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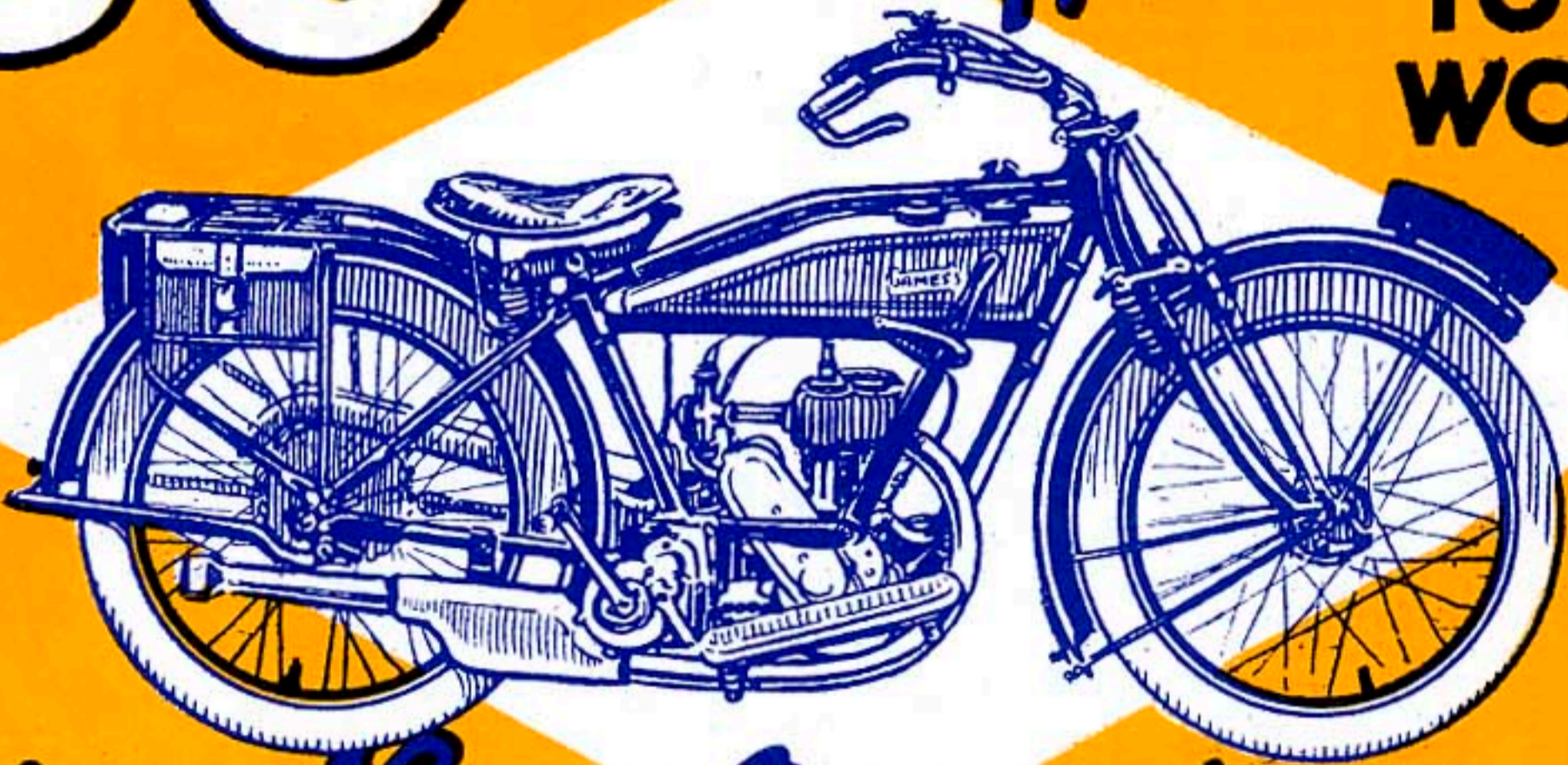
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Next Monday's Programme!

"TRUE AS STEEL!"

