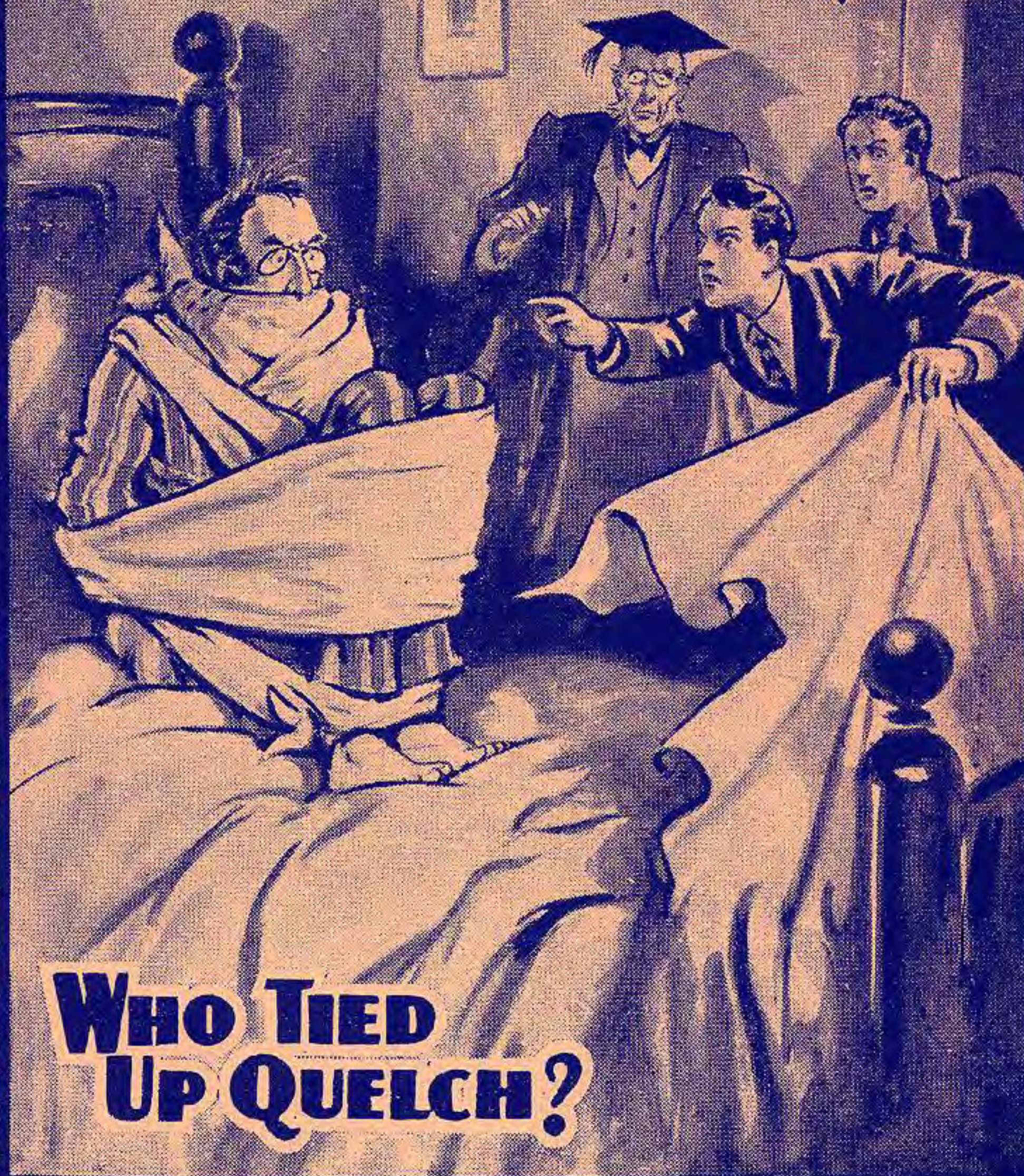


Great School and Detective Yarn Starring Harry Wharton & Co.!

The Magnet^{2D}

*Billy Bunter's
Own Paper*



**WHO TIED
UP QUELCH?**



**THIS WEEK BY
FRANK NUGENT,
Study No. 1, Remove.**

MOST fellows know little about their ancestors, and I think it's just as well. Fellows like young Paget, of the Third, can trace their great-granddads back to the time they swung on trees, but for ordinary chaps like myself, three generations is about the limit. It is probably a case of "where ignorance is bliss."

Alas! my bliss is shattered. Some time ago a merchant calling himself a "court inquiry agent" called on my pater and offered to dig up the family tree for a few guineas, plus expenses. My pater felt a bit curious about this venerable tree, and closed with the offer. A month later the C.I.A. returned.

The family tree proved to be a decidedly shady one!

"Your great-grandfather, Ananias Nugent, held the tenure of a farm and policy in Northumberland," said the agent. "I had to go to Northumberland to glean details from the land registers there. That, of course, makes the expenses heavier—it's a long way."

"Quite!" said my pater politely. "What happened to Ananias?"

"Died in prison at the age of sixty-eight," replied the agent. "His father was Ezra Nugent, of North Wales. I made a personal journey to North Wales to get particulars about him."

"Quite a widespread family!" murmured the pater. "Did Ezra die in prison?"

"No; he was killed in a poaching affray. His father was Nero Nugent, of Cornwall, to which district I immediately proceeded and—"

"Tell me one thing," said the pater anxiously. "Did we have any relations in China?"

"Not that I have discovered."

"Excellent! What happened to Nero?"

"Shot by preventive men during a smuggling raid one night shortly after he had come south with his parents from the North of Scotland. In the North of Scotland I found details of Sandy MacHaggis Nugent—"

"Help!"
"Who was descended from Irish stock—"
"Go no further!" begged the pater. "Tot up your bill for expenses, and I will sell my home and furniture in an endeavour to meet it, but spare me any more details of my crime-infested race!"

THE DISMAL TRUTH

So that was that! You now know the truth (more or less) about my remote ancestors. I had better let my pater speak for himself about the family as it is now. His letter arrived this morning:

"Dear Frank,—I hardly see why our family history should interest boys and girls who have never met us, but if you think it will, here is the unromantic truth. We have lived in our present home in Wiltshire since your grandfather bought the place in 1872, after he had made a fortune in cork—not the Irish county, but the bottle-stopper stuff. Nugent & Son were, and still are, cork merchants and importers, though we have ceased our connection with the firm."

"Your grandfather disgraced the family name by dying a natural death in 1907, and was greatly honoured in the district."

Your father has so far never been killed in a poaching affray, shot by coastguards, or hanged by the Bow Street Runners, and I sincerely hope his elder son has not yet displayed the family's natural tendency to crime, or I shall request Mr. Quelch to effect a cure forthwith.

"Apart from the court inquiry agent's discoveries, all I know about your ancestors is that they were stolid, dull, and unromantic business men, almost painfully free from crime, and that they lived chiefly in the North London and Hertfordshire districts."

"I enclose a ten shilling note as a solace for your disappointment. You may tell Dicky that I am writing to him shortly, but warn him not to place too much reliance on the '5-pound-note' for which he asked. It may be accidentally omitted."

"Your affectionate father,
"JAMES NUGENT."

I can only leave it at that. Whether my ancestors were bloodthirsty criminals or city merchants doesn't matter. Here I am in not a bad old world, and it's up to me to make the best of it—what?

BUT IT—GROOOH!

I'm not going to fill the whole page with stuff about myself. I rather fancy myself as a poet, so here's an effort that would have turned Tennyson green with envy.

A tiny tiddler in Pegg Bay
Disported in the briny,
Till Prout went fishing there one day
And caught that tiddler tiny!
Then it grew,
And it grew,
And it grew!
Till, judging by old Prouty's tale,
That tiddler had become a whale!
For fishes grow; and if they don't—
Well, stories do!

A football Billy Bunter kicked
One day in idle humour;
It landed on Quelch, and Bunter clicked!
And then began a rumour.
And it grew,
And it grew,
And it grew!
According to what Bunter said,
He'd practically left Quelch for dead,
For Bunter's yarns are made to stretch
A mile or two!



Now, Fishy loves to make us squirm
In no uncertain manner;
I once owed money to the worm—
My debt was just a tanner!
But it grew,
And it grew,
And it grew!
The debt bore interest, I found,
When Fishy asked me for a pound.
And my reply—in Fishy's eye—
Was black and blue!

RANDOM RAMBLES See Greyfriars First.

A most interesting walk is from the Remove Form room to the Head's Study. It takes a long time, for ramblers doing this journey prefer to go as slowly as possible while they admire the scenery and glance at the short note, in Mr. Quelch's handwriting, which they carry with them as a sort of passport.



Turn to the right on leaving the Form-room, and a short walk of ten yards will bring you to the door of the Fifth Form room. Rest here while you listen to the pleasant gurgle of Prout. After a long rest, drag your way to the stairs (35 feet high), on which you can sit for another rest. (Distance, 5 yards.) Linger at the notice-board, which is of early Tudor design, and having read all the notices two or three times over, turn your faltering feet to the second corridor on the right (10 yards). At the end of this corridor will be found the Head's Study (admission free).

Pause at the door for half an hour or so, admiring the woodwork, then tap lightly with the knuckles. You will be in time to see an interesting ceremony take place. The Head accepts your note with an old world courtesy, reads it rapidly, then goes to a cupboard and selects a sample of birch-twigs, which he will offer to give you. You will be required to bend over to accept the gift in traditional fashion, and while the offering is being made you are expected to cry out loudly any words that may occur to you.

At the end of the ceremony you will leave the study, bent double and intoning a kind of chant, and then you simply make your way back to the Form-room.

You will not, however, sit on the stairs. The desire may have left you!

FRANK NUGENT

Frank is Harry Wharton's oldest chum, and shares Study No. 1 with him. He is a quiet and thoughtful fellow, as a rule, but is a good sportsman and handy with the gloves; though in the sports field he is probably the least brilliant of the Famous Five. As a rule, he is not in the Junior Eleven; but he is a good reserve and always keen. In class-work he is clever; he has a great sense of humour; is always good-natured and calm. At chess he is hard to beat. Skinner's cartoon shows him glowering over a chess-board, and from his expression it is not easy to believe that Frank is one of the best-looking fellows in the Form. He has rather an effeminate face, and for this reason is usually chosen to play female parts in Wibley's dramatic efforts. Frank has a minor (Dicky) in the Second Form, and three sisters at home in Wiltshire.

(Cartoon By H. SKINNER)

The mysterious prowler of Greyfriars has had a long run. But the net is fast closing in on him, thanks to Jack Drake, Ferrers Locke's clever assistant!

DUFFER or DETECTIVE?



"I can see you, Mauly, you beast! What are you going to do with all those currency notes? I say—yareooooooooop!" Billy Bunter broke off with a roar, as a foot landed on his tight trousers and his fat head banged on the door-handle.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Queer Of Quelch!

"WHERE'S Quelch?"
"Seen Quelch?"
"What's happened to Henry?"

Remove fellows at Greyfriars were asking one another those questions. Every fellow asked; but no fellow could answer.

Henry Samuel Quelch, Form-master of the Remove, had not been seen that morning.

It was not only unusual, it was remarkable. It was, in fact, unprecedented. It quite astonished the Removees.

Quelch was always down before his Form. Never, in the memory of the oldest inhabitant had he over-slept himself. He was as punctual as clockwork.

Harry Wharton & Co. could not remember a single occasion on which Quelch had out early prayers before. But he was not seen at prayers. Neither was he seen at breakfast. Nor was he seen after breakfast. Now it was drawing near time for class, and still Mr. Quelch was conspicuous only by his absence.

Billy Bunter suggested hopefully that he might be ill. Quelch was seldom, or never ill. Still, there was always the happy chance. Bunter's fat mind dwelt on the blissful possibility of getting out of class that morning, if Quelch was laid up.

"I say, you fellows, bet you he's ill!" declared Bunter. "I jolly well know that Quelch rambles round at night, sometimes, looking for that fellow who's been prowling the House after lights

out. Well, very likely he's caught a cold."

"Fathead!" said Bob Cherry. "If he was ill he would ring, and somebody would go up."

"Might be too ill to ring!" suggested Bunter brightly. "I say, if Quelch is fearfully ill, we may get off a whole lesson—perhaps two. Might get the whole morning!"

Bunter beamed at the happy thought.

**Exciting School-Adventure
Yarn of HARRY WHARTON
& CO., of GREYFRIARS, re-
introducing JACK DRAKE,
late of the Remove, and now
Detective Locke's clever boy
assistant.**

"Shut up, you fat frog!" said Harry Wharton. "Quelch isn't ill—"

"No such luck!" sighed Skinner.

"But he certainly hasn't come down," said Frank Nugent. "And he hasn't had his brekker in bed. Trotter went up and tapped at his door, and it was locked, and Quelch didn't answer."

"It's jolly queer!" said Johnny Bull.

"The queerfulness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "There goes the absurd bell, and there is no Quelch!"

Greyfriars fellows headed for the House, as the bell for class clanged out. Other Forms went into their Form-

rooms, but the Remove had to wait. They clustered at the door of the Remove-room, and waited—wondering more and more.

Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, passed them, and stopped to speak. All the masters had noticed, and commented upon, Quelch's unaccountable absence.

"Has not your Form-master come down yet?" asked Prout.

"No, sir!" answered Harry Wharton.

"It is extraordinary!" said Prout.

"Very unusual for Mr. Quelch to over-sleep himself like this! Very! One of you had better go and tell him that the bell has rung for class."

Prout rolled on to his Form-room.

"One of us better hadn't!" remarked Vernon-Smith, when Prout was out of hearing. "Anybody in a hurry for class?"

"Hardly!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"But we can't keep on waiting here!" said Johnny Bull.

"No fear!" Smithy grinned. "You know the rule—we wait fifteen minutes, and if the beak doesn't turn up, class is off."

"That's all very well!" said Harry Wharton, shaking his head. "But I think Quelch would expect his head boy to give him a call."

"Let him expect!"

"I suppose nothing can have happened to Quelch!" said Bob. "He looked his usual bonny self last night."

"Fast asleep, and snoring!" said Smithy. "Let him snore! It's a ripping morning, and we can get some football, if we get off class."

Harry Wharton shook his head again. He was not, it was true, fearfully keen

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on class. He was not looking forward with happy anticipation to Latin. He would, in fact, have preferred football.

But he was head boy of the Remove, and a head boy had his duty to consider. And really there was no doubt that, if Quelch was sleeping on to that unaccustomed hour, it was up to his head boy to give him the tip.

"I think I'll go up," said Harry.

"Think again," snapped Smithy.

"Rats!" answered the captain of the Remove cheerfully. And he walked away—to give Quelch a call; not much to the satisfaction of the other juniors, most of whom agreed heartily with Smithy's point of view.

Harry Wharton was greatly puzzled, as he made his way up the stairs, and crossed the landing to the passage on which the masters' rooms opened.

It was quite possible that Quelch had been up in the night; for plenty of fellows knew, or suspected, that he sometimes kept a nocturnal eye open for the prowler—the unknown and mysterious fellow who prowled the house at night. In that case, he had lost some sleep, and was perhaps making up for it now.

Still, it was very puzzling.

If Quelch was still asleep, he was sleeping in a style worthy of Billy Bunter, of his Form. Bells did not awaken Bunter; but it was very odd if they did not awaken Quelch. And if he was not still asleep, it was inexplicable why he did not come down.

Wharton reached his door, and tapped on it.

There was no answer from within, so he tapped again, and as there was still no reply he thumped.

Thump, thump!

He listened.

It seemed to him that he heard a slight sound, as of someone stirring on a bed. But that was all. There was no answer to his knock.

More and more surprised, Harry Wharton gave another thump, and then turned the door-handle.

The door did not open. He had heard that Trotter, the House page, had gone up once and found it locked. It was still locked. There was no getting in; and Mr. Quelch seemed deaf to knocking on the door.

Harry Wharton stooped, to place his mouth near the keyhole, and shouted.

"Mr. Quelch!"

No reply.

"Mr. Quelch!" The captain of the Remove fairly roared. "The bell's gone, sir, and the Form's waiting for you."

Silence!

Bang, bang, bang!

Wharton hit the door with his knuckles, and hit it hard. He was beginning to feel a vague alarm now. Quelch had to wake up and answer.

But there was no reply to the bangs. Again Wharton fancied he heard a faint rustling, as if someone had stirred. But no voice responded; no footstep came to the door.

Quelch, he was certain, was there. In fact, his ears told him that there was someone in the room, and it could only be the Remove master. The fact that he stirred, showed that he was not asleep—besides, he couldn't possibly be, after that banging and shouting at the door. Why he did not answer was an utter mystery.

Wharton was getting really alarmed now.

It seemed impossible that anything could have happened to Mr. Quelch, in his own room, with the door locked. Yet, if he was able to speak, why didn't he?

"Mr. Quelch!" Wharton gave a final

shout. "Can you hear me? Will you answer, sir?"

Silence!

"If you do not answer, sir, I must go and call the headmaster."

Still silence!

Harry Wharton gave it up at that. Clearly, there was something wrong in Quelch's room, though he could not begin to guess what it was, and the sooner Dr. Locke was told the better. Harry Wharton scudded down the stairs, and cut off to the Sixth Form Room to call the Head.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Something Like A Surprise!

KNOCK, knock, knock!

"My dear Quelch!"

Knock, knock!

"Bless my soul!" said Dr. Locke. "What can have happened? Something must have happened! Quelch! Please answer me, Quelch!"

Faintly came a stirring sound, from the locked bed-room. But there was no other sound.

Dr. Locke's benign countenance had expressed something rather like annoyance when he was called away from the Sixth Form Room. But now it expressed only concern.

He knocked and knocked and knocked on Quelch's door. He called again and again. But from the Remove master within came no word.

Harry Wharton had followed the headmaster up—not alone! A crowd of Remove fellows came after him. They were all curious to know what could have happened to Quelch and ready to render assistance if required. There was a buzzing crowd on the landing, staring down the passage at the Head, standing at Quelch's door and knocking.

"Bless my soul!" repeated the perplexed headmaster. He glanced round and started a little at the sight of the eager crowd watching him from the landing. "Dear me! What are all you juniors doing here?"

"Can we help, sir?" asked Bob Cherry. "Shall I get my tool-box? I'll have that door open in a jiffy—I mean, very quickly, sir."

"Oh!" The Head paused a moment. "Yes, you may get your tool-box, Cherry, and bring it here."

"Yes, sir!"

Bob Cherry scudded away to the Remove passage to get the tool-box from his study there.

Dr. Locke turned to Quelch's door again and rapped harder than before.

Rap, rap, rap!

"Quelch! Can you hear me, Quelch? Cannot you answer me?"

Rap, rap!

"If you do not answer, Quelch, I shall have no alternative but to force the door," said the Head. "I fear that you must be ill—very ill."

Still there was no answer.

From the direction of the landing came a fat, excited squeak:

"I say, you fellows, I wonder if old Quelch has been knocked out, like Loder of the Sixth was, you know? I wonder if—"

"By gum!" said the Bounder. "If that jolly old prowler has been at Quelch—"

"But the door's locked!" said Nugent.

"Might have locked it when he left!"

"Oh, my hat! But—"

"I say, you fellows, fancy seeing Quelch with his eyes blacked, like Loder's, after he bagged that prowler! He, he, he!"

Dr. Locke glanced round.

"Silence!" he thundered.

The buzz of voices died down. But excitement was growing quite intense now. And the Head's own face was anxious.

The suggestion that the night prowler of Greyfriars might have been at work was startling. Startling as it was, it suggested a solution of the mystery of Quelch's room.

For several weeks now that prowler had prowled undiscovered. Twice he had had narrow escapes. One night Loder of the Sixth had grabbed him, and had been knocked out and left with two black eyes. Another night Mr. Prout had spotted someone in the Head's study at a very late hour, and had been knocked over by a banging door. Since then the prowler had prowled once more, and pilfered a bundle of currency notes from the Head's study desk. That, so far as was known, was his last exploit. But now—

Bob Cherry came scudding back with his tool-box. The whole crowd made a movement to follow him up the passage from the landing, but the Head waved them back.

"Now, Cherry, if you can open this door—" said the Head.

"Yes, sir, in a brace of shakes—"

"What?"

"I mean, immediately, sir!"

"Proceed at once, Cherry!" said Dr. Locke.

Bob Cherry proceeded at once. Bob was always rather keen on handling the tools from that tool-box. He rather fancied himself as an amateur carpenter who could make things—though the Remove fellows said that when he handled his tools he never made anything but a row!

He made row enough now. With a hammer and a cold chisel it was possible to make quite a lot of row, and Bob made a lot! Banging and clanging rang far and wide as Bob set to work on the lock of the door.

Bang, bang! Clang, clang! Bang!

Bob held the chisel in one hand and banged on it with the hammer in the other.

Bang, bang, bang!

"Yaroooh!" came a sudden roar.

Hammer and chisel dropped, clanging, to the floor, and Bob Cherry was seen to leap like a kangaroo and jam his thumb into his mouth.

Dr. Locke gazed at him in astonishment.

"Cherry, what are you doing? Why are you wasting time in that absurd manner? What—"

"Yaroooh!"

"Cherry! What—"

"Ow! My thumb! Wow! My thumb!" howled Bob. "Wow! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came from the landing.

"Yow-ow! Wow!"

"Cherry, what do you mean?" exclaimed the Head angrily. "How dare you? What is the matter with your thumb?"

"Ow! I hit it with the hammer! Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! Cherry, you are clumsy—you are stupid! Cease that absurd noise at once! Stand aside! Wharton, see if you can open that door."

"Yes, sir," said Harry.

Bob, in anguish, sucked an agonised thumb, while Harry Wharton proceeded to handle the tools—taking rather more care than Bob where the hammer landed.

Five minutes of banging and clanging did the trick. The lock sagged loose, and it was possible to force the door open.



"We're going to Friardale to fetch in a duck for Quelch," said Bob Cherry, with a grin. "What on earth does Quelch want a duck for?" exclaimed Bunter, in astonishment. "Well, he's got an owl—that's you—now he's going to have a duck, too!"

