that you and your friends are the boys in question?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, sir," answered Harry, his face crimson.

Mr. Quelch stared at the five. There was a breathless silence in the Remove. It was broken by a fat squeak.

"Oh erikay! I say, you fellows, those chaps going pub-haunting—"

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

There was deep silence. The gimlet eyes of Henry Samuel Quelch scanned five flushed and discomfited faces.

"I am amazed—I am shocked—I can scarcely credit this!" said Mr. Quelch at last. "I was questioning the Remove chiefly as a matter of form—I could not for one moment suppose that such boys were to be found here. And it appears that they are Remove boys—one of them my head boy."

"May I explain, sir?" asked Harry Wharton very quietly.

"You will certainly explain yourself at once, Wharton."

"We were late last evening, sir, coming back from Cliff House, and we took the short cut from the towpath, by Cross Keys Lane. That is all."

The Bounder winked at Skinner.

A fat giggle was heard from Billy Bunter.

"That's all, sir," said Bob Cherry. "I know we oughtn't to have done it, but—but we did—but that's all."

"We should have been late for roll, sir!" said Frank Nugent. "That's why we cut across."

Mr. Quelch's jaw set grimly.

"Is that your explanation?" he demanded.

"That's it, sir!" said Johnny Bull. "We were fools to do it, of course!"

Mr. Quelch coughed.

"If your action was merely foolish, Bull, it is much less serious than it appears to be!" he said. "This is not the first time that you have given me precisely the same explanation of the same incident. Your word was taken on that occasion, but on the clearest possible understanding that no such thing ever occurred again."

The Famous Five stood dismally silent.

Some of the Remove fellows were grinning, but most of them looked serious enough. The Bounder whispered to Skinner that, if they got by with this, he would know what to say if he was spotted at the Three Fishers! That remark caused Harold Skinner to giggle—a giggle that died away with startling suddenness as a gimlet eye turned on him.

Mr. Quelch stood silent for several moments. He was plainly angry, but as much puzzled and distressed as angry.

There were certain black sheep in his Form, on whom Quelch had a wary eye. But Harry Wharton & Co. certainly were not in the number.

Quelch, in fact, believed their explanation, but that did not alter the fact that these five boys of his Form had been seen in suspicious circumstances in a spot strictly out of school bounds.

"I am greatly surprised, and pained!" he said at last. "You are all perfectly well aware that that disreputable place is out of school bounds, for very good reasons."

"Yes, sir!" said Harry, in a low voice.

A Greyfriars boy was once expelled for having visited that very place," said Mr. Quelch. "Yet you have placed yourselves under the suspicion of having acted in a similar disgraceful manner."

The five did not answer. There was nothing to say. Quelch had to judge them, and if their word was not good enough, they had to go up to the Head, in which case a flogging was the least they could expect.

Johnny Bull, as silent as his comrades, glanced at them, and though he did not speak, his glance said as plainly as words: "I told you so!"

"You say that you took a short cut—" resumed Mr. Quelch. "You did not linger about the place at all?"

"Certainly not!"

"According to the statement made over the telephone, you were seen hanging about there—those were the words used."

"They were false!" said Harry Wharton steadily. "We certainly did not hang about. We had to stop for a few minutes at the gate, as a man was sitting on it, and would not let us pass till we shifted him. That is all."

"Oh!" said Mr. Quelch. "That presumably is the man who saw you, and who has telephoned to the headmaster."

"I'm sure of that, sir."

Mr. Quelch was silent again. He realised at once that there was probably malice in a report from a man who had had to be "shifted."

"I can scarcely decide how to deal with you," he said at last. "I believe that you acted thoughtlessly; I accept your word on that. Nevertheless, you

have broken a very strict and salutary rule of the school; you have placed yourselves in suspicious circumstances, and you have risked the good name of the school to which you belong."

"Oh, sir!" gasped Harry.

"If Greyfriars boys are seen in such places, Wharton, the good name of the school must suffer, as you are very well aware."

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"Your defence is this," said Mr. Quelch sternly, "that you entered the place for no disgraceful object, but only in a careless disregard of your headmaster's authority and commands."

"Oh!" gasped the wretched five. Certainly they had never looked at it in that light.

"We—we never meant—" stammered Bob.

"Whatever you may have meant, Cherry, that is what you have done!" said Mr. Quelch severely. "I must report this matter to the headmaster. I must take upon myself the responsibility of answering for your good characters, in spite of appearances. This I shall do—but you have placed me in a most awkward and disagreeable position."

"We're sorry, sir—" mumbled Nugent.

"No doubt: but the facts remain the same," said Mr. Quelch dryly. "I shall deal with this matter myself, and explain to the headmaster. Each of you will take an imposition of five hundred lines, and will be detained for the half-holiday on Saturday. I shall trust that this will be a warning to you, to think twice before you act once, on another occasion. Now go to your places."

The Famous Five, in silence, went to their places.

They did not look happy, during class that morning!

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### A Row in The Remove!

"I SAY, you fellows, fancy that lot!" giggled Billy Bunter.

"Only fancy!" grinned Skinner.

"Humbugs and no mistake!" said Snoop.

"You never know a man till you spot him!" said Skinner oracularly. "They took most fellows in! Still, I can say that they never quite took me in! I don't believe all I see and hear."

"Actually copped, you know!" said Bolsover major. "Caught in the jolly old act! They got off cheap."

"That's the advantage of a good reputation!" sighed Skinner. "Blessed if I don't go in for it myself this term! It's useful."

"Oh rot," said Hazeldene. "I dare say they were only taking a short cut, just as they said."

"Oh, quite!" said Skinner airily. "I've taken such short cuts myself—more than once! Lots of times, in fact. So have you, haven't you, Smithy?"

The Bounder laughed.

After class, a crowd of the Removites were discussing the scene in the Form-room. It was a great topic in the Remove.

The Famous Five were the acknowledged leaders of the Form. They had a great deal of influence in many ways, and they were generally more or less well to the fore. That, of course, brought their delinquency, or supposed delinquency, into great prominence.

Most fellows believed that the matter was exactly as they had explained it to Quelch. Some fellows didn't! Skinner, especially, was eloquent on the subject

of humbugs and hypocrites. According to Skinner, they had been found out, and that was all there was about it.

Skinner rather prided himself on his keen judgment. His system of judging was quite a simple one; he always believed the worst of everybody. It was quite easy, and satisfactory to a fellow like Skinner.

"The fact is," said Skinner, "that they've got off, because they're Quelch's favourites. Quelch ain't going to admit that they've pulled his leg. That's the long and the short of it."

"But you don't think they were really pub-haunting?" asked Wibley.

"Oh, no!" said Skinner airily. "Not at all! If I was seen there, or Smithy, we should be pub-haunting all right, and taken up to the Head! When Quelch's favourites do the same thing, it's not the same thing, but something quite different."

"I've taken that short cut myself," said Hazel.

"I know! Isn't that where you get your smokes?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If Quelch knew you'd taken that short cut, Hazel, old bean, he would make you turn out your pockets!" said Skinner. "I wonder what we should have seen if he'd made them do it."

"I say, you fellows, it's jolly thick!" said Billy Bunter. "Quelch takes their word and lets them off! He doesn't take my word! Now, does he?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I don't think that a beak ought to have two rods and two lines!" said Bunter warmly.

"Do you mean two weights and two measures, you fat ass?" asked Smithy.

"Well, whatever it is, I don't think a beak ought to have it!" declared Bunter. "Quelch had me up about that pie the other day? Suppose I'd told him I was taking a short cut through the pantry—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Would he have believed me?" demanded Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He jolly well wouldn't!" declared Bunter. "Don't I know him? But those fellows get by with their yarns about short cuts. Humbugging all round, you know—a lot of whitened spectacles—"

"A lot of what?" gasped Smithy.

"Whitened spectacles—"

"Oh crumbs! Do you mean whitened sepulchres?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can cackle," said Bunter, "but that's what they are—humbugs and whitened spectacles, the lot of them—I shouldn't mind telling them so, too. Standing up to a beak and telling him whoppers about short cuts! Not the sort of thing I could do."

Bunter was indignant.

"You'd hardly think," he went on, "that those fellows—those very fellows—have often called me a fibber! They have! They've called me untruthful more than once! Rubbed it in, you know! Me! And now Wharton, when he's copped pub-haunting, tells Quelch, before the whole Form, a whopper about a short cut! I call it thick!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Bunter's audience.

It was not Bunter's remark that caused the laughter. It was the circumstance that Harry Wharton was coming across the quad, and that Bunter made that happy remark in his hearing.

The expression that came over the face of the captain of the Remove made the juniors yell.

Bunter, who had his podgy back to

Wharton, did not see him, and seemed surprised by that outbreak of merriment.

"I don't call this a laughing matter," he said severely. "Some fellows ain't so particular as I am, I know! But there's a limit! I can tell you, I was simply disgusted to hear Wharton rolling out crammers like that! If I had been Quelch, I should have said—yarooop! Who's that beast kicking me?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton's boot, landing on the tightest trousers at Greyfriars, interrupted Billy Bunter's remarks.

The fat Owl roared, and spun round like a fat humming-top!

"Ow! Beast!" he howled. "Wow! Keep off, you beast!"

"So you think I was telling crammers to Quelch, you fat fooler?" exclaimed Wharton, glaring at the fat Owl.

"Beast!"

"Weren't you?" asked Skinner blandly.

Wharton's eyes turned on Skinner with a gleam in them.

"No, Skinner," he answered quietly. "I was not! Nothing in your line, at all! And if you say I was, put up your hands at the same time."

Skinner put his hands in his pockets. "My dear chap," he said, and went on in an imitation of Mr. Quelch in the Form-room. "I believe you acted thoughtlessly! Nevertheless, you have broken a very strict and salutary rule of the school. I must take upon myself the responsibility of answering for your good character, in spite of appearances—"

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

"If any fellow here believes—" began Wharton savagely.

"No fellow here believes that you did anything but play the giddy ox!" said Tom Redwing. "You were a silly ass to take that short cut; but nobody believes you did anything else."

"Don't we?" sniggered Snoop.

"Just!" grinned Skinner.

"I don't think I need tell you fellows," said Harry, "that it all happened just as I told Quelch—"

"Hem!" said Skinner loudly.

"Hem!" repeated Snoop, like a faithful echo.

The next moment Skinner and Snoop wished that they hadn't "hemmed" so emphatically. Harry Wharton, with a flash in his eyes, made a sudden grab and caught them by their collars.

Bang!

Two heads came together suddenly and sharply with a loud crack! Two frantic yells woke the echoes of the quad.

"Oh!" yelled Skinner.

"Ow!" yelled Snoop.

"Hoity-toity!" grinned the Bounder.

"Are you going to bang the head of every fellow in the Remove who thinks you've been kicking over the traces, Wharton?"

"I'll bang yours fast enough, Smithy, if you repeat Skinner's check!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove.

"Will you, by gad?" exclaimed the Bounder, with a warlike look. "Then I'll repeat it fast enough, my pippin! I—let go my arm, Reddy, you fool!"

But Tom Redwing did not let go his chum's arm. He dragged Herbert Vernon-Smith away from the spot by main force.

Wharton stared after the Bounder with knitted brows, and then walked away, frowning—leaving Skinner and Snoop rubbing their heads, and the other fellows laughing. It was clear that the Famous Five were not going to

hear the end, just yet, of their unfortunate adventure at the Cross Keys!

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

### Sportsmen All!

**B**ILLY BUNTER blinked in at the doorway of Study No. 1 at tea-time, and grinned.

The Famous Five had gathered in that study as usual for tea. But they were not in their usual happy-go-lucky spirits.

Talk in the Remove on the subject of the Cross Keys was irritating. Still less pleasing was an impot of five hundred lines apiece. Likewise, detention on a half-holiday was neither grateful nor comforting.

Least gratifying of all, perhaps, to four members of the Co. was the fact that Johnny had "let them so."

Johnny, possibly warned by that bumping in the quad, had ceased to mention that he had told them so. But he looked it, as it were!

Besides, the fact was indubitable that Johnny had told them so! He had been right all along the line. Any penalty for being late for roll on Wednesday would not have been so severe as what had befallen the five on Thursday—and now there was all that unpleasant talk in the Form thrown in, over and above.

It was all very well to bang Skinner's head against Snoop's, and Snoop's against Skinner's; but that did not still their malicious tongues—rather it gave those malicious tongues an added activity!

Nor was the matter limited to the Remove. Fellows in other Forms had heard of it. Hobson of the Shell had asked them if they had really been spotted pub-haunting, and what the dickens they could see in such a dingy game—and it was little satisfaction, though it was certainly some, to leave Hobby sitting in a puddle in the quad, struggling for his second wind.

More annoying still, Angel of the Fourth had given them a friendly nod.

They could not very well sit a fellow down in a puddle for giving them a friendly nod! But it was fearfully annoying. It meant that Aubrey Angel had heard the story, and fancied that they were fellows of his own kidney! Which they were, of course, very far from being.

On the other hand, Wingate of the Sixth had bestowed on them a very scrutinising stare.

They admired and respected old Wingate, and did not like at all the idea of the Greyfriars captain fancying, for one moment, that they had been dabbling in dingy folly like Skinner, or Angel, or the Bounder.

Altogether, it was very uncomfortable all round; and a certain aspect of calm superiority in Johnny Bull's looks far from soothed the general irritation.

Bunter, as he blinked in, apparently saw something amusing in disgruntled visages, for his own fat visage was wreathed in an expansive grin as he blinked.

Harry Wharton picked up a loaf from the table. He was in no mood for the fascinating society of William George Bunter.

"Hook it!" he snapped.

Bunter's blink became very wary. He was ready to dodge. But he did not hook it.

"I say, old chap, don't be shirty!" he expostulated. "I say, I've come here to put you fellows on to a good thing."

He rolled in.

"Mind, I haven't come to tea," he

explained. "I've had tea in my study, as well as in Hall. Still, I'll have a spot of that cake, if you fellows don't mind. I say, would you fellows like a chance of making a pot of money?"

That question caused the Famous Five to turn surprised stares on the fat Owl. A chance of making a pot of money was welcome to any fellow—but what the fat Owl was driving at was rather a mystery.

"Might be several quids!" said Bunter. "It depends, of course! Mind, I wasn't going to mention this to you fellows, but now you've been found out—"

"What?" hooted the Famous Five, with one voice.

"I say, don't yell at a chap!" said Bunter peevishly. "You make a fellow jump. What I mean to say is, now it's come out the sort of fellows you are, I know you won't mind taking a hand in a sporting proposition, what?"

They gazed at him!

"Don't think I'm down on you!" went on Bunter, blinking at them owlishly. "I ain't! I think it's a bit thick the way you've been bumbugging up till now—I must say that! But I ain't down on you! I like to shake a loose leg myself sometimes. Nothing soft about me, you know."

"What about your head?" asked Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry! I've been a bit rorty at times!" said Bunter, with a fat wink. "After all, why not? Got a smoke about, you chaps?"

They continued to gaze at him! If Harry Wharton & Co. had ever felt disposed to "shake a loose leg" and be "rorty at times," and have a "smoke" about, Billy Bunter would probably have cured them, on the spot, of any such propensity. The idea of resembling that fat and fatuous youth, in any way whatsoever, would have been altogether too unpleasant.

"I suppose you've got some smokes," went on Bunter.

"You blithering Owl!" said Harry. "Why should you suppose so?"

"Eh? Ain't that what you went to the Cross Keys for yesterday?" asked Bunter. "That's why Skinner goes."

"Oh, kill him!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"I mean to say, no good keeping up the goody-goody stunt now you're found out!" explained Bunter. "Don't you see that yourselves?"

"Not quite!" said Harry Wharton, undecided whether to laugh or to hurl the loaf.

"Well, I mean to say, it's pretty plain now, isn't it?" said Bunter. "But never mind the smokes, if you've not got any left. I'm going to put you on to a good sporting thing, now I know. See? Angel's getting it up."

"Angel of the Fourth?" said Harry, remembering that friendly nod in the quadrangle. "What rotten black-guardism is Angel of the Fourth up to now?"

"Oh, really, Wharton! That's pretty rich from you, considering!" said Bunter. "But look here, what about a sweepstake?"

"Oh! Is that it?"

"On the Wapshot Cup, on Saturday," explained Bunter. "I wasn't going to mention it to you fellows, till it came out that it's in your line, you know. I don't mind admitting that you took me in."

"We took you in?"

"I own up, you did!" confessed Bunter. "Skinner makes out that he jolly well knew you were spoofing all the time, and no better than other

fellows! I don't believe he did—you see, you did it so well!"

"Oh!" gasped Bob. "We did it well, did we?"

"First rate!" said Bunter. "You took me in, as I said. You took in everybody, I should say. Of course, you were bound to get found out in the long run. A fellow's always found out in the long run. But look how long you've kept it up without being spotted—till now."

"You piffing, pie-faced, pernicious porpoise—"

"No good calling me names," said Bunter. "I never found you out, did I? I wouldn't have given you away if I had. But now I know, I'm letting you into this. Look here, I've drawn Blarney."

Bunter displayed a slip of paper.

"The name of 'Blarney' was inscribed thereon."