NEXT Monday's powerful story of Greyfriars will go like hot cakes. Mr. Frank Richards has scored many triumphs, but this coming yarn bids fair to top them all. With Tom Redwing and Vernon-Smith as the central figures on the stage, my readers can be assured of something extra good. The sailor lad finds himself up against public opinion, and in his bitterness turns against his chum, Vernon-Smith. Smitty, however, decides to play a lone hand, and he plays it well. He establishes Tom Redwing's innocence of the charge laid against him, and by doing so proves himself a chum indeed, and as "True as Steel!"

"A MARKED MAN!"

Ferrers Locke, the wizard detective, falls into the hands of Tiger Sleek in the coming instalment of our grand footer serial, and his chances of escape are practically nil. To rid himself of such a formidable foe, the Tiger causes Locke to be thrown into the river, his hands and feet tied securely, his pockets weighted with heavy stones, and a cruel gag to stifle his cries for help. To the ordinary person such a dastardly plan could meet with but one end—success. A strange Fate, however, destines that Ferrers Locke should be spared. How that comes about you can best learn from next Monday's sensational instalment. Don't miss it, chums!

A FOUR-PAGE SUPPLEMENT!

I can already picture the delight on your faces as you realise that our popular "Herald" supplement once again comes into its own. Four pages! I feel like cheering myself. But you are all dying to know the subject of this coming treat. Well, here it is—a SPECIAL SMUGGLERS' NUMBER. That alone will convince you of rollicking moments ahead, for some of the "Herald" contributions would make the proverbial cat laugh. There is a serious side to this Supplement, however, which will strike a happy note.

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The curtain rings up on the mysterious disappearance of a particularly large and rich cake—the property of Mr. Quelch. As it is generally known that William George Bunter had had designs upon the cake in question, suspicion falls upon his fat shoulders and he is faced with the prospect of a flogging. For once in a way Billy Bunter shows a reckless disregard of authority. Not only is the cake missing but the Owl also is conspicuous by his absence. Where is the cake and where is Bunter?



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**NOW SHOWING—
THE CASE OF THE
MISSING CAKE!**

A Splendid Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars.
By **FRANK RICHARDS.**

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Generous!

“YOU fellows care for plum-cake?” Billy Bunter asked that unexpected question in the doorway of Study No. 1 in the Remove at Greyfriars.

Five juniors were busy in that study—very busy indeed.

Outside there was rain—wet rain, and plenty of it. Even Bob Cherry acknowledged that football was impossible that afternoon.

It was wet—it was dark—it was dismal. But in Study No. 1 a big fire roared, and the gas was lighted, and Harry Wharton & Co. sat round the study table with cheery faces. Five intellects were concentrated on the production of the Christmas Number of the “Greyfriars Herald.”

On fine days the “Herald” was liable to be neglected or forgotten. It was, in fact, saved up for a rainy day.

So while the rain splashed without the ink splashed within, and the Christmas Number of the “Herald,” like the little peach in the orchard, grew and grew and grew.

There was no desire whatever, on the part of anybody in the study, to see Bunter. Johnny Bull instinctively reached for a ruler, and Frank Nugent for an inkpot, as he looked in. But his unexpected question rather disarmed them.

“I say, you fellows, you’ve been doing a lot of work, and you seem to have forgotten tea-time,” went on Bunter. “It struck me that you’d like some of my big plum-cake!”

“Well, my hat!” said Bob Cherry, in astonishment.

“You’ve got a plum-cake!” exclaimed Harry Wharton.

“Yes.”

“And you haven’t scoffed it at sight?”

“Oh, really, Wharton!”

“Do I sleep, do I dream, or is visions about?” inquired Bob.

“Oh, don’t be a silly ass, you know!” urged Bunter. “I think it’s jolly generous of me to think of you fellows like this!”

“And jolly unusual,” said Johnny Bull. “Have you really got a cake, or are you trying to be funny?”

“It’s just come. I haven’t unpacked it yet,” said Bunter. “My idea is to bring it here, and whack it out all round. That’s my style, you know—nothing greedy about me, I hope.”