Wharton put his shoulder to it, and Bob, having partially recovered by that time, added a more hefty shoulder. They shoved together, and the door flew open—so suddenly that both of them nose-dived into the room.

Two startled howls were blended into one.

Dr. Locke, frowning, stepped in after the two sprawling juniors. His gaze swept the room.

"Good heavens!" he ejaculated, aghast.

Wharton and Bob Cherry scrambled up! Their gaze followed the Head's to a figure that lay on the bed. It looked like a bundle of blankets tied round with twisted sheets. Nothing else could be seen, but the fact that the bundle wriggled told that it contained something alive.

That accounted for the stirring sound that had been heard. Quelch, clearly, could not speak; he could not move except to wriggle. He wriggled!

"Great pip!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"Oh, holy smoke!" stammered Bob.

"Is—is—is that Mr. Quelch?" articulated the Head.

There was a rush of feet in the passage. The Remove fellows simply had to know what had happened. The doorway was crammed with faces. There was a roar of amazement.

"Quelch—"

"Look!"

"Oh crikey!"

"That's Quelch—"

"Oh crumbs!"

Dr. Locke stood as if transfixed. He had not known what to expect when Quelch's door was opened. But certainly he had not expected this! He was not expecting anything like this. He was dumfounded.

Harry Wharton ran to the bedside.

He grabbed a twisted sheet, tore at the knots, and dragged them loose. A head emerged from the rolled blankets, and the face of Henry Samuel Quelch was revealed—at least, the upper half of it! The lower half was hidden by a towel, bound over the mouth to serve as a gag! A faint gurgle came from under the towel, audible now that the head was free of the blankets.

Wharton dragged off the towel. Then Quelch spoke.

"Urrrrgh!"

That was his first remark.

"Gurrrgh!"

That was his next.

"Quelch!" articulated the Head. "My dear Quelch! What—who—how—Bless my soul! My dear Quelch—"

Quelch's face crimsoned with rage and mortification.

No doubt he was glad to be released. Probably he was grateful for the same. But he did not look, at the moment, glad or grateful. He looked infuriated. It was most fearfully exasperating to be revealed, in such a predicament, under the staring eyes of half his Form. Mr. Quelch glared at the crammed faces in the doorway.

"Quelch! You—"

"Will you send the boys away, sir?" Quelch found his voice. "If you will have the kindness to send those boys to their Form-room—"

"Oh, certainly! Boys, go down to your Form-room at once—this moment!" rapped the Head. "Wharton—Cherry—the rest of you, go to your Form-room! Lose no time!"

The Head waved a hand, waving the juniors off like troublesome chickens.

The Removes crowded down the stairs, buzzing with excitement, and Mr. Quelch was left to his chief's aid.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bumps For A Bully!

"I SAY, you fellows, ain't it funny?" Billy Bunter chortled.

The Remove Form Room was in a buzz. The juniors had gone there by the Head's order, Wharton fetching the key from Mr. Quelch's study to let them in. But they were not thinking of class.

Quelch—if he were coming—had not yet come. While the cat was away, the mice, naturally, played! Fellows stood in groups or sat on the desks, excitedly discussing the amazing happening in Quelch's room.

Billy Bunter, as close to the Form-room fire as he could get, basked in warmth and chuckled. Quelch's extraordinary predicament, tied up in a roll of blankets, struck Bunter as funny. Quelch, obviously, had been through a tough time, and Bunter, at least, hoped that he would not recover from the effects too soon! Frowning over the fire suited Bunter ever so much better than work.

"Tied up like a turkey!" grinned Herbert Vernon-Smith. "Poor old Quelch! He must have been glad to hear you at the door, Wharton."

"Thank goodness I went up!" said Harry.

"Well, yes, as it turns out!" admitted the Bounder. "It must have been the jolly old prowler that got Quelch!"

"Got him in the night!" said Skinner. "But why—"

"The whyfulness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamsot Ram Singh.

"Oh, that's an easy one!" said Smithy. "Bet you there's something missing from Quelch's room!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Bob. "You think that—"

"That jolly old prowler doesn't prow for fun," said the Bounder. "He was after the dough, same as in the Head's study last week. I dare say Quelch woke up and spotted him."

"Some nerve, bagging a beak like that!" said Johnny Bull, with a whistle.

"Oh, he's got nerve, whoever he is!" said Smithy. "He knocked out Loder of the Sixth one night, and banged a door on old Prout's nose another night. Now it's Quelch's turn."

"But who—?" said Frank Nugent.

"Who the dickens—?" said Peter Todd.

"I say, you fellows"—Billy Bunter blinked round through his big spectacles—"I say, did Smithy go down from the dorm last night?"

Only Herbert Vernon-Smith answered that question. He did not answer it in words. He shot out his foot, which landed on tight trousers, and there was a yell from Billy Bunter.

"Owl! Beast! Wow! Leave off kicking me, Smithy, you beast! I was only asking if you— Yaroooooh!"

"Keep on asking," snapped the Bounder, "and I'll keep on booting you! I'll keep it up as long as you do!"

"Beast!"

Bunter ceased making inquiries on that subject.

"Of course, the prowler's a senior man," said Tom Redwing. "I was sure of it from the first by the way Loder was knocked out. This proves it. No junior could have handled Quelch."

"That looks like a cert," agreed Bob Cherry.

"Fifth or Sixth Form man?" agreed Bolsover major. "But who—and which?"

"That's a jolly old mystery."

"Loder still thinks it was Smithy," remarked Lord Mauleverer. "But I wonder what he will say now? He can't fancy that Smithy could handle Quelch, even if he was ass enough, which even Smithy isn't."

"Thanks!" grinned the Bounder.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Talk of angels, and you hear the rustle of their giddy wings!"

The Form-room door opened, and Loder of the Sixth stepped in.

All eyes turned on Loder.

The Sixth Form were in class; but, as the headmaster had left him, Loder had apparently given himself leave out. No doubt he had caught something of what had happened, and was curious to know more.

He glanced over the crowd of Removites, and his eyes fixed grimly on the Bounder. The bully of the Sixth had a special down on Smithy these days.

"Want anything here, Loder?" asked Harry Wharton politely.

"Barge him out!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith. "Loder ain't a prefect now, and he's come here to ask for it!"

Loder gave him a black and bitter look. Nothing would shake Loder's belief that Smithy was the wanted man. The peculiar methods he had adopted to prove his case had caused his headmaster to take away his rank of prefect. Loder no longer carried the official ashplant under his arm, and was no longer an object of terror to small fags.

"I've just heard what's happened," said Loder, speaking to the captain of the Remove. "The prowler's been at it again, and he's got Quelch this time. Quelch's room has been pilfered, like the Head's study last week. We all

know now what that prowling rascal is after."

"The knowfulness is terrific, esteemed Loder!" said Hurree Singh. "But the absurd prowler is still a preposterous mystery."

"Well, the whole school knows what I think about that!" said Loder, with another bitter glare at Vernon-Smith. "The fellow who blacked my eyes and cracked Prout's nose is the fellow who got Quelch last night. Where have you hidden the loot, Vernon-Smith, you young scoundrel?"

The Bounder's eyes blazed.

"Chuck that, Loder!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "You seem to have forgotten that you're not a prefect now. Any more of that, and you'll get punched!"

"If I were a prefect now I'd go through that young rotter's pockets!" said Loder venomously. "The Head doesn't believe in searching pockets. I do!"

"You would!" said Harry.

"You've got a thief in this Form!" went on Loder. "I've no doubt some of you know that Vernon-Smith left his dormitory after lights out. And you know what he was after— Yoo-hoo! Ooooh!"

Loder was suddenly interrupted.

Vernon-Smith had stepped to his desk. He jerked out the ink-well, and, with a swing of his arm, sent the contents of the same in a whizzing stream at Loder of the Sixth.

Loder caught the ink with all his features at once. He staggered, with a spluttering howl.

There was a yell from the delighted Removites. Loder, as a prefect, could not have been interrupted in this unceremonious way. But if Gerald Loder had forgotten that he no longer held the rank of prefect, Vernon-Smith hadn't. Loder could be treated now like any other fellow who threw his weight about too much, and the Bounder was the man to make that clear unto him.

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

"He, he, he!" cackled Billy Bunter. "I say, you fellows, Loder looks inky! He, he, he!"

"Gurgh!" spluttered Loder, clawing ink. "Urgh!"

"You asked for that, Loder!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "You'd better get out of our Form-room!"

Loder did not appear to think so. He clawed ink from his face and made a fierce rush at Herbert Vernon-Smith.

"Collar him!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Bag him!" yelled Squiff.

A dozen or more Removites rushed at Loder as he rushed at Smithy. He was grabbed on all sides. His feet swept from under him.

"Bump him!" shouted Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bump the cheeky cad!" shouted Vernon-Smith. "Give him jip!"

Bump!

Loder struggled wildly. He had awakened rather a hornets' nest in the Remove Form Room.

There was hardly a fellow in the Remove who would not have been glad to rag Loder in his days as a prefect. Now they could rag him—and they did!

Gerald Loder bumped hard on the floor of the Form-room. He roared as he bumped. His face, where it was not black with ink, was red with rage. He struggled and wriggled and kicked.

Bump!

"Oh!" howled Loder. "Ow! I—I—I—"

Bump!

"Whooop!"

"Now chuck him out!" grinned the Bounder.

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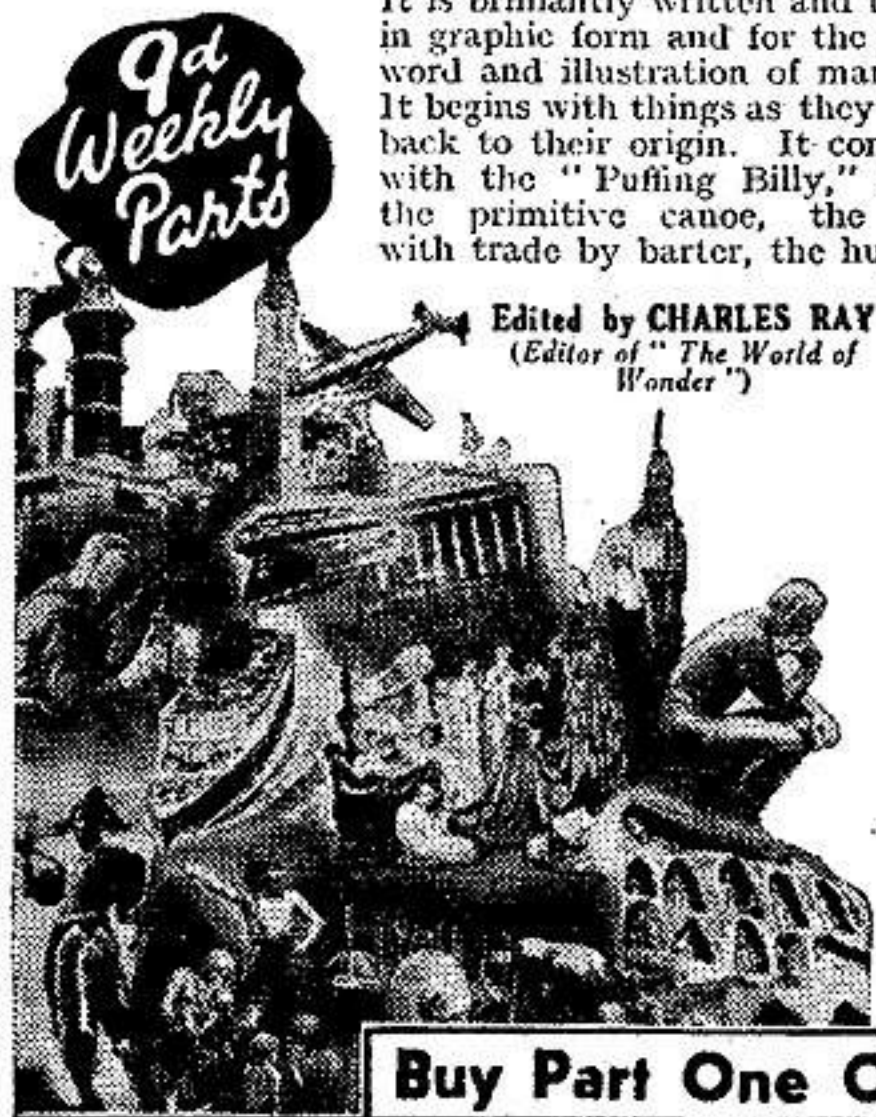
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Loder had been deeply disgruntled when he was deprived of his rank of prefect. But never till this moment had he realised how far the once-mighty had fallen.

Nobody cared a boiled bean for Loder now. Every fellow lent a hand at whirling him to the Form-room door.

He flew out of that doorway, with thrashing arms and legs. There was a thud in the passage as he landed.

"What-ho, he bumps!" chortled Bob Cherry.

"Come in and have some more, Loder!" yelled the Bounder.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Lots more if you want it, Loder!"

"Do come in!"

Loder scrambled to his feet, panting for breath. He gave the juniors packed in the Form-room doorway a deadly look, but he did not come in.

It was only too clear that, if Loder came in again, he would go out again in the same manner.

Gerald Loder did not want history to repeat itself in that way. He panted and glared and tramped away, followed by a howl of derision from the Remove.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Surprising!

"WHARTON!"

Wingate of the Sixth came out of the House in break and called to the captain of the Remove.

"Yes, Wingate?" Harry Wharton was punting a footer with the Co., but he left them and came up as he was called.

"Quelch's study!" said Wingate.

"Oh!"

Wingate grinned.

"Not a row, I think," he said; "but your Form-master wants you. Cut in!"

Harry Wharton did not feel sure that it was not a row as he went in and made his way to the Remove master's study.

The Remove had not seen Quelch that morning—after the glimpse of him tied up in his blanket. Probably after that experience Quelch did not feel quite equal to taking his Form. Possibly, too, he was in no hurry to face the eyes that had beheld him in that rather ridiculous position.

Monsieur Charpentier had taken the Remove in extra French till break. Mossoo had not had a very orderly class.

Wharton wondered whether Quelch had heard of Loder's exit from the Form-room, and whether any uproar had reached his ears during the French class. So he was rather wary as he tapped at Quelch's door.

The expression on Quelch's face was not encouraging.

Seldom had Wharton seen his Form-master looking so grim.

"You sent for me, sir," murmured Harry.

"Yes, Wharton." Mr. Quelch's brow cleared a little as he addressed his head boy.

Wharton, it seemed, was not the object of his wrath. No doubt he was thinking of the mysterious and unknown prowler who had bundled him in his blankets the night before.

He coloured faintly as he met the junior's eyes.

He could not fail to remember that Wharton had seen him tied up in a bundle—and Quelch hated to appear ridiculous.

"I am much obliged to you, my boy, for coming up to my room this morning." Quelch spoke with an evident

effort. "I might have remained there much longer had you not done so. It is, however, about another matter that I desire to speak." Quite plainly Quelch was glad to get off the subject.

"Yes, sir," said Harry.

"A new boy is coming into the Remove to-day," said Mr. Quelch. "He will arrive at Friardale by a morning train—eleven-thirty."

He paused, and Wharton waited for more. It was unusual for a new boy to arrive so late in the term. Still, it sometimes happened. But the captain of the Remove could not quite see how it concerned him specially.

"I desire him to be met at the railway station, Wharton," went on Mr. Quelch. "You will be excused from third school for the purpose."

"Oh, certainly, sir!" said Harry, more and more surprised.

"If you desire, you may take your friends with you," added Mr. Quelch. "You may take Cherry, Nugent, Bull, and Hurree Singh."

"Yes, sir," said Harry, wondering, but cheerful.

A run out into the fresh air, instead of third school, was quite a pleasant prospect.

But it was rather mystifying. Wharton could see no particular need for a new fellow to be met at the station at all. But for five fellows to be let off class to go to meet him was really an astonishing occurrence.

Wharton wondered whether this was a sort of reward for having been the means of releasing Quelch from his painful predicament that morning. Otherwise, he could not understand it.

"You will meet this boy at the station in Friardale and bring him to the school," went on Mr. Quelch.

"Certainly, sir! Jolly glad to!" said Harry cheerfully. "What is his name, sir?"

"His name?" repeated Mr. Quelch.

Why he hesitated in answering was a further puzzle to his head boy. Surely Quelch could not have forgotten the name of a new boy who was coming into his Form!

"I'd better know his name, sir, if I'm to meet him," said Harry, quite astonished as his Form-master did not reply.

"Oh, yes, quite!" said Mr. Quelch. "Probably you will find the boy without difficulty, Wharton, and when you see him you will ask him whether his name is James Duck."

"James Duck," repeated Harry.

"Yes, sir."

It was not till long afterwards that Harry Wharton recalled that Mr. Quelch had not actually said that the new boy's name was James Duck.

"James Duck," repeated Mr. Quelch. "Please take care to be at the station in time, Wharton, and do not fail to meet this boy. You and your friends may start at once."

"Very well, sir."

Harry Wharton left the study still wondering.

In the quad he rejoined the Co., who were waiting for him, not wholly easy in their minds.

"Row about chucking Loder out?" asked Bob.

"Is the rowfulness terrific?" inquired Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"No fear! We're all in luck!" he answered. "I suppose you fellows know that third school this morning is maths with Lascelles?"

"Don't remind us of it till it happens, fathead!" groaned Bob Cherry.

"We're cutting it—"

"What?"

"Excuse all round!" said Harry, laughing. "That is, of course, if you fellows would like a walk down to the village, instead of maths with Larry Lascelles. Any fellow who prefers maths can stand out."

"Oh, my hat! Gee-lorious!" roared Bob. "Hurrah—and all that! But what the jolly old dickens—"

"There's a new kid coming into the Remove—"

"Bit late coming, isn't he?"

"All the better, as he's getting us off maths. We're picked out—because we're the nicest fellows in the Form, I suppose—to meet him on his way and guide his baby footsteps to Greyfriars."

"Eh? Can't he find his own way from the village?" asked Johnny Bull, staring.

"Seems not. Anyhow, there it is; we're to go. But if you prefer maths—" grinned the captain of the Remove.

"I don't think! We'll go! Blessed if I can understand Quelch letting us off class to meet a new kid, though!"

"The understandfulness is not terrific," remarked Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "But the happy escape from mathematics will be a boonful blessing! Never mind the whyfulness. One should never look a gift horse in the pitcher that goes longest to the well, as the English proverb remarks."

"Some proverb!" chuckled Bob.

"Well, if this new kid needs five fellows to see him safe to the school he must be a giddy specimen of a soft ass; but we'll roll him safely in, this side up with care."

"What's his name?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Duck."

"Oh orikey! There was a chap in the Remove once named Drake, and now we're getting a Duck! Some name!"

"Oh, Duck's quite a jolly good name! Lots of people named Duck," said Bob. "I should say he was an innocent sort of duck to have to be walked to the school by a mob of Remove fellows. But I shan't be sorry not to see Larry this morning."

"Hear, hear!"

And when the bell rang for third school the Famous Five, instead of heading for the House like less fortunate fellows, walked down to the gates in cap and overcoat.

"I say, you fellows, there's the bell!" squeaked Billy Bunter, blinking after them in surprise.

"That bell's only for common mortals like you, old fat man!" answered Bob Cherry. "We're going duck-hunting."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I know you jolly well ain't going duck-hunting!" exclaimed the fat Owl of the Remove.

"Have you got leave off class?"

"Right on the wicket!"

"Well, it jolly well ain't fair!" exclaimed Bunter warmly. "Look here, think Quelch would give me leave, too, if I asked him?"

"Not likely! You see, we're picked out specially because we're nice. No chance for you, you see."

"Beast! Anyhow, I jolly well know you ain't going duck-hunting!"

"We are—we is! We're going down specially to Friardale to fetch in a Duck for Quelch."

"Gammon! There ain't a poulterer's in Friardale at all. You'd have to go to Courtfield."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I jolly well know that you can't get a duck in Friardale."

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"This Duck is coming specially by train," explained Bob. "Look out after third school and you'll see us leading it in."

"A live duck?" exclaimed Bunter.

"Oh, yes, rather—unless there's been a railway accident—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What on earth does Quelch want a live duck for?" exclaimed the fat Owl, in astonishment. "Ain't he going to eat the duck?"

"Oh crikey! Probably not!" gasped Bob. "Quelch wasn't brought up in the South Sea Islands."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But what does Quelch want the duck for, then?" howled Bunter.

"Adding to his ornithological collection," explained Bob. "He's got an owl—that's you—now he's going to have a duck, too."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Famous Five, leaving Billy Bunter deeply mystified, walked out of gates, and sauntered cheerfully down to the village.

They were in good time for the train, and they waited on the wind-swept platform at Friardale Station for the eleven-thirty to come in, wondering what the new fellow, James Duck, would be like, and wondering still more why they were there to meet him.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The New Fellow!

JACK DRAKE sat in a corner seat as the train boomed on towards Friardale Station.

He had a copy of the "Gem" open on his knee, but he was not reading now; he was looking from the windows at the old familiar scenes.

Drake, once a junior in the Greyfriars Remove, was now the assistant of Ferrers Locke, the famous detective; but no one, looking at him, could have guessed anything of the kind.

He looked a schoolboy—as, indeed, he was once more. He played the part all the more easily, because it was a welcome and agreeable one.

More than once since he had joined Ferrers Locke's staff, Drake had revisited his old school—as glad to see his old friends, Harry Wharton & Co., as they were to see him.

But this time his visit was being made in unusual circumstances.

Looking at him, anyone would have taken him for a schoolboy; but the fellows at Greyfriars who knew him best would not have taken him for Jack Drake.

He had no elaborate disguise, but a few skilful and careful touches were enough to change his appearance sufficiently for his purpose.

His hair was darker and a trifle longer; his clear, fresh complexion had a faint olive tint; his eyebrows were thicker; and other little changes in his looks made a complete difference—most of all, perhaps, a pair of steel-rimmed spectacles.

The lenses of these spectacles were of plain glass, and did not bother him. Behind them his eyes were as keen as ever.

Looking from the window, as the train ran into the station, Drake spotted a group of five juniors on the platform and smiled.

He knew Harry Wharton & Co. again at a glance, but he was confident that they would not know him.