Harry Wharton & Co. were not so well up in such matters as Aubrey Angel, or the rosy Owl, but they guessed that Blarney was the name of a horse.

"He ain't the favourite!" said Bunter. "I rather think Angel himself will draw the favourite—he, he, he! They wangle these things, I fancy! He, he! Still, Blarney's a good geo!"

"Oh!" gasped Bob. "He's a good gee, is he?"

"Outsiders often romp home, you know," said Bunter, drawing on the great stores of his sporting knowledge, for the benefit of the Famous Five. "If you draw a rank outsider, you may get there all the same. What about risking a bob each on it? If you bag the sweep I shall expect you to stand me a spread—for putting you on to it, you know. That's only fair."

"My only hat!" said the captain of the Remove. He stared at the fat and fatuous Owl.

Twenty-four hours ago Bunter would never have ventured to talk like this in Study No. 1. But there had been a change since then! Now the fat Owl was satisfied that he was dealing with a rorty lot! That made a difference, of course!

"So that's what you wanted to borrow a bob for yesterday?" said Bob Cherry. "Glad I never lent you the bob."

"Oh, that was all right! Angel said stamps would do—"

"Stamps!" yelled Harry Wharton. "Was that what you were pinching my stamps for, you fat villain?"

"Well, I never had them!" said Bunter. "You were too jolly mean to let a fellow borrow a few stamps. Still, I managed it. That's all right. I've drawn Blarney. You fellows going in for it? Angel says there's still some tickets to be drawn—in a hat in his study. Of course, you'll have to keep it fearfully dark. A fellow might be sacked for this."

"The mightfulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Angel jolly well would be, if Capper spotted him at this game," said Frank Nugent. "Capper goes about with his eyes shut."

"I wish Capper was our beak, instead of Quelch!" said Bunter. "Quelch would be on to anything like this, in the Remove, like a shot. Well, what about it, you fellows? Are you on? Don't forget me if you pull off a winner. That's only fair."

Harry Wharton rose to his feet. His face was grim.

Plenty of fellows in the Lower School knew the kind of black sheep that Aubrey Angel was. That was no business of any man in the Remove. The festive Aubrey could back winners



With a flash in his eyes, Wharton made a sudden grab and caught Skinner and Snoop by their collars. Bang! Two heads came together, suddenly and sharply, with a loud crack, and two frantic yells woke the echoes of the quad. "Hoity-toity!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith.

—or losers—sneak in at the Three Fishers on a half-holiday—or skulk out of his dormitory after lights out—with-out the Famous Five of the Remove wasting a thought on him.

But it was a different matter when Aubrey drew a fatuous fool like Bunter to his own sportive ways. Bunter was in the Remove; and Bunter was booked for a flogging if his sportive speculations came to light. That, in the opinion of Bunter's Form captain, was not good enough.

"So now we know!" said Harry.

"Yes, now you know!" agreed Bunter, winking a fat wink. "I wouldn't have told you this yesterday—he, he, he—but now—he, he, he—"

"Now," said Harry. "Drop that ticket into the fire!"

"Eh? Why?"

"Because I'm going to boot you till you do!"

"What?" roared Bunter. "You silly ass, Blarney might win! I may get three or four pounds on this ticket—"

"You'll get three or four kicks, and then some, if you don't drop it into the fire this minute."

"Why, you boast—" gasped Bunter. "Lot of good me cadging stamps up and down the Remove to get this ticket if I chuck it into the fire. Gono mad?"

Harry Wharton drew back his foot. Bunter made a bound for the door—wishing, from the bottom of his fat heart, that he had not come to that study to put the fellows there on to that good thing! He had banked on their new and juicy reputation; but that, it seemed, had been a little error.

He did not reach the door. A grasp on his collar swung him back.

"Wow! Leggo!" roared Bunter.

He was spun round. Then a boot landed. He roared again. The boot landed again—and he roared yet again.

"Chucking that rubbish into the fire?" asked the captain of the Remove.

"No!" yelled Bunter.

"Have a few more."

"Yarooop! Whoo-hoop! Oh crikey! Beast! I say, you fellows, stoppin! I say—yow-ow-ow-ow! I say, I'm chucking it into the fire, you beast! Wow!"

"Blarney" vanished in a flick of flame! Then Bunter vanished—a last drive from his Form captain's boot helping him through the doorway. Then Harry Wharton turned to his chums.

"Coming?" he asked.

"Whither bound, O Chief?" asked Bob, grinning.

"I'm going to see Angel and let him know what I think of him getting that blithering idiot into this sort of thing."

"Hear, hear!"

And the Famous Five proceeded, in a body, to Aubrey Angel's study in the Fourth.

## THE NINTH CHAPTER.

### Booted!

**C**ECIL REGINALD TEMPLE, the captain of the Fourth Form, was standing in the doorway of Aubrey's study, when the Famous Five came along the passage.

Cecil Reginald was talking—his remarks addressed to some fellow within, not visible to the chums of the Remove. They could guess that it was Aubrey, however. Cecil Reginald was not paying compliments.

"You measly rotter!" Temple was saying. "Precious row there would be if Capper got on to this game."

"Does Capper ever get on to anythin'?" came a lazy drawl from the study.

"He might! We don't want a Fourth

Form man sacked—even you."

"Thanks."

"You were out of the dorm, after lights out, a couple of nights ago. Lots of fellows know."

"Lucky Capper doesn't. Are you goin' to tell him?"

"You'll get spotted, sooner or later," said Temple. "I've heard that a gang in the Remove have just got spotted, after pulling their beak's leg for a long time. It'll be the long jump for you when you get copped."

"When?" drawled Aubrey.

"Well, I think you're a measly worm!" said Temple hotly. "You're getting a lot of fellows to take tickets in your silly sweep; and if it came out they'd all be up before the Head. You're a gambling rotter!"

"Thanks again."

"I don't believe you're square, either. You couldn't play fair if you tried!" said Temple scornfully. "You're diddling a lot of mugs! That's what you're doing, Angel."

"There's a draught from that door."

"What?"

"Mind shuttin' it?"

Cecil Reginald Temple shut the door with a bang that rang from one end of the passage to the other. He turned angrily away; and ran into the Famous Five.

"What the deuce do you Remove kids want here?" he demanded.

"Calling on Angel!"

Cecil Reginald's lip curled.

"Birds of a feather, what?" he asked.

"You're the gang that's just been spotted pub-haunting, ain't you? Well, I jolly well think—"

Temple of the Fourth did not get further with what he thought. The

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(Continued from page 13.)

Famous Five grabbed him and strewed him along the passage.

Leaving Temple spluttering, they pitched open the door of Aubrey Angel's study and tramped in.

Angel of the Fourth was reclining elegantly in his armchair. He had a cigarette between thumb and forefinger. A rather good-looking fellow, Aubrey was very elegantly dressed; he gave almost as much attention to clothes as to gee-gees!

He stared round angrily as his door was flung open.

"Look here, Temple, you cheeky ass—" he exclaimed. Then, as he saw who the visitors were he broke off, rose from the chair, and gave them a smile and a nod. "Oh! You fellows!" he said. "Trickle in!"

Evidently Angel of the Fourth had no doubt about the truth of the story he had heard concerning those members of the Remove. He was prepared to welcome them as birds of a feather!

They did not look, or feel, grateful, for that polite greeting. They gave the dandy of the Fourth grim looks.

"This isn't a friendly call!" said Harry Wharton.

Angel raised his eyebrows.

"Isn't it? Then what have you come for?"

"To boot you all round your study and back again."

Aubrey's expression changed very considerably.

"If you've come here raggin'—" he began.

"You've got it!" agreed Bob.

"Better think twice, then!" said Angel coolly. "I'm not goin' to scrap with a mob of Remove fags! You lift a finger in this study and I'll get a prefect here—mind, I mean that! I'm not standing for Remove rags!"

"Get all the prefects here, if you like!" said Harry Wharton. "Beaks as well, if it suits you. We don't mind them knowing why we've called—if you don't."

Angel set his lips.

"What do you mean, if you mean anythin'?" he snapped.

"Just this! You've sold Bunter, of our Form, a sweepstake ticket. From what we've just heard Temple say, he thinks you're running this sweep in your own way, to put the money in your own pocket. Still, it's not our bizney if you diddle your pals. We want you to leave Remove men alone—especially a silly ass who hasn't sense enough to go in when it rains."

"You can't mind your own business?" asked Aubrey, with a sneer.

"I may point out that I am head boy of the Remove as well as captain of the Form, and my Form-master would expect me to put a stop to anything of the kind in my Form," said Harry quietly.

"Doesn't he expect you to steer clear of pubs as well?" sneered Aubrey.

"I thought you'd got on to that!" said Harry. "I suppose you're not decent

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enough to believe that we were taking a short cut at that show, as we told Quelch."

Angel laughed.

"Not soft enough, at any rate!" he said.

"You can keep your opinion—it won't hurt us!" said Wharton contemptuously. "We're not here to argue about that! We're here to make you understand quite plainly, that you're to leave Remove men out of your sporting stunts—above all, silly fatheads who can't take care of themselves."

"I shall do exactly as I choose!" answered Aubrey Angel. "Now get out of my study! I'm rather particular about the company I keep—and I bar pub-haunters!"

"The sooner we get out, the better we shall be pleased!" answered the captain of the Remove. "But we've got something to do first. Go it, you men!"

And the Famous Five went it—promptly, efficiently, and energetically.

Aubrey Angel's supercilious loftiness dropped from him like a cloak. He dodged, and yelled, and roared, and bolted for the door as the only means of escape.

But Bob Cherry barred the doorway and pushed him back—not with a gentle push!

Aubrey flew round the study table, yelling. He grabbed up an Indian club—which was immediately grabbed away again. And all the time boots landed, and landed again, and yet again, on his elegant trousers.

Cecil Reginald Temple stared in. Dabney and Fry came with him, and Wilkinson and Scott—all ready to back up Cecil Reginald in dealing with the Removites who had invaded the Fourth Form quarters.

But at the sight of Aubrey in wild and frantic flight from lunging boots, they stopped in the doorway and stared.

"Oh gad! What's this game!" exclaimed Temple.

"Rescue!" yelled Angel. "Back up, you cads! Turn these ruffians out! Lend me a hand! Oh crumbs! Yarooop! Help!"

The sportsman of the Fourth dodged one boot, only to feel another crash. There were altogether too many boots at work for him to dodge successfully.

"You men stand clear!" said Bob Cherry. "This isn't a Form row—just a lesson to Angel to keep his sporting stunts to himself!"

"Oh!" said Temple. "Go it, then, all you like!"

Temple, Dabney & Co. turned away, grinning. There was no rescue for Aubrey from the other Fourth Form men. The "bad hat" of the Fourth was far from popular in his Form, and Temple & Co. cheerfully left him to it. Their own opinion was that if ever a fellow wanted booting, Aubrey Angel did—and he was getting the booting now, good and hard.

When the Famous Five at length left the study they left a dismal and dilapidated Aubrey gasping and gurgling and groaning—sorry for himself, if not sorry for his misdeeds.

## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### One In The Eye!

"BUNTER!"

Aubrey Angel almost hissed that name.

He was leaning on his study table, gasping. He had not yet recovered—he had far from recovered—from that emphatic booting, when Billy Bunter blinked into his study.

His eyes gleamed at the fat fatuous face of the Owl of the Remove.

It was Bunter who was the cause of all this—it was on Bunter's account that the Famous Five had paid him that visit. Aubrey was glad to see Bunter!

He was quite eager to pass that booting on! Bunter had dropped in just in time! Why he had come, Aubrey did not know; but he knew what he was going to get now that he had come!

Bunter rolled in unsuspectingly.

"I say, old chap—anything happened?" he asked as he observed Aubrey's untidy and gasping state.

"Yes!" said Angel, between his teeth. "Shut the door, Bunter."

Bunter shut the door; and Aubrey glanced round for a walking-stick.

Bunter blinked at him again.

"I say, old chap, you look as if you've been through it—he, he, he! But I say, I've come about my sweepstake ticket! Those beasts made me chuck it into the fire! Awful check, you know, considering the kind of fellows they are, now it's come out! But they did—and I want another, see?"

"I see!" assented Angel. "I'm glad you've come, Bunter! I don't think you'll butt into this study again after what you're goin' to get this time."

"Eh! I say—wharrer you up to?" exclaimed Bunter in alarm as the sportsman of the Fourth jumped at him and grasped him by the collar. "I say, leggo—I say, have you gone off your rocker? Leggo!"

Angel of the Fourth did not let go! He gripped Bunter's collar with his left hand in an iron grip. The walking-cane was in his right.

He swung the fat Owl towards the armchair, face down! Then the cane rose and fell.

Swish, swish, swish!

Bunter, in surprise and rage, roared and kicked.

What was the matter with the beast was quite a mystery to Bunter.

Angel had been civil enough the previous day when Bunter had come along with his collection of stamps. All was grist that came to Aubrey's mill; and Bunter's shilling was as good as anybody's. But Aubrey's civility had quite departed now. He grabbed Bunter almost like a tiger grabbing its prey.

Swish, swish, swish!

"Ow! Leggo! Leave off!" roared Bunter, as the cane swished and swished. "I say, I came here to—yarooop! I came to say—Leave off, you beast! Wow!"

Swish, swish, swish!

Bunter was the unintentional cause of that booting; but that was not Aubrey's only reason. Aubrey wanted to wreak his rage on somebody—and Bunter came in handy.

It was open to him, if he liked, to call the Famous Five to account, and to have the gloves on with any member of the Co.—or all of them, one after another. But he did not like. Aubrey was not looking for scraps.

Bunter was an easy victim—and Bunter got it!

Swish, swish, swish!

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Swish, swish!

"Yoo-hooooo!"

Aubrey laid it on as if he were beating a carpet. Bunter roared, and howled and struggled and kicked and wriggled like a fat eel.

But it booted not. Aubrey laid it on harder and harder. Aubrey was deriving solace from this—though Bunter assuredly was not! He swished and swished and swished. The fat junior

was helpless in his grip and he had to have it.

The cane swished and swished till Aubrey's arm was tired; then, panting for breath, he released the fat Owl's collar.

"Now get, you—you fat rotter!" he panted. He threw the cane into a corner and pointed to the door.

"Yow-ow-ow!" roared Bunter, as he wriggled out of the armchair. "Owl Beast! Bully! Rotter! Swab! Wow!"

"Get out of my study!"

"Owl Beast! Wow!"

"Are you waiting to be booted out, you fat frog?" asked Aubrey. "By gad, I'll boot you to the end of the passage!"

He came at Bunter again, and the fat Owl dodged for the door.

A boot landed on his tight trousers as he went, and landed again as he fumbled with the door-handle.

The worm, according to the proverb, will turn. Bunter turned. He was not thinking so much of vengeance as of stopping that boot from crashing on him while he got the door open. He hit out wildly.

Aubrey was not expecting that.

Not expecting it, he got it by surprise. A fat fist, with all Bunter's ample weight behind it, landed in his eye.

Aubrey Angel went over backwards as if he had been shot.

Bunter gave him one blink.

Angel was on his back, spluttering. He was not likely to remain there long. What he would do when he got up Bunter did not need telling. Bunter did not wait for him to do it.

He got that door open and fairly whizzed into the passage. He did the passage like a streak of greased lightning.

Bunter vanished, in deadly fear of pursuit, while Aubrey Angel was scrambling to his feet, a hand to his eye.

But there was no pursuit. That knock in the eye had given the dandy of the Fourth something else to think about.

Aubrey pressed his hand to his eye. He knew, with a thrill of horror, that it was swelling and darkening. In utter, overwhelming dismay, he realised that he was going to have a black eye.

Aubrey was fearfully particular about his appearance. He disliked a speck of dust on his well-cut jacket. A spot of grease on his trousers was a real pain to him. And now he was going to have a black eye!

He gazed at it in the glass, forgetful of Bunter. It was darkening already. It was going to be black—black as the ace of spades!

When his studymate Kenney came in, later, he found Aubrey bathing his eye. He bathed it in vain!

"What——" began Kenney, staring.

Aubrey lifted a streaming face, from which one eye seemed to leap to his studymate's eyes.

"Oh scissors!" ejaculated Kenney.

"Does it look very bad?" asked Aubrey huskily.

"Frightful!" said Kenney.

Aubrey resumed bathing his eye.

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter, Too!

"If we hadn't——" began Johnny Bull.

Johnny did not finish that remark.

His friends were looking quite dangerous.

It was Saturday afternoon—a fine,

frosty day. There was no football for five members of the Remove that afternoon.

Their impots, heavy as they were, had been got through somehow and handed in. The half-holiday's detention remained to be got through before they were done with the result of that wretched adventure in Cross Keys Lane.

It was really unnecessary for Johnny to rub it in. Only too well had the Co. realised the unwisdom of having taken that short cut. It is not uncommon for a short cut to prove the longest way round, but never, probably, had a short cut ever caused so much trouble before.

Nobody else was in detention that afternoon. The Famous Five had the Form-room to themselves. Mr. Quelch kindly set them a detention task and left them to it. They sat down dismally to that task.

Detention was from two till five. They did not expect to be interrupted till Mr. Quelch came to collect the papers at five o'clock. But it was only a little after three when the Form-room door opened, and they looked up.

They beheld a fat face and a big pair of spectacles.