“Oh crumbs!” said Bob.

It really wasn’t Bunter’s style at all. But the Owl of the Remove seemed to be in earnest. He stood in the doorway and blinked very seriously at the Famous Five through his big spectacles.

“It’s a whacking big cake,” said Bunter. “Real plums in it, and plenty of them—marzipan on top. Special instructions were given by telephone about the marzipan. Now, would you fellows like some?”

“Would we?” grinned Bob.

There was no doubt that they would. It was tea-time, and the chums of the Remove had been hard at literary work for some time. It suddenly occurred to them now that they were getting hungry. A big plum-cake with marzipan on top was particularly welcome just then in the editorial office.

“Trot it along!” said Johnny Bull.

“Yes, rather!”

“You’d really like it?” asked Bunter.

“What-ho!”

“The likefulness is terrific,” remarked Hurree Singh. “The esteemed, ridiculous Bunter is a sportsman!”

“I suppose one of you fellows wouldn’t mind fetching it upstairs?” asked Bunter casually.

Bob Cherry jumped up.

“Lazybones! But I’ll fetch it if you like. Where is it—in Gosling’s lodge?”

“Nunno!”

“In the housekeeper’s room?” asked Bob.

“No; in Quelch’s study.”

“In Mr. Quelch’s study!” exclaimed Nugent. “That means that it’s been confiscated, then?”

“No, it doesn’t,” said Bunter eagerly.

“You see, I wasn’t on hand when it was delivered, and Trotter took it on from the man and put it in Quelch’s study, like a silly ass, you know! It’s standing there on the table, just as it came. I’ve just seen it. Quelch’s out, too!”

“Then why the thump didn’t you carry it up here?”

“Well, it’s jolly heavy,” said Bunter. “It’s an enormous cake, you know—a present from one of my titled relations.”

“Ass!”

“And—and Coker of the Fifth was hanging about,” added Bunter. “Just like that brute Coker to raid a fellow’s cake. He makes out that I bagged some jam-tarts from his study the other day. Of course, I didn’t—four measly jam-tarts with hardly any jam in them. They didn’t last me three minutes!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Serve you jolly well right if Coker bagged your cake!” said Bob. “But if you’re whacking it out in this study, that’s a different matter. Coker will have to learn to keep his hands from picking and stealing, in the circumstances.”

“Hear, hear!”

“Well, cut down and get it,” said Bunter. “I’ve asked Skinner, and he won’t! Beastly funk! Afraid of Quelch—”

“Quelch!”

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"I mean Coker! You're not funky, Bob."

"I don't think!" grinned Bob. "I'll cut down and get it."

Bob Cherry left Study No. 1. The Owl of the Remove called after him anxiously.

"I say, don't you get into a scrap with Coker—just bag the cake and bolt up here with it, quick!"

"Right-ho!"

Bob Cherry scudded down the stairs. Skinner was lounging on the landing below, and he called to Bob.

"You fetching that cake for Bunter?"

"Yes."

"Oh, my hat! What a neck!"

"I don't see it! I'm not funky!" answered Bob.

"You'll get scalped."

"Rot!"

Bob Cherry scudded on. He reached the masters' corridor, and spotted Coker of the Fifth loafing at the corner, with Potter and Greene. Horace Coker gave him a lofty and admonitory glance. Coker of the Fifth was "down" on the cheerful Removites, and he laboured under the delusion that it was up to him to keep those cheeky fags in order. Unheeding Coker & Co., Bob Cherry tapped at Mr. Quelch's door—to make sure that the Remove master was absent—and then walked in.

On the study table stood a large package, carefully wrapped up and tied with string. In large letters appeared the legend: "FRAGILE! WITH CARE!"

Bob was stepping towards the table when Coker of the Fifth looked in, with Potter and Greene grinning over his shoulders.

Coker was not grinning. He was frowning.

"You cheeky young sweep!" began Coker. "Larking in your Form master's study while he's out—what?"