He would have been better pleased to come to Greyfriars School in his own proper person, and greet his old pals

under his own name; but it was not as a schoolboy—except in appearance—that he was coming back to Greyfriars, but as a detective.

At Greyfriars, headmaster and Form-masters and prefects had failed to spot the mysterious night prowler, who for several weeks had prowled the school. And since that prowler's object had been discovered—on the occasion when Dr. Locke's desk had been rifled at night of a wad of currency notes—it was clear that measures had to be taken to discover the mystery man.

All Greyfriars School knew that Drake was now a detective, so it would have been hardly useful to arrive in his own name and character. The prowler would not have been likely to prowl again while he was there.

But as a new boy in the Remove, a spectacled youth under the name of James Duck, it was quite a different proposition. The prowler was not likely to be on his guard against J. Duck of the Lower Fourth, even if he noticed the existence of a new junior at all.

It was to test his disguise—though they were far from guessing it—that Harry Wharton & Co. were at Friardale Station that morning. They were the fellows who knew Jack Drake best, and if he passed muster with them there was no doubt that he would pass muster with ease with the rest of the school.

Only the Head and Mr. Quelch knew that J. Duck was in reality Jack Drake. From all others the secret was carefully kept.

The train stopped in the old village station that Drake knew so well. He rose and threw open the door.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came a cheery hawl, familiar to the ears of the boy detective. "Here he is!"

Several other passengers alighted from the train at Friardale, but only one looked anything like a schoolboy; so the waiting juniors had no doubt that this was "James Duck."

They cut across the platform to meet him, and regarded him with some interest. The junior eyed them through the steel-rimmed glasses, with a faint twinkle of amusement in his eyes.

Not a glimmer of recognition was in the faces of the Famous Five. They saw, as they supposed, a total stranger before them.

"New man for Greyfriars?" asked Bob Cherry cheerily.

The spectacled youth blinked at him and shook his head.

"No; I'm a new boy," he answered.

Apparently he did not know that at Greyfriars all boys were men, and did not catch on.

"Oh!" ejaculated Bob. His impression was that the new fellow was a bit of a fool, and he did not guess that that was the impression that the new fellow desired to give in his Form. "Same thing, kid. Your name's Duck?"

"Our Form-master has sent us here to meet a new chap named Duck," explained Harry Wharton.

"Oh! In that case you've got the right man," said the new junior. "Are you going to show me the way to the school? That is very kind of you, and very kind of Mr. Squeech."

"Not Squeech—Quelch!" said Bob, with a chuckle. "If you call Quelch Squeech you will hear something drop."

"The dropfulness will be terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

The new junior looked at the Nabob of Bhanipur as he spoke. Jack Drake was well acquainted with the nabob's remarkable and exotic variety of the English language, but James Duck was

not supposed to be. And on strangers the English Hurree Singh had learned from the wisest moonshee in Bhanipur always had a surprising effect.

"What did you say?" ejaculated James Duck.

"I remarkably observed that the dropfulness would be terrific, my esteemed and absurd Duck," answered Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Four members of the Co. chortled.

"That's Inky's way of speaking English," explained Frank Nugent.

"Oh, my hat! Is his name really Inky?" exclaimed James Duck. "I never knew there was such a name as Inky."

"Oh, no! We call him Inky, because of his snow-white complexion," said Bob. "His real name is Humpty Chump Bang Jampot."

"My esteemed and idiotic Bob!" protested Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The jokefulness with the absurd new fellow is not the proper caper. My esteemed Duck, my idiotic name is Hurree Jamset Ram Singh."

"The others are shorter, if not sweeter," said Bob. "Wharton, Nugent, Bull, and Cherry—that's me. Got the lot?"

"Yes, I think so," said Duck, with an owlish blink. "Carter—"

"No; Wharton. Wharton's captain of the Form."

"Oh, yes, Wharton! And Blucher—"

"No, Nugent—Frank Nugent."

"And Bullock—"

"Bull!" growled the owner of that name. Johnny rather liked his name, which was a good old British name, with no nonsense about it. But he did not seem to like being called Bullock.

"And Gooseberry," said the new junior. "Did you say Gooseberry?"

"No, I didn't; I said Cherry!"

"Oh, yes! Sherry—"

"Cherry!" hooted Bob.

"Oh, Cherry! I've got it right now," said James Duck cheerfully. "I haven't much of a memory for names. I say, it's very nice of you to come and meet me at the station. I might have lost my way to the school."

"I shouldn't wonder," agreed Bob. "It's less than a mile, and a straight road; but I dare say you would have. How did you manage to take the right train when you changed at Courtfield?"

"Eh? I didn't."

"You didn't?"

"No; the train took me," explained James Duck.

Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at the simple, spectacled face of the new junior.

They wondered whether this remark was intended as a joke. But James Duck's face was perfectly solemn. Apparently he was speaking with the greatest seriousness.

"Oh, my hat!" said Johnny Bull. "Bunter will be glad you're in the Remove, Duck."

"Who's Bunter?"

"The biggest ass in our Form. But he won't be, after you get in," explained Johnny.

"Hem!" said Bob. "Come on, you men! We've got to look after Duck's box, and get it sent on! This way, Ducky!"

James Duck's box having been seen to, the Famous Five walked him out of the station and down the village street to Friardale Lane. And as they started for Greyfriars, all of them were of Johnny Bull's opinion—that, after this new fellow had joined up, Billy Bunter would no longer be the biggest ass in the Remove.



In another moment, the thick, heavy thong of the cart whip would have been lashing across Harry Wharton & Co. But in that moment, James Duck put out a foot, and Crocker stumbled over it. "Yooo-hoop!" roared the bully.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Swipe!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! That sweep!"

Bob Cherry made that remark as the bunch of juniors came up to the corner of Friardale Lane, in sight of the school gates.

At that corner was the old spinney, that had once been part of the monastic lands when Greyfriars had been a monastery, and which was still called the Abbot's Spinney.

The hiker's hut, which had been built over the remains of the ancient stone cell in the spinney, lay a little back from the lane. In front was a weedy garden, with a muddy path down to the gate in the wooden fence on the lane.

On the gate leaned a man in blue overalls and leather apron, smoking a cigarette; and his sharp, shifty eyes fixed on the Greyfriars juniors as they came up.

He gave them a scowl.

Randolph Crocker, once of the Greyfriars Sixth, expelled long years ago from his school, did not like those cheery youths.

James Duck glanced at the man as Bob spoke. A look of surprise dawned on his simple face.

"Did you say sweep?" he asked.

"Yes—that sweep!" said Bob.

"He doesn't look like a sweep!" said Duck. "And it says on the board over the fence that he mends boots and shoes. Isn't he a cobbler?"

"When I say sweep, I mean sweep, not sweep!" grunted Bob. "I mean he's a sweep—a tick—a worm—a rotter! Understand?"

"Oh! Yes! Who is he?" asked Duck.

He glanced with some interest, and a good deal of surprise, at the man leaning on the gate, and the sign on the fence. The sign announced that Ran-

dolph Crocker, formerly of Greyfriars School, was prepared to sole and heel boots and shoes with promptness and dispatch!

It was, undoubtedly, a surprising thing to behold within sight of the gates of Greyfriars School.

"He's an old Greyfriars man!" explained Harry Wharton. "He was turfed out of Greyfriars donkey's years ago, for all sorts of things—pinching, among the rest. He's come back and set up that show to worry the Head."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Duck.

"He pretends to mend boots and shoes, but he doesn't do anything of the kind," went on Harry. "It's a stunt to worry Dr. Locke. He's been there for weeks now. I've heard that he's taken that place, from the estate agent in Courtfield, for three months! So he can't be shifted. He's got the whole neighbourhood buzzing about him—people come miles to stare at an old Greyfriars man setting up as a cobbler right at the school gates!"

"What a stunt!" ejaculated Duck. "He must feel awfully sore against the headmaster."

"No doubt about that!" answered Bob.

"But if he feels like that, he seems to have left it over a long time," said Duck. "How long is it since he was expelled?"

"Nearly twenty years, I believe."

"And he only turned up to play this game a few weeks ago?"

"That's it!" said Harry. "He told Gosling, the porter, that he had been away in America. I suppose that was the reason. Anyhow, he's here now, and he seems to be going to stick here. Everybody for ten miles round has heard of him—it's a regular topic, all over the shop, that Randolph Crocker, who once belonged to Greyfriars, has set up here to worry his old headmaster. Some-

times there's quite a crowd here, staring up at that sign."

"They'll be running excursion buses soon from Lantham and Canterbury!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Must have a nerve to come back here and draw attention to himself, if he was expelled for pinching!" said Duck.

"Oh, he's got a skin as thick as a rhinoceros!" said Wharton contemptuously. "Everybody knows he pinched, and was kicked out of the school for it; and he doesn't care. All he cares about is to get the Head's rag out."

"He seems to know you fellows!" remarked Duck.

The keen eyes behind the steel-rimmed spectacles had noted at once the evil look that that peculiar old boy of Greyfriars gave the Famous Five.

"The dear man doesn't love us!" said Bob. "You see, we ducked him in the ditch yonder one afternoon—to give him a lesson to keep his cheeky paws to himself. He would like to mop us up this minute, but he knows he can't handle the bunch of us."

The party of juniors were almost opposite the gate in the spinney fence now. The stubby face, with its thick, ragged moustache, looking over the gate, watched them as they came.

But Randolph Crocker ceased to scowl as they came by, and touched his old hat to them, with an air of sardonic respect.

"Good-morning, young gentlemen!" he said. "Stop a minute, will you?"

The juniors paused.

"What do you want?" asked Harry Wharton curtly.

"I'm not doing much business here so far," said Sportsman Crocker. "People come here to look at my sign, but they don't bring me boots and shoes to repair."

"You couldn't repair them if they did!" said Bob Cherry. "What's the

good of making out that you want to work, Crocker? Everybody knows what you're here for."

Crocker grinned.

"Doesn't your headmaster like it?" he inquired.

"You wouldn't be doing it if he did."

"Well, a man must live!" said the former Greyfriars man. "I never made a fortune in the United States, and my old headmaster refuses to give me any sort of a recommendation to get a job of any sort."

"Do you want a testimonial to your skill as a pincher?" asked Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm getting a lot of publicity, but no trade!" said Crocker. "If I hadn't had some luck on a horse, I shouldn't be able to pay my rent here."

"Oh, my hat! If you rely on that to pay your rent, we shall soon see the last of you!"

"Well, naturally, I expect my old school to put some business my way," said Crocker. "But I haven't repaired any Greyfriars boots or shoes since I've been here."

"You don't expect anything of the sort, and you couldn't repair boots and shoes to save your life; and if you could, you're too lazy!" said Johnny Bull.

"Hear, hear!" grinned Bob.

"And I don't believe you're keeping going on backing horses, either," went on Johnny. "That's not common sense! You're not so hard up as you make out—it's all just a stunt to bother the Head."

"The dear old Head, who booted me out!" smiled Crocker. "Tit for tat! He bothered me a lot at one time."

"Did you expect him to keep a pincher in the school?" snorted Johnny.

Randolph Crocker chuckled.

"I've heard that there's a pincher in the school now!" he retorted. "I don't keep my ears shut! I hear a good many things about my dear old school, and what's going on there. Have they turned out that pincher yet?"

The Famous Five made no reply to that.

They coloured uncomfortably.

Crocker had them there, so to speak.

It was a fact that there was a pincher in the school—the night prowler who had rifled the Head's desk.

Nothing had been said of it outside the walls of Greyfriars; but the whole school was in a state of excitement on the subject, and it was not surprising that some hint of it had reached the ears of the Sportsman at Abbot's Spinney, so close to Greyfriars.

"Have I got it right?" grinned Crocker. "I've heard a word here, and a word there. Wasn't there something that happened in the headmaster's study last week?"

"No bizney of yours!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Why, of course, I take a deep interest in my dear old school!" said Crocker. "Give me the latest news. Has that pincher been at it again?"

"Find out!"

"That means that he has!" chuckled Crocker. "What has he done this time?"

"Oh, come on, you men!" said Harry.

"I've had enough of this!"

"The enoughfulness is terrific."

The juniors moved on.

As they passed the gate, it swung suddenly open, and Crocker stepped out, catching up, at the same moment, a cart whip that stood against the gatepost.

Clearly, the Sportsman had not forgotten that ducking in the ditch.

He had, as a matter of fact, seen the

Famous Five pass that morning, on their way to the village station, and he was at the gate, watching for their return—with the cart whip ready to his hand. It seemed to be the Sportsman's intention to give the chums of the Remove something in exchange for that ducking.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Look out!" yelled Bob Cherry, as the old boy of Greyfriars rushed at them, swinging up the whip.

He took no notice of James Duck, who stood staring at him through his steel-rimmed glasses. He rushed at the Famous Five, and in another moment the thick, heavy thong of the cart whip would have been crashing on them.

But in that moment, James Duck put out a sudden foot in his way.

Crocker stumbled over it before he saw it.

As he stumbled, Duck stepped to him quickly, reached at the cart whip, and jerked it from his hand.

The next moment he was swinging it round his head, and as Randolph Crocker picked himself up from the stumble, the thong cut round his legs with a crack that rang like a pistol-shot.

"Yooo-hoop!" roared Crocker.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob.

Crack! rang the cart whip again round Crocker's legs, and, with another yell, he spun round at Duck, and jumped at him.

But the Famous Five did not give him time to lay hands on the new junior. They fairly hurled themselves at Crocker, grasped him, and upended him in the lane. The old boy of Greyfriars went down with a terrific crash.

"By gum!" gasped Bob Cherry, his blue eyes ablaze. "That cheeky sweep had got that whip for us. He's going to have a taste of his own gruel. Hand me that whip, Duck."

He jerked the cart whip from James Duck's hand, and whirled it in the air. It came down across the man sprawling in the dust of Friardale Lane.

Swipe!

Bob Cherry put plenty of beef into that swipe. The thong fairly rang on Randolph Crocker. His frantic yell, as he got it, awoke the echoes of fields and woods and meadows far and wide.

Swipe!

"Go it!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Give him a few more!"

Randolph Crocker did not wait for a few more. He bounded to his feet, and bounded in at the gate in the fence.

The cart whip was in the wrong hands now, and Randolph Crocker did not want to have anything more to do with it. He shot up the path, and disappeared into the hiker's hut, yelling.

"Won't you have a few more?" roared Bob Cherry, brandishing the whip. "Come out and have a few more, Crocker."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Randolph Crocker showed no sign of accepting that invitation. Instead, he slammed the door of the hut.

Bob tossed the whip away across a hedge.

"Come on!" he said. "Duck, old man, we should have got some swipes if you hadn't tripped that hooligan up. How the dickens did you do it?"

"I put my foot in his way," answered James Duck innocently.

"Eh? I know that," said Bob, staring at him. "I mean you can't be such a silly ass as you look, see?"

"That's very nice of you," said Duck. "Perhaps you aren't, either."

"Eh?" Bob blinked at him. "Are you trying to be funny? Come on, fathead! It's time we handed you over to Quelch. The Remove are out long ago."

And the juniors walked on to the school gates, the Famous Five rather wondering whether James Duck was such an ass as they had taken him to be—and Jack Drake's eyes twinkling behind James Duck's spectacles.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

"Good-morning, Henry!"

MR. QUELCH stood at his study window, looking out into the spring sunshine in the quad.

His eyes were fixed on a bunch of juniors coming towards the House, five of whom were quite familiar to his eyes.

It was the sixth who drew his special attention; and Quelch's gimlet eyes scanned him, questioningly and dubiously.

Certainly he had not expected Jack Drake's identity to be in evidence when he arrived at Greyfriars School. That identity was to remain quite unknown to all but Quelch and his chief.

At the same time, as he knew who the boy was, he did not expect to be completely unable to detect any resemblance between him and the Jack Drake who had been in his Form.

But he scanned the olive, spectacled face in vain for any hint that he had ever seen the boy before.

As the fellow came in with the Famous Five, who had gone to meet Duck at the station, this newcomer could hardly be other than the assistant of Ferrers Locke, whom he was expecting.

Nevertheless, the Remove master felt a doubt. If this was Drake, he had left every sign of his real identity behind him in Baker Street.

Mr. Quelch threw up the sash of his window and leaned out, to get a better view of the boy who had come in with the Famous Five.

Third school was over, and there were a good many fellows in the quad. Some of them glanced at the stranger within the gates, but not one of them, obviously, with the least suspicion that he had ever seen him before.

Vernon-Smith came up to the Co. as they passed in view of Mr. Quelch's study window.

"Where did you dig that up?" he asked, apparently referring to the new junior, who was gazing about him through his steel-rimmed glasses.

Bob Cherry grinned.

"It blew in on the eleven-thirty at Friardale, and we found it on the platform," he answered.

"New kid?"

"That's it. We've had special leave from class to roll it home. Did you enjoy the maths while we were gone?"

"That ass Bunter has been saying that you told him you'd gone down to Friardale to fetch in a duck for Quelch—a live duck."

"Ha, ha, ha! That was right! This is the duck," explained Bob.

"James Duck, of that ilk, see?"

"Oh, I see! What the thump did you have to fetch him in for?"

"Might have lost his way," grinned Bob.

"Oh, my hat! Sure his name's Duck? He looks as if it might be Goose," said the Bounder. "Here, Duck! Are you coming into the Remove?"

James Duck blinked at the Bounder. "What's that?" he asked.

"What's that?" repeated Smithy. "That's our Form, fathead!"

"I am going into Mr. Squelch's Form," said Duck. "I thought it was the Lower Fourth."

"The Lower Fourth is called the Remove here," said the Bounder, staring at him. "And the beak's name is Quelch, not Squelch."

"I've told him that already," chuckled Bob. "But he doesn't remember names. If he calls Quelch Squelch, he will get squelched."

"The squelchfulness will be terrific," grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Is he a nice man?" asked Duck.

"Oh, frightfully nice!" said the Bounder. "Of course, you have to try to please him."

"Oh, I shall try very hard," said Duck. "My dear Uncle Percy told me, many times, always to try hard to please my kind teachers."

"Oh crumbs!" gasped the Bounder. "Well, look here, as a new kid, I'll give you a tip. Quelch's name is Henry. Nothing pleases him better than to be called Henry. You call him Henry as soon as you see him, and you'll get on his right side at once."

"How very nice that is," said James Duck. "Thank you so much for telling me! How very nice and friendly that sounds."

The Bounder gurgled, and the Co. gazed at Duck. They had already decided that he was an ass, but even an ass might have been expected to know that he ought not to address his Form-master as Henry. But James Duck, apparently, was lapping this up like milk.

"Draw it mild, Smithy," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Don't pull a new kid's leg to that extent."

"Don't you mind him, Duck," said the Bounder. "As soon as you see Quelch, you say 'Good-morning, Henry!'—and see how he will smile."

"I shall certainly do so, and I am very much obliged to you for telling me," answered Duck.

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

They could picture the expression on the face of Henry Samuel Quelch if the new junior said "Good-morning, Henry!" That expression was not likely to bear the remotest resemblance to a smile.

"Wharton!" came a voice from Mr. Quelch's study window.

"Oh, yes, sir!"

The juniors all looked round. Vernon-Smith looked a little uneasy. He had not noticed that Quelch's window was open, and he wondered whether Quelch had heard that valuable tip he had given the new fellow.

Harry Wharton & Co. crossed to the study window, Duck going with them.

Mr. Quelch's eyes scanned him more keenly than ever as he approached, and he was more than ever puzzled. The innocent simplicity in Duck's face leaped to the eye, as it were, and if he did not exactly look a fool, he might, at least, have been very easily taken for one.

"Is that the new junior, Wharton?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir; that's Duck," said Harry.

"Are you Mr. Squelch?" asked James Duck, staring through his glasses at the Remove master.

"What? I am Mr. Quelch!"

"Good-morning, Henry!" said Duck.

"What?" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh crikey!" gurgled Bob Cherry.

"Shut up, you ass!"

"Cheese it, you fathead!" hissed Johnny Bull.

"What does this mean?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch angrily. "You have not made a mistake, Wharton, I presume, and brought the wrong person to Greyfriars?"

"I—I don't think so, sir! He said he was Duck!" answered the captain of the Remove. "His box is coming on."

"I—I do not quite understand this! This foolish boy—"

"Are you angry with me, Henry?" asked Duck. "Have I done anything?"

"Upon my word! There must be some mistake in the matter!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. He frowned with annoy-

ance. A dozen fellows at least had heard the new junior address him as Henry, and they were all grinning. "You must not address me in that ridiculous manner."

"Don't you like being called Henry, sir?" asked Duck. "A nice boy told me that you would be pleased if I called you Henry, sir!"

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

"Upon my word! Silence! Wharton, bring that—that boy to my study at once!" snapped Mr. Quelch, and he shut the window with almost a bang.

Duck blinked round at the Co., who were striving hard, but in vain, to suppress their merriment.

"Is Mr. Quelch cross with me?" he asked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton grabbed the new junior by the arm.

"Come on," he said, "I've got to take you in! Don't call Quelch Henry any more, you ass!"

"But that nice boy said—"

"And don't believe all you're told, unless you want your leg pulled all the time you're here!" said Harry. "Come on!"

He led James Duck into the House—leaving a crowd of fellows howling with merriment. New boys were often simple, and often it was easy to pull their legs, but James Duck seemed quite a record in that line. A fellow who believed that it was judicious to address his Form-master as Henry, was really capable of believing anything—and quite a number of Removites were already thinking that they were going to get a good deal of entertainment out of that new member of the Form!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Schoolboy And Detective!

"COME in!" rapped Mr. Quelch. Harry Wharton opened the door of his Form-master's study, and gave James Duck a push into the room.

(Continued on next page.)

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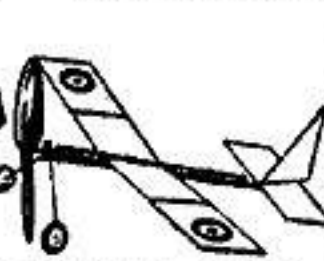
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"Get in!" he said. And James Duck, having got in, the captain of the Remove drew the door shut, and walked away smiling.