They stared at Bunter.

In the dismal solitude of the Form-room in detention any interruption was welcome; they were almost glad to see even Bunter. But they wondered why he had barged in. It was, of course, strictly forbidden for any fellow to speak to fellows under detention—and Bunter really was not the man to run risks for the sake of giving them a cheery word or two.

Bunter blinked in, then he rolled in, and carefully shut the door after him. He did not want to be spotted there.

"I say, you fellows——" he began.

"Better not let Quelch spot you here, fatty!" said Bob Cherry.

"That's all right," said Bunter. "Nobody saw me coming here, and I shan't stay long. But, I say, you fellows, it was at two o'clock."

"What was?"

"The Wapshot Cup."

"The Wapshot Cup!" repeated Harry Wharton blankly. He had quite forgotten about Aubrey Angel's sweepstake and Bunter's share therein.

"It's run now," said Bunter. "But, as you know, you fellows polished off my ticket. Angel won't give me another. He was cheeky about it when I saw him in his study, and I knocked the fellow down—gave him a black eye. He, he, he! I've barred him since."

At which the Famous Five grinned.

Bunter had been barring Aubrey Angel very carefully and sedulously since the episode in the Fourth Form study. Since that episode Aubrey never saw him without kicking him—and often looked for him specially with that purpose in mind. Bunter had had a lot of dodging to do; he did not find it very easy to bar the enraged and black-eyed Aubrey.

"I decline to have anything to do with the fellow," continued Bunter. "If he's cheeky again I'll jolly well give him another black eye to match. He, he, he! But I bar him—definitely!"

"Bar us, too, like a good chap!" suggested Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry! Look here, suppose Blarney's won, how do I get on without my ticket?" asked Bunter.

"That's what I want to speak to you fellows about. I want you to see fair play. As sportsmen yourselves——"

"You fat ass!"

"I expect you to see fair play. If I win that sweep I shall have a pot of money. I shouldn't mind lending you fellows some, if you're hard up, if you

want another flutter. In fact, I was thinking of asking you to put something on for me with Bill Lodgey next time you go to the Cross Keys."

"See that door?" asked Bob.

"Eh?" Bunter blinked round.

"Yes. What about it?"

"Get on the other side of it!"

"I say, talk sense!" said Bunter peevishly. "This matter can't wait! If Blarney's won I stand to handle a pot of money, and I rely on you fellows as pals to see that I get it. Well, I want to know, of course. They'll know at the Cross Keys by this time, won't they?"

Bunter blinked inquiringly at the Famous Five. Evidently he supposed that they were well up in the manners and customs at the Cross Keys.

"I mean to say, they get that sort of thing on the phone," said Bunter. "Don't they? You'd know."

"You unspeakable idiot——"

"Oh, really, Wharton! What I mean is, I could bag a phone and ask them," explained Bunter. "What's their number?"

"Their number?" gasped Harry.

"I suppose you know."

"You—you—you suppose we know!" gasped Wharton.

"Well, Smithy does, but the beast kicked me when I asked him——"

"Good! We'll do the same!"

"Look here, don't be an ass! Angel knows, but I can't ask him; as I said, I'm barring that Fourth Form cad! I don't want to be hunting out numbers in a telephone directory in a beak's study. You might tell a chap!"

"You uninitiated idiot——"

"I mean, I want to get through quick if I dodge into a beak's study to use the phone," said Bunter impatiently. "What's the number of the Cross Keys? I suppose you've rung them up a good many times. I know Smithy has; and I suppose you fellows have, now it's come out about you hanging about the place and all that!"

"We can expect that sort of thing!" snorted Johnny Bull. "We've asked for it! If we hadn't taken that short cut we——"

"Shut up!" roared his four friends.

"Yes, shut up, old chap!" said Bunter. "I haven't come here to jaw! I just want that telephone number, so that I can speak to Lodgey. He doesn't know me, but I suppose I can mention your name, Wharton?"

"Mine!" gasped Harry.

"I mean, Lodgey will want to know who's speaking, and I can say it's a friend of a chap he knows—see?"

Harry Wharton had a Latin dictionary on his desk to assist him in dealing with his detention task. He now picked it up to assist him in dealing with the fat sportsman of the Remove.

Bang!

"Whoop!" roared Bunter, as the dictionary smote.

Bump!

Bunter sat down suddenly.

"Ow, ow! Yow! Oh! Wow!" roared Bunter. "Oh crikey! Why, you beast, I'll——"

The Form-room door reopened. This time it was a tall and angular figure that stepped in. A pair of gimlet eyes fixed on the fat Owl.

"Bunter!" said a deep voice.

"Oh crikey!"

Billy Bunter scrambled to his feet, and blinked in dismay at his Form-master. Evidently his surreptitious visit to the fellows in detention had not been so unobserved as he had happily supposed.

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"What are you doing here, Bunter?" inquired Mr. Quelch.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "Nothing, sir!"

"You are well aware, Bunter, that no boy is allowed to enter a Form-room where boys are in detention!" said Mr. Quelch grimly. "As you have chosen to come here, Bunter, you will remain here!"

"Oh! I say, sir——"

"You need say nothing, Bunter! You will go to your desk, and I shall set you a Latin paper! You will remain here with the others till five o'clock!"

"Oh lor'!"

Five fellows smiled. One fellow did not. When Mr. Quelch left the Form-room, leaving Billy Bunter with a Latin paper to keep him occupied till five o'clock, the fat Owl looked as if he was understudying that ancient king who never smiled again.

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

### Luck For Mr. Squidge!

**A**UBREY ANGEL stopped, with a sudden throb at his heart, and glanced quickly over his shoulder.

It was very dark, and there was a drizzle of rain. From the clock tower of Greyfriars the half-hour had chimed; it was half-past eleven.

At that hour the whole school slept; the latest master had gone to bed; all lights were out; not a single window glimmered.

And at that hour the sportsman of the Fourth Form was coming back from an excursion out of bounds—not for the first time by many a one.

Aubrey was not looking or feeling good-tempered as he trod through the darkness and drizzle of the winter night.

His eye was still a beautiful black, which was very worrying and troublesome to the dandy of the Fourth. But he was not at the moment thinking of the black eye with which Bunter had presented him. Other worries and troubles had accrued.

He had crept out of bounds that night with several pounds in his pocket. He was returning with a few shillings. He had seen a few sporting friends at the Three Fishers, up the river; and there had been banker, and Aubrey's several pounds had been left with his sporting friends.

Aubrey had rather doubted whether he would keep his appointment at the Three Fishers that night, in view of the black eye; he did not like being seen with a black eye, even by the disreputable crew at the Three Fishers. But the urge of blackguardism had been too strong to resist, and he had gone.

Now he wished that that black eye had kept him in.

He had lost nearly all his cash; his head was aching from a close, thick, and smoky atmosphere; his mouth was dry and foul from the cigarettes he had smoked. It had come on to rain; he was damp and tired, and there was still the climb in over the wall to be negotiated; the clamber in at the window he had left unfastened for his return; the stealing on tiptoe back to his dormitory, and the risk of discovery all the time. And, to add to his general discomfort, he had a feeling that he was followed.

Several times, as he trod on his way back to the school, he had heard a sound behind him—a splash in a puddle or the snapping of a twig—and several

times he had glanced uneasily back and seen nothing but darkness and rain.

Now, as he reached the school wall, he heard a sound again, and again he looked back, with a beating heart.

Outside the walls of Greyfriars he had not much fear of being spotted by masters or prefects at such an hour of the night. But at such an hour tramps and perhaps footpads were abroad, and it would not have been a light matter to run into some hulking ruffian at half-past eleven.

He was almost sure that he was followed; and if that were the case he supposed that it could only be by some night-prowling ruffian, who judged by his clothes that he was worth robbing.

However, he saw no one; and in another minute he would be safe within the wall—safe from tramps and footpads, if not from masters and prefects.

At that spot—well known to breakers of bounds—there was ivy on the wall that gave hand-hold, and certain crevices in the old stone that gave foothold to an active fellow. Angel of the Fourth swung himself up, and got his elbows on the top.

He was about to swing himself bodily up when a suppressed shriek of terror broke from him as he felt a sudden grip on his ankle.

He had feared and dreaded some lurking figure in the dark; now he knew that one was there. He had not been mistaken; he had been followed and watched, though why the man who had grabbed him had waited till he was half over the school wall was a mystery.

He clung desperately, panting. In spite of himself, in spite of the need of caution, a cry broke from his lips.

"Old your row, you young idiot!" said a voice from below. "I ain't going to 'urt yer—not Tommy Squidge ain't!"

"Let go!" panted Angel. "Oh, let go!"

"Git down!"

"I—I—I— Oh, let go!"

A jerk of his leg settled the matter. Angel was jerked off the wall, and then Mr. Squidge let go.

Angel tottered against the wall, his heart thumping, and the oily face of Mr. Squidge was thrust close to his, the foxy eyes peering at him.

"Ho!" said Mr. Squidge. "You ain't one of that lot!"

Mr. Squidge was thinking of the five juniors he had seen at the Cross Keys a few days ago who had left him to wriggle out of a ditch. Had Angel been one of "that lot," alone at Mr. Squidge's mercy at that late hour, it was probable that he would have felt the weight of Squidge's knuckles.

As it was, Mr. Squidge only grinned at the sight of Aubrey's black eye, and drew back his oily face.

Angel, of course, did not know to what or whom his remark referred. He had heard that someone had reported to the headmaster having seen Harry Wharton & Co. out of bounds, but he did not know that that someone was the oily rascal now leering at him. He fancied, from Squidge's words, that the dingy rascal had followed him in mistake for somebody else.

"What do you want?" he panted. "You—you startled me!"

"Mebbe I did!" grinned Mr. Squidge. "Yes, I fancy I did. You belong to this 'ere school—me seeing you gitting over the wall—what?"

Angel peered at him. The man was not a footpad, apparently; it did not seem that robbery was his object. He looked like a disreputable racing man. It seemed that he had waited, before revealing himself, till Angel climbed

the school wall to ascertain by that action that he belonged to Greyfriars—why, the Fourth Form sportsman could not guess.

"Yes," breathed Angel. "What—what do you want?"

"This 'ere," said Mr. Squidge, "is a bit of luck! Mebbe I've been keeping an eye open to see whether some young rips what ducked a man in a ditch was up to their tricks ag'in. I copped 'em once, and mebbe I thought I'd cop 'em again. I've copped you!"

Angel stared blankly at the dingy, grinning rascal. He could not make out Mr. Squidge's object at all.

But the oily man soon made it clear.

"You're one of the same sort!" he went on. "I fancy your schoolmaster don't know you walks out at this time o' night—what? What's it worth to you to get over that there wall?"

"Wha-at?" stammered Aubrey.

"Think I don't know what would 'appen to you if I rung the bell at the gate and handed you over, with my 'and on your collar?" asked Mr. Squidge.

Angel caught his breath, and his face whitened with sheer terror. He knew only too well what would happen to him if the oily man took any such step. What would happen would be the sentence of expulsion and a morning train home.

"You—you—you wouldn't!" he stammered. "You wouldn't! Why should you? I've never done you any harm."

"Course I wouldn't," said Mr. Squidge—"not if you do the 'andsome thing, at any rate! Make it a fi'pun note, and call it a day!"

Then Aubrey understood.

The rascal had, apparently, supposed or suspected that he was some other fellow; but any Greyfriars man out of bounds late at night was game for him. This was blackmail!

"You look," said Mr. Squidge, "as if fi'pun ain't a lot to you—wet?"

"I—I—I haven't got anything of the sort!" panted Aubrey. "I've got five shillings. You can have that if you leave me alone."

"And the rest to foller?" grinned Mr. Squidge.

"No. You see, I—I——"

"Come along to the gate!" said Mr. Squidge, laying a greasy hand on Aubrey's shoulder.

The wretched junior shrank back against the wall.

"N-no!" he breathed. "I—I—I'll manage it somehow! I—I'll send you the money!"

Aubrey Angel would have promised anything at that moment to get clear of this horrible man and get safe within the walls of the school. He had little prospect of raising five pounds to send to Mr. Squidge, but the pressing matter was to get clear of him.

"Name?" said the oily man, peering at him, as if to register Aubrey's face—black eye and all—on his memory.

Angel did not answer. If he got clear he certainly did not want to leave this blackmailing rascal in possession of his name.

"You giving me your name?" asked Squidge, with a threatening look. "You fancy I'd trust you without knowing your name, young feller-me-lad? Not Tommy Squidge!"

Aubrey panted.

"Wharton," he breathed—"Harry Wharton!"

He had to give a name. He was not going to give his own.

Harry Wharton's name came readily to his tongue for two good reasons. Harry Wharton had brought his friends to Angel's study to administer a booting, and Harry Wharton was talked



Swish, swish, swish! Aubrey Angel laid the cane on as if he were beating a carpet. Bunter roared, howled, struggled, kicked and wriggled like a fat eel. But it booted not! "Yow-ow-ow-ow!" roared Bunter. "Ow! Beast! Rotter! Swab! Wow!"

about as a fellow who had been snaffled at the Cross Keys. If there was any disagreeable outcome of this midnight meeting outside the school walls, Wharton could have the benefit of it.

"Wharton," repeated Mr. Squidge—"Harry Wharton. All right! What Form are you in?"

"The Remove!" breathed Angel.

"The what? What's that?"

"The Lower Fourth Form."

"Ho! Who's your schoolmaster?" asked Mr. Squidge, no doubt meaning Form-master.

"Mr. Quelch!"

"I seen 'im," said Mr. Squidge. "Covey pointed 'im out to me t'other day—not the sort of old bloke to go easy with a game like this 'ere, on his looks."

"Oh, no!" breathed Aubrey.

"And over that five bob!"

Aubrey handed it over.

"Now," said Mr. Squidge, with an oily leer, "you can 'op it, Master Wharton. But chew over this! F'pun has got to get to T. Squidge, Esq., at the Cross Keys, not later'n Monday artemoon! If I don't touch that fiver there's going to be trouble for you, Master Wharton, at your school! Got that?"

"Yes!" breathed Aubrey.

"Chew on it!" said Mr. Squidge. "Now I'll give you a bunk up, if you like, Mr. 'Arry Wharton!"

A minute more, and Angel of the Fourth dropped safe on the inner side of the school wall. Five minutes more, and he was creeping into a sleeping dormitory, still trembling.

It was likely to be a long time before the festive Aubrey broke out again after lights out. Breaking bounds at night seemed to have lost its attraction for the bad hat of the Fourth.

## THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Quite A Surprise!

"NICE sort of chap you are, ain't you?" said Billy Bunter.

This question, it was clear, was in the sarcastic vein.

It did not mean that Billy Bunter thought that Harry Wharton was a nice chap; it meant that he thought he wasn't!

Bunter propounded that query in the Rag after class on Tuesday.

Bunter had been out of gates after class. Now he had rolled in, and he blinked round the Rag when he entered that apartment in search of the captain of the Remove. Having spotted him, he rolled up to him, and asked him that sarcastic and surprising question.

Harry Wharton was talking football with six or seven other Remove fellows. Bunter interrupted the football jaw.

He fixed his eyes and his spectacles on the captain of the Remove with a look of ineffable scorn. His fat lip curled. He turned up his nose—an easy task, as Nature had started it well on the way.

The whole aspect of the fat Owl registered scorn and contempt. It expressed so much scorn and so much contempt that the captain of the Remove ought really to have been withered on the spot.

He was not, however, withered. Overwhelming scorn and contempt from Bunter did not make him turn a hair. He simply stared.

"Nice sort of chap?" he repeated.

"Yes. You're a nice sort of chap, and no mistake!" declared Bunter, still registering scorn and sarcasm.

"Quite!" agreed Wharton, with a nod. "Sorry I can't say the same of you, fatty! Now shut up!"

"I say, you fellows!" Bunter blinked round at a dozen staring faces. "What do you think of him? That's the fellow"—Bunter pointed a fat, accusing, dramatic forefinger, rather in need of a nailbrush, at the captain of the Remove—"that's the fellow who made me chuck a sweepstake ticket into the fire, making out that he was down on such things!"

"Guilty!" admitted Wharton.

"That's the fellow who made out that he didn't know the phone number at the Cross Keys when I asked him last Saturday!" pursued Bunter.

"Guilty again!" said Harry. "Now shut up!"

"That's the fellow," continued Bunter, evidently thinking of anything but shutting up, "who made out that he was taking a short cut when he was copped at a pub—"

"Turn round!" said Harry, drawing back his foot.

Bunter did not turn round. He backed out of reach. But his aspect of overwhelming scorn and contempt continued unabated.

"Well," went on Bunter, "what do you fellows think now? I've got a letter for him—and from whom do you think?"

"A letter for me?" repeated Harry. "What do you mean, you fat frump?"

"I mean what I say!" retorted Bunter. "I was stopped in Friardale Lane, and a man asked me to hand you a letter. If you fellows had seen that man," added Bunter impressively, "you'd know the sort of pals that Wharton has outside the school! Beery, bookmaking rotter—the very last word!"

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"What the thump—" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Is that fat idiot wandering in his silly mind?" asked Frank Nugent.

Harry Wharton set his lips.

"I don't know what that fool's talking about," he said; "but I know I'm going to boot him for it!"