"Take your face away!" was Bob's reply. "It's not a thing you ought to spring on a fellow suddenly."

"Well, I'm jolly well going to stop you!" said Coker. "The cheek of you Remove fags is getting altogether too thick."

"You silly owl!" exclaimed Bob. "I've come here to fetch a parcel. Go and chop chips!"

"What's a parcel of yours doing in Mr. Quelch's study?" demanded Coker suspiciously.

"Find out!"

"That's what I'm jolly well going to do!" declared Coker, and he marched into the study.

Potter winked at Greene, and Greene grinned at Potter, and they walked quickly away. It was like Horace Coker to chip in where he had no concern; but Potter and Greene were not keen on a row with a fag in a master's study.

Bob Cherry picked up the big package and dodged round the study table as Coker advanced on him.

"Put down that parcel," said Coker.

"Bow-wow!"

"Do you hear me?" roared Coker.

"Fathead!"

"By gum!" gasped Coker. "I'll jolly well pulverise you, you cheeky little beast!"

He rushed round the table. Bob Cherry made for the door. He was not quite equal to a scrap with the hefty Coker; neither did he want a scrap to take place in the apartment sacred to Mr. Quelch. But Coker was after him like a shot.

He reached Bob as Bob reached the door.

Coker's hand dropped on Bob's shoulder.

"Now!" he panted. "Now— Oh! Ooooooh!"

Bob Cherry swung round, the big package in both hands, and it came into collision with Horace Coker's nose. Coker staggered back, and sat down on Mr. Quelch's carpet with a heavy bump.

"Oh!" roared Coker. "Ow! Wait till I get at you! Ow!"

Bob did not wait. He had no desire whatever for Horace Coker to get at him. He jumped out of the study and scudded for the stairs. He went up the stairs three at a time, at a great rate, and reached the Remove passage in a breathless state.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Narrow Escape!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Here you are!"

Bob Cherry slammed the parcel down on the study table in Study No. 1, and panted for breath.

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Bunter.

"What's the hurry?" asked Wharton.

"That ass Coker—he had to butt in," said Bob. "I biffed him with the parcel and got out. I think he's after me."

"Good!"

The editor and sub-editors of the "Greyfriars Herald" jumped to their feet. Skinner looked in.

"Here comes Coker of the Fifth!"

"Let him come!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"I'll call the fellows."

There was an alarm all along the Remove passage at once. Most of the Removites were indoors that rainy afternoon. Most of them, too, were glad of the news of a Fifth Form invasion of their quarters—it was a little excitement to break the monotony.

Removites came pouring out of the studies. Peter Todd arrived first, and then Vernon-Smith, and Redwing, and Squiff, and Tom Brown, and Hazeldene, and Russell, and Ogilvy, and Jimmy Vivian, and a crowd more, eager for the fray. The Famous Five turned out of Study No. 1. Coker of the Fifth, charging up the Remove staircase in pursuit of Bob Cherry, rushed fairly into a hornet's nest.

"Here he is!" yelled Peter Todd.

"Collar the Fifth Form cad!" roared Squiff.

"Mop him up!"

"Down with the Fifth!"

Coker of the Fifth hardly knew what happened next. He had come there to reduce Bob Cherry to a pulverised state. Instead of which Coker went through a process of pulverisation. Uncounted hands were laid on him—innumerable feet landed on him—a lightning calculator could not have kept pace with the number of kicks, punches, pokes, shoves, and jabs that were bestowed upon Coker. In a wild and whirling frame of mind Coker went rolling down the Remove staircase to the landing below.

"Come up again!" yelled Peter Todd.

"Ow! Wow, wow!"

"Come and have some more!" shrieked Squiff.

"Yooooohooooop!"

"Let's get after him!" shouted Bolsover major, and he led a rush down the stairs after Coker.

But Coker did not wait. Before the juniors came down the upper flight,

Coker was skimming down the lower flight, fleeing for his life. Yells and catcalls from the landing followed him; but Coker did not turn. As had happened upon innumerable occasions, Coker realised that he had bitten off more than he could masticate, and he