Mr. Quelch was not smiling, as he fixed his eyes on the spectacled youth. He was puzzled, perplexed, and a little annoyed.

"You are, I presume, Duck?" he asked. His mind was in a state of doubt.

"Yes, sir!" answered the new junior. Mr. Quelch gazed at him. Like a sudden transformation, the sheepish simplicity in the new junior's face faded out and a keen, alert expression took its place.

"I hope you will excuse me, sir!" said Jack Drake, with a faint grin. "But I have not come here as a detective with all his wits about him, but as a new boy with all his troubles before him. The more easily the fellows pull my leg, the less likely they are to guess that they are entertaining Mr. Locke's professional assistant unawares."

"Oh!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch. "Quite! I—I understand! Then you are—are—" He paused at the name.

"Drake, sir! You do not seem to feel quite sure of it."

"I am quite amazed!" said Mr. Quelch. "I am perfectly acquainted with you, if you are Drake; yet I trace no resemblance whatever."

"My presence here would not be very useful if you could, sir!"

"Yes, yes, that is certainly true. I know your voice, however, now that you speak naturally; I did not recognise it when you spoke at my window."

"Neither did my friends in the Remove, sir."

"Oh! Quite, quite!" Mr. Quelch still seemed puzzled and uncertain. "Please sit down, Drake! I sent the boys who knew you best to meet you at the station—they suspected nothing?"

"Nothing, sir—only that the new boy was rather a prize ass! If the fellow I am after thinks the same, so much the better."

"That is true!" agreed Mr. Quelch. He sat down, his eyes still curiously on the face of Ferrers Locke's assistant. "I am very glad, Drake, that Mr. Locke has been able to accede to the request of his relative, the headmaster, and send you here to help us."

"And I am very glad to come, sir. I hope I shall be of some use," said Jack Drake. "It's a pleasure to see my old school again, and my old Form-master, sir, if you will allow me to say so."

Mr. Quelch smiled. His momentary annoyance had passed now.

"You will take your old place in my Form, Drake, and will, of course, be treated exactly like any other Remove boy!" he said. "But you will be allowed a free hand in all respects, and such matters as school bounds, lock-ups, and even lights out, will not apply to you. At the same time, you will be careful, of course, to keep up the appearance of being nothing but an ordinary schoolboy here."

"Exactly, sir! You may rely upon me!" said Drake. "I have gathered something of what is wanted, from Dr. Locke's communications with Mr. Locke, but if you will explain precisely what has happened here—"

"That can be done in a few words!" said the Remove master. "Some boy in the school—totally unknown—is causing trouble, such as has never occurred before. It may seem odd to you, and to Mr. Locke, that we are unable to deal with it; but the fact is, that it

became necessary either to call in the police, or a private detective. It is a matter that Dr. Locke naturally does not desire to make public—a case of theft in the school."

He paused a moment.

"No such thing has happened for twenty years past," he said. "As long ago as that a Greyfriars boy was expelled for theft."

"Crocker?" said Drake.

"You have heard of that disreputable rascal?" Mr. Quelch frowned. "No doubt! His conduct is the talk of the school."

"I saw him as I came here, sir!" said Drake.

"No doubt! The wretched man seems to desire to make himself prominent, and to display to all the world that he was once connected with the school! But to keep to the matter in hand. Several weeks ago, a prefect of the Sixth Form, named Loder—probably you may remember him—"

"Perfectly, sir."

"Loder, one night found, as he supposed, a junior boy breaking bounds, by way of the headmaster's study. He seized this boy, in the dark, and was struck down—so brutally that he was stunned for some minutes, and his eyes were blackened—and the boy escaped undiscovered."

"And no one was suspected?"

"Yes; Vernon-Smith was suspected. It transpired that he had abstracted the key of the Head's study, and that he was out of his dormitory at the time. The matter seemed so clear that he was expelled—"

"Expelled, sir!" Drake had seen the Bounder only ten minutes ago, and received that valuable tip from him!

"That sentence was not carried out," explained Mr. Quelch. "Owing to his father's intervention, Dr. Locke agreed to give the matter further consideration, and Vernon-Smith was, meanwhile, locked in the punishment-room. During that time, the same person prowled the House again at night, which made it clear that he was not Vernon-Smith, certain as the matter had seemed."

"That was fortunate for Smithy—I mean Vernon-Smith!" said Drake.

"Vernon-Smith had only himself to blame for having fallen under suspicion," said Mr. Quelch. "He should not have been out of his dormitory at night; neither should he have taken the key of his headmaster's study. However, it was, as you say, fortunate."

"But what precisely happened the second time?"

"Mr. Prout, being unable to sleep one night, came down—and heard, as he supposed, Dr. Locke going into his study. It was not, however, Dr. Locke, but some unknown person, who slammed the door in Mr. Prout's face. Mr. Prout came to call me, and in the interval, the person escaped, unseen."

"The study was entered with a key?" asked Drake.

"Yes, on both occasions. The boy, whoever he is, has a key that fits the lock of the headmaster's study, but no known key is missing."

"Please go on, sir."

"The third time, which occurred last week, the prowler was not seen or heard at all," resumed Mr. Quelch. "But in the morning, it was found that the headmaster's study had been entered, as before, with a key, and a drawer of his desk broken open and twenty-two pounds in currency notes taken away."

"Then theft was the object from the first?"

"It appears so, but on the two earlier occasions the young rascal had been in-

terrupted, and could not carry out his purpose."

"And this time no one was suspected?"

"Every investigation, of course, was made," said Mr. Quelch. "But the result was absolutely nothing."

"And since then—"

"Since then nothing occurred till last night," Mr. Quelch's jaw squared and a glitter came into his eyes. "Last night, my room was entered, while I was sleeping."

The Remove master breathed hard.

Only too clearly, the strange events of the previous night had stirred the deepest ire of Henry Samuel Quelch.

"I woke suddenly," he went on, "to see a spot of light moving about my room. I realised immediately that it could only be the young rascal who had robbed the headmaster's study."

"And you saw—"

"Nothing except the spot of light—a small flashlamp. I sat up in bed at once, and reached for the lighting switch. Before I could touch it, I was suddenly grasped. A moment more, I should have seen who the young rascal was—but he must have heard me stir, and he sprang upon me—really like a wild animal."

Mr. Quelch seemed to choke for a moment.

"I am no weakling," he said, "but whoever he was, he was too strong for me. I was overpowered at once, rolled in the blankets on my bed, gagged with a towel, and tied up in the blankets."

Jack Drake's eyes widened.

"Is it possible?" he ejaculated.

"It seems, indeed, incredible!" said Mr. Quelch. "But it actually happened. That, of course, makes it impossible to suppose that the person can be a junior boy, which narrows down the field of search."

"It is quite certain that no junior here could have handled you in such a manner, sir! And very few of the seniors, I should imagine."

"He had, of course, every advantage in the struggle," said Mr. Quelch. "But he certainly was very powerful and muscular. There are, of course, a large number of very powerful senior boys in the Fifth and Sixth Forms. But I cannot believe for a moment that the boy who grasped me in the darkness was a junior."

He shook his head decidedly.

"I remained in that very painful predicament for the rest of the night," he went on. "For some time I could hear him prowling about the room; but he went at last, locking the door and removing the key."

"And you had no idea of his identity?"

"None whatever."

"You are sure that he was a Greyfriars boy?" asked Drake.

"On every occasion when he has prowled the House, investigation has been made, and there has never been the slightest sign of the House having been entered from outside. On the first two occasions, when he was nearly caught, he fled so hurriedly that he could not possibly have left the House without leaving some sign of the way he went. Every door and window was closed and fastened. It was quite clear that he was an inmate of the House."

Drake nodded slowly.

"I was not released," went on Mr. Quelch, "till the bell rang for class, when my head boy, Wharton, came up to see why I had not come down. The door had to be forced to release me."

"And there had been another theft?"

"Exactly!" said Mr. Quelch. "As soon as I was able to do so, I made a search in my room, and found that a



James Duck held on to Bunter's fat ear while Lord Mauleverer walked away down the stairs. "Ow! My ear! Leggo!" yelled Bunter. "I say, I shan't find Mauly again! Leggo, you beast!" But only Bunter's voice followed the departing Mauly.

small sum in loose cash, was taken—a matter of five or six pounds."

"Hardly worth a cracksmen's while!" said Drake.

"It is not a question of burglary, but of petty pilfering!" said Mr. Quelch. "Some wretched boy has found himself desperately in need of money—which can only be attributed to bad conduct, such as betting on horse races. That, of course, will be a line for you to follow in finding him out."

Drake nodded again.

"There are black sheep in every flock," said Mr. Quelch. "Some young rascal is now in the school; but he is so wary, so cunning, that it seems impossible to detect him. Nevertheless, he must be found and sent away at the earliest possible moment. The loss, in money, is no great matter; but such a state of affairs cannot come to an end too soon. But I fear that you have been set a difficult task, Drake."

"It doesn't look easy at the moment, sir!" confessed Drake. "But if anyone can nail the prowler, it will be a detective whose presence in the school he cannot possibly suspect."

"It is upon that, that I found my hope of detecting him!" said the Remove master. "Difficult as the matter seems, I have no doubt that, in Ferrers Locke's service, you have dealt with problems still more difficult."

There was a clang of a bell.

"That is the dinner-bell!" said Mr. Quelch, rising. "If there are any questions you wish to ask, Drake, you may bring an exercise to my study after class."

"Certainly, sir!"

Jack Drake had a good deal of food for thought as he sat at the dinner-table with the Remove that day. But no sign of it showed on the simple, innocent, spectacled face of James Duck!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Floury!

"HE, he, he!"
"Dry up, you cackling ass!"
"I ain't going to tell him, Smithy—"
"Shut up!"

There were a dozen grinning faces in the Remove passage when James Duck, the new fellow in the Remove, came up after class.

Herbert Vernon-Smith was leaning on the wall beside the doorway of Study No. 1, with his hands in his pockets. Other fellows stood round—a grin on every face. On Billy Bunter's fat countenance was a grin that extended almost from one fat ear to the other.

Had James Duck been as innocent as he looked, he could hardly have failed to guess that something was on in the Remove studies.

He glanced round inquiringly through his steel-rimmed glasses.

The new junior had been assigned to Study No. 1, which he was to share with Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent. If he noticed that the door of that study was ajar, and that something was lodged on the top of it, his innocent face gave no sign of the discovery.

"He, he, he!" Billy Bunter could not restrain that merry cackling as Duck went towards the door of Study No. 1, and lifted his hand to push it open.

All eyes were on him.

The grinning Removites waited for him to push open the study door.

As soon as it was pushed open, the object lodged on the summit would descend on his head; and as that object was a large paper bag of flour, the result was expected to be entertaining—

from the point of view of the spectators. Almost breathlessly, the juniors watched for Duck to put his unsuspecting head into that booby-trap!

But even as his finger-tips touched the door, Duck paused, without pushing it open, and looked round at the Bounder. "Your name is Smith, I think?" he asked.

"My name's Vernon-Smith!" grunted the Bounder. Smithy was rather particular about both barrels, as it were, of his double-barrelled name.

"Do you know, I think you must have been mistaken in what you told me this morning?" said Duck. "Mr. Quelch—I mean, Mr. Quelch—was not at all pleased when I called him Henry!"

"He, he, he!" from Bunter.

"But I am sure you meant kindly," went on Duck, "and I should like to offer you a slice of nice cake I have brought from home. Will you come into my study?"

"Oh, all right!" said Vernon-Smith. He did not want a slice of that cake, however nice it was, in return for the valuable tip he had given the new junior that morning. But he did want to see Duck walk into the study! He detached himself from the wall on which he was leaning.

Duck turned to the study door again. Again there was a moment of breathless excitement as he lifted his hand to push it open.

But again he dropped his hand, and turned from the door. He stepped aside to make room for Vernon-Smith.

"After you!" he said politely.

"Oh, don't be an ass!" grunted the Bounder. He had no use for politeness to that extent; as the first fellow to push open that study door was booked

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DUFFER or DETECTIVE?



(Continued from page 13.)

to have a paper bag of flour bursting in his head!

Clump, clump!

James Duck had a couple of school books under his arm. Apparently forgetting them, he let them fall to the floor.

He stooped to pick them up. In stooping, he stumbled clumsily, and slipped over. Perhaps it was by accident that he crashed into the Bounder—or perhaps it was not!

At all events, that sudden and unexpected crash sent Herbert Vernon-Smith staggering backwards—right at the door of Study No. 1.

Almost before he knew what was happening, Smithy's shoulders bumped on that door.

As the door was not latched, it naturally yielded under that heavy bump, and flew wide open, and Vernon-Smith tottered in the doorway.

Then it happened!

Down came the bag of flour, landing fair and square on the Bounder's head, and bursting as it crashed.

"Oooooogh!" came in a choking gurgle from the Bounder.

Thick clouds of flour enveloped him. Flour covered his head, smothered his face, and scattered over him from head to foot.

Choked and blinded by that sudden shower, the Bounder staggered and gurgled, and clawed at his face.

From the fellows in the passage came a yell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He, he, he!" cackled Billy Bunter. "Oh crikey! I say, you fellows, Smithy's got it himself! He, he, he!"

"Urrggh!" gurgled Vernon-Smith. "Oooooogh! Oh gad! Urrggh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh dear!" exclaimed James Duck, blinking at the floury Bounder. "Oh dear! There was something on the door!"

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

"What an extraordinary thing!" exclaimed Duck. "It was a bag of flour! Who could have placed a bag of flour on top of the door? How very thoughtless."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Herbert Vernon-Smith clawed flour from his face, and glared at the new junior through a floury mask.

It had seemed quite funny, to the Bounder, to lay that booby-trap for the innocent new junior. But it did not seem funny now. Smithy was not the kind of fellow to appreciate a joke when it turned against himself. Under the flour, his face was red with rage.

"Urrggh!" he gurgled. "Groooooogh! You potty ass—ooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors. They had been prepared to laugh when Duck got the bag of flour; but it struck them as still funnier for the Bounder to get it. They howled with merriment.

"You—you—you—" gasped Vernon-Smith.

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He clenched his fists, and made a rush at the new junior, flour showering from him as he rushed. Smithy had only one idea in his mind at that moment; which was to punch James Duck, and punch him hard!

But Duck, whether he was afraid of the Bounder's punches or not, did not want to establish contact; Smithy was too floury. He dodged promptly, and cut out of the passage to the landing.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the crowd of Removites, as the new junior flew across the landing, and the Bounder, spluttering rage and flour, rushed in pursuit. A floury trail was left behind the enraged Bounder.

Duck shot across the landing, and did the Remove staircase in one jump. Smithy did it in one jump after him.

After Smithy came the crowd of Removites, yelling with laughter.

"Urrgh! Stop, you swab! I'll smash you!" yelled Vernon-Smith.

James Duck did not stop.

He cut across the Fifth Form passage, and the Bounder tore after him.

At the door of the Fifth Form games-study stood Coker of the Fifth. He was speaking to Potter and Greene, in the study, and had his back to the landing. He gave quite a jump as James Duck suddenly circled round him.

"What the thump—" ejaculated Coker.

He stared round—and at the same moment Duck gave him a push which shifted Horace Coker into the Bounder's way. Smithy was going too fast to stop. He crashed into Coker. A cloud of flour enveloped the startled Horace.

"Why—what—ooooogh!" gasped Coker. "You cheeky young sweep—ooooh! You cheeky—groooooogh! Oooooogh!"

Coker grasped Vernon-Smith. He grasped him and smote.

Coker of the Fifth did not like a junior crashing into him—still less did he like the flour! He smote, and smote, and smote again, hard and fast.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a yell from the Remove landing, as the floury Bounder struggled and roared in the hefty grasp of Horace Coker—flour flying from him in clouds, as Horace smote and smacked.

James Duck strolled away and left them to it. The Bounder was too busy to heed him, and by the time Horace Coker was finished, Smithy was not feeling equal to dealing with James Duck or anybody else.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Beastly For Bunter!

KNOCK!

"I say, Mauly!"

James Duck grinned.

It was Wednesday afternoon.

That afternoon, Harry Wharton & Co. were playing football, at which the new junior would have been glad enough to join them. But though there would certainly have been a place in the Remove eleven for Jack Drake, nobody thought of James Duck as a footballer; neither was it the boy detective's aim to make himself prominent in any way.

He had been two or three days at Greyfriars now; and had cheerfully settled down to be regarded as the duffer of the Form.

If the secret prowler had noticed that there was a new fellow in the Lower Fourth, it was very unlikely that he would have scented danger from such a quarter.

But though there were extremely keen

eyes behind James Duck's steel-rimmed glasses, Ferrers Locke's assistant had to admit that, so far, those keen eyes had picked up absolutely nothing.

Drake had not been idle.

In Form and at prep he seemed rather a slow-witted fellow, as was to be expected of such a duffer! Out of Form, his wits were very far from slow.

But in the total absence of a clue, Ferrers Locke himself might have been beaten. Unless, and until, the prowler prowled again, it seemed that there was nothing doing.

But on that Drake felt that he could safely bank. Undiscovered, and unsuspected, the mystery man was fairly certain to get to work again some time. The schoolboy detective could only wait—and watch!

At the present moment he was leaning on the banisters of the Remove landing, thinking over the problem he had to solve—if he could! The sound of knocking, and of a fat, squeaking voice, drew his attention, and he grinned.

Billy Bunter was banging at the door of Lord Mauleverer's study. His lordship, it seemed, was sporting his oak, apparently having no desire for the attractive company of William George Bunter.

Knock, knock!

Bunter thumped with a fat fist.

"I say, Mauly, old chap! Beast! I jolly well know you're there—the door's locked! I say, old beast—I mean, old chap, let a pal in."

No reply came from Study No. 12.

Bang!

"Mauly!"

Silence.

"I jolly well know you're there, you beast!" roared Bunter. "I say, Mauly, old chap, I've got something rather special to tell you! I say, my postal order never came this morning, after all."

Jack Drake chuckled! He had not forgotten Billy Bunter's celebrated postal order.

Bunter had been expecting that postal order when Drake was a Remove fellow at Greyfriars. Apparently he was still expecting it!

Knock! Bang!

"I say, Mauly! Are you there?" howled Bunter.

Dead silence!

Whether Mauly had gone out and locked his door after him, or whether he was in the study and did not choose to answer the voice of the charmer, seemed doubtful. It was fearfully annoying to Bunter.

If Mauly was there, he had his lordship—as soon as Mauly opened the door. If, on the other hand, Mauly had gone out, Bunter was losing him—and the longer he haunted that study door the less chance he had of rounding him up.

And the matter was rather urgent, as Bunter had been disappointed, once more, about his postal order.

But the fat Owl of the Remove had his own way of dealing with such a difficulty. So long as keyholes were made to doors, Bunter was not going to be at a loss to know what went on, on the other side!

The fat Owl stooped at the door and applied an eye to the keyhole! He was going to spot Mauly, if Mauly was there!

Jack Drake, grinning, left the landing and went quietly up the Remove passage. Bunter, stooping at the keyhole, was nicely placed to take what he deserved for peering through keyholes!

"Why, you beast, I can see you!" howled Bunter, evidently having

spotted his lordship in the study. "I say, what are you going to do with all those currency notes? I say—yaroooooooooop!"

Billy Bunter roared as a foot landed on his tight trousers, and his fat head banged on the door-handle.

He rolled over and sat in the Remove passage, blinking at James Duck through his big spectacles.

"Ow! Smithy, you beast!" he gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh! It's you, you cheeky rotter!" Billy Bunter scrambled up. "I've a jolly good mind to mop up the passage with you! Gerrou, you beast! I say, Mauly!"

No reply.

"I know you're there!" roared Bunter. "I saw you! Sticking all those currency notes into your notecase, you beast! I say, Mauly, will you lend me a quid? It's rather special—and I'll let you have my postal order in the morning."

The study door opened at last.

Lord Mauleverer came out, and Billy Bunter's fat form immediately blocked his way down the passage.

"Hold on, Mauly, old chap—"

"I'm goin' out!" said Lord Mauleverer. "Roll away, old barrel!"

"I'll come with you, old fellow."

"Can't be done!"

"Oh, really, Mauly! I suppose you'd like my company!" said Billy Bunter, with a great deal of dignity.

"Eh? Oh! Yaas, awfully! But I'm goin' out of bounds!" explained his lordship. "Six if you're spotted, old fat man!"

"You going out of bounds!" ejaculated Bunter, in astonishment. Breaking bounds was seldom one of Lord Mauleverer's amusements.

"Yaas."

"Well, look here, I'll come."

"Can't take a nice chap like you into bad company, Bunter!" said Lord Mauleverer, shaking his head.

"Oh crikey! Are you going into bad company?" gasped Bunter.

"Yaas! Worse than I've got at present!"

"You cheeky beast! I mean, look here, dear old chap! I saw you packing notes into your notecase. A dozen or more—"

"No; only ten!" said his lordship placidly. "Roll away!"

"Ten quids!" gasped Bunter. "Mean to say you can't lend a pal ten bob out of ten quid?"

"Yaas."

"Well, of all the mean sweeps!" ejaculated Bunter, in disgust. "Look here, Mauly, it's only till to-morrow. I believe I told you I was expecting a postal order—"

"I believe you did!" grinned Lord Mauleverer. "I seem to remember somethin' of the sort."

"It's from one of my titled relations, old chap!" explained Bunter. "It's absolutely certain to come to-morrow. I say, don't walk away while a chap's talking to you, Mauly."

But Lord Mauleverer did walk away. He circled round the fat Owl, and walked down the Remove passage.

Bunter shot after him, and grabbed him by a sleeve.

"I say, Mauly, old fellow—" he gasped.

"Take your fat paw away, old fat frump! It's sticky!"

"Beast! I mean, look here, I'll come!" said Bunter. "I'll see you through, Mauly, old chap, if you're going out of bounds! Who cares for beaks and prefects? I can tell you, I'm jolly rotty in the hole. I say, are you going to Wapshot races, or what?"

"Oh gad!" gasped Lord Mauleverer. "No. Not quite."

"The Three Fishers—"

"You blitherin' ass, I'm goin' to see that man Crocker, at the Abbot's Spinney! That's out of bounds, since Crocker camped there. Now you know, you howlin' chump! Take that sticky paw away!"