"Here, you keep off, you beast!" roared Bunter, dodging behind Vernon-Smith. "You kick me, you beast, and I'll jolly well take the letter to Quelch! How would you like that?"

"You fat, footling, frabjous fat-head!" roared Wharton. "If you've got a letter, you can take it to Quelch, or the Head, or to Jericho!"

"Well, I'm not the fellow to get a pal sacked!" said Bunter. "I ain't going to give you away, of course. But I must say I'm disgusted! Making out that a chap can't have a flutter in a sweepstake, chucking my ticket into the fire—not that it matters very much now, as Blarney never ran, but, all the same, making out that you turn up your nose at a fellow, and then getting copped at pubs, and getting letters from boozy hooligans—"

"Hold on, old bean!" said Bob, catching Wharton's arm as he was making a stride at the fat Owl. "Let's find out what this means, if it means anything. Has somebody given you a letter for Wharton, you fat chump?"

"Boozy-looking blighter!" said Bunter. "Beast I wouldn't touch with a barge-pole. Nasty, oily looking brute! He asked me if I knew Mr. Wharton, and I said I did, and he said will I take him this note. So I said I would."

Every fellow in the Rag was gathering round now. Skinner was specially interested, not having forgotten the crack of his head against Snoop's. This looked like good news for Skinner.

"Who was the man, Bunter?" asked Skinner.

"Never seen him before," answered Bunter. "Low sort of rotter—greasy beast! He knows Wharton all right! Not the sort of friend that could call on him here! He, he, he! I can fancy Quelch's face if he saw him!"

"Sounds nice!" remarked the Bounder, with a grin. "Who's the man, Wharton?"

"How should I know?" snapped Harry. "I suppose Bunter's inventing all this. No such man would send a note to me; more likely to send it to you, Vernon-Smith! You know that kind—I don't!"

"One for your nob, Smithy!" grinned Bob Cherry.

Smithy shrugged his shoulders.

"Whether I know that kind or not, I take jolly good care that they don't send me notes at the school!" he said. "I'd advise you to be as careful, Wharton!"

"I'll take your advice, when I begin haunting pubs in your style!" snapped the captain of the Remove.

"Haven't you begun?" jeered the Bounder.

Harry Wharton clenched his hands.

"Oh, shut up, Smithy!" exclaimed Bob. "Let's have this out! Bunter must be making it all up—"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"If you've got a note for Wharton, cough it up, you fat, frowsy fraud!"

"He hasn't!" snapped Harry.

"Haven't I?" hooted Bunter. "Look here, then!"

The fat Owl jerked an envelope from his trousers pocket. It was a crumpled, soiled envelope, and a stray aniseed ball was sticking to it—doubtless collected in Bunter's pocket. On

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the envelope was written, in a scrawling hand:

"Mister Harry Wharton,  
"Greyfriars School."

All eyes fixed on it. And Harry Wharton, in blank astonishment, took it from the fat paw, jerked it open, and drew out the letter inside.

Every fellow watched him as he looked at it. Some of them were grinning; the Bounder was sneering; all were keenly interested. Utter astonishment gathered in Harry Wharton's face as he read.

The letter was scrawled on grubby notepaper in a sprawling hand he had never seen before, and it ran:

"I ain't had that fiver yet, Mister Harry Wharton. You better hike it along quick, if you don't want your schoolmaster to know where you was Saturday night."

There was no signature. Mr. Squidge, no doubt, was too cautious to sign his name to a blackmailing letter.

From whom it came, and what it could possibly mean, was an utter mystery to the captain of the Greyfriars Remove. He stood with the letter in his hand, staring at it, while the whole crowd in the Rag watched him breathlessly.

## THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Solving The Mystery!

HARRY WHARTON stood dumb. He had never been so astonished in his life.

He had, of course, no idea that Angel of the Fourth had been out of bounds on Saturday night, and that the wary Aubrey had given a false name to a rascal who had spotted him outside the walls. He was not thinking of Aubrey Angel, and he had almost forgotten the existence of Mr. Squidge.

He stared at that startling letter. There were very curious looks on all faces round him.

Wharton looked up from the letter at last with a flushed and angry face.

"Who gave you this, Bunter?" he rapped.

"Pal of yours!" jeered the scornful fat Owl. "Nice sort of fellow you are, ain't you, with such pals?"

"You fat fool! Did anyone give it to you, or is this your idea of a joke?"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"But what the thump—" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What's it all about?"

"You can look at it," said Harry, throwing the letter on the table. "Any fellow who likes can look at it. It's nothing to do with me."

There was quite a rush to look at that mysterious missive. Its contents caused a buzz.

"Who—" ejaculated Johnny Bull.

"What—" gasped Nugent.

"I say, you fellows, Wharton owes that man a fiver," grinned Billy Bunter. "I say, fancy that! He, he, he!"

"Well, if I'd had a note like that, I'd have kept it dack," said Skinner. "What's the big idea in telling the world, Wharton?"

"Don't you mind everybody knowing?" asked Snoop.

Harry Wharton's eyes gleamed.

"I know nothing about that letter, or who has written it," he said, clearly and distinctly. "I owe nobody five pounds, or anything else. And on Saturday night, I don't mind every-

body knowing where I was. I haven't the foggiest idea what it means: unless that fat idiot has got it up for an idiotic joke."

"You have had a letter from somebody, you don't know, about something you know nothing about?" asked the Bounder, with a wink at the other fellows.

"Exactly!"

"Oh, great pip!"

"I say, you fellows, he makes out that I tell crammers!" squeaked Bunter. "Now listen to him!"

The whole crowd stared at the captain of the Remove. Even his own chums gazed at him, dumbfounded.

The way Smithy put it made it seem quite incredible. That a man Wharton did not know had sent him a note referring to some matter he had never heard of, undoubtedly sounded very steep.

Wharton's face reddened till it was crimson. There was wonder in all faces, doubt in many, mockery in some. He breathed hard.

"I've said that I know nothing about that letter, or the fool who has written it!" he said. "Any fellow who doubts my word, needn't speak to me again."

"You want to be sent to Coventry by the whole Form?" asked Skinner.

Wharton gave him a look.

"Have you had a hand in this, Skinner?" he asked, between his teeth. Skinner jumped.

"I! What do you mean?" he stammered.

"You've been making the most of that silly gabble about us taking a short cut at the Cross Keys last week. Now this happens. Bunter hasn't sense enough to think of such a rotten trick, but you have! Did you write that letter, and get that fat fool to pretend that it was given to him?"

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Skinner. "Hardly!"

"A man gave it to me in Friardale Lane!" yelled Bunter. "A racing man of some sort. Awful-looking rotter!"

"If that's true, he never gave it to you for me," said Harry.

"Ain't your name on it?" yelled Bunter. "Is there another chap here of the same name?"

"Is there?" grinned the Bounder.

Wharton was silent. He was the only Wharton at Greyfriars. There were three Smiths, and a couple of Browns, and some fellows had minors. There was a Bunter minor, a Nugent minor, a Bolsover minor. But Wharton had no minor. And there was no other fellow of that name in the school. If a letter arrived for anyone named Wharton, it was meant for the captain of the Remove, and for no one else.

"There's the name on the envelope, and in the letter," said Hazeldene. "It's for you, old bean, if it's for anybody."

"Oh, it's all right!" said the Bounder satirically. "A perfect stranger has written to Wharton, to remind him about the fiver that Wharton doesn't owe him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can shut up, Smithy!" growled Bob Cherry. "But what the thump does this mean, Harry?"

"How should I know?"

"Oh!"

"I've said that I know nothing about it. That letter must have been written by some lunatic, unless it's a rotten trick of some cad here!"

"Not guilty, my lord!" grinned Skinner.

Harry Wharton looked at him. In his utter puzzlement, it seemed to him

that this might be some trick of Skinner's, to keep the Cross Keys story alive. Skinner was as full of malicious tricks as a monkey. And he did not like having his head banged, even when he asked for it.

"Skinner wouldn't," said Bob.  
"Wouldn't he play any rotten trick?" said Wharton scornfully. "Didn't he fix up a spoof letter once to make a row between Smithy and Redwing?"

"By gad, he did!" said the Bounder, with a sudden change of expression. "By gad, so he did!"

"I remember he did," said Tom Redwing, very quietly.

"That's it," said Frank Nugent, with a deep breath of relief. "It's one of Skinner's monkey-tricks, and he's got that fat ass to help him!"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"  
"Is that it, Skinner, you rotter?" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"No!" yelled Skinner, quite alarmed now. "Nothing of the kind! Think you're going to put it on me, Wharton, now it's all come out? I never knew anything about it till Bunter brought it in."

"It was a man in Friardale Lane!" yelled Bunter.

"Well, if it was, you shouldn't have taken a letter from such a man," said Harry, "and you shouldn't have brought it into the school. But I don't believe a word of it!"

"Look here—"  
"It looks to me," said Harry, "as if Skinner fixed this up—it's exactly his idea of a joke—and that you lent a hand."

"I tell you—" yelled Skinner.  
"I tell you—" howled Bunter.

"You can tell me what you like, till you're black in the face," said Harry, "and I shan't believe a word of it! I'm going to boot you, Bunter—"

"Why, you beast—"  
"And I'm going to punch your head, Skinner—"

"Look here—"  
Billy Bunter made a rapid strategic movement towards the door. Harry Wharton's boot shot out, and helped him on his way. Bunter disappeared with a yell.

Then there were yells in the Rag as the captain of the Remove proceeded to punch Skinner's head! Skinner was not long in following Bunter.

Bob Cherry threw the offending letter into the fire. After which, the interrupted "football jaw" was resumed—though not so cheerfully as before.

Harry Wharton was satisfied that he had solved what looked, at first, like an insoluble mystery. Other fellows were not quite so satisfied. There was doubt in a good many minds—and that evening a good many Remove fellows were asking one another if they knew where Wharton had been on Saturday night!

## THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Smithy Means Well!

**H**ERBERT VERNON - SMITH strolled into Study No. 1 at tea-time the following day.

The Famous Five were all there at tea.

There was a rather peculiar expression on the Bounder's face that drew the attention of all the five at once.

"Got a minute to spare, Wharton?" he asked.

"Two, if you like," answered Harry, with a curious look at him. "If it's about footer—"

"It isn't!"  
"Well, fire away, anyhow!"

The Bounder did not "fire away" immediately. He paused.

"Come to my study," he said, at last. "That," remarked Bob Cherry, "means that it's fearfully private! Is Smithy going to give you a tip for the Swindlem Handicap, old bean?"

Harry Wharton's face set a little.

"You've got something to say to me, Smithy?" he asked.

"Yes."  
"Something for these fellows not to hear?"

"Well, yes, if you put it like that."

"Then you can say it here before all of them, or keep it to yourself!" said the captain of the Remove tartly. "I've no secrets with you, and I'm not going to have any."

"Hoity-toity!" said the Bounder. "Keep your wool on, old bean! We're not exactly pals, but I've come here as a friend."

"Get on with it, then—I've no secrets from these fellows!"

"Perhaps not!" grinned Smithy. "They were all with you when you took that jolly old short cut, I remember."

Five fellows rose to their feet.

"If that's the topic, the sooner you clear, the better," said Bob. "Nobody here wants to hear any more about that."

The Bounder did not heed. He shut the door behind him, evidently so that no one in the passage should hear what was said.

"I've told you I've come here as a friend," he said quietly, "and if you're in a hole I'm willing to help. If you're stumped for five pounds, I'd see you through, sooner than see you sacked, Wharton."

"Thank you for nothing!" snapped the captain of the Remove. "I should be stumped for five pounds if I wanted such a sum, certainly—but as it happens I don't! And if any man in the Remove is in danger of the sack, it isn't me!"

"Hold on!" said Bob. "What do you mean, Smithy? You don't generally walk round offering fellows fivers, though you've always got a few."

The Bounder laughed.

"No!" he said. "I don't! But if a silly ass has landed himself in a hole, I don't mind lending a hand to hook him out."

"Am I the silly ass?" asked Harry.

"You've got it."

"I suppose you mean this in a friendly way, as you say so," said Harry, suppressing his anger, "but what you say can only mean that you think that letter yesterday was genuine, though you know it was only a trick of Skinner's."

"I know now that it wasn't!" said the Bounder quietly.

"And how do you know that?"

"Because I've seen the man who gave Bunter the letter for you."

"Oh!" exclaimed Harry, taken quite aback.

"That's why I've come here," said Vernon-Smith. "You carried it off with a high hand in the Rag yesterday; and a lot of fellows believed you had pinned old Skinner down to one of his monkey tricks. I half-believed it myself. I know now that Skinner had nothing to do with it; and Bunter really had a letter given him to bring to you. The proof is, that here's another from the same source."

The Bounder threw a letter on the study table.

All the Famous Five stared at it. It was addressed to Harry Wharton, in the same hand as the previous letter.

Wharton made no movement to touch it. After glancing at it, he fixed his eyes on Herbert Vernon Smith.

"Who gave you that?" he asked.

"A dingy, horsey-looking outsider in Friardale Lane; the man Bunter described to us yesterday!"

"Then there was a man!" said Bob.

"Yes, there was."

"And you let such a man hand you a letter to bring into the school?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Yes," said Smithy quietly. "I let such a man hand me a letter to bring into the school—to keep the man from bringing it into the school himself. If he had done that, it would have been the sack for somebody."

"For me?" exclaimed Harry savagely.

"The letter's addressed to you!" said Vernon-Smith dryly, "and if you'll take a tip, you'll stop that dingy loafer from hanging about the school, just as soon as you can. It won't do you any good if he's seen about Greyfriars."

Wharton's eyes flashed.

"It won't do me any harm as I don't know the man, and have never even seen him!" he snapped.

"He sends you letters!"

"I can't make that out! I thought yesterday that it was one of Skinner's monkey tricks—"

"Well, you don't think that this is one of my monkey tricks, I suppose," sneered the Bounder. "I'm trying to see you clear. If you've got yourself into a hole—"

"You fool, I haven't!"

"If you've got yourself into a hole, I'll stand your friend, and see you through," said the Bounder, unheeding. "Have a little sense, Wharton! You can punch Skinner's head, and shut him up—I suppose you know that you can't punch Quelch's—or the Big Beak's. If you owe that man a fiver, and can't raise it, I'll lend you the money, and you can get shut of him."

Harry Wharton laughed angrily.

"Thank you for nothing, as I said before," he answered.

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

"Have it your own way," he said.

His own temper was rising now. "But you'd better see what the man says before you get on the high horse. There's his letter."

"I'm not curious to see what he says! Take the letter back to him, and tell him I've no use for it!" said Wharton scornfully.

"Oh, don't be a fool!"

"Look here, we'd better see what's in it," said Johnny Bull. "May be able to find out what the fellow thinks he's up to."

"You can open it if you like," said Harry, "I shan't touch it!"

"I will, then!"

Johnny Bull slit open the envelope and drew out a dingy letter, scrawled in the same hand as before. All the juniors looked at it as he unfolded it. It was rather more emphatic than the earlier missive.

"You cheeky young 'ound, you ain't sent that fiver. This is the last time you'll hear from me. If I don't get it to-night your schoolmaster will know in the morning that you was out of your school at 'arf-past eleven Saturday night."

"Good heavens!" breathed Frank Nugent, his face quite pale. "Harry—what does that mean?"

Wharton stared at that letter as if petrified.

The Bounder whistled softly.

"So that's it!" he said. "You don't owe the money—it's blackmail! By gad, you've got landed this time!"

Wharton caught his breath.

"You fellows know where I was Saturday night," he said, his voice a little husky. "I went to the dorm with the rest of you, and never left it again till the morning."

"I—I know! But——"

"But——" stammered Bob.

"That letter doesn't look as if you did!" remarked the Bounder. "Wharton, old man, for goodness' sake don't play the goat now! We're all your friends here, and if you've got snaffled like this, we're all ready to help all we can."

Wharton did not answer him.

"That letter's enough to get the writer sent to prison if it could be proved on him!" said Johnny Bull.

"No danger of that!" said Vernon-Smith. "No address, and no signature. That kind of rotter would deny his own hand, as soon as tell any sort of lie. Very likely it's a disguised hand—black-mailers are wary. You can't touch that brute even if you could afford to make it public. You can't."

"It beats me," said Harry slowly. "beats me hollow! Of course, it's a lie from beginning to end—he never saw me out of bounds on Saturday night, I was fast asleep in the dorm."

The juniors were silent. The letter was that of an unscrupulous rascal, but it proved one thing quite clearly, that the rascal believed, at least, that he had seen Harry Wharton out of bounds, at close on midnight. And why should he believe so, if Wharton had not been out of the school?

The Co. did not know what to think. The Bounder did—or thought he did! He had no doubt, and he was genuinely concerned.

"This is pretty thick," he said slowly. "No good giving the man money—it would only make him want more! I wouldn't give him sixpence! But—if he gives you away to Quelch——" The Bounder whistled again.

Harry Wharton gave him a fierce look.

"There's nothing to give away to Quelch!" he shouted. "If Quelch saw that letter, he would send it to the police."

"Very likely! But he would know that the man had seen you outside the school at half-past eleven last Saturday night."

"I tell you I was in the dorm."

Smithy gave a shrug.

"Not according to this letter," said the Bounder. "The man says he saw you——"

"Believe me or not, as you choose! Where did you leave the man?"

"In Friardale Lane."

"How long ago?"

"Not more than a quarter of an hour."

"Which way was he going?"

"Back towards the village."

"Hurrying?"

"No, loafing."

"That does it!" said Harry Wharton between his teeth. "There's a chance of catching him, and letting him know what I think of his sending me letters like this."

He ran across to the study door.

"Oh gad!" exclaimed the Bounder. "Look here, Wharton——"

Wharton did not heed him. He ran out of the study, and his chums, after a startled look at one another, ran after him.

The Bounder was left staring in astonishment. He was utterly at a loss to know what to think. However, he picked up the letter, and tossed it into the study fire—that, at least, was safer out of existence. Then he left the study—still in a state of great astonishment.

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## THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

### "Six" For Squidge!

**M**R. SQUIDGE, loafing along Friardale Lane, with his hands in his pockets, and a cigarette sticking out of the corner of a loose mouth, was not hurrying in the least.

Every now and then he glanced round, as if in expectation of seeing someone following. He had, in fact, little doubt that his second note would have the effect of bringing his victim to heel.

Mr. Squidge, as a disreputable racing man, had had dealings in his time with fellows at places like Greyfriars, and he did not need telling what it meant to any fellow at such a school to be discovered out of bounds late at night. It meant the sack and he knew it. He could, therefore, hardly understand why the fellow he had "copped" had dared to disregard his first letter. He was fairly sure that the "bad hat" of Greyfriars would not dare disregard the second. Probably he would have been right, had Aubrey Angel given his own name!

That he had not done so, Squidge did not suspect—being, like most rogues, as dull-witted as he was dishonest.

He thought it quite likely that the "bad hat," frightened by the threat in his letter, would come scudding after him, either with the money, or with an excuse and a plea for time. So, when he heard a pattering of running feet in the lane behind him, Mr. Squidge grinned and turned round, nothing doubting that it was his victim arriving—the fellow with the black eye that he had "copped" under the school wall on Saturday night.

But he did not see that fellow! He was not likely to see that fellow, in point of fact, for Aubrey Angel was keeping very carefully within gates these days, lest he should run by chance into the oily rascal who knew him.

He saw five fellows in a bunch; one a little ahead, running hard, the other four close behind him. Not one of them had a black eye, so not one of them was the fellow he expected to see.

But as they came nearer, he recognised them—the five schoolboys whom he had seen in Cross Keys Lane the week before.

He scowled at them and resumed his walk. It did not occur to him, for the moment, that they were heading for him, or thinking of him. Naturally, he had no idea that his note had gone to the wrong man in the school, and that that wrong man, instead of dreading any disclosure on his part, was only keen to get hold of him and give him a lesson.

He loafed on, expecting the running bunch of schoolboys to pass him and go on their way, wherever that was.

Not till they reached him did he realise that he was their game.

They came on full pelt, and stopped, surrounding him as they stopped. Harry Wharton stood directly in his path, facing him.

"Hold on!" he rapped breathlessly.

Mr. Squidge held on—sulkily and surlily. Then, as they looked at him, the five recognised their old acquaintance of the Cross Keys, whom they had last seen struggling in the ditch.

"You!" exclaimed Harry.

"That rotter!" said Johnny Bull.

"That terrific toad!" exclaimed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"You know me again!" sneered Mr. Squidge. "I 'ope you was whacked by your schoolmaster, you young rips! I told you I'd make it 'ot for you at your school—ducking a covey in a ditch! 'Ands off!"

"Make sure he's the right man, old chap!" said Bob. "Might be some other blackguard gave Smithy that letter."

"We'll make sure!" agreed Wharton, though he had no doubt on the subject—having found Mr. Squidge there, where the Bounder had said that the man who had handed him the letter would be found.

"Ask him!" said Nugent.

"I'm going to, and he's going to answer! Now, my man," said Harry, speaking quietly. "Two letters have been sent into my school, one yesterday, and one to-day. Did you send them?"

"Find out!" retorted Mr. Squidge.

"I'm going to find out! You're going to tell me."

"I ain't going to tell you nothing," asserted Mr. Squidge. "'Tain't any business of yours, that I knows of!"

The chums of the Remove stared at him. As both the letters had been sent to Harry Wharton, it was difficult to understand Mr. Squidge's reply.

"No business of mine?" repeated Harry.

"No, it ain't!"

"Did you send in those letters or not?"

"Find out!" repeated Mr. Squidge.

"That means that you did! I suppose you know that a policeman could be called, to take you into custody for doing such a thing!" said Harry.

Mr. Squidge grinned.

"Come on it!" he answered. "Ow'd you prove it on a covey? And I fancy there's a bloke in your school who'd be in queer street, if there was a row about this 'erc."

"Well," said Harry, with a deep breath, "you've sent two letters—you're not going to send any more."

"Ain't I?" jeered Mr. Squidge. "And oo's going to stop me, if I choose?"

"I think you'll be tired of that game, whatever you mean by it, when we've done with you!" said Harry Wharton.

Now that he had recognised the oily rascal, and knew who had written those startling letters, Wharton thought that he could see light! This was the man who had been pitched into the ditch for his rascality, and he had somehow found out Wharton's name, and was bent on causing him more trouble. That was how it looked to Harry Wharton!

Whether that was correct or not, the man was obviously a rascal, and obviously the letter-sender.

"You're going to have a lesson to keep clear of Greyfriars and Greyfriars fellows!" said Harry. "You might find this sort of game pay, if you got hold of some weak-kneed fellow with shady secrets to keep. You won't find it pay now. Collar that scoundrel, you fellows!"

"'Ands off!" roared Squidge. "You lay a 'and on me, and I'll go straight to your schoolmaster."

"You can please yourself about that," said Harry. "You're going through it now, you rotter, and you're going through it good and hard."

Mr. Squidge made a desperate attempt to dodge away. But there was no dodging away for Mr. Squidge.

The five juniors collared him without ceremony. Mr. Squidge smote Friardale Lane with a heavy bump.

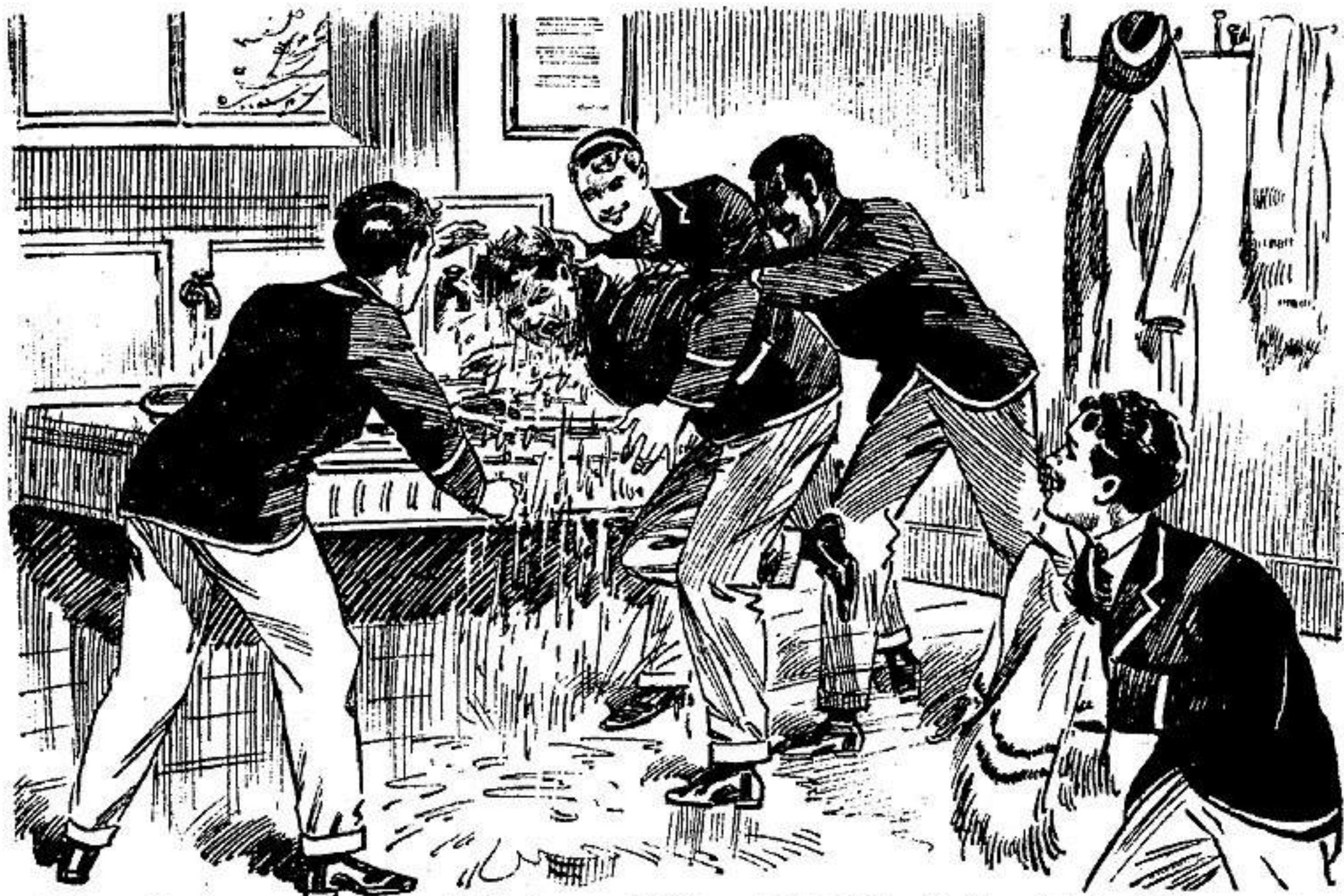
"Get a stick, Bob!" said Harry Wharton.

"You bet!" grinned Bob.

He whipped out his knife and cut a stick from the thicket beside the lane. Harry Wharton gripped it hard.

"Now turn the brute over!" he said.

Mr. Squidge, at the moment, was lying on his back, with a couple of feet on his waistcoat pinning him there. Now



As if moved by the same spring, Johnny Bull's chums grabbed him and ducked his head in the wash-basin. "Woooooooh!" gurgled Bull, lifting a streaming head. "Urrgh! You silly asses—wurrgh!"

he was grasped and bundled over, with his beery features grinding into the mud of the lane.

Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull stood on his legs, and Herree Jamset Ram Singh sat on the back of his head, to keep him in position. Then Harry Wharton wielded the stick, with a heavy hand.

It came down on Mr. Squidge's patched trousers with a terrific swipe. Mr. Squidge's frantie yell startled the cows in the adjoining fields.

Swipe!

"Whooooooo!"

Swipe, swipe, swipe!

The dust rose from Mr. Squidge's trousers. Wild and frantic howls rose from Mr. Squidge. He wriggled wildly.

Swipe!

"Yoo-hoo-hoop!" roared Mr. Squidge.

"Make it six!" grinned Bob.

"I'm going to!"

"You leave off!" yelled Mr. Squidge.

"You 'ear me? Leave off! I know your game, you young rips! You're pals of that covey I copped! I'll make 'im sorry for this 'ere! You mark me."

"Does he really think he copped Wharton out of bounds," exclaimed Nugent, "or is he off his rocker?"

"Don't I know I did?" howled Mr. Squidge. "I'll make him 'op! You mark my words—I'll make 'im 'op!"

"Just at present I'll make you hop!" said Harry grimly, and he delivered the last of the "six"—a swipe that made Mr. Squidge fairly bawl.

Then the wriggling rascal was released.

Harry Wharton tossed the stick over the hedge, and fixed his eyes on the gasping, wriggling rascal, as he sat up.

"That's a tip to steer clear!" he said. "If there's any more notes from you, you rascal, I shall know where they come from, and you'll get some more of the same."

"Ooooh!" gurgled Mr. Squidge.

"There won't be no more notes—there'll be a telephone-call next! Ooooooh!"

"Asking for more?" inquired Bob.

"You jest wait!" gasped the wretched Squidge. "If that young 'ound Wharton ain't kicked out of your school tomorrow, I'll never touch whisky agin! You wait!"

"You must have been touching the whisky, old bean, when you saw Wharton out of bounds on Saturday night!" said Bob, with a grin. "Come on, you chaps, we're in bad company here."

The Famous Five walked back to the school, leaving Mr. Squidge to wriggle on his way. They hoped that they were done with him now.

But that hope was ill-founded! They were far from done with Mr. Squidge.

## THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Accused!

WINGATE of the Sixth looked into the Rag shortly after calling-over.

The captain of Greyfriars had a grave expression on his face as he glanced over the juniors there.

"Wharton here?" he called out.

"Here!" answered Harry.

"You're to go up to Quelch's study at once."

"Right!"

It was not uncommon for the head boy of the Remove to be called in by his Form-master. But the expression on Wingate's face was a little out of the common. His look at the captain of the Remove was very keen.

"Anything up, Wingate?" asked Harry.

"You ought to know," answered the prefect dryly. "Anyhow, you're to go along to Quelch at once. Cat!"

Wingate walked away; leaving the

crowd of fellows in the Rag exchanging glances. They could all see that it was not on account of some duty as head boy that Wharton was sent for.

Wharton compressed his lips. He remembered Mr. Squidge's parting threat of a telephone-call! The same thought was in the minds of his friends, at once.

"By gum!" said Bob. "Has that rotter—"

"Looks like it!" said Harry. "It matters little enough, so far as I can see. Quelch isn't likely to take the word of a rascal like that."

"He did last time!" muttered Bob.

"That was different, ass! He was telling the truth last time, and we owned up to it! Do you think I've got anything to own up to now?"

"No! But—"

"I say, you fellows, think Wharton's been copped at last?" asked Billy Bunter eagerly. "I say, Harry, old chap, have you been copped, do you think?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton did not trouble to answer the fat Owl. He walked out of the Rag, with a rather heightened colour, to obey his Form-master's summons. He left the whole room in a buzz.

"Landed at last!" murmured Skinner.

"Blessed if I can make the fellow out," said Vernon-Smith, quite puzzled. "If that man's given him away, his number is up here."

"There's nothing for that man, or any man, to give away, you fathead!" howled Bob Cherry. "Think Wharton would have given him six on his bags if he had anything to be afraid of?"

"He's got nerve!" grinned Smithy. "A bold game is the best game! That's the line I should have taken."

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"You're a shady sweep—Wharton isn't!" hooted Bob.

The Bouncer laughed.

"Well, if he isn't, let's hope he will be able to make it clear," he said. "It looks to me as if he's got all his work cut out."

Harry Wharton went direct to his Form-master's study. He tapped at the door, and entered; and his first glance at Mr. Quelch apprised him that something very serious was the matter.

He compressed his lips as he stood before the Remove master, and faced the penetrating, gimlet eyes.

"You sent for me, sir!" he said, very quietly.

"Where were you last Saturday night, Wharton?" That question shot from Mr. Quelch like a bullet.

"That depends on the time, sir!" answered Harry. "If you mean after dorm—"

"I mean between eleven o'clock and midnight."

"I was in bed."

"You did not leave your dormitory after lights out?"

"No!"

"I should take your word, without hesitation, Wharton, but for what occurred last week," said Mr. Quelch. "but—"

"I explained that, at the time, sir, and you were satisfied; at least, I believed so."

"I was satisfied, Wharton; but now there is another matter to explain," said Mr. Quelch grimly. "I have received a telephone-call, from the same man who reported you to the headmaster last week. He states that he saw you out of school bounds at a late hour on Saturday night."

"He did nothing of the kind."

"Then why should he make such a statement?"

"That day he saw us at the Cross Keys he asked us for money," answered Harry. "If we had paid him, you would never have received any report from him. We ducked him in the ditch—"

"Wha-a-t?"

"We thought that the best way to deal with a blackmailer, and I still think so!" said Wharton steadily. "I've no doubt that that is why he is playing this game."

"For revengeful motives, do you mean?"

"I can't think of any other motive."

"Indeed! On the former occasion, Wharton, you and your friends were reported to the headmaster, not by name, as the man did not know the names. On this occasion you are reported to me, by name. How does he know your name, unless, as he states, you gave it the night he caught you under the school wall?"

"I don't know! He might have asked somebody."

"On the occasion when, as you say, you ducked him in a ditch, did you act alone, or did your friends take an equal part?"

"We all had a hand in it."

"One as much as another?"

"Yes!"

"Then why should the man single you out for a malicious accusation, when any revengeful feelings he may entertain must be equally directed against four other boys?"

Wharton was silent. That was a puzzle, and he did not know the answer!

"And how," continued Mr. Quelch, in a deeper voice, "did he know not only your name, but mine? How did he know that you were in the Remove, and

that I was your Form-master, unless, as he states, you told him?"

Wharton stood silent.

"Last week," said Mr. Quelch, "this man did not even know your name. Now he knows your name, your Form, and the name of your Form-master. He states that he made you tell him who you were before letting you go on Saturday night. If that statement is untrue, how did he obtain all this information about you?"

"I don't know."

Mr. Quelch sat silent, looking at his head boy.

Wharton's cheeks were burning. He was quite bewildered.