"I say, Mauly, that man Crocker is rather a ruffian. Look how he punched Prout—and Coker of the Fifth, too! You'd better let me come to protect you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I'm coming, old fellow. I jolly well don't believe you're going to the spinney—but I'll come, anyhow!"

Lord Mauleverer looked round at James Duck.

"Duck, old bean, I believe you're rather an obligin' chap!" he said.

"Oh, yes!" answered Duck. "I hope so! My Uncle Percy always told me to be kind and obliging—"

"Oh gad! Good old nunky!" said Lord Mauleverer. "Well, look here, will you do somethin' to oblige me?"

"Certainly I will!"

"Thanks! Take hold of Bunter's ear, and hold on to it, for a couple of minutes."

"Why, you beast!" roared Billy Bunter, in wrath and indignation. "Mauly, you cheeky swab— Wow! Leggo my ear, Duck, you beast! Yow-ow! Will you leggo my ear, you swab?"

Lord Mauleverer, grinning, walked away down the passage and disappeared down the staircase. James Duck, also grinning, held on to a fat ear, with a finger and thumb like a pair of pincers.

Billy Bunter—not grinning, or feeling anything like grinning—wriggled and roared.

"Beast! Leggo! What are you grabbing my ear for?" he howled.

"Two minutes!" answered Duck.

"You silly chump. Leggo! Will you leggo? I'll jolly well punch your nose!" roared Bunter. "Ow! My ear! Wow! I say, I shan't find Mauly again—I jolly well know he ain't going to the spinney—why should he? I say, you beast, will you leggo my ear or not?"

Billy Bunter's voice followed Lord Mauleverer as he went, on its top note. But only his voice followed Mauly. The rest of Bunter remained in the Remove passage, and his lordship went his way, minus the fascinating company of the fat Owl!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Nothing Doing!

RANDOLPH CROCKER, loafing in the doorway of the hiker's hut on Abbot's Spinney, glanced curiously at the elegant Greyfriars junior, who came along to the gate in the fence.

Lord Mauleverer stopped at the gate, glanced over it, and opened it. He came through, and walked up the muddy path to the hut.

Crocker stood watching him, wondering what he wanted.

He had had a hostile visit once from Coker of the Fifth, and he would not have been surprised at receiving another from other fellows; but Lord Mauleverer evidently did not intend hostility. Neither was he likely to have called on business in connection with Crocker's pretended trade of cobbling.

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Crocker!" said Mauleverer politely, as he reached the doorway of the hut, where the old boy of Greyfriars lounged and smoked.

"Want anything?" asked Crocker,

without taking the cigarette from his mouth.

"Yaas." Mauly nodded. "Just a few words, if you're at liberty."

Crocker grinned.

"I'm not frightfully busy!" he answered. "I don't get a lot of trade here. You can come in if you like."

"Thank you!" said Lord Mauleverer urbanely. "I'd rather not be seen from the road—I shall get into a row if I'm seen—I suppose you know that this spot is out of school bounds?"

"Stagger in!" yawned Crocker.

Mauly staggered in.

There were only two rooms in the hiker's hut. The outer one was fitted up more or less as a cobbler's workshop, to give colour to Crocker's affectation of working on the repair of boots and shoes that lay on the bench. Probably they had lain there untouched ever since Randolph Crocker had hired the hut from Mr. Pilkins, the estate-agent in Courtfield.

There was, however, signs of other activities—the floor, which was the old flagstone floor of the abbot's cell that had originally stood on the spot, being littered, indeed almost carpeted, with cigarette-stumps, and burnt matches.

Three or four racing papers lay on the bench, as well as several old programmes of greyhound races. It seemed that Mr. Crocker, though he was not keen on work, had plenty of time to divide between the attractions of the gee-gees and the dogs.

Sportsman Crocker sat on a corner of the bench, still smoking, and Lord Mauleverer sat on a rickety chair.

"Carry on!" said Crocker. He was plainly curious to know why the Greyfriars junior had called. "By the way, I don't think I know your name."

"Mauleverer!"

"Lord Mauleverer?" asked Crocker, with quick interest. Evidently he had heard that name.

"Yaas."

"Welcome to my humble abode, my lord!" said Crocker. "I do not often have the honour of entertaining a nobleman or a millionaire, and I have heard that you are both."

"Oh, don't be an ass, you know!" said Mauleverer placidly. "Look here, Mr. Crocker, you've been here some weeks now, and you're causin' a fearful lot of talk in this neighbourhood. It's frightfully unpleasant for the school."

"The school that turfed me out!" smiled Crocker. "Yes—I think it can't be quite agreeable for the dear old school, and the dear old headmaster. But a man must live, you know."

"Let's talk sense!" suggested his lordship. "You haven't earned half-a-crown since you've been here. You're not doin' it for that. If you've got any money, you must be spendin' it to keep up this stunt—you're not livin' on air, and you're certainly not livin' on horse and dog races. I've no doubt you give them plenty of your time; but you don't pick up money there—you drop it. Look here, what are you doin' it for?"

Crocker laughed.

"Just to level up with the dear old headmaster who turfed me out," he answered. "There's not much of a secret about that."

"Not about that," agreed Mauleverer. "But there is about your real reason."

Randolph Crocker gave his lordship a quick, sharp, penetrating look.

"What other reason do you fancy I have?" he asked quietly.

"Haven't the foggiest," answered Lord Mauleverer. "But I know that you're not wastin' weeks of time on sheer malice. You're a bad hat. I'm

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afraid—but you're not ass enough to camp in a place like this for weeks on end simply to make yourself an annoyance."

Crocker did not answer that. He sat watching the calm, placid face of Lord Mauleverer with a glint in his eyes.

"No bizney of mine, of course," resumed his lordship. "If you're keepin' out of somebody's way I dare say it's quite nice for that somebody to lose your company. But you could keep out of somebody's way somewhere else—what?"

"Do you think I am keeping out of somebody's way, Lord Mauleverer?" asked Crocker in the same quiet tone.

"Looks likely to me," assented Mauleverer. "You've got a reason for stickin' here, and you're keepin' it dark, whatever it is. You feel pretty sore against your old headmaster—but you haven't got sore all of a sudden after twenty years! You're puttin' that up to cover your real reason."

"Is that what you came here to say?" asked Randolph Crocker, with a rather dangerous look at the schoolboy earl.

"Yaas; and some more! What will you take to go?" asked Mauleverer. "You've kept up this stunt for weeks, and you must be fed-up to the chin. This is quite a nice campin' place in the summer—but it's horrid in February! To come down to brass tacks, I'll stand you a tenner to clear."

"Oh!" ejaculated Crocker.

He understood now the object of Lord Mauleverer's visit.

"I'm an old Greyfriars man," he said. "A Public school man! You think I'm a man to whom you can offer money!"

"Yaas!" said Lord Mauleverer calmly. "I think you'd pinch it if you could. You're a bad egg all through, Mr. Crocker."

Randolph Crocker stared at him, and burst into a laugh.

He did not seem to mind being described as a "bad egg all through." It was a fact, and one of which, apparently, the Sportsman was not ashamed.

"You've caused enough trouble here," went on Mauleverer. "The Head hasn't said a word on the subject, of course, but everybody knows that it worries him. Well, you can't be thinkin' of keepin' it up for ever! In fact, you can't keep it up when your three months' agreement with Mr. Pilkins runs out—you can bank on it that Pilkins won't renew it in the circumstances. Why not clear and take a tenner to see you on your way?"

"You're a Lower Fourth junior, with ten pounds to spare?" asked Crocker, eyeing him very curiously.

"Yaas!" Lord Mauleverer drew out the notecase in which Billy Bunter had seen him packing the currency notes. "Is it a go?"

Crocker's eyes fixed on that notecase.

Lord Mauleverer did not fail to observe the greedy gleam in them.

That the Sportsman was not in affluent circumstances was certain, and it was equally certain that his devotion to horses and dogs could not have improved his circumstances. Obviously, had he possessed either means of his own, or an occupation, he would not have been wasting his time in playing his present game. It was very probable that a tenner was an object to him—and his look showed that he would have been glad to finger that sum.

There was a pause, and then the Sportsman shook his head slowly, his eyes still on the notecase. It seemed rather to fascinate him, but he was not going to accept Lord Mauleverer's offer.

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"Forget it!" he grunted.

"You won't clear?" asked Lord Mauleverer.

"No!"

Mauleverer slipped the notecase back into his pocket. He rose from the stool, his eyes on the face of the outcast who had once been a Sixth Form man at Greyfriars School.

"Better think it over, Mr. Crocker," said Lord Mauleverer quietly. "You're causin' plenty of trouble here, but you're huntin' for trouble at the same time. It's no good tellin' you that you jolly well ought to be ashamed of yourself—you know that! But if you get spotted—"

Crocker gave a violent start.

"Spotted!" he repeated. "What do you mean, you young fool?"

"Exactly what I say," answered Lord Mauleverer. "You're up to somethin', stickin' here—I don't know what! I can't make out what your game is, unless you're dodgin' trouble from some other quarter. But if that's it, it doesn't seem sense for you to be doin' all you can to make yourself conspicuous—makin' a regular show of yourself all over the place. But, whatever you've got up your sleeve, Mr. Crocker, it's somethin' you don't dare to have come out—I'll bet two to one in doughnuts on that! If it's spotted, it spells trouble for you—I needn't tell you that! Why not go while the goin's good?"

Randolph Crocker slipped from the bench and threw away his cigarette. The expression on his hard, unscrupulous face was one of sheer evil as he stepped nearer to the schoolboy earl of Greyfriars.

"You'd have done well to take your own advice and go while the going was good!" he said venomously. "Now you're going at the end of my boot, you cheeky young cub!"

"Oh gad!" ejaculated Mauleverer.

He made a swift backward jump as Crocker grasped. Then, as the old boy of Greyfriars rushed at him, he grabbed up one of the old boots from the bench.

Whizz!

The boot crashed on Randolph Crocker's chin and bowled him over like a ninepin. There was a crash on the old flagstones of the floor as the Sportsman went down on his back, and a yell of rage rang through the hiker's hut and over the spinney.

Crocker sprawled on his back, yelling.

Lord Mauleverer did not wait for him to get up again! He stepped quickly out of the doorway and cut down to the gate. And though his lordship did not exactly run when he got to the gate, he walked down Friardale Lane at a very rapid walk!

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Keeping It Dark!

"I SAY, you fellows! Stop that row!"

Billy Bunter blinked in at the doorway of Study No. 2 in the Remove.

There was not exactly a row in the study, but Tom Brown of the Remove had his radio going, and a number of fellows had gathered there to listen to the early news.

Billy Bunter was not interested in the news, and Billy Bunter wanted to speak! So he requested the fellows in Study No. 2 to stop the row.

But the fat Owl was not heeded. Other fellows were interested in the news, if Bunter was not.

Harry Wharton & Co. were in the study with Browney and Hazelden; and they were sitting on the study table.

Peter Todd and Vernon-Smith, Redwing and Squiff, were also there, occupying all the available chairs. Another fellow also was there—James Duck, the new junior, looking meek and mild, as usual, and rather owlish in his steel-rimmed glasses. Study No. 2 was rather crowded, and Duck was leaning on the wall by the door, so that, as it happened, he was hidden from Billy Bunter's sight when the fat Owl pushed the door open and blinked in.

Meek and mild and diffident as he looked, James Duck was probably the most keenly interested of all in the news that was coming over the wireless. But he gave no sign of his keen interest when the name of Rupert Crook came in the announcer's voice.

That name was rather familiar to many of the fellows. It had appeared a good deal in the newspapers of late, and it had often been heard over the radio. It was the name of a convict who had escaped from Highmoor Prison some months ago and had not yet been traced.

Jack Drake was specially interested, because his chief, Ferrers Locke, was engaged in the hunt for the missing man from Highmoor. Drake had been taking part in the quest for the elusive Rupert Crook before James Duck came to Greyfriars.

When the name came over the radio Drake hoped to hear that the man from Highmoor had been laid by the heels. But the announcer only announced that Rupert Crook was still at large.

"I say, you fellows, you don't want to listen to that rot!" urged Billy Bunter. "I say, I want—"

"Shut up, fathead!" hooted half a dozen voices.

"I say, shut that beastly radio off!" yapped Bunter. "Who wants to hear about escaped convicts and such bosh? I say, somebody shut that silly radio off!"

"Somebody shut that silly ass off!" said Tom Brown, glancing round from the portable.

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter grunted with annoyance. But he had to wait till the news had run out. Then he re-started after the interval.

"I say, you fellows, do listen to a chap! I want to borrow—"

"Ask next door!" said Hazel.

"I mean, I want to borrow—"

"No need to tell us that, old fat man!" said Bob Cherry. "We guessed that one."

"The guessfulness was terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I want to borrow some gum!" roared Bunter.

He held up a bottle. It was rather a large bottle, and it was already half full of a sticky fluid.

The crowd of juniors in Study No. 2 stared at the bottle, and at Bunter.

Gum, no doubt, was a useful fluid. But Bunter had already about half a pint of it in that bottle, and half a pint of gum would have lasted most fellows quite a long time. But Bunter, it seemed, wanted more.

"I want to fill this bottle!" explained Bunter. "I've got some in most of the studies already."

"You fat chump!" said Harry Wharton. "Have you been burgling gum up and down the Remove? What the thump do you want all that gum for?"

"Well, I don't mind telling you if you'll keep it dark!" said Bunter. "I'm going to make that beast Duck sit up."

"What?" yelled the Removites.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

As James Duck was standing less than three feet from Bunter, there really did not seem much prospect of keeping it



Billy Bunter sat up in bed, silent, his heart thumping, blinking at the beam of light as it fell on box after box. At last, it shone on Lord Mauleverer's box, and the name of Mauleverer was momentarily revealed.

dark—if Duck was the person from whom the secret was to be kept.

But the door was between the fat Owl and the new junior, and Bunter was not aware that he was in the study.

"The beast grabbed hold of my ear this afternoon!" said Bunter. "I'd have knocked him down, only—only I didn't! But if he thinks he's going to pull my ear, he's jolly well mistaken, see? I'm going to pay him out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Every fellow—except Bunter, who was standing in the doorway—could see Duck. It was quite entertaining to hear the fat Owl explaining his scheme of deadly vengeance in the hearing of the destined victim.

"If you fellows have got any gum, hand it over," said Bunter. "I've got all I can find in the other studies. I say, you fellows, think it will make that cad, Duck, jump, when he gets it mopped all over him?"

"The jumpfulness will be terrific."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

James Duck did not move or speak. He stood leaning on the wall, behind the door, smiling. Bunter rattled on cheerfully, happily unaware of what the open door hid from his eyes and his spectacles.

"I don't want a row with the rotter! Of course, I could lick him, with one hand—a booby like that! But I ain't going to take the trouble! Mind you fellows keep it dark! You see, I'm going to let him have it in the dorm to-night! He, he, he!"

"In the dorm?" gasped Bob Cherry.

"He, he, he! That's the idea! I'm going to stay awake after lights out—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came another roar.

If the success of Bunter's plot of vengeance depended on his staying awake after lights out, it was improbable that James Duck was in much danger from the gum. Billy Bunter's eyes were not likely to open after his fat head was once

laid on the pillow. Rip Van Winkle had nothing on Bunter, when it came to solid sleeping.

"I shall turn out at ten!" continued Bunter. "The swab will be fast asleep by then. I shall up-end this bottle over his chivvy. He will get the lot; and he will never know who did it! Mind you don't tell him."

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

"He, he, he!" echoed Bunter. "I fancy he will be sorry for himself, what? You fellows keep it dark, and don't spoil a jape."

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "You're too funny to live, Bunter, old man! We'll keep it dark, of course—mind any of you fellows don't tell Duck!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Got any gum, Browney?" asked Bunter. "You got any, Hazel? The more the merrier, you know! I've got all there was in the other studies, while you fellows have been listening to that row. I say, if you've got any—"

"Catch!" said Tom Brown.

He picked a small bottle of gum from the mantelpiece and tossed it across to Bunter.

Billy Bunter caught it—with a fat chin.

"Ow!" he roared. "Wow! Beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fat Owl picked up the small bottle and emptied its contents into the big bottle, the juniors watching him with grinning faces. Then he corked the big bottle very carefully.

"I say, you fellows, not a word to Duck!" he said anxiously.

"Not a giddy syllable!" said Bob Cherry solemnly. And there was another roar.

"You see, I don't want him to guess who did it!" explained Bunter. "I don't want a row with the fellow. He's beneath my notice, really! But I say,

you fellows, fancy his face when he gets it!"

"Only fancy!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I may be able to get some more in the Fourth. I want to fill the bottle," said the fat Owl. "I want the cad to have plenty! I'll jolly well swamp the measly swab with it, you know."

"And what are you going to say to Quelch if he spots you carting that bottle into the dorm?" asked Johnny Bull.

Billy Bunter chuckled.

"Oh, I've got that all cut and dried!" he explained. "As soon as I've got this bottle full, I'm going to cut up to the dormitory, and hide it in my bed, see? Nobody will know that it's there, and it will be all ready when I want it."

"Ain't he fearfully deep?" said Bob Cherry. "Ain't he a Machiavellian old plotter?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter rolled away—in search of more gum, leaving the study in a roar. But his fat face and big spectacles looked in again a moment later.

"I say, you fellows, mind you don't tell Duck!" he said. "I'm relying on you to keep it dark, you know!"

And Bunter rolled away again, followed by a yell of merriment.

Happily unaware that James Duck was among the juniors, howling with laughter in Browney's study, the fat Owl proceeded to beg, borrow, or snoop more and more gum, till he had that pint bottle full to the neck.

After which he made his way with tremendous caution to the Remove dormitory, to hide the carefully corked bottle in his bed—to wait there till wanted.

That evening Billy Bunter's fat face wore a happy grin. He grinned whenever he thought of the pint bottle of gum hidden in his bed, ready to give James
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Duck the surprise of his life when the time came.

Probably he would not have grinned so happily had he been aware that James Duck had also paid a visit, a little later, to the dormitory, and pulled the cork out of that gum bottle.

But Billy Bunter did not know that—yet!

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Sticky!

"H E, he, he!"

Mr. Quelch, at the door of the Remove dormitory, glanced at Billy Bunter.

Quelch was seeing lights out for his Form. That fat cachinnation from Bunter drew his attention.

Why Bunter cackled, and why his little round eyes brimmed with merriment behind his big round spectacles, Quelch did not know. He glanced at Bunter, but gave him no further heed.

But all the fellows in the Remove dormitory knew!

Bunter was thinking of that pint bottle of gum hidden in his bed, which he was going to swamp over the slumbering face of James Duck—later!

Bunter was fearfully amused!

So were the other fellows, not one of whom supposed that Billy Bunter would re-open his eyes after they had once closed. Their idea was that the fat Owl would, as usual, snore till the rising-bell rang, and would find an unused bottle of gum in his bed when the Remove turned out in the morning.

Only James Duck thought differently. James was the most amused fellow in the dormitory. He was thinking of the gum bottle also, from which, by that time almost every drop of gum must have exuded, since the cork had been drawn—into Bunter's bed.

Bunter, no doubt, would have slept soundly enough with the corked gum bottle for company. He was not likely to sleep quite so soundly with a pint of gum loose in his bed.

James Duck smiled as he waited for Bunter to turn in, and make that happy discovery.

"He, he, he!" chuckled Billy Bunter. "I say, you fellows, I shouldn't wonder if somebody's woke up all of a sudden to-night! He, he, he!"

"What's the joke, Bunter?" asked James Duck, in his mild voice.

Billy Bunter grinned at him.

"Oh, I ain't telling you anything, you swab!" he answered. "I dare say you'll know later—he, he, he! Perhaps you'll be sorry for yanking at a fellow's ear! He, he, he!"

Billy Bunter rolled to his bed, to turn in. As his fat little legs were shoved into the bed, he expected to feel the gum bottle there, with his podgy toes.

He did, but he felt something else also, that was not expected. He gave quite a convulsive jump as his feet slid into a sticky swamp.

"Oh!" he ejaculated.

The fat grin died off Bunter's fat face. A startled, and, indeed, horrified expression came over his plump face.

"Oh crikey!" he gasped.

"What's up, old fat man?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Oh lor'! The cork's come out of that bottle!"

"What?" howled Bob.

"I'm all gummy!"

"Oh, my only hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I'm all sticky——"

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was quite a gale of merriment that swept up and down the Remove dormitory. The juniors fairly yelled.

"I—I—I say, you fellows, I can't sleep in this bed!" gasped Billy Bunter. "I say, it's simply swamped with—with gum!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The beastly cork must have come out of the beastly bottle——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Quelch looked in from the passage. His face was severe. Quelch saw no reason for that outburst of merriment in the Remove dormitory; neither did it please his ears.

"Silence!" he rapped. "Silence! What is this disturbance?"

The howl of merriment died away. The Removites turned into bed—only Bunter sitting up, his feet dragged out of the sticky swamp.

Quelch's gimlet eyes fixed on him.

"Bunter! Why are you sitting up? I am waiting to switch off the light! Why——"

"I—I—I——" stammered the hapless fat Owl.

"What do you mean, Bunter?"

"I—I—— Oh, nothing, sir!" gasped Bunter.

To repose his fat form in that swamp of gum was a most unattractive idea. He already had more of the gum than he wanted.

On the other hand, he could not let Quelch learn that he had parked a bottle of gum in his bed! Quelch's cane would have been featured next on the programme!

Bunter extended himself in bed. He slid and squelched into wet gum! He shuddered and wriggled.

Mr. Quelch gave him a severe glance. However, Bunter was—or, at least, looked—settled down now, and the Form-master put his hand to the lighting switch.

"Good-night, my boys!"

"Good-night, sir!"

The light was shut off, and Mr. Quelch closed the door and departed.