Why should Squidge have singled him out? It was Johnny Bull who had knocked him off the Cross Keys gate; and all the five had taken an equal hand in ducking him and pelting him with snowballs. Harry Wharton realised—he had to realise—that it was not a malicious scheme of revenge that actuated Mr. Squidge. There was no reason why he should have picked out Wharton as the victim of such a scheme—though there was some reason why he should have picked out Johnny Bull!

"Have you nothing more to say?" asked Mr. Quelch, after a long, long pause.

"I don't understand it, sir!" answered Harry, and for the first time his voice faltered. "That rascal has sent two notes to me in the school. I thought it was a silly trick of one of the fellows at first, but when the second note came this afternoon I went out with my friends and collared him to give him a lesson. I suppose that's why he's phoned; he said he would when we left him. But I can't understand why he's picked on me, and—and—"

"And what?" rapped Mr. Quelch sharply.

"Now I come to think of it, I—I think he really believes that he did see me out of bounds on Saturday night. I can't make it out, unless he had been drinking. He looks that sort."

"Do you mean that he must have seen some other boy whom he mistook for you?"

"I—I suppose so, if he believes it at all."

There was another long silence.

"It was dark if he really saw somebody under the school wall late at night," said Harry. "He may have made a mistake. But how he found out my name and Form, and your name—it's no good asking me. I don't know."

Mr. Quelch's eyes had never seemed so like gimlets. They almost bored into the flushed face of his head boy.

"This," he said, "is the second suspicious occurrence within a short period, Wharton. I accepted your explanation last week. Now this has occurred. It is my duty to make the fullest and completest investigation, and to pass the matter on to the headmaster unless you are quite exonerated."

Wharton bit his lip and said nothing.

"If what you have told me is correct, this man is an unscrupulous rogue," continued Mr. Quelch. "Your first contact with him was by your own act in breaking a rule of the school—a rule laid down for the very purpose of keeping boys out of doubtful or dangerous company. You have only yourself to blame if your own act has placed you in a dubious light."

"I—I know."

"It seems improbable to me that this man can have made such a mistake as you suggest, even on a dark night," went on Mr. Quelch. "Neither would such a mistake account for all the circumstances, as you are aware. Rogue

or not, I have no choice but to take note of his explicit statement."

Wharton did not speak.

"I shall, therefore," said Mr. Quelch, "speak to the man on the telephone and request him to come here and verify his statement by picking out the boy of my Form whom he saw on Saturday night. If he positively identifies you as that boy, Wharton, the matter will pass into the headmaster's hands, and Dr. Locke will judge you."

Mr. Quelch made a gesture of dismissal. His head boy, with deep feelings, left the study in silence.

## THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Witness Not Wanted!

"H E'S rather a beast!" said Billy Bunter thoughtfully.

Bunter made that remark in prep.

Neither of his studymates heeded it—Peter Todd because he was deep in prep; Tom Dutton because he did not hear.

"But, after all, a pal's a pal," went on Bunter. "I always was the fellow to stand by a pal, Toddy, as you know."

"Don't jaw, old fat man!"

"He hasn't treated me well," said Bunter, unheeding. "Look at the way he made me chuck away my sweepstake ticket—not that it was any good, as it turned out. I had a row with Angel over that; he's still got the black eye I gave him. He, he, he! Beast all round, you know. Still, if a fellow can see a fellow through—I'm not the man to nurse grudges, Peter. Kindest friend and noblest foe—that's mo all over, isn't it?"

"Park it!"

"Oh, really, Toddy! He's a bad lot!" said Bunter, shaking his head. "I'm a bit rorty myself at times; but going in for pub-haunting and breaking bounds at night and all that—it's rather thick, Toddy. Still, if a fellow's up for the sack I'm the man to stand by him. I say, Toddy, you've heard that the man who copped him is coming here to-morrow to pick him out."

"Yes, ass. Dry up!"

"Well, his number will be up," said Bunter. "All the fellows think that poor old Wharton's number's up. You see, he's got no witnesses that he was in the dorm on Saturday night. Of course, he couldn't—as he wasn't. Still, if he had a witness, I don't see how they could nail him. Suppose a fellow woke up that very night, Toddy, and saw him in bed—sleeping the peaceful, innocent sleep of happy boyhood, and all that, you know."

"Nobody did, fathead!"

Bunter smiled.

"That's all you know!" he answered. "Perhaps a fellow did. If a fellow did, and was ready to say so, the least Wharton could do would be to stand him a study supper. Don't you think so, Toddy?"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Toddy.

"I've been thinking that out, Toddy—"

"Better think of your prep."

"Oh, blow prep!" said Bunter. "When a pal's up against it I'm not the fellow to let him down. I think I'd better trickle along and speak to him now; it will give him time to fix it about supper—I mean, it will relieve his mind."

And Billy Bunter, regardless of prep, rolled out of Study No. 7. He blinked up and down the passage to make sure that the eye of authority was not on him, and rolled along to Study No. 1.

In that study Wharton and Nugent were not, for once, giving much more attention to prep than William George Bunter. Both of them were worried—as were the other members of the Co. They were looking forward to the morrow with anything but happy anticipation.

In the nature of things Wharton could not prove that he had been in the Remove dormitory on Saturday night from bed-time till rising-bell in the morning. Everybody had been asleep, all eyes were closed; and a fellow could have stolen out quietly—as, indeed, sometimes fellows did!

So the morrow's ordeal was far from pleasant to anticipate.

The man Squidge was a dingy, loafing, dishonest rascal, but, bad as he was, he was not wicked enough to make an accusation that he knew to be false. Harry Wharton, reflecting on the matter, realised that, and he had to admit that Squidge really did honestly believe that he had "copped" him out of bounds at night.

In fact, his attempt to extract blackmail was a proof that he believed it; it was unimaginable that he had picked on a fellow at random for such a purpose.

His motives were bad enough, but he was coming to the school to state what he believed, at least, was the truth.

That was where the danger lay. Quelch was far too keen to be taken in by a reckless falsehood; he would know at once whether Squidge really believed what he was saying or not. And if Squidge believed it, how could he, unless it was true?

Wharton himself could not account for it. His friends could not. While most of the Remove could not help taking the view that if the man identified Wharton on the morrow, it was proof—or as good as proof.

Rather naturally, Wharton found it difficult to put his mind into prep that evening. Nevertheless, he was not pleased when a fat face looked into the study and a fat voice squeaked:

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, buzz off, Bunter!" snapped the captain of the Remove irritably.

"I like that!" said Bunter. "If

that's your style of thanking a chap who's come here to help you out of a scrape, Harry Wharton—"

"Fathead!"

"You're for it!" said Bunter, blinking at him. "Wait till that man spots you in the Form-room to-morrow! You'll be glad enough then to have a pal to stand by you—who's ready to prove to Quelch that you were in your dorm on Saturday night when you weren't—"

"What?"

"Half-past eleven, you know," went on Bunter, while Wharton and Nugent stared at him blankly. "Well, suppose I heard the half-hour chime; suppose I'd eaten something that disagreed with me, and it woke me up—"

"Oh!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. His face brightened at once, and Nugent's brightened also. "You fat ass, why didn't you tell me that before?"

"I never thought of it till now—"

"Well, you should have, ass! But better late than never. You actually woke up at half-past eleven that night?" exclaimed Harry. "By gum! If you can tell Quelch that you know nobody was missing—"

"That's the big idea," said Bunter complacently. "Suppose I sat up in bed, not being able to sleep, you know. Suppose a ray of moonlight fell on your face as you lay in the peaceful, innocent sleep of boyhood, and all that—"

"Was there a moon on Saturday?" asked Nugent doubtfully.

"Eh? How should I know?" asked Bunter peevishly.

"You fat clump, you couldn't have seen a ray of moonlight on my face if there wasn't!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Oh, I hadn't thought of that! I suppose we can find out."

"Find out?" repeated Harry.

"Still, make it starlight," said Bunter. "A ray of starlight fell on your face, you know, as you lay in the peaceful, innocent—"

"You howling ass, you must have noticed whether it was moonlight if you woke up at all."

"Better make it starlight," said Bunter decidedly. "Starlight's safer all round. It was plain enough to see your

face, anyhow, sleeping peacefully the innocent sleep of boyish happiness—I mean, happy boyhood. Just as the half after eleven was chiming, you know."

"By gum!" said Harry, with a deep breath. "You're sure it was half-past eleven at the time? You can say so to Quelch?"

"That's the idea, of course. What you want is an eye-witness to see you through. Well, I'm the eye-witness."

"Good man!" said Wharton cordially. "Thank goodness you woke up—you don't often. Much obliged, old fat man!"

"That's all right," said Bunter cheerfully. "I never was the chap to let a pal down. I say, what about supper?"

"Supper?" repeated Harry.

"Well, one good turn deserves another," said Bunter. "A study supper ain't much, if I see you through to-morrow. Now, is it?"

Harry Wharton gave a start. He rose to his feet with quite a different expression on his face. He had tumbled at last.

"You fat villain!" he said, in measured tones. "Did you wake up at half-past eleven on Saturday night or not?"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Did you or not?" roared Wharton.

"I wish you wouldn't yell at a chap—it makes a fellow jump! I don't think you ought to be mean about the supper, either! If a pal stands by you—Wow! Leggo my neck, you beast!" roared Bunter as the captain of the Remove grabbed him. "Is that what you call gratitude, you rotter? Wow!"

"Yes or no?" hooted Wharton. "Did you wake up or not?"

"Of course I didn't!" howled Bunter. "I ain't saying to you that I did—that's what I'm going to say to Quelch! No good telling you that I saw you in bed, when you were getting copped out of bounds, is it?"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Nugent.

"You—you—you—you—" stuttered Wharton. "You—you fat frog! You pernicious porpoise! You blethering bandersnatch! You've come here proposing to tell a pack of lies—"

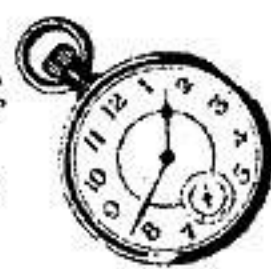
"Leggo!" howled Bunter. "I jolly

(Continued on next page.)

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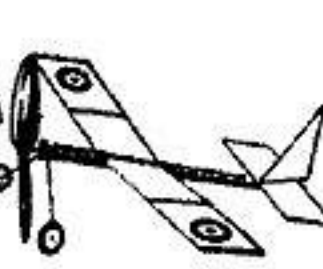
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well won't tell Quelch now! Nice way of treating a friend who came here to say—Yoo-hooooop!"

Bunter roared as he went through the study doorway. He bumped in the passage and roared again. Why Wharton was cutting up rusty like this was a mystery to Billy Bunter; but it was clear, even to Bunter's limited intellect, that the captain of the Remove had no use for that valuable eye-witness, and that there was going to be no study supper!

Wharton slammed the door.

Bunter howled through the keyhole.

"Yah! Beast! I hope you'll be cacked! Pub-haunting rotter! Yah!"

After which, Bunter beat a prompt retreat to Study No. 7 lest the door of Study No. 1 should reopen. He rolled, gasping, into his own study.

"I say, Toddy, that chap Wharton is an utter beast!" he gasped. "I shan't say a word for him now! Ungrateful brute, you know! Talk about a thankless serpent being sharper than a child's tooth! I offered to be a witness for him—an eye-witness, you know—and he chucked me out of his study—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Toddy.

"And I don't see anything to cackle at!" hooted Bunter.

But Peter Todd evidently did for he cackled and cackled!

## THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

### Face To Face!

**T**HIRD SCHOOL, the following morning was to be devoted to the important subject of European Geography!

But when the Remove went in after break that morning it would have been safe to say that not a fellow in the Form was giving a single thought to geography, European or other; and that even Quelch, generally a whale on the business in hand, was not thinking much more about European Geography than any member of his Form.

Quite another matter, really, occupied the minds of the Remove and the Remove master.

Mr. Squidge was almost due!

Squidge was coming. Quelch had talked to Squidge on the telephone, and Squidge had agreed to come, willingly, indeed eagerly. Squidge had set out to turn a dishonest penny by petty blackmail; and he had gained nothing but six terrific whops on his dusty trousers—which had naturally had the effect of putting Squidge's back up. Mr. Squidge was keen to make himself as unpleasant as he possibly could—and he was coming to pick out the fellow he had copped under the school wall on Saturday night and who had given him the name of Harry Wharton.

Every fellow in the Remove glanced at Harry Wharton—more than once. His face was set and serious.

His own friends were worried and anxious. They did not believe, for a moment, that he really had been caught out of bounds at night; but they could not understand. Wharton himself was puzzled and perplexed; and his chums were as perplexed as he was.

Other fellows were doubtful—though Skinner & Co. had no doubts; they were cheerily anticipating a regular "show-up" for the captain of the Remove.

There was keen though suppressed excitement in the Remove when Trotter tapped at the Form-room door and opened it. The House page had his instructions from Mr. Quelch to show the caller in as soon as he came—and here he was—followed by Squidge.

"Mr. Squidge, sir!" Trotter almost gasped. It was the first time that Trotter had ever had to show in a gentleman of Mr. Squidge's description.

Squidge stepped in.

Quelch's eyes fixed on him. All other eyes fixed on him. The Famous Five knew him by sight, so did Billy Bunter and Smithy; but to all other eyes he came as a stranger and every fellow was keen to see what sort of a merchant he was!

What sort of a merchant Mr. Squidge was, was easy to see; it was written all over his sly, cunning face; as well as indicated by the lingering scent of stale

tobacco and spirits that clung lovingly about him.

Mr. Quelch's brows knitted.

He had not been favourably impressed by Mr. Squidge over the phone. Now that he saw him, he rather doubted his wisdom in letting such a character enter the school for any purpose whatsoever.

Still, dingy and unpleasant as Squidge was, what he had reported could hardly be disregarded. It was necessary for the matter to be settled. And here he was, anyhow.

"Er—good—morning, Mr.—er—Squidge!" said the Remove master. "Pray come in! I—I am obliged to you for taking the trouble to come here on a matter affecting the discipline of this school."

"Don't mench, sir!" answered Mr. Squidge affably. He slouched in, his rakish bowler on the side of his greasy head and a cigarette sticking out of the corner of his mouth—it did not seem to occur to him to remove either. "Glad to oblige a gent, sir—and a matter of dooty, too! A pretty serious matter, sir, a young rip 'looking it out of his school close on midnight."

"Oh, quite!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "I understand, Mr. Squidge, that at a late hour last Saturday night, you were passing the school—"

"Walkin' 'ome from the Peal of Bells, in Courtfield!" assented Mr. Squidge.

"And you saw—"

"I see a young rip coming down from the way of the Three Fishers," said Mr. Squidge. "I kep' an eye on 'im, and when I saw him 'iking over the school wall, I knowed his game all right. 'Ooks him by the leg, I does, and 'ooks him down agin!"

The Remove listened breathlessly.

Harry Wharton sat very still in his place. He was wondering when, and whether, the sly, sharp eyes of Mr. Squidge would fix on him.

But Mr. Squidge, so far, was not singling any fellow out. He glanced over the breathless class and gave his attention to the Form-master again.

"I 'ooks that young covey down," resumed Mr. Squidge, "and makes him tell me his name, his Form, and the name of his schoolmaster. It's my dooty, I thinks, to report that young covey to his schoolmaster, seeing that he was out late at night and very likely in bad company."

"Perfectly so!" said Mr. Quelch. "I cannot quite understand your delay in doing so."

Mr. Squidge gave him a very sharp look. He was not sure whether that "bad hat" had let out the circumstance that Squidge had attempted to extort money from him.

"I been thinking it over," he explained. "I didn't want to be 'ard on a young bloke. But when his friend comes out and wallops a man with a stick on his trousers—"

"This boy gave you his name?"

"He did, sir; I made him. Harry Wharton was the name."

There was a deep breath in the Remove.

"I asks him his Form, too," pursued Mr. Squidge. "Remove, he says! I asks him what that is, and he says, says he, Lower Fourth Form, he says."

"Quite so! And—"

"Name of his schoolmaster, I ask him—Quelch, he says! That being your monicker, I take it, sir?"

"My—my what? Oh! My name—certainly!"

"That's the 'ole lot, sir," said Mr. Squidge, "and if you want me to p'int out that young rip, 'ere I am to do it."

Quelch's eyes were on the man as he

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talked. Squidge, evidently was not a man particular on the subject of truth; he would as soon have lied as not. But Quelch was a man of keen judgment and penetration; and he could see—as indeed all the Remove could see, including Wharton—that Squidge was relating exactly what had happened.

Actually and undoubtedly he had caught a Greyfriars junior getting in over the school wall late at night, and that junior had given his name as Harry Wharton, his Form as the Remove, and his Form-master's name as Quelch. It only remained for Mr. Squidge to pick the junior out.

"You are assured that you would know the boy again?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"Take my davy on it, sir!"

"It was a dark night, I think—"

"Black as a 'at! That young covey had stopped a good one with his eye! Black it was, and swelled all round!"

Harry Wharton smiled. His friends breathed more freely. Squidge was telling the truth—so far as he knew it. But evidently there was some mistake in the matter.

Mr. Quelch's grim brow cleared very considerably. He had seldom been so glad to hear of anything as of that black eye!