The Removites suppressed their emotions till his footsteps had died away down the corridor. Then there was a howl:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter sat up again. He was damp and sticky with gum. His gummy pyjamas were sticking to his fat little legs.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm all sticky!" wailed Bunter. "I say, my bed's simply floating in gum! I'm gummy all over!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, I don't see how the cork could have come out of that bottle! I know I jammed it in tight enough! I say, did one of you beasts come up and pull the cork out of that bottle?" howled Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, I'm all sticky! I can't sleep in this bed! Who pulled the cork out of that bottle?" yelled Bunter. "I say, did anybody tell that swab Duck that I had it here?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the juniors. They could all guess how that cork had got out of the bottle.

"I asked you to keep it dark, you beasts!" wailed Bunter. "You jolly well know I jolly well did! Duck, you beast, did you come up and uncork that bottle?"

"Guess!"

"Beast! I say, you fellows, it was pretty rotten to give it away to Duck; after I asked you to keep it dark! The fellow who told Duck ought to be jolly

well straggled! Rotten sneaking cad! Who was it?" roared Bunter. "That cad came up and made my bed all gummy! I can't sleep in it! What rotten cad told Duck? Whoever it is, he's an absolute cad, and tick, and swab, and rotter!"

"Right on the nail!" chuckled the Bouncer. "He's all that, Bunter, and some more!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do you know who told him, Smithy?"

"Yes."

"Who was it?" yelled Bunter. "What rotten, sneaking, beastly worm told Duck about that gum?"

"You did!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You see, Duck was in the study when you told us all about it!" chortled Tom Brown.

"Oh crikey!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I never saw him! Oh crikey! Then the beast knew all the time—and he sneaked up here and made my bed all gummy! Look here, I can't sleep in this bed! Dirty trick to swamp a fellow's bed with gum!"

"Worse than swamping his face with it?" asked James Duck.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast! I ain't going to sleep in this bed!" roared Bunter. "I'm jolly well going to have yours, Duck, as you've made mine all gummy!"

"I don't think!" chuckled James Duck.

"I say, you fellows, turn that cad out of that bed!" howled Bunter. "Bob, old man, you turn him out, will you?"

"No fear!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"If you like to take a bottle of gum to bed with you, old fat man, it's your own look-out!"

"Will you turn him out, Wharton?"

"Hardly!"

"I say, Smithy, you ain't a funk like those chaps! You could handle that moon-faced booby with one hand. Make him gimme his bed."

"Bow-wow!"

"Duck, you cad, I'm going to have your bed!" roared Bunter. "You can have mine, if you like gummy beds! Get out of it!"

"Eh? Me get out of my bed so that you can get into it!" said the new boy. "Not likely, is it?"

"Beast!" roared Bunter. "I'm having your bed, and that's that!"

The fat Owl of the Remove rolled out, and rolled across to James Duck's bed. He grabbed at the bedclothes to yank them off.

James Duck sat up with his pillow in his hands.

Swipe!

"Yaroooh!" roared Billy Bunter as he got the pillow. The Remove dormitory almost shook as he sat down. "Ow! Beast! Wow!"

"Have another?" asked Duck.

"Yah! Cad! Rotter! Swab! I don't want your beastly bed!" gasped Bunter. He scrambled up and rolled back to his own bed. Whether he wanted James Duck's bed or not, he did not want James' pillow.

With deep feelings, the fat Owl crawled back into a gummy bed.

There was no help for it! A fellow had to sleep—and it was that gummy bed or nothing! Billy Bunter wallowed in gum, in a state of rage and wrath that could not have been expressed in words.

Almost for the first time in history, Billy Bunter was not the first fellow asleep in the Remove dormitory. Every other fellow was deep in slumber before Bunter's snore woke the echoes.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Prowler On The Prowl!

THE stroke of one boomed through the dim February night. But it was not the distant boom from the clock-tower that awakened Billy Bunter. It was the gum!

Bunter, for once, did not sleep soundly.

Had that bottle of gum remained corked, Bunter, no doubt, would have slept till morning, his intended jape forgotten in the mists and shadows of sleep. Bunter was a good man at sleeping; it was a thing he could do really well.

But even the fat Owl could not sleep as usual, wallowing in gum. He woke, and woke, and woke again. He was horribly sticky and clammy and uncomfortable. Every half-hour or so, the hapless fat Owl woke, and mumbled, and turned over in squashy gum, and went to sleep again. At the stroke of one he woke once more, and wriggled dismally in sticky pyjamas.

He lifted a weary head from his pillow, and blinked about him.

Every other fellow was fast asleep—that beast, Duck, as fast asleep as any of them. There was a pale glimmer of starlight from the high windows; and Billy Bunter blinked vengefully in the direction of Duck's bed, which was next to Lord Mauleverer's.

Had the gum been still available, Billy Bunter would have turned out and carried on with that masterly scheme for making the new fellow sorry for himself. But the gum was no longer available—it was soaking into Bunter's bedclothes, and Bunter's pyjamas, making him feel clammy and sticky all over.

According to Shakespeare, 'tis sport to see the engineer hoist by his own petard. If that was so, Bunter was not enjoying the sport! A gummy bed was one of those things which it is more blessed to give than to receive.

Billy Bunter had a jolly good mind to turn out, and give that beast, Duck, a swipe with a bolster. On the other hand, the beast would no doubt swipe back if he did; so he had, so to speak, a jollier good mind not to.

He turned over in his gummy bed to seek repose once more—and, as he did so, a winking flash of light caught his eyes.

Those eyes, instead of shutting, opened their widest.

Bunter stared blankly.

It was quite startling to see that sudden flash of light in the darkness of the dormitory. Obviously it came from a flash-lamp, carried in an unseen hand.

It flashed only for a few seconds, and was turned off again.

Bunter sat up, blinking in the gloom.

Some fellow was out of bed, with a flash-lamp in his hand. It was quite amazing.

The light winked again, a little farther away. Bunter could not see who held it, but he saw the tiny beam of light glimmer on a box at the foot of the next bed. It had glimmered first on his own box, now it was glimmering on the next fellow's.

Again it was shut off, Billy Bunter sitting up and staring.

Then again it glimmered—on another box, at the foot of another bed. In the Remove dormitory a fellow's box was placed at the foot of his bed. The owner's name was on the lid.

Anyone seeking a particular bed, therefore, had only to spot the names on the boxes. But only a fellow

from another dormitory could need such a guide, for the fellows belonging to the dormitory knew, of course, where the other fellows were.

Again the light was shut off—again it glimmered. This time it gleamed on James Duck's box.

Bunter blinked with popping eyes.

He forgot the sticky gum. He sat in bed, silent, his fat heart thumping. He knew that it was not, and couldn't be, a Remove fellow who was passing from bed to bed, letting a swift beam of light fall on box after box, obviously to read the name on it.

It was the prowler.

Billy Bunter's fat brain did not work swiftly. But even Billy Bunter was able to guess that one.

A yell trembled on his lips. But he did not utter it. If this unseen figure with the tiny flash-lamp was the mystery man of Greyfriars, breaking new ground in the junior dormitory—and it could hardly be anybody else—Bunter did not want to draw his attention.

Loder of the Sixth had collared him once, and had been knocked out, and had been decorated with two black eyes for weeks afterwards. Billy Bunter had no desire to go through Gerald Loder's experience. In fact, he hated the idea. He sat in palpitating silence.

The tiny beam glimmered again.

This time it shone on Lord Mauleverer's box, and the name of Mauleverer was momentarily revealed.

Darkness again. Bunter blinked, with beating heart, into the darkness, but there was no further gleam from the flash-lamp.

The fat Owl did not need telling why. The secret prowler had found what he sought. It was Lord Mauleverer that he was after. The reason was plain enough—Bunter knew that Mauly had, at least, ten pounds in his notecase—and it looked as if the prowler knew it, too.

Bunter opened his mouth again, and again he shut it. He could see nothing, and he could hear nothing.

But, as plainly as if he could have seen and heard, he knew that the prowler, having found the bed he wanted, was groping in the dark for Lord Mauleverer's notecase.

Every fellow, but Bunter, was fast asleep. But for the gum Bunter would have been fast asleep, also. The mystery man would have come and gone unseen and unsuspected, and in the morning there would have been a startling discovery, with no clue to the mysterious prowler.

But the fat Owl, for the life of him, dared not utter a warning yell. The bare thought of getting such a jolt as the one that had knocked out Loder of the Sixth made him quail.

The fellow, whoever he was, was the one who had knocked out Loder, banged a door on Mr. Prout's nose, and tied Quelch up

in his blankets. That was not the sort of fellow with whom Billy Bunter yearned for trouble.

On the other hand, to sit there silent and motionless, while the rascal pinched Mauly's notecase, was rather too rotten, as Bunter realised. And in these very minutes the unseen marauder was groping in search of it, and it was not likely to take him long. In the silence a faint rustling sound came to Bunter's straining ears, and he knew that it meant that Mauly's clothes, folded neatly on a chair beside his bed, were being shifted. Another minute or two—

Bunter dared not utter a sound. But his fat brain was startled into unusual activity, and it occurred to him that he could interrupt the prowler without drawing attention to himself.

Silently Bunter grasped his pillow and lifted it. Silently, but with all his force, he hurled it in the direction of Lord Mauleverer's bed.

Wherever that pillow dropped it would wake somebody. If it landed on the prowler, so much the better, but it had to land somewhere.

As a matter of fact, it dropped several feet short of Mauleverer's bed, and landed on a face that Billy Bunter had intended to plaster with gum. Now that face was plastered with Bunter's pillow.

James Duck had been fast asleep; but as Bunter's pillow thumped down on James Duck's features, Jack Drake came out of slumber with a bound.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Hand To Hand!

"**O**H!" gasped Drake.

It was James Duck, the simple new fellow in the Remove, who had gone to sleep. But it was Jack Drake, the keen-witted assistant of Ferrers Locke, who awakened—with all his wits about him.

A pillow rolled from his face as he started up in bed. He hardly knew

(Continued on next page.)

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what it was, and he did not heed it. By his bedside, between his bed and Lord Mauleverer's, a shadow loomed.

Dark as it was, Drake could see it, though not clearly. It looked like a black shadow in dimness. And even if he had not seen it, he would have heard it, for from it came a startled sound of swiftly caught breath as the pillow, rolling off Drake, fell at its feet.

The prowler was probably as startled as Drake by the sudden crash of the whizzing pillow, if not more so.

Drake heard the catching breath, and the rustle of garments that dropped from a startled hand. He knew that that dark figure turned swiftly round towards him as he sat up in bed. It loomed over him, and he had a glimpse of eyes that seemed to glint in the dark like a cat's.

Drake's hand shot under his own pillow, where he kept an electric torch in readiness. He grabbed it out in a second.

He had no time to think, but the thought of the mystery prowler was instantly in his mind. And whether this was the prowler, or some fellow larking at a late hour, he was going to know.

But whether the unseen one caught a glimpse of the torch as he jerked it out from under the pillow, or whether he guessed the action, there came a sudden grasp. Drake's arm was wrenched, and the torch flew from his hand before he could flash on the light.

It crashed on the floor beside the bed.

Drake could still see nothing but a black shadow—but he knew now! That powerful grasp on him was not the grasp of a junior schoolboy; it was not some fellow playing tricks; it was the prowler.

He grasped back; but at the same moment the hands that grasped him hurled him away, and he rolled off the bed, on the side opposite from that on which the prowler stood.

He humped heavily on the floor, in a tangle of bedclothes.

Three or four startled voices were heard up and down the dormitory. Fellows were awakening at the noise.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came drowsily from Bob Cherry's bed.

"What the dickens—" It was Harry Wharton's voice.

"Oh gad!" Lord Mauleverer was sitting up, staring in the dark. "What the jolly old dooce—"

Jack Drake struggled to his feet, flinging off tangled blankets. As he leaped up, he heard a rapid patter.

It was the sound of running feet, making for the door. Whatever the prowler had been up to, whether he had secured his plunder or not, the alarm had scared him off, and he was thinking now only of escaping—unrecognised.

Drake's torch was somewhere on the floor. There was no time to grope for it. He shot away towards the door.

He had a glimmer of a passing shadow. The door opened, and there was a rapid patter in the corridor outside.

He ran on, collided with the door, flung it aside, and dashed out after the fugitive.

The dormitory was left in a buzz of excitement behind him. Nearly all the Remove were awake. As Drake rushed down the passage, on the track of the flying feet, the light flashed on in the dormitory. Somebody had turned on the switch.

But in the passage, and on the wide

landing beyond was darkness, save for a faint glimmer here and there from high windows.

That the prowler was making for the staircase, Drake soon knew. He glimpsed a darting shadow on the landing, and heard a stumbling sound on the stairs.

He shot across the landing to the head of the staircase. Below, on the lower landing, he heard the sound of feet. The unseen one was at the foot of the stair as Drake reached the top.

To follow by the stairs was to lose him. Drake did not follow by the stairs. He groped for the thick polished oak banister, threw himself upon it, and shot down like a bullet.

It was a risky action enough in the dense darkness, but Ferrers Locke's assistant did not stop to think of the risk. The schoolboy detective was there to do his job, and he had to take the risks in his stride.

He whizzed dizzily down the smooth banisters, and shot off the end on to the next landing, reeling and stumbling. Hardly a second had been occupied in the descent, and as he stumbled his outstretched hands came in contact with an invisible figure.

He grasped it instantly. He heard a panting breath. The prowler—the mystery man of Greyfriars—was in his grasp, struggling savagely and desperately.

Drake had not forgotten what he had heard of Loder's mishap. The prowler, whoever he was, was desperate, sticking at nothing to escape discovery. He had knocked Loder of the Sixth out, and it was certain that he would repeat that performance if he could. But that was another risk that the schoolboy detective had to take.

"Help!" Drake shouted at the top of his voice as he closed with the unseen struggling figure.

"Help! Help!" His voice echoed up and down the well of the staircase, and rang along passages. If only someone came quickly—if only a light was turned on—his work at Greyfriars was done. He heard opening doors, calling voices. Some instinct made him duck his head as a savage clenched fist swept by, and it grazed his ear.

He released his right hand and struck back, judging as well as he could the position of the unseen face.

He felt a nose under his knuckles and heard a grunt of pain. He felt the struggling figure stagger.

Then, with an exertion of strength that was greater than his own, the invisible figure flung him off and tore away.

Drake stumbled and fell, and before he could scramble up, racing feet were pattering down the lower stairs.

He staggered to his feet, and at the same moment a light flashed on on the landing. He blinked round at Mr. Quelch, in his dressing-gown.

"What—who—oh, you!" exclaimed the Remove master. "What—"

"It's the prowler, sir! He was in our dormitory! He's out down the stairs!"

Jack Drake stayed only to pant out those words, and then he was whizzing down the lower banisters. At the foot of the staircase he dropped on his feet and stood listening. Faintly from the darkness came a patter, but it died away at once. He was sure, however, that it came from the direction of Masters' Passage, and he cut off in that direction.

A light suddenly flashed on. Wingate of the Sixth, in shirt and trousers, turned from the switch and stared at Drake.

"What the thump! A Remove kid! What the dickens does this mean, Duck? You're waking the House! Are you mad? Who was it rushed by me?"

"Did someone pass you?" panted Drake.

"Yes. I heard a row and came out, and—"

"The prowler!" Forgetting for the moment that he was Duck of the Remove, and that Wingate was Wingate of the Sixth, captain of Greyfriars, Drake caught him by the arm in his excitement. "Where did he go? Quick!"

"Look here, you young ass—"

"Quick!" yelled Drake. "I tell you it's the prowler. Which way did he go?"

"I think he turned the corner into Head's corridor. But look here—"

Drake did not stop for more.

He shot down the passage and turned into Head's corridor. There he flashed on the passage light.

It gleamed on the oak-panelled walls of the old corridor—on the closed door of Dr. Locke's study; but it revealed nothing else. If the mystery man had been there, he was gone. He had had time, if only bare time, and he had vanished.

Who was he?

A Sixth Form man, who had dodged back to his room on the ground floor? A Fifth Form man, dodging away by a back staircase to the Fifth Form dormitory? One or the other seemed a certainty; but whoever he was, he had vanished, and the mystery of the night prowler of Greyfriars was as deep a mystery as ever.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Alarm In The Night!

"I SAY, you fellows—" "What the thump—" "Where's Duck?"

"What the dooce!" ejaculated Lord Mauleverer. "What the jolly old dooce, you know! Who's been raggin' my clobber?"

"I say, is he gone?" howled Billy Bunter.

The light was on in the Remove dormitory. Half the Form were out of bed. All were awake. Lord Mauleverer was staring at his elegant clobber, scattered on the floor by his bedside. Several fellows were staring blankly at James Duck's empty bed.

The door stood wide open as Drake had left it. What had happened nobody knew, but something had, that was clear.

Billy Bunter's head emerged from under his blankets. Bunter had parked it there, after hurling his pillow, and kept it there till the glimmer of light and the buzz of excited voices apprised him that it was safe to emerge.

He groped for his spectacles, jammed them on his fat little nose, and blinked up and down the dormitory.

"I say, you fellows, is he gone?" he howled. "I say, suppose he's under one of the beds?"

"Fathead! Why should Duck hide under one of the beds?" asked Harry Wharton, staring round from the empty bed at Bunter.

"Duck! Who's talking about Duck? I say, is he gone?"

"Duck's gone—"

"Blow Duck!" roared Bunter. "Bother Duck! Is that prowler gone, you silly fathead?"

"Has the jolly old prowler been here?" asked Bob Cherry.



Jack Drake threw himself upon the thick polished oak banister and whizzed down like a bullet. He shot off the end almost on top of the mystery man of Greyfriars!

"Didn't you see him?" gasped Bunter. "Was he gone when you put the light on?"

"Duck was gone——"

"Blow Duck!" yelled Bunter. "Don't keep on jawing about Duck! I tell you that prowler was here, and he was after Mauly's notecase——"

"Oh gad!" ejaculated Lord Mauleverer.

"He's gone, if he was here, you fat ass!" grinned Vernon-Smith. "Have you been dreaming that the prowler came to this dorm after your postal order?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Smithy! I tell you he was here. I saw him——"

"You saw him?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"I mean, I saw his flash-lamp. He was looking at the names on the boxes, and he stopped at Mauly's bed, and I—I—I——"

"What rot!" said Johnny Bull, staring at the fat, excited Owl. "If you saw somebody in the dorm, why didn't you call out and wake us?"

"Think I wanted to be bashed like Loder was?" hooted Bunter. "I jolly well wasn't going to have him jumping on me in the dark! I don't want two black eyes like Loder had——"

"You flabby funk——"

"Beast!"

"Somebody's been here," said Lord Mauleverer. "Some ass has been raggin' my clobber. Look at it!"

"I tell you it was him!" roared Bunter, too excited to bother about grammar. "It was him——"

"Oh, rot!" said the Bounder. "Mean to say he woke you up, and woke up nobody else? Gammon!"

"I wasn't asleep!" hooted Bunter. "I woke up because of that putrid gun. It kept on waking me up——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, cackle! I've hardly slept a wink, with that filthy gun sticking all over me. I woke up fifty times, at least—two or three times, anyhow. I was awake when he came, and I saw him flash on his light, and I chucked my pillow at Mauly to wake him. I knew what he was after."

"Blessed if I know what's happened?" said Harry Wharton. "It sounded to me like a scuffle and somebody running, and I heard the door open——"

"I tell you it was the prowler!"

"After Bunter's postal order, or else his rolled-gold watch," said the Bounder. "Go to sleep and dream again, fathead!"

"I tell you he was after Mauly's notecase!" howled Bunter. "I tell you he picked out Mauly's bed with his flash-lamp, and I puzzed my billow—I mean, I buzzed my pillow—and——"

"Here's a pillow," said Lord Mauleverer. He picked it up from the floor at his bedside. "It never touched me, if you buzzed it, old fat man. It was Duck who woke me up, I think——"

"Well, I chucked the pillow," said Bunter. "I'd have jumped out and tackled him, only I didn't want to be knocked out like Loder. Jolly lucky for you I was awake, Mauly, or he'd have had your notecase! He was after that, of course. What else do you think he was after? He wasn't going to pinch your trousers, I suppose?"

"See if your notecase is safe, Mauly!" said Harry Wharton.

Lord Mauleverer picked up an elegant jacket, and groped into the inside pocket. A startled look came over his face.

"Oh, gad!" he ejaculated.

"Gone?" asked three or four voices.

"Yaas."

"Much in it?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Oh, a few quid."

"Oh crikey! I say, you fellows, Mauly had ten quid in that notecase!" exclaimed Bunter. "I jolly well know he had."

"That so, Mauly?" asked Wharton.

"Yaas."

"The jolly old prowler knew where to look, if he came to this dorm!" grinned Skinner. "Did you tell all Greyfriars that you had ten quid in your pocket, Mauly?"

"Well, Bunter knew!" answered Mauleverer. "I suppose that comes to the same thing!"

"Oh, really, Mauly——"

"By gum! It looks as if the brute has been here!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith. "Has that ass Duck gone after him, or where has he gone?"

"Not much good a fathead like Duck getting after him! Perhaps he's got scared, and hunted cover!" grinned Skinner.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Look here!"

It was Bob who spotted a handsome Russia-leather notecase lying on the floor under the edge of James Duck's bed. Doubtless it had been in the prowler's hand when Jack Drake was awakened by the whizzing pillow and started up, and he had dropped it when he seized Drake. Anyhow, there it was—and Bob picked it up and handed it to Lord Mauleverer.

"Thanks, old bean!" yawned his lordship, as he took it. "Jolly lucky that blighter was interrupted, what?"

"I say, Mauly, he'd have had it, if I hadn't chucked my pillow and interrupted him——"

"You fat, flabby, frabjous funk!" exclaimed the Bounder. "If you'd woke us up, we could have snaffled him——"

"Oh, really, Smithy——"

"Well, there's not much doubt that the prowler's been here," said Harry

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Wharton, "and it's plain enough what he was after. You'll have to park your cash in a safe place after this, Mauly."

"I say, Mauly, old chap, I'll mind it for you, if you like—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, do stop cackling! Look here, why don't you get after that pincher? I'll stay here, and—and watch for him, in case he comes back—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Duck!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

James Duck came in at the open doorway. Every eye in the Remove dormitory turned on him.

It was the resolute, keen-witted assistant of Ferrers Locke who had rushed in pursuit of the fleeing prowler; but it was the simple, sheepish new fellow who came back into the dormitory!