Quelch was aware that there was a fellow in the Fourth Form with a black eye, but he knew, of course, that there was no Remove boy so adorned. Quelch almost smiled.

"Thank you, Mr. Squidge!" said the Remove master. "Now will you have the kindness to look over the boys here,

Squidge. "Six wipes he give me, on the trousers."

"Hem! You do not know that boy's name, Mr. Squidge?"

"Course I don't! I know he's one of the lot I see at the Cross Keys last week, like I let on—I never knowed his name."

"His name is Harry Wharton."

"Eh?"

Mr. Squidge blinked.

Evidently that piece of information took him very much by surprise.

The mention of the black eye had already settled the matter. But the obvious fact that Squidge did not know Wharton's name settled it still more completely.

"Name of Wharton?" ejaculated Squidge.

"Precisely."

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GOOD "scoring" was again the feature of our fourth "Footer-Stamps" (November) prize-giving. The actual scores that won Free Footballs were 77 "goals" and over, and their senders' names are given here. A Prize Football has been promptly sent off to these winners.

Allam, P. D., Shaftesbury; Arnold, A., London, S.E.; Atkins, D., London, N.W.; Baguley, J., Alderley Edge; Baker, J., London, W.; Baldwin, J. E., Bedford; Barber, G., Manchester; Barraclough, F., Mirfield; Barrihall, E., Exeter; Barter, L. D., Portsmouth; Batt, A. G., Bristol; Bell, N., Kenton; Benson, J., Bromley; Bexon, J., Ilkeston; Blake, G., Wendlebury; Blake, R. W., Sutton; Blencowe, J., London, S.W.; Blott, A., Blatchley; Booker, S., Brixworth; Brocklebank, J., Sevenoaks; Brown, C., Glasgow; Brown, R., London, W.; Brown, W., Kenton; Bryan, R. J., Leicester; Bull, A., Camberley; Burgin, P., Leeds; Butler, R., Fairfield; Casajana, B., Nottingham; Catchpole, W., Cork; Cave, L., Retford; Charlton, H., Harrow; Chamberlain, M. J., Dukinfield; Charman, K., London, E.; Charman, S., Merstham; Chapman, D., Coventry; Chapman, R., Plymouth; Chick, J., Chester; Clark, D., Dublin; Clark, V., King's Lynn; Clarke, D. H., Bedford; Clifford, R. W., Bath; Coleman, B., London, W.; Conolly, F., Wembley; Cooksey, G., Tunstall; Cooper, R. W., Brouley; Cork, A., Dagenham; Cornwell, K. H., Seven Kings; Cousins, O., Anna-long; Cox, P., London, N.W.; Cox, R., Addlestone; Craddock, J. W., Bramhope; Crawley, C., Ventnor; Cuthbert, H., Leicester; Davies, B., London, N.; Davis, R. G., Northampton; Davis, V., Woodbridge; Dockerty, C., London, S.W.; Downing, J., Holmes; Doyle, W., Dunloughaire; Drew, N., Westerham; Dunn, T., Stoke-on-Trent; Eaton, J., Langwith; Elser, J., Enfield; Edwards, J., Watlington; Elliott, J., London, E.; Ellis, W., Harlow; Emsden, R., Tiverton; Ensor, R., Coventry; Faulkner, J., Dagenham; Fearnhead, L., Man-

chester; Finch, J., Luton; Fisher, J., Winchester; Fleming, K. M., Ramsgate; Fletcher, R., Billingham; Foreman, T., Roffey; Ford, K., Netley; Fordham, J., Hindhead; Fraser, C. A., London, S.E.; Gates, R., Alton; Gay, S., Falmouth; Geere, D. B., Buckhurst Hill; Gilbert, D., Allford; Gill, G., Honiton; Girt, G., Bolton; Goddard, N., Bradford; Goldblum, B., London, N.; Gordon, A., London, W.; Gordon, W., Inverness; Gray, W., Altrincham; Gregory, W. B., Altrincham; Grice, R., London, W.; Griffiths, H. D., Newport; Guerri, A., York; Hale, R., Westcliff; Hammond, P. J., London, S.W.; Hammond, A., Brightonsea; Hancock, W. G., Whitstable; Harris, R., Northampton; Harrison, E., Northampton; Harrison, J., Leagrave; Hart, C., Feltham; Harvey, E., West Croydon; Hatrey, G., Plymouth; Hayes, H., Boston Spa; Haynes, S. B., Leicester; Haywood, B., Coventry; Hazel, D., Plaistow; Head, E., Lenton, E.; Healy, P., Cork; Hemmings, A. J., Redmarley; Higgins, M. J., Marlborough; Hilton, N., Hazel Grove; Hobbs, D. C., Bristol; Hodgson, N., London, S.W.; Holmes, E., Chesterfield; Horne, C., Retford; Houchin, A., Manchester; Hough, R., Deblington; Howes, H., London, E.; Hunt, D., Newmarket; Hunter, K. R., Hull; Hurst, H., Blythe Bridge; Isherwood, J. R., Coventry; Jackson, A., Birmingham; Jackson, D., London, E.; Jackson, R., Sheffield; Jennings, D., Guiseley; Johnson, P., Sandy; Jones, I., Evesham; Jordan, E., Smethwick; Justice, R., Southsea; King, A., Peterborough; King, I. A., Barnhurst; Kirkby, J., Kendal; Knowles, E., Scarborough; Leggett, P., Copford; Le Moignan, J., Vauvert; Leng, P., Ripon; Lewis, D., London, N.; Lewis, K., Walsall; Lewis, L., Holywell; Lloyd, G. H., Pwllheli; Lowes, D., London, S.W.; Luxford, D. A., Bethersden; McCabe, T., Edinburgh; Macdonald, E., Edinburgh; McCullough, J., Newtownards; Mabbitt, K., Brixworth; Magraw, K., Coventry; Mann, L. S., Rochdale; Manton, N., Buckingham; Martin, J. L.,

Ipswich; Mason, P., Derby; Massey, J., Northwich; Matthews, E., Kilkhampton; Meikle, L., Llandudno; Mellor, A., Froghall; Miller, M. B., St. Annes-on-Sea; Moffatt, A. W., Worksop; Morris, G., Wolverhampton; Mottis, P. J., Southminster; Mulvaney, J., Leeds; Munroe, A., Glasgow; Murphy, B., Haverfordwest; New, J., Witley; Newland, P., Leigh-on-Sea; Nicholls, B. R., Sherborne; Nicholls, L., Oldham; Nobbs, N., Bungay; Noble, W. J., London, S.W.; Oliver, W. K., Coventry; Owen, C. W., Faversham; Palethorpe, H., Sale; Parfoot, A., London, N.W.; Parkins, L., Portsmouth; Parry, A., Birmingham; Parry, A. R., Holyhead; Parsons, L., Snodland; Parsons, R., Shoreham-by-Sea; Peake, C. C., Hunstanton; Peiley, S. W., Congleton; Perry, E., Potters Bar; Phillips, A. F., Hounslow; Phillips, D. J., London, S.W.; Phillips, J., Cardiff; Pipkin, F., Dunstable; Poulter, S., Farnborough; Priestley, T., Mansfield; Rennie, P., Kilmarnock; Riddell, J., Bridge of Weir; Rigden, V. J., London, N.W.; Riglar, D., Blandford; Ripley, S., Heckmondwike; Rolfe, R., Henley-on-Thames; Robinson, A., Liverpool; Robinson, A. D., Hull; Robinson, W. B., West Hartlepool; Rockhill, A., London, S.E.; Ross, D. A., London, S.E.; Rossiter, K., Lydney; Rudkin, H., Ellistown; Rushton, R., Leeds; Samson, A., St. Owens, Jersey; Sandell, G. A., Norwich; Schofield, J., Liverpool; Shepherd, M. P., Wallingford; Sheppard, P., London, S.W.; Shove, D., Shanklin; Simpson, G., Leicester; Sims, H., Croydon; Slow, L. J., Northampton; Smith, R. J., Wymondham; Smith, T., Newmarket; Spall, B. C., Bromley; Spence, J., Newton Mearns; Spittle, H., Coscely; Stacey, P., Radcliffe; Stevens, P., Oxford; Stewart, J., Gracehill; Stuart, R., Edgware; Sullivan, E., Bexleyheath; Summers, M., Trowbridge; Sutherland, I., Thornton Heath; Tardivel, A., L'Islet, Guernsey; Taylor, G. P., Harrow; Taylor, J., Kempston; Taylor, L., Taunton; Taylor, P. H., Claygate; Taylor, W., Guildford; Tennant, P. E., Bromley; Tester, D. L., Woodchurch; Thorpe, D., Gloucester; Tilley, H., Chadwell Heath; Tooke, R., Wallington; Townsend, P., Herne Bay; Turner, A., Watford; Wadhams, W., London, W.; Wakefield, J., Seaford; Wallace, E. W., Dagenham; Walters, T. W., Derby; Warburton, R., Eye; Ward, C., Morden; Ward, E., Herne Bay; Wastell, A., London, E.; Watson, J., Manchester; Webb, R. J., Brighton; White, R., Penarth; Whitley, E., London, N.W.; Wiles, S., Flitwick; Woods, J., Churt; Wooten, D., Richmond; Wright, J., Stockton-on-Tees; Wyatt, D., Camberley.

"Black as a 'at!" agreed Mr. Squidge. "But I give 'im a good look! I'd know his face again, and if I didn't, I reckon there ain't a lot of young coveys 'ere with a black eye."

Mr. Quelch almost jumped. The Remove did jump—every man of them.

Squidge blinked round. He could see that his words had made a sensation, but he did not know why.

"Did—did you say—a—a black eye?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Black as the hacc of spades," said Squidge. "I fancy that young covey had been fighting, and got a omer in the hip! 'Ard, too! He ain't got shut of that black eye yet, I'll lay."

"Oh!" breathed Harry Wharton.

"Let me have this clear, Mr. Squidge," said the Remove master. "You are sure that the boy in question had a discoloured eye?"

"Couldn't miss it, sir!" said Squidge,

and tell me whether the one to whom you refer is present?"

Squidge's narrow eyes scanned the Remove. He scowled at five faces, one after another. But clearly he did not identify the "bad hat" there! He was, in fact, looking for a boy with a black eye!

"He ain't 'ere, sir!" said Squidge, at length. "But there's some young coveys 'ere that pitched into a bloke yesterday—and that's the young covey that laid into a bloke with a stick, hitting 'im on his trousers."

He pointed to Harry Wharton.

Harry laughed, and stood up.

"Do you know my name, Mr. Squidge?" he asked.

"Ow'd I know your name?" answered Squidge, staring at him.

Wharton sat down again.

"That's the young covey what 'it me on the trousers with a stick!" said Mr.

"Same name as the young covey I copped Saturday night!" said Mr. Squidge, in great surprise.

"There is only one boy in this school of that name."

Mr. Squidge blinked again.

"I believe," continued Mr. Quelch, "that you found some boy, as you state, on Saturday night, by the school wall, Mr. Squidge. But it certainly was not Harry Wharton, as you now see for yourself."

"Strike me pink!" gasped Mr. Squidge. "Strike me pink and yell! I've been took in!"

"The boy in question—possibly not a Greyfriars boy at all—evidently gave you a false name!" said Mr. Quelch. "He had the audacity, the unscrupulousness, to give the name of a boy in my Form. That is clear now."

"Took in!" repeated Squidge. "Took in!"

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in by a schoolboy! Met Tommy Squidge took in by a schoolboy! Strike me blue!"

"Wharton, my dear boy, I am very glad that this matter has been so satisfactorily settled!" said Mr. Quelch. "It is perfectly clear now that some unscrupulous person made use of your name. You are exonerated in every way."

"Thank you, sir!" said Harry.

"Took in!" said Mr. Squidge, almost dazedly. "Tommy Squidge's leg pulled by a schoolboy! What'd they say if I told them at the Cross Keys? Larf! Not arf! Took in!"

"Good-morning, Mr. Squidge?"

"Eh?"

"I am obliged to you for calling and clearing up this matter so very satisfactorily! Good-morning!"

"Look 'ere——"

"Trotter!"

"Yessir!" Trotter looked in from the passageway.

"Please show this gentleman out, Trotter!"

"Yessir!"

"Took in!" repeated Mr. Squidge. "That young rip gave me a name what wasn't his'n, and took me in—took Tommy Squidge in!"

"Good-morning!"

Mr. Squidge was shown out.

## THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

### Something For Aubrey!

**H**ARRY WHARTON had a rather grim expression on his face when the Remove came out.

The Co. were greatly bucked by the happy outcome of Squidge's visit; the whole puzzling mystery was explained now, and the explanation, after all, was very simple. The breaker of bounds, who had been "copped" by the unpleasant Squidge, had given another fellow's name instead of his own—that was all there was about it.

Who the fellow was—and, indeed, whether he was a Greyfriars fellow at all—Mr. Quelch did not know. But the head boy did.

"The Fourth are out," said Harry, glancing round as the Famous Five came into the quad. "Come on! I want to see Angel."

"What the thump do you want to see Angel for?" asked Bob. "You don't want a ticket in a sweep, I suppose?"

"I want to give him another eye to match the one he's got already!"

"Oh! You think——"

"I don't think—I know!" said Harry, with a gleam in his eyes. "Squidge caught a fellow who gave my name, and the fellow had a black eye! Angel's got the black eye that Bunter gave him. Could anything be plainer?"

"The plainfulness is terrific!" agreed Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Um!" said Bob. "Quelch seems to think it mayn't have been a Greyfriars man at all—some thief sucking in,

perhaps, who pulled Squidge's leg when he was grabbed."

"It was Aubrey Angel," said Harry, "and I'm going to let him know what I think of his using my name!"

"It was Angel all right!" said Bull, with a nod. "He's that sort! Everybody knows he breaks out after lights out——"

"That black eye settles it," said Harry. "Squidge might make a mistake in the dark about a fellow's face, but he couldn't make a mistake about a black eye. It's time Angel had another to match!"

"Make sure first, old bean," said Bob.

"That's all right. I've been pestered by a blackmailing rascal, and all through that cur using my name! He won't borrow another fellow's name in a hurry when I'm done with him!" said the captain of the Remove, between his teeth.

Aubrey Angel of the Fourth was in the quad, thinking, but certainly not of Harry Wharton or Mr. Squidge. He knew nothing of Mr. Squidge's visit to the Remove room that morning, nothing of the blackmailing notes that had been sent to the junior whose name he had used, and the lapse of days since his adventure out of bounds had made him feel safe.

He was, in fact, thinking of the chances of Nobbled Nick in the two-thirty when the Famous Five came up. He stared at them as Harry Wharton stopped in front of him, and the Co. circled round to cut off escape.

"What the dooce——" began Aubrey. "Where were you last Saturday night?" asked Harry Wharton.

Aubrey gave a start.

"What? What do you mean? What——" he stammered.

"Do you know that Squidge has been here this morning?"

"Squidge?"

"The man who caught you out of bounds on Saturday night."

Aubrey Angel fairly staggered. His face went white, and his eyes started. He shot a sudden terrified glance round the quad, in terror of seeing the oily face in the offing.

"Here?" he gasped. "That—that man's been here? Has he seen the Head? Has he——" His voice trailed off in a feeble gasp.

If any of the Co. had doubted, they could not have doubted now. Aubrey Angel was the man.

"You cur!" said Harry Wharton. "You gave my name, and set the man after me. I've had notes from him, asking for money. I've had to go through it in my Form-room this morning. He came to pick me out, because you'd given him my name."

"He's not here now?" panted Aubrey.

His trick of giving another fellow's name had seen him through, so far, but it would not have served had Squidge seen him face to face.

"No," said Harry contemptuously, "he's not here now. He's gone, long

ago. He won't spot you, you rotten rascal; but I've spotted you. Come round the elms; we'd better not be seen from the windows. You're going to have a lesson about using another fellow's name when you're spotted out of bounds late at night, you pub-haunting outsider."

Aubrey gave him a bitter black look, and came. He did not like the prospect; but a scrap with the captain of the Remove, though unwelcome, was ever so much better than a meeting with Mr. Squidge.

In a quiet corner, behind the elms, Aubrey Angel suffered for his sins! It was a quiet corner when the scrap started, but not so quiet when the news spread and Remove fellows, and other fellows, came speeding up to see the show. Quite a numerous crowd swarmed in that hitherto quiet spot and looked on, while Aubrey Angel stood up to such a punching as he had never been through before.

There was no help for it. And the sportsman of the Fourth put his beef into it—all the beef he had. For ten minutes it lasted, and then Aubrey lay on his back, beaten to the wide.

Wharton, with a handkerchief to his nose, looked down at him.

"Next time you borrow a fellow's name, I fancy it won't be mine," he said, and he turned away, his friends accompanying him to the changing-room to bathe his nose, which needed it.

In the changing-room Harry Wharton bathed his nose in a wash-basin, and dabbed it with a towel.

"That's that," remarked Bob Cherry. "And now, perhaps, we shall hear the end of all that jaw in the Remove."

"The jawfulness has been terrific," remarked Hurree Singh, "and the endfulness will be a boonful blessing."

"Well, we asked for it," said Johnny Bull. "No getting out of it that it was all our own fault."