"Where have you been, you ass?" asked Harry Wharton. "Wandering about the House in your pyjamas?"

Duck blinked at him.

"Something woke me up!" he said. "I—I thought I saw somebody—was it a burglar?"

"Oh, my hat!" yelled Vernon-Smith. "Mean to say you bolted out of the dorm because you thought there was a burglar here?"

"Oh, no! I—I didn't bolt—not exactly—I—I just went—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He, he, he!" chortled Billy Bunter. "I say, you fellows, what a rotten funk! He, he, he!"

There was a howl of laughter in the Remove dormitory. There was another howl as James Duck stooped and looked under his bed, before turning in, apparently to make sure that there was no burglar there!

"It's all right, Duck!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "It was only the

prowler you've heard about—not a burglar—safe as houses."

"Oh! I—I wasn't frightened, you know—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence, please!" Mr. Quelch appeared in the doorway. "Silence! Go back to bed at once, all of you!"

"The prowler's been here, sir!" said Harry.

"Yes; the matter will be inquired into in the morning. Go back to bed now," said the Remove master.

The Remove went back to bed, and the light was turned off again, but it was long before the juniors slept. For a long time there was a buzz of voices from bed to bed.

But at length, the Removites slept again—though there was one member of the Form who woke, from time to time, and grunted, and wriggled uncomfortably in a gummy bed!

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Clue!

"DUCK!"

"Yes, sir!"

"You will follow me to my study!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

Mr. Quelch's face was grim. He gave James Duck that order, after breakfast in the morning.

Some of the Remove grinned as James Duck followed his Form-master. The juniors had heard that Mr. Quelch had spotted Duck out of his dormitory the previous night, and they had no doubt that he was called on the carpet.

Duck followed the Remove master into his study and shut the door. Mr. Quelch's face was still rather grim as

he sat down and fixed his gimlet eyes on the olive, spectacled face of the new member of his Form. The fact was that the Remove master was disappointed.

It was by his counsel that Dr. Locke had requested his relative, Ferrers Locke, to send his boy assistant to Greyfriars in the hope of detecting the secret prowler. Now the prowler had prowled again, while the schoolboy detective was on the spot, but the outcome had been the same as before—the mystery man had escaped and left no sign behind him.

"Have you anything to tell me, Drake?" asked Mr. Quelch.

Drake smiled faintly. He quite understood what was in the Remove master's mind.

"Yes, sir, I have something to tell you!" he answered. "You've heard all that happened in the dormitory last night. There is no doubt that it was the secret prowler, and no doubt why he came. Luckily Bunter was awake—"

"The rascal escaped!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, he got away!" agreed Drake. "But he got away empty-handed this time."

"Owing, apparently, to Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, owing to Bunter. But—"

"And it appears that there is no clue to his identity," said the Remove master. "We are where we were before."

"Not quite, sir!"

"You do not mean that he left a clue behind him!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, the grim expression fading from his countenance, and an eager look taking its place.

"No, sir! I mean that he took one with him."

"Wha-a-t?"

Quelch's face was grim again as he stared at the schoolboy detective. He could hardly suppose that Jack Drake was jesting with him, but certainly that reply sounded like it.

"I mean—"

"Well, what do you mean?" rapped Mr. Quelch. "I fail to understand you, Drake—and I presume that you do not regard this as a jesting matter."

"Not at all, sir!"

"Then explain what you mean!"

"I mean exactly what I say, sir—the prowler left no clue behind him, but I am quite assured that he took one away with him!" answered Jack Drake quietly. "I've told you, sir, that I collared him in the dark—"

"You could not see him!"

"No, I'm not a cat, to see in the dark, sir!" answered Drake. "But before he threw me off, I got in a jab—"

"A what?"

"A punch, sir! I landed my knuckles on his nose pretty hard! He got away, and I never saw him, but he took away a clue—and that's what we have to look for—the fellow's nose was damaged, sir."

"Oh!" Mr. Quelch sat up, his face keen again. "You are sure that your blow took effect?"

"I am quite sure of that, sir! He nearly got me with a punch, but missed it—and I got him, fairly on the boko—I mean, on his nose! There is no doubt about that at all; and this morning, sir, there is not the slightest doubt that his nose shows the mark of it."

"Oh!" repeated Mr. Quelch. His eyes glinted. "If you are sure of this, Drake, if you are absolutely certain that

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your blow must have left a mark on the feature you struck—"

"That is quite certain, sir! I hit hard, and landed fair and square on the nose! I've no doubt that the nose bled, and that it is swollen this morning. I am quite certain of that."

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Quelch.

He was not looking grim now. There was a keen satisfaction in his face.

Jack Drake spoke with absolute conviction. He knew how hard his knuckles had landed on that nose in the dark, and he knew that damage must have been done. Such damage to so prominent a feature as a fellow's nose could not be hidden or disguised. If the prowler was a Greyfriars man, all that remained was to scan every face at Greyfriars School and ascertain which one had a swollen nose.

"If this is correct, Drake—"

"It is correct, sir. I am certain of it."

"The matter should be easy in that case," said the Remove master. "I have, however, seen the whole school at prayers this morning, and I did not notice any face showing signs of damage such as you describe, Drake."

"Neither did I, sir. But I was not able to give every face the once-over, and perhaps you did not. I've been keeping my eyes open since, but I admit I've not seen the fellow. But there is no doubt about it; the fellow who prowled last night has a damaged nose."

"I will visit the Fifth and Sixth Form Rooms as soon as the boys are in Form," said Mr. Quelch. "You have no doubt that it was a senior, I presume, any more than I have?"

"It certainly was not a junior, sir. No junior could have handled me as he did; and a junior could not have handled you, sir. But—"

"But what, Drake?" asked Mr. Quelch, as the schoolboy detective paused. His eyes fixed inquiringly on the spectacled face that was so unlike Jack Drake's.

"I cannot be certain, sir, of course, as I did not see him; but during the few moments that I was struggling with him I had the impression that it was a man I was struggling with—not a school-boy at all."

"Some of the Sixth Form, Drake, are very powerful lads—Wingate, for example, is probably stronger than any master in the school, excepting Mr. Lascelles."

"I know, sir. But I had that impression, all the same. If you do not spot the fellow in the Fifth or the Sixth it will be as well to give the menservants the once-over."

"The what? Oh, I understand you! I will certainly do so, Drake, though I feel assured that it will be futile to look in that direction. I am afraid, Drake, that there is no doubt about the facts—some reckless senior boy has taken to bad courses, like that rascally man Crocker, who was expelled so many years ago. It was for precisely the same kind of action that Dr. Locke expelled Randolph Crocker, and it has unfortunately happened that history has repeated itself."

"In that case, sir, the fellow, man or boy, can be picked out. As soon as you have found someone, whoever it is, with a swollen nose, you will tell me, and I shall know whom to watch."

"Very well, Drake. Leave that in my hands."

Jack Drake left the study. There was a gleam in his eyes behind James Duck's steel-rimmed spectacles. If the prowler was an inmate of Greyfriars School, he was going to have a clue to his identity; and that he was an inmate

of the school appeared as certain as anything could be.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry greeted him with a cheery roar as he came out into the quadrangle. "Had it bad?"

"Oh, no!" James Duck blinked at him. "I have not been caned, thank you!"

"Not six on the bags?" asked Nugent.

"Oh, no!"

"Just a jaw?" asked Bob.

"Yes. Mr. Quelch talked to me for a few minutes," said Duck. "I do not think he was pleased with me—in fact, I think he was a little cross at first, but he seemed quite good-tempered when I left him."

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Well, I suppose he wouldn't whop you for being frightened of an imaginary burglar," he agreed. "But you'd better not bolt out of the dorm next time you get a scare, Ducky. Fellows ain't allowed to wander about the House at night. You'll get six next time."

"But I wasn't really frightened—at least, not very much—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five chortled. A fellow who bolted out of his dormitory because he fancied he saw a burglar there seemed to them a first-class funk—excelling even William George Bunter in that line.

"Hide under the bed next time, old bean!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"Oh, I never thought of that!" said Duck innocently. "I will remember that if it should happen again. Thank you so much, Bullock!"

"My name's not Bullock!" grunted Johnny. "Call me Bull, idiot, if you call me anything at all!"

"Certainly, if you like, Bull-idiot!" said James Duck. "I suppose that isn't really your name, though. Is it a nickname?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Co.; while Johnny Bull glared at the new junior as if he could have eaten him.

And James Duck ambled away, leaving four juniors yelling and one glaring.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Drawn Blank!

"HENRY'S shirty!" murmured Bob Cherry.

Bob was exceedingly careful not to let Henry hear that whisper about him.

The Remove were in Form.

Mr. Quelch had set them Latin papers and left them in charge of his head boy, and quitted the Form-room for a time.

The Removites concluded that he was seeing the Head on the subject of the exciting episode of the previous night. James Duck was aware that he had gone to give the senior Forms at Greyfriars the once-over, in search of any fellow who happened to have a swollen nose.

When he returned, the expression on his speaking countenance was so grim that every fellow in the Remove sat up and took notice. They realised that it would be judicious to be a model Form that morning. Even the short-sighted Owl of the Remove read the danger signals, and hastily dropped a chunk of toffee under his desk.

Henry, it was clear, was shirty—fearfully shirty.

Why, nobody in the Remove knew. Quelch had seemed quite amiable—indeed, almost merry and bright—when he had left them. He had been away

half an hour. Something, it appeared, had transpired in that space of time to disturb his equanimity very seriously. His lips were compressed, his eyes glinted, his brow wrinkled by a frown.

He gave his Form one glance. It was more than enough. Every fellow settled down to Latin as if he dearly loved that language.

James Duck, however, eyed his Form-master rather curiously through his steel-rimmed glasses. He could only surmise, from Quelch's look, that the Remove master had been disappointed in his search for a Greyfriars fellow with a swollen nose. Yet how could that be when Drake remembered so clearly the jolt with which his knuckles had landed on the unseen nose?

It was not a nice morning for the Remove. Quelch was too just a man to wreak his irritation and disappointment on an unoffending Form, and had the Greyfriars Remove been all model youths there would not have been a spot of trouble on the horizon. But they weren't.

Bob Cherry, who could seldom keep still for long, had fifty lines for shuffling his feet. Lord Mauleverer had another fifty for yawning. Quelch seemed to think that a Form-room was not a proper place either for shuffling the feet or indulging in yawns.

Billy Bunter, unable to resist the lure of toffee till break, was spotted slipping a chunk into his mouth. He almost swallowed it when a rap on his fat knuckles reminded him that a Form-room was no place for chewing toffee.

Smithy, who had neglected his prep, was put on con, and had the keenest edge of Quelch's tongue for two whole minutes as a result. And James Duck, for the first time, received a severe snap.

Duck made several mistakes, probably owing to the fact that Jack Drake had not kept up his Latin in the service of the Baker Street detective. So far, however, Quelch had been very tolerant with the new junior. Tolerance seemed to fail him on this particular morning.

"Ridiculous!" barked Mr. Quelch. "Absurd! Really, if you cannot do better than this you had better not be at Greyfriars at all!"

Only James Duck knew that it was not his mistakes in Latin to which Quelch was really thinking, though the rest of the Remove supposed so. He coloured a little under the Remove master's sharp tongue.

Every fellow in the Form was glad when the bell rang for break. They respected Mr. Quelch, and some of them liked him, but they were glad to get a rest from him.

"You will remain, Duck!" barked Mr. Quelch.

And the new junior remained behind as the rest of the Form filed out, some of them giving him sympathetic glances as they went. Evidently, to the Remove, the new fellow was in Quelch's black books.

And that, in point of fact, was the case, although it was not Duck's failures in Form that worried the Remove master.

After the juniors were gone Duck closed the Form-room door and turned to Mr. Quelch. From his desk the Form-master gave him the grimmest of looks.

"Well, sir?" said Drake quietly.

Mr. Quelch grunted expressively.

"You were in error, Drake!" he said.

"I can hardly think so, sir!" said Drake. "In fact, I am sure—"

"You were in error, and there is not

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the slightest doubt on the subject," said Mr. Quelch grimly. "I have investigated in the Fifth and Sixth Forms, and there is not one member of either Form whose face shows any sign of damage whatever."

Jack Drake stood silent.

He could not doubt that Quelch's examination had been carefully made; and that no trace of a swollen nose would have escaped his searching eye. This looked like convincing evidence that the prowler was not in either the Fifth or Sixth Form at Greyfriars. Quelch's search had drawn blank.

"That the young rascal could be in a junior Form is almost impossible," continued Mr. Quelch, in the same grim tone. "But in order to leave no room for doubt, I have visited every Form-room at Greyfriars! There is no boy in the school who shows such signs of damage as you have described."

Drake did not speak.

"I have carried the matter further," went on the Remove master. "I have seen, personally, every manservant in the House, Drake! Not one of them shows the slightest sign of having been struck a blow in the face."

Drake breathed rather hard.

"You are sure, sir, that you have missed no one?" he asked, at last.

"No one!" said Mr. Quelch. "Even to members of the staff, I have looked for any such signs as you described in every face within the walls of Greyfriars School. I have wasted my time. I do not complain of that—but—obviously, you have made a mistake."

Drake stood silent again.

He had not made a mistake! He knew that he had not! His knuckles had crashed on that unseen nose, and he had heard the grunt of pain that had followed. He knew that a mark—most likely a very prominent mark—must have been left on the prowler's face. Yet no such mark was to be found on any face in the school!

He coloured uncomfortably.

Mr. Quelch's grim face relaxed a little.

"I am sorry, Drake!" he said. "I have expected too much of you—you are, after all, but a boy! I understood that Mr. Ferrers Locke had found you very useful in his service, and I assumed that you would be capable of dealing with this strange and perplexing matter; but I realise that I have expected too much of a mere lad."

"But, sir—"

"It is a great disappointment to me, because it was on my advice that Mr. Locke requested his relative to send you here," said Mr. Quelch. "But—"

"The matter is not finished with yet, sir."

"I hardly see any use in proceeding, Drake. I was greatly relieved when you told me, this morning, that a clue existed, at last, to the identity of the secret night-prowler. It turns out to be a complete error—"

"Nothing of the kind, sir!"

"What? What do you mean, Drake?" rapped Mr. Quelch. "I tell you that the boy who prowls the house at night is as utterly unknown now as before you came here, and you were totally mistaken in what you told me."

"I was not mistaken, sir!" said Drake quietly. "Whoever it was that I struggled with last night has the mark of my knuckles on his face."

"I have told you, Drake, that no individual within the walls of this school bears any such mark."

"In that case, sir, the prowler is not a Greyfriars man at all; but comes from outside the school."

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Mr. Quelch started and stared at the schoolboy detective.

"Nonsense!" he barked.

"There is no other possible conclusion from the facts, sir!" said Drake.

"Nonsense!" repeated Mr. Quelch. "On five separate occasions this person has prowled the House at night, to our knowledge. On three occasions he had the narrowest possible escape from detection. Had he left the House by door or window on those occasions, certainly he would have had no time to close either—and fastening them would have been impossible."

"But—"

"Such a suggestion is nonsensical, Drake. Last night, for instance, the rascal barely escaped pursuit. I, personally, supervised a search of the House, after you had gone back to your dormitory. Every door, every window, was shut and fastened. Such investigations were made on previous occasions. The result was the same."

Drake did not answer.

"Moreover," resumed Mr. Quelch, "if we are to suppose that these miserable thefts are committed by some outside person, such a person, to obtain unseen and unsuspected entrance, must be a professional crook—what is called a cracksman! In such a case, the headmaster's safe would be at his mercy—a very valuable booty for a burglar! Why should a man content himself with petty pilfering, when he would undoubtedly be capable of opening the headmaster's safe and taking hundreds of pounds worth of plunder?"

Drake did not speak.

That question was, in fact, unanswerable.

"Such a suggestion is absurd!" snapped the Remove master. "Upon my word! You cannot suppose that a professional cracksman would visit the same spot five times in succession, to pilfer a few pounds at a time—when he could obtain valuable plunder by a single visit, if he chose?"

"No!" said Drake slowly. "No! but—"

"Dismiss any such idea from your mind!" said the Remove master. "Obviously this unknown person belongs to the school. That has been taken for granted from the beginning of this strange and disturbing affair. There cannot be any doubt on that point."

"But—"

"You were sent for, Drake, to find this wretched, this unscrupulous boy—not to suggest wild and fantastic theories!" said Mr. Quelch. "I realise that I have expected too much of you. Only one thing is known for certain concerning this prowling pilferer—that he is someone inside the House."

"If he is in the House, sir, he bears on his face the mark of the blow I gave him in the dark last night."

"No one here bears such a mark, as I have told you."

"Then he is someone outside the House!"

Mr. Quelch breathed hard.

"You had better say no more, Drake!" he said. "I see now that it was a mistake to send for you. I will consult with the headmaster what is farther to be done—for the present you may go."

"Very well, sir!"

Jack Drake's feelings were not pleasant as he left the Form-room. He left Mr. Quelch annoyed, disappointed, irritated, and evidently believing that he had over-rated the abilities of Ferrers Locke's assistant.

That was a disagreeable reflection for Mr. Quelch. It was still more disagreeable for the schoolboy detective, who

certainly had no desire to go back to Ferrers Locke and report failure.

Drake's lips set as he went out into the spring sunshine in the quad. He was at his old school to spot the secret prowler—and he was going to stay at his old school till he had spotted his man!

On that point his mind was definitely made up; and if Henry Samuel Quelch decided otherwise, Henry Samuel Quelch had another guess coming!

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

Backed Up!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter rolled into Study No. 13 in the Remove after prep that evening.

Prep was over, but Bob Cherry was still busy grinding out the fifty lines that Mr. Quelch had given him that morning.

His friends were waiting for him to finish before going down to the Rag, when the Owl of the Remove blew in.

"Shut up!" said Bob, over his shoulder. Bob was working at express speed, and had no use for interruptions.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Kill him, somebody!" said Bob.

"Beast!"

Bob scribbled on. Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent leaned on either side of the door while they waited—Johnny Bull sat on the table, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh on the fender.

Billy Bunter blinked at Bob through his big spectacles; then he blinked at each member of the Co. in turn—then he blinked carefully round the study, taking special care to bestow a special blink behind the door!

North, south, east, and west, did Billy Bunter blink—four members of the Co. watching him in surprise, while the fifth member scribbled the last of his fifty lines. Bunter, apparently, was making sure—making assurance doubly sure—that nobody else was in the study!

"It's all right!" announced Bunter at last. "That beast was in Browney's study yesterday, you know, when I was speaking about the gum—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't cackle! He jolly well ain't here!" said Bunter. "I say, you fellows, I'm jolly well going to jape that beast Duck in the dorm to-night—"

"And you're not going to tell him so this time?" asked Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Well, I never saw him in Browney's study, you know, so he heard me, and he was cad enough to spill that gum in my bed—dirty trick!" said Bunter. "But he jolly well won't know this time! I ain't going to gum him this time—"

"I think I'd give gum a miss!" chuckled Nugent. "You don't have much luck with gum, old fat man!"

"You fellows noticed what a putrid funk he was last night," said Bunter. "Frightened out of his wits. You know he bolted out of the dorm because he fancied there was a burglar. He, he, he!"

"Not the only funk there!" granted Johnny Bull.

"Yah! I jolly well stopped that prowler getting Mauly's notecase, anyhow, with my courage and presence of mind. But, I say, you fellows, I'm going to give that swab Duck the fright of his life to-night. I'm going to make him think there's another burglar—"

"Oh, my hat!"

Billy Bunter grinned from one fat ear to the other. Evidently he was greatly taken with his new stunt for making that obnoxious new fellow sit up. And this time he had been very careful to make sure that James Duck was not present when he expounded his masterly scheme.

"I was all gummy this morning," he said. "I had to wash all over—"

"Awful!" gasped Nugent.

"The awfulness was terrific!"

"And you still live to tell the tale?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. Bob had written his last line, thrown down the pen, and pitched Virgil across the study. "What did a wash all over feel like, Bunt, for the first time in your life?"

"Oh, really, you fellows! Well, I'm going to make him squirm for gumming me," declared Bunter. "Suppose I seize him suddenly at midnight—"

"Suppose you sees him!" repeated Bob. "That's rotten bad grammar, Bunter. Besides, you couldn't see him in the dark."

"I didn't say sees him, you fathead; I said seize him!" hooted Bunter.

"But if he sees you when you seize him he may seize you as soon as he sees you—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, do stop cackling! I say, you fellows, I want you to help. I might not wake up at midnight—"

"The mightfulness is terrific."

"Of course, I could stay awake—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Only I don't want to. Now, my idea is this," said Bunter, blinking with owlish seriousness at the grinning Co. "You fellows stay awake in turn for a time. See? You stay awake till ten, Wharton—"

"Do I?" ejaculated the captain of the Remove. He seemed to doubt it.

"Yes. Then you chuck a boot or something at Bob and wake him, and he stays awake till half-past ten—"

"Do I?" grinned Bob.

"Yes. Then you wake Inky, and he keeps it up till eleven," explained Bunter. "At eleven Inky calls Nugent, and he keeps it up till half-past, and calls Bull, and Bull keeps awake till midnight, and calls me. You see, I've got it all out and dried."

"The cut-and-dryfulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "What a brain!"

"Well, I can think things out, you know," said the fat Owl. "I turn out at midnight, when I'm called—see?—and carry on japing that swab Duck. Don't you think he'll be scared out of his funky wits?"

"Not if it depends on your waking up at midnight, old fat man!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "You're about as likely to wake as jolly old Rip van Winkle."

"But I've explained that," said Bunter impatiently. "If Wharton calls you, and you call Inky, and Inky calls Nugent, and Nugent calls Bull, and Bull—"

"It sounds like the 'House That Jack Built,'" grinned Bob. "But there's just one flaw in that scheme, old porpoise."

"Well, what's that?" demanded Bunter.

"Wharton's not going to call me, I'm not going to call Inky, Inky's not going to call Nugent, Nugent's not going to call Bull, Bull's not going to call you—and you're going to snore till rising-bell."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you fellows aren't going to back me up after all I've done for you, I can only say—Hold on, you beasts, and don't walk out of the study while

a fellow's talking!" roared Bunter. "Look here, it's a jolly good idea for you to take it in turns to stay awake. I thought of that because I'm considerate. But if you won't—"

"Bank on that!" grinned Johnny Bull. "We won't!"

"Well, then suppose one of you stays awake all the time? Which of you will stay awake and call me at midnight?" asked Bunter.

"The whichfulness is terrific."

"Don't all you fellows speak at once," said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No takers!" chuckled Frank Nugent. "Ask next door, old fat man."

"Well, of all the rotters—" said Billy Bunter in disgust. "Of all the swabs—"

"You fellows coming down?" asked Bob.

"Of all the ticks!" hooted Bunter. "I've done a lot for you fellows in one way and another; now you won't back me up. I've asked Toddy, and he only sniggered—the beast! I thought I should be backed up in this study."

Bob, who was heading for the door, paused and looked back.

"Hold on, you men!" he said. "If Bunter really counted on being backed up in this study I should hate to let him down. You've come to the right study for that, Bunter."

"You silly ass!" roared Johnny Bull. "You're not going to do anything of the kind. It's a potty trick to play, anyhow, and you're not—"

"You shut up, Bull!" roared back Bunter. "Bob can do as he jolly well likes without asking you! You back me up, Bob, old man!"

"You really want to be backed up in this study?" asked Bob.

"Yes, rather! I knew I could rely on you, old chap! You ain't a swab like the other beasts—"

"You can rely on me to back you up in this study if you want me to!" declared Bob. "Here goes!"

He grasped Billy Bunter by his fat shoulders and backed him suddenly up against the study wall.

Bunter backed on that wall with a heavy bump and a loud roar.

"Yaroooh! Leggo! Wharrer you up to?" he yelled.

"Backing you up in this study," said Bob affably. "If the wall doesn't suit you I'll back you up against the table, or the armchair; I'll back you up just as long as you want me to back you up—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaroooh! Leggo!" shrieked Bunter, as he bumped on the wall again, wriggling frantically. "Will you leggo? I didn't mean back me up against the wall, you blithering idiot—"

"I did!" answered Bob cheerily.

"Leggo! Yow-wooooh! Leggo, you beast! Yaroooh!"

"Don't you want to be backed up in this study, after all?"

"Ow! No! Wow! No! Leggo!" roared Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, all right!" said Bob. He stepped back, leaving the fat Owl gasping for breath against the wall. "There's no satisfying some people. You said distinctly that you wanted to be backed up in this study—"

"Ow! Beast! Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five, yelling, walked out of Study No. 13, leaving Billy Bunter gurgling and spluttering for breath—and quite fed-up with being backed up in that study!

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

Only Bunter!

BILLY BUNTER'S eyes opened. It was not merely unusual, it was really unprecedented, for Bunter's eyes to open at midnight's wakening hour. Nevertheless, they did open, blinking round in the deep, dark shadows of the Remove dormitory.

Bunter was in a determined mood that night. After lights-out he had sat up in bed with a pillow behind his fat head, determined to keep awake. James Duck was going to be scared out of his wits by an imaginary burglar as a just punishment for gumming Bunter's bed; that determination was fixed in the fat Owl's mind.

And for a good quarter of an hour Bunter did keep awake—with heroic efforts. Then, still sitting up, he fell asleep—and until midnight boomed out from the clock tower he slept and he snored.

And in all probability he would have snored on till the rising-bell clanged in the dewy morn but for the circumstance that he stirred in his sleep and the pillow slipped from under his fat head.

That fat head, left without visible means of support, banged on the bed-head, and Bunter came out of slumber with a jump.

He rubbed his head and grunted. Faintly through the February night came the boom from the clock tower. It reminded Bunter that he had intended to stay awake.

He was awake now, at all events. His determination revived. He threw back the blankets and rolled off the bed.

There was a steady sound of regular breathing from all the other beds.

All the rest of the Remove were fast asleep.

Billy Bunter's eyes gleamed in the gloom. The hour of vengeance, so to speak, had struck.

The fat Owl crept cautiously away from his bedside, his fat hands extended to grope his way in the dark. He was not going to make a sound—at least, that was his intention. He was going to approach James Duck's bed, as silently as a flitting spectre. But that intention was not carried out—owing to the unforeseen circumstance that Bunter bumped into a chair in the dark, stumbled, and sent the chair crashing over against a bed.

"Oh!" came a startled gasp.

Herbert Vernon-Smith, who was in that bed, awoke with a jump. He sat up, staring in the dark.

Billy Bunter stood quite still.

He hoped that if he made no sound the startled junior would settle down to sleep again. He made no sound, and no movement, suppressing his breathing.

"What's that?" came a gasp from the Bounder. "Who's that?"

No sound from Bunter.

Smithy stared into the gloom, catching his breath. He could not see Bunter—it was too dark for that. But he could make out the dim outline of a black shadow in the darkness, and he knew that somebody was standing within a few feet of his bed—silent and motionless.

One thought, naturally, flashed into the Bounder's mind—the prowler. That mysterious night-prowler had failed in his object the night before, and now he had come back again. Really, there was hardly anything else that Smithy could think.

He grasped his pillow. If the mystery man was in the Remove dormitory, he

was not getting out again, if Herbert Vernon-Smith could stop him.

The Bounder kicked back his bed-clothes, and leaped from the bed, his pillow grasped in his hands. With lightning-like swiftness he leaped at that dim outline in the dark, and snote.

Crash!

Bump!

The half-seen figure went over, bumping on the floor of the dormitory. A startled howl woke the echoes as it bumped. Before that howl was fairly uttered, Vernon-Smith was grasping and gripping—and shouting to awaken the dormitory.

"Oooooogh!" came a gurgling splutter from the unseen figure wriggling in the Bounder's sinewy grip.

Bunter wriggled and struggled and kicked.

"Wake up!" yelled Vernon-Smith.

"I've got him!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"What—"

"The prowler—I've got him!" yelled Smithy. "Lend a hand here—he's kicking like anything. Get a light—I've got him—I've got the prowler—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Hold him!"

"Hang on to him, Smithy!"

"Urrgh! Grooogh! Oooooogh!" came a gurgle. "Ooogh! Urrggh!"

The Removites leaped out of bed, up and down the dormitory.

James Duck—the first to awake—had a torch in his hand, as he jumped out. The light flashed on.

"I've got him!" panted the Bounder. "I've got you, you rotter—I've got you all right! Lend a hand here—"

Harry Wharton & Co. were quickly on the spot. Dimly they made out two struggling figures—the Bounder uppermost. They added their grasp to Smithy's. The prowler—if it was the prowler—simply had no chance of breaking away. He was grasped by many hands—his neck, his hair, his ears, even his nose, were clutched and gripped.

"Bring that light here!" shouted Harry Wharton.

"Coming!" called out James Duck. He ran up, with the electric torch flashing in his hand.

"Now let's have a look at him!" panted Bob Cherry. "We'll jolly well know who he is now—why—what—who— Oh crikey!"

The light in Duck's hand gleamed down on the prisoner. It revealed a fat face with a large mouth wide open, gasping for breath.

"Bunter!" yelled Johnny Bull.

"Bunter!" stuttered Vernon-Smith.

"That fat ass—"

"That blithering idiot—"

"Gurrghh!" Billy Bunter gurgled, horribly. "Urrggh! Oooooogh!"

ARE YOU READING the Story of FRANK RICHARDS' SCHOOLDAYS in the **GEM?**

"You frabjous owl!" roared Bob Cherry. "What the thump—"

"Grooogh! Ooogh! Leggo my hair! Leggo my nose! Urrgh! Leggo my neck! Ooogh! Stop jamming your knee in my tummy, Smithy, you beast! Ow! Oooooogh! You've knocked all the bib-bub-bob-breath out of me! Yoogh! Grooogh!"

Bunter spluttered.

"Urrgh! I ain't the prowler, you silly idiots! Grooogh! I was going to jape that beast Did-dod-Duck—urrghh! I'm winded! That silly idiot jammed his knee in my tummy! Oooooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you—you blithering bandersnatch!" hooted the Bounder. "I thought—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Grooogh! You jammed your knee in my tummy! Oooooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Herbert Vernon-Smith picked up his pillow. He realised now that it was not the prowler. It was only Bunter. And he proceeded to give Bunter what he thought he deserved for startling fellows in the middle of the night! Smithy handled that pillow with terrific vim.

Swipe, swipe, swipe!

"Ow! Oh crikey! Leave off!" yelled Bunter. "I ain't the prowler, you fat-head! Yarooooh! Wharrer you pitching into me for, you beast! Oh crumps! I say, you fellows, keep him off—"

Swipe, swipe, swipe!

"Ow! Rescue! Help! Keep him off!"

Swipe, swipe, swipe!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yarooooooop!"

Billy Bunter scrambled up, and bolted back to bed. He was not thinking of midnight japes now. He was fed up with midnight japes. He flew back to bed—and after him flew the Bounder, still swiping with the pillow. A final swipe flattened Bunter down on the bed, and he rolled there and roared.

"Yarooooh! I say, you fellows— Yow ow-ow-ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Oh crikey! Wow!"

The Bounder, panting after his exertions, went back to bed, and the other fellows chuckling, turned in.

But long after they were asleep, there was a sound of grunting and gasping from Billy Bunter's bed. Smithy had pillowed him, not wisely, but too well; and it was long before the fat Owl's snore rumbled in the Remove dormitory. And it was likely to be very long before Billy Bunter tried on any more japes at midnight!

THE END.

(The Greyfriars prowler is still at large! Will Jack Drake have to go back to Ferrers Locke and report failure, or will he spot his man? Read: "AN OLD BOY'S VENGEANCE!"—next week's gripping yarn of Harry Wharton & Co. It's great!)

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IS CATCHING PANCAKES A TOSS-UP?

Bunter Criticises Modern Cooks' Ignorance

"Tossing pancakes is more luck than judgment," Skinner opined in the Rag, the other evening. "When they come down again, it's a toss-up whether you catch them or not."

Bunter said "Rot!" and the talk, which had been rather desultory, brightened up quite a lot.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" remarked Bob Cherry. "Here's a giddy Daniel come to judgment! What do you know about pancakes, Bunter?"

"Pretty well everything there is to know, I should think!" snorted Bunter. "I pride myself on my knowledge of cooking. Even if I didn't, though, I should be ashamed to confess to such ignorance as you fellows show. A toss-up whether you catch pancakes, indeed! Why, it's a child's play. Yah!"

"Rats!" said Skinner cheerfully. "I happen to know the truth about this. I watched the chef at Chunkley's Palm Lounge on the job last Pancake Day. Think he did any pancake-tossing? Not likely!"

Bunter sniffed. "What of it? You've only proved what a rotten lot of chefs there are about nowadays. It's what I'm always telling fellows—modern cooks are dashed ignorant! They don't know the first thing about their own job!"

"Why, in the good old days," went on the cheery old Owl, warming to his subject, "the chef who didn't toss the pancake would have been looked on as a blessed pariah—something right outside the pale, by Jove! But in these barbarous blessed times, anything's good enough. People ain't civilised enough to care tuppence about grub—barring a few fellows of culture and refinement like me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle

at!" sniffed Bunter. "You can take it from me, anyway, that pancake-tossing is as easy as winking. And no fellow worth his salt would dream of doing them in any other way than by tossing them."

"Bet you a bob you don't toss three running and catch 'em!" was Skinner's retort. "Money down before you start!"

"Done!" said Bunter. "Lend me a bob, somebody!"

When nobody could be found to lend Bunter a bob, Skinner's interest in the argument evaporated. But the



rest of the fellows were interested by this time and several offered to supply batter to put Bunter to the test; so the experiment duly went forward.

Squiff fetched a frying-pan. Trevor contributed a jugful of milk, butter, and a slab of lard; and Bunter started to fry his first pancake over the fire in the Rag.

Having fried one side, he lifted the frying-pan, shook the sizzling pancake, tossed it sky-high, and then waited with quiet confidence for its return.

Alas for his hopes! The pancake didn't come down! Bunter had tossed it so high that it flattened itself out

on the ceiling and remained there! Amid cries of "Hard luck, Bunter!" and "Well tried, anyway, Porpoise!" the amateur chef poured out more batter and made a second attempt. It was no fault of Bunter's that the attempt failed. It was the fellows who were at fault for pressing round him so closely as to knock the pan out of his hand just at the crucial moment.

Pan and pancake crashed side by side on the hearthrug amid ironical cheers. Bunter voiced a protest.

"Look here, you fellows, give a man a chance! Stand back this time and then I'll show you something worth seeing!"

The Porpoise was as good as his word. His third pancake went flying in a graceful curve right over the heads of the spectators.

The spectators couldn't help wondering where it was going to land.

They were not long left in doubt.

Just as the pancake started gravitating to earth again, the door of the Rag opened and Loder of the Sixth looked in to announce bedtime.

Plop! went the pancake, descending on Loder and curling round his face like an outside in turban. It took Loder completely by surprise. He sat down on the floor with a bump, clawing sizzling batter away from his face and howling fiendishly the while.

The Remove, Bunter included, decided to make a move for the dorm while they were safe; and by the time Loder had recovered, not a Remove man was left in the Rag!

The problem of how much luck there is in pancake-tossing was left unsolved; and Bunter and Skinner still hold to their respective viewpoints!

thought of still better times to come! Footer, of course, will last till we break up for Easter—to conclude, we are all hoping, with Greyfriars at the head of the Championship Table that Vernon-Smith so laboriously compiles after each round of games!

With the approach of spring, however, other outdoor sports also begin to claim our attention. The seniors have already had racing-skiffs out on the river, for instance; and cross-country aspirants are beginning to train seriously for the open event that takes place a month hence. Tennis enthusiasts are turning their thoughts to the re-stringing of rackets, and I have even observed one or two fellows oiling their cricket bats. There's nothing like being well prepared!

Perhaps the most striking effect resulting from an odd day of spring-like warmth at this time of the year is the activity it promotes among cyclists. We must be fair-weather cyclists at Greyfriars, for many machines lie in the shed totally neglected for the entire winter. But when the first touch of spring is felt in the air, then there's a rush!

I dropped in to mend a puncture in the back tyre of my own jigger just before dinner to-day, and found it quite difficult even to get through the doorway! Half the school seemed to be there, de-corking rusted handlebars, mending punctures, and loudly lamenting lost bits and pieces which had been "borrowed" by other cyclists during the winter season.

I noticed another sign of happy days to come after dinner, in the tuck-shop. When my chums and I adjourned there for a ginger-pop, it was to find that Mrs. Mimbles had made her first ice-cream of the year—and incidentally she was doing quite a brisk trade in it!

Ah, well! Probably by the time these words are printed, we shall all be huddled round our study fires again, while a biting nor-easter howls down the chimneys. But it's pleasant, all the same, to get this forerunner of the joys of the not-very-distant future!

A spot of sunshine puts new life into a fellow. It makes one want to be out in the fresh air.

Meet you again next week, chums!

HARRY WHARTON.

When I spotted Fisher T. Fish trying to teach his nanny-goat to jump through a paper hoop this week I couldn't help wondering how long it will take to turn the Greyfriars "menagerie" into a circus!

The enthusiasm of our pet lovers for inducing their pets to do what no reasonable chap can expect them to do is really remarkable.

Snoop is actively engaged in getting his rabbits to pick out variously colored toy bricks to order. Bulstrode is intent on training his wire-haired terrier to paw footer with a tennis ball. Squiff is spending hours patiently teaching his guinea-pig to dance in and out of a fret-work contraption he has made solely for that purpose.

I should like to say that these stunts, in my humble opinion, are not always to be applauded.

Don't misunderstand me, you fellows. Most opposition to the idea of performing animals is based on the objection that you have to be cruel to teach animals to

do tricks. I don't think that that is always true, and I'm quite sure, anyway, that very few Greyfriars men would use methods involving any suggestion of cruelty.

There are, of course, one or two who have no liking for animals and don't care two hoots whether animals are hurt or not. But they are not interested in teaching them tricks, in any case, so they don't come into it.

My own objection to many of these laboriously achieved tricks is that they make the performing animal look so dashed silly!

I may be all wrong, but I've got a hunch that most animals, including domestic pets, have a sort of natural dignity all of their own. And when you start teaching them tricks you destroy all that natural dignity and turn them into giddy freaks of nature!

Mind you, I don't carry

AWFUL WHEN FISH GETS HIS MAD UP!

Says S. Q. I. FIELD

Jevver see Fisher T. Fish in a temper, chaps? If you haven't, you don't want to; it's a sight you would never forget. Something to strike a chill to the boldest heart, in fact.

You could almost sense the shiver that ran round the Remove passage the other evening when Fishy appeared in a towering rage. One or two of the more timid inhabitants dived back into their studies and sought refuge under tables and sofas on the look of him alone.

Fishy certainly did look wild. His cap was pulled over his eyes, he was grinding his teeth, his hair was all awry and his horn-rimmed specs. were spread slantwise over his face.

"Say, where's Bolsover?" he howled. "Let me get at that guy an' tear him in pieces! Let me knock him into the middle of next week! I wanna lay my fins on Bolsover!"

"W-w-what's done, Fishy?" asked one trembling Remove man.

"Borrowed my bunch of keys without paying for 'em—an' as if that ain't enough, he used some of my stock of impots for a—darned paper-chase! But what I've done to me will be jest nothin' compared with what I'm

gonna do to him!" roared Fishy, doing a wild war-dance and brandishing his fists furiously. "I guess I'll make mincemeat of him! Yes, sir! I'll turn that hombre into potato-scrappings! Yes, siree! I'll—"

"Anybody want me?" asked Bolsover, appearing in his study doorway at that moment.

We told him Fishy wanted him; and then we all averted our eyes—unable to bear the frightful scene of carnage that threatened.

But the threatened didn't happen, after all. Instead of Fishy wading in and making pulp of Bolsover, he plunged his hands into his pockets, hunched his back, and walked away.

"I guess it can wait," he said. "It was nothin' much. I'll tell you about it sometime!"

Simply amazing! The only conclusion I can come to is that Fishy, by a superhuman effort, mastered his feelings and let Bolsover off rather than have blood on his hands.

Some have whispered that Fishy shifted his ground for quite another reason—funk, they put it.

But that's unthinkable. Nobody could entertain such a suggestion for a moment who saw how awful Fishy looked when he had got his mad up.

DO YOU TEACH YOUR PETS TRICKS?

Asks TOM BROWN

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ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

P. B. (Remove).—"It was just my luck that on the one occasion this year when I've been offered a chance to play for the Form, I should have to turn it down for fear of catching the flu. You evidently thought the offer was not to be sneezed at!"

P. S. PAGET (Third).—"There isn't a fellow in our Form with any blots on his carrierker."

Quite right, kid; by the time you've finished placing blots over your faces and hands, you probably haven't any ink left for your "carrierkers!"

C. H. (Shell).—"As I played the piano to those chaps, I noticed some of them actually crying."

The rest, being made of sterner stuff, presumably suffered in silence.

"BEAU BRUMMELL" (Remove).—"In the matter of Sunday morning clobber, the average fellow finds his topper the handicap."

Exactly; he'd much prefer the "handy cap!"

G. TUBE. (Third).—"If that big booby touches me again, I shall treat him with contempt—heap coals of fire on his head."

Alternatively, of course, you can tell him to go and eat coke!



But when you start teaching it to dance on its hind legs or balance a biscuit on its nose, it's a different thing altogether! I simply don't agree with that—that's all!

I'm not laying down the law about it. All you chaps

REMOVE FIND TRAPEZE EASY TRAP!

Says H. VERNON-SMITH

And now, for a change, friends, let's listen to the padding of soft feet on parquet flooring instead of the heavy thudding of boot against ball. In other words, let's talk about this week's gym display instead of footer! We shall find this easier than it might have been, for it so happens this week that there is not a single junior footer match to report from any of the schools represented in the championship list.

In any case, the gym show is worth a mention—if only for the reason that the Remove scored top points in it!

Picked teams from every Form in the school took part in the show, and although allowances were made in marks to level up inequalities in age, Wharton, the Remove team leader, must have felt a qualm or two when he saw the other teams on parade. Taking them all round, they were admittedly a nifty-looking lot!

Our team, by the way, consisted of the following seasoned gym workers:

H. Wharton (team leader), J. Bull, R. Cherry, M. Linley, R. Russell, T. Redwing, D. Morgan, T. Brown.

The selection was by no means universally approved, and, in fact, without making invidious comparisons, I thought I might have been included myself. But the proof of the pudding is in the eating, after all, and as the selected team got away with it and beat the rest, I can hardly criticise now!

The secret of success in a gym display is smartness, and there you must certainly hand it to Wharton. Although handicapped by lack of time for proper preparation, he managed to get his team into such trim order that they would not have disgraced an Olympic Games parade. Every order was obeyed with military precision and the team worked together like clockwork.

Mr. Larry Lascelles, who officiated as M.C., divided the programme into six test acts—Swedish drill, pyramids, parallel bars, vaulting horse, rope-climbing, and trapeze.

The trap in the programme was reckoned to be the trapeze. None of the other Forms appeared to have got beyond the elementary stage in trapeze work. The Remove team, on the other hand, having done a lot of trapeze work last term, were thoroughly at home on the high swing and drew the loudest cheer of the evening for their display in this test.

Apart from this, however, there was a commendable slickness about the Remove men all through that marked them out as winners. When they formed a pyramid they were as firm as a rock. In their rope-climbing the eight went up their ropes as one man. On the vaulting horse, too, they added a little flourish by finishing off with a somersault after landing on their feet. A little uncalculated for, this, perhaps, and it probably added nothing to the number of marks earned, but it tickled the audience and evidently didn't upset the judges!

Taking the display as a whole, it was a rattling good show, and the Remove team deserved their win.

Well, that's all about the gym display, lads. It proved another feather in the Remove cap, and nobody who watched the show could afterwards complain that Greyfriars was lagging behind in the campaign for physical fitness!

As the footer championship table remains unchanged, I am not giving it this week. Watch out for it next week, however, when a full programme of matches may make some noticeable alterations in it!