"Shut up!"

"All right. But we've only got what we asked for and I told you so."

The wash-basin, full of water, was at hand—unfortunately for Johnny Bull. His four friends, as if moved by the same spring, grabbed Johnny Bull, and ducked his head into it.

"Woowooch!" gurgled Johnny.

He lifted a streaming head.

"Urrgh! You silly asses! Wurrgh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll jolly well—— Gurrghgh! Urrgh!"

Johnny Bull's loyal chums, chortling, departed, leaving him grabbing frantically at a towel. Johnny, undoubtedly, had told them so, but he had told them so once too often.

THE END.

(Don't miss the sequel to this great yarn. "SAVING BUNTERS BACON!" You'll find it in next Saturday's MAGNET.)

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SPORTSMEN NEVER FORGET THEIR PETS!

Says TOM BROWN

I can never understand the man who neglects his pets. My idea is that if a chap can't find time to look after them properly, he shouldn't be allowed to have them!

Take Snoop. He brought back a couple of rabbits with him this term and hasn't been down to the hutch to look at them since!

When I tackled him about them, he calmly told me there was no need to worry because if he didn't look after them, one of the other fellows would.

That's quite true, as far as it goes.

In the spot behind the Head's garden (generally known as the "menagerie") where Greyfriars pots are housed, the pet-fanciers take a general interest in each other's animals and attend to their wants regardless of ownership.

You can often see Bulstrode feeding Hazelrode's pigeons while Hazel takes Bulstrode's wire-haired terrier out for a run. Penfold will frequently spend an hour in the company of Treloche's money in it—or so Fishy hopes, anyway. He has whispered in my ear jackdaw while Treloche adds improvement to the midge gymnastics in the cage where Penfold keeps his mice.

This atmosphere of co-operation among the inmates is very helpful. It often happens that a chap gets tied up with impots, footer fixtures, and pressing engagements, and can't get down to the menagerie for days on end; and it's very nice for him to know that somebody is doing the needful in his absence.

But when the pally system of mutual aid leads to a chap like Snoop completely neglecting his responsibilities, it's in danger of defeating its own ends. I am seriously thinking of calling a meeting of Greyfriars pet-owners to draw up rules to be observed by all fanatics—and to decide on fines for infringements thereof.

While we're about it, we might even decide on a system of licences for all

owners—the said licencees being without exception drawn from all owners found guilty of neglect.

There is quite a boom in pets this term. Several new dogs have arrived and two Remove men—Rako and Squiff—have brought back guinea-pigs. First prize for originality in pets goes this year to Fisher T. Fish. The lad from 111 of Noo York has swapped a collection of junk with somebody in Friardale for an outside in nanny-goats. Needless to say, there's going to be money in it—or so Fishy hopes, anyway. He has whispered in my ear



that he is training it for carriage-work, and that it's going to earn him a pile of "greenbacks" on the beach at Pegg in the summer. In the meantime, he hopes to make a small profit by retailing goat's milk round the school. The animal seems quite fond of Fishy. No accounting for tastes, is there? When morning classes started yesterday it followed its hatchet-faced owner into the Form-room and created

already putting in a bit of practice at it last term.

Mauly was not one of them, and quite frankly I do not expect him to repeat his success.

More to my fury as probable winners are Cherry and Russell. Modesty compels me to omit my own name, but I can tell you in confidence that I intend to have a shot at beating the lot!

Another affair that will attract plenty of attention is the gym display. Mr. Lascelles is said to be putting up a challenge cup for the best team show, and as we have a number of sick gymnasts in the Form we may make a bold bid for the trophy.

Ice-hockey may also form a subject for comment if we are again allowed the facilities for practice that were offered us last term. This is a game I find very much to my liking. But naturally our opportunities to reach a respectable standard of play are limited, and I can't foresee the game attaining very great prominence in the sporting annals of Greyfriars.

Finally, there is boxing, and here, if I correctly gauge the mood of readers who have written me on the subject, we have a problem that ought to be solved this term.

H. VERNON-SMITH'S Weekly Sports Shorts

Reading tells me that on analysing my sports notes from the start he finds I have devoted about 95 per cent of my space to footer.

Well, that's just too bad—for those readers who are not interested in footer! As I judge, however, that roughly 99.9 per cent of my readers are interested almost exclusively in footer, I really don't feel called on to make a very abject apology.

On the other hand, it had never been my intention to neglect other sports, and this week I intend to touch upon one or two other kinds of recreation that are going to claim some of our attention in the coming term.

First, there is the open cross-country run, provisionally fixed for an afternoon in mid-March. It may be recalled that this event was surprisingly won last time by the so-called slacker of the Remove, Lord Mauleverer.

The unexpected firm and glory we achieved out of that result has made us particularly keen on cross-country running, and several of our men were

The GREYFRIARS HERALD

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

January 14th, 1939.

a scene by trying to make a meal off the end of Quelely's gown! Fishy's stock in the Remove has risen quite high as a result of that exhilarating incident.

If Wharton will stand for it, I shall be contributing more articles on the Greyfriars menagerie at intervals. Meanwhile, let me emphasise, for the benefit of all concerned, that sportemen never forget their pets.

Now you can't say you haven't been warned!

Answers to Correspondents

"INDIGNANT" (Remove).—"When Loder turned out to be mistaken in reporting Todd absent, he excused himself by saying that Todd is too slender to be seen. What do you think?"

"Sounds a bit too 'thin' to us!"

"CONFIDENT READER" (Remove).—"Bolsover's watch works nicely, but there's something he doesn't like about the dial."

We've heard the same thing said about Bolsover!

"DOWN WITH TYRANNY" (Third).—"Bulstrode has a face like a boiled pudding."

And yet he's often as nice as pie!

S. J. S. (Remove).—"I can never seem to get on with geometry. We recommend you to approach the subject again from the 'try' angle. C. T. (Cliff House).—"To improve her complexion, Barbara Redfern rubs snow on her face."

Perhaps this explains the reputation she enjoys for displaying plenty of "cool cheek."

The result of the competition held last year was that Wharton became the acknowledged champion of the Remove. Many fellows are convinced that the result would have been very different if the competition was held again, and Linley's revelation after the Wharton-Cherry contest that Cherry was ill when he entered the ring certainly puts Wharton's pre-eminence in doubt.

I don't suppose we shall be able to organise a competition on quite such a grand scale as before. But I see no reason why our best boxers should not hold eliminating contests with a view to challenging Wharton, and if I can do anything to get this proposition going I shall certainly do it!

Everybody admits that the present position is unsatisfactory. Wharton himself would probably welcome being put to the test.

We'll see if we can't put him to the test before long! If he survives it—well, that should silence the critics. If he goes down, then he is no longer the best boxer in the Remove.

My own opinion is that he never was the best boxer in the Remove. But if he can meet all comers successfully this term, then I will willingly eat my own words!

HARRY WHARTON CALLING

Ever tried to keep a diary, chums? Take my tip and try it some time. It will correct your false ideas as to what sort of a stick-up you are. When I was given a pocket diary with a page for every day, I made up my mind to put it to good use. Each day, I resolved I would write what had happened to me in the preceding twenty-four hours. At the end of the year I would then have a complete record of my life during 1939.

I made a rattling good start with January 1st. It seemed quite an effort waiting for things to happen at the beginning. Then, when things did start happening, the difficulty was to know how to compress it all into a single page. I managed it in the end

NOVELIST KYLE GETS PLOTS FROM LIFE! Declares DICK RAKE

Seeing a group of Greyfriars men at Lantham Junction, where I changed for Friardale on my way back to school, I strolled over and joined them. I found they were following the efforts of Temple of the Fourth to win a prize at a penny-in-the-slot electric crane machine.

"Nothing doing in this," Temple remarked, as I arrived. "That's the tough penny I've put in, and so far I haven't been anywhere near a prize."

"Givin' it best, old bean?" yawned Jabney. "Waste of money, I think," drawled Fry. Temple fished in his waistcoat pocket for cash.

"I've two more pennies. May as well throw these away and then we'll make a move for the trip," dear man!

The elegant leader of the Greyfriars Upper Fourth slipped the first of his last two pennies in the slot.

While all eyes were turned on to the crane to see what the penny brought forth, I was surprised to note Mark Linley on the edge of the crowd, scribbling as express speed in an exercise book. At intervals of a few seconds he looked up to

direct a keen glance at Cecil Reginald Temple.

"What's the idea, Linley?" I asked, giving him a gentle dig in the ribs.

"Doing an article on slot machines for the 'Herald'," Linley smiled and shook his head as he closed the exercise book and put it away in his overcoat pocket.

"Nothing like it, old chap. As a matter of fact I was taking notes for a novel!"

"A penny-in-the-slot electric crane machine?"

"Taking notes for a novel? But how the thump—"

"I like to get as much realism as possible into my literary work," explained Linley. "So before I sit down to a session of writing, I study real life—life in the raw, so to speak—life as it really is! This stroke me as being a good opportunity to make a few notes. I've watched Temple at that machine and watched the crowd watching him—and I've got enough material out of it for at least a chapter of my book!"

"The Dickens you have!"

"If you'd like to have a look at the result later on you're welcome," went on Linley. "I think you'll see what I mean then."

"Thanks," I grinned. "I'll have a squint at it with pleasure."

Two days later Linley tootled into the Reg. where



"CHAPTER 15. 'THE GAMBLER'S LAST THROW!'"

"Rien ne va plus!"

"The croupier's voice rang out harshly across the crowded gaming table."

"Silence fell on the assembly, save for the whirring of the wheel on whose spin a fortune rested."

"In the centre of the table, immaculate in a

of the diaries that start so promisingly on the first day of the year—it will fizzle out!

Well, perhaps it doesn't matter much, anyway. Some are born diarists, some achieve diaries, and some have diaries thrust upon them. Evidently I belong to the majority—the chaps that have diaries thrust upon them and use them for nothing appointments and the dates of people's birthdays!

Try keeping one yourselves—and you'll soon see where you belong!

HARRY WHARTON.

THIS WEEK'S FAG STORY

When Wingate sent a new Second-Form fag to the Friardale shoe-menders the kid walked five miles beyond the village before he thought of going back to see if he had passed the shop.

Such yarns—like Wingate's shoes—sound too far-fetched for us!

faultlessly cut dress suit, Lord Poshe waited for the result. The strain of a long losing sequence was easily seen on his ghastly white face.

"The sinister whirling of the fateful wheel stopped; the ball rolled into a pocket. 'Numero die!' came the croupier's laconic announcement.

"A spearm of impotent fury crossed the gambler's face.

"My luck's dead out!" he hissed. "That's ten thousand pounds I've lost in ten throws!"

"Giving it best, old bean?" yawned his right hand companion.

"Waste of money, I think!" drawled the man on his left.

Lord Poshe gritted his teeth. There was a mad gleam in his bloodshot eyes.

"I've another couple of thou. Left. May as well lose them while I'm about it! Hero goes!"

At this point Linley's manuscript dropped from my nerveless hands.

"Is this what you built up from the real basis of Temple and that crane machine?" I stammered.

"Just that!" nodded Linley. "It's given me the very atmosphere I needed for that chapter, don't you think?"

I said: "Ye gods!"

Somewhat that was all I seemed able to say.

Linley's literary work on "realistic" lines had left me practically speechless!

Going back to school! Br-r-r-r! The mere idea of it sends a cold shiver down a chap's spine! After living as a free man for weeks on end, it's simply ghastly for a chap to contemplate being back in that joyous prison known to the world as Greyfriars School. But that's just where I'll be this time to-morrow!

Already, I can hear the mournful, melancholy clanging of the rising-bell.

Already I hear the jarring chorus of wooden forms scraping against the floor in Hall, as the wretched captives file in for brekkie.

As in a nightmare, I see the hideous faces of the goliaths—Quelely, scowling; Prout, gibbering; Hacker, biting his lips. I shudder with acute revulsion, as the sharp memory returns to my palate of the taste of stale "doorstops" and scrape!

Despair settles down over me like a mantle, as I think of the dread routine—grinding away at Latin in the Form-room, booting a beastly ball about the playing-fields, squabbling with milwits and congenital idiots in the Rag!

As for the thought of that footpione discipline—it makes me mean alone! No going to pictures without a pass—no billiards at the Cross Keys without risking a flogging—no cigarettes or cards except in dark corners where the beaks won't find you!

I can keep this up no longer, old pals, it will drive me potty if I dwell further on this depressing subject.

I think I have said enough, anyway, to give you a faint idea of the thoughts I shall be thinking when I'm crawling back to Greyfriars in the morning!

2. By BOB CHERRY

Going back to school! Hurrah!

The mere thought of it sends a warm glow flowing through a chap's anatomy! Holidays are ripping, and it's top-hole to have spent several weeks on the spree; but it's great, too, to contemplate being back in that genial homo from home known as Greyfriars School!

Already, I can hear the merry, musical clanging of the rising-bell—getting us out of bed at a nice early hour of the morning when we've had all the sleep a healthy chap should need.

Already, I hear the jolly rattling of wooden forms, scraping against the floor of Big Hall, as the happy throng assembles.

As if in a pleasant dream, I see the cheery faces of the masters—Quelely, smiling to himself behind his stern exterior; Prout, chuckling; even Hacker's wrinkled visage creasing up into a kind of grin at being back!

I feel as happy as a sandboy, as I think of the familiar old routine—the larks in the Form-room, the delights of footer on Little Side, the cheery gatherings in the Rag!

Of course, there's the discipline—but that's quite a pleasure! After all, you can never hope to command till you've learned to obey!

I could go on like this all night, y'els, but I think I have said enough to give you a faint idea of the thoughts I shall be thinking when I'm dancing back to Greyfriars in the morning!

HELL WANT

SOME "STOPPING," TOO!

Hoskins, our champion piano-smiler, has to visit the dentist shortly.

Presumably, he will resume piano-playing after the dentist has "fiddled his ivories!"



NEW TERM'S EVE!

1. By HAROLD SKINNER

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The GREYFRIARS HERALD

SPORTSMEN NEVER FORGET THEIR PETS!

Says TOM BROWN

I can never understand the man who neglects his pets. My idea is that if a chap can't find time to look after them properly, he shouldn't be allowed to have them!

Take Snoop. He brought back a couple of rabbits with him this term and hasn't been down to the hutch to look at them since!

When I tackled him about them, he calmly told me there was no need to worry because if he didn't look after them, one of the other fellows would.

That's quite true, as far as it goes.

In the spot behind the Head's garden (generally known as the "menagerie") where Greyfriars pots are housed, the pet-fanciers take a general interest in each other's animals and attend to their wants regardless of ownership.

You can often see Bulstrode feeding Hazelrode's pigeons while Hazel takes Bulstrode's wire-haired terrier out for a run. Penfold will frequently spend an hour in the company of Treloche's money in it—or so Fishy hopes, anyway. He has whispered in my ear

owners—the said licencees being without exception drawn from all owners found guilty of neglect.

There is quite a boom in pets this term. Several new dogs have arrived and two Remove men—Rako and Squiff—have brought back guinea-pigs. First prize for originality in pets goes this year to Fisher T. Fish. The lad from 111 of Noo York has swapped a collection of junk with somebody in Friardale for an outside in nanny-goats. Needless to say, there's going to be money in it—or so Fishy hopes, anyway. He has whispered in my ear



that he is training it for carriage-work, and that it's going to earn him a pile of "greenbacks" on the beach at Pegg in the summer. In the meantime, he hopes to make a small profit by retailing goat's milk round the school. The animal seems quite fond of Fishy. No accounting for tastes, is there? When morning classes started yesterday it followed its hatchet-faced owner into the Form-room and created

already putting in a bit of practice at it last term.

Mauly was not one of them, and quite frankly I do not expect him to repeat his success.

More to my fury as probable winners are Cherry and Russell. Modesty compels me to omit my own name, but I can tell you in confidence that I intend to have a shot at beating the lot!

Another affair that will attract plenty of attention is the gym display. Mr. Lascelles is said to be putting up a challenge cup for the best team show, and as we have a number of sick gymnasts in the Form we may make a bold bid for the trophy.

Ice-hockey may also form a subject for comment if we are again allowed the facilities for practice that were offered us last term. This is a game I find very much to my liking. But naturally our opportunities to reach a respectable standard of play are limited, and I can't foresee the game attaining very great prominence in the sporting annals of Greyfriars.

Finally, there is boxing, and here, if I correctly gauge the mood of readers who have written me on the subject, we have a problem that ought to be solved this term.

H. VERNON-SMITH'S Weekly Sports Shorts

Reading tells me that on analysing my sports notes from the start he finds I have devoted about 95 per cent of my space to footer.

Well, that's just too bad—for those readers who are not interested in footer! As I judge, however, that roughly 99.9 per cent of my readers are interested almost exclusively in footer, I really don't feel called on to make a very abject apology.

On the other hand, it had never been my intention to neglect other sports, and this week I intend to touch upon one or two other kinds of recreation that are going to claim some of our attention in the coming term.

First, there is the open cross-country run, provisionally fixed for an afternoon in mid-March. It may be recalled that this event was surprisingly won last time by the so-called slacker of the Remove, Lord Mauleverer.

The unexpected firm and glory we achieved out of that result has made us particularly keen on cross-country running, and several of our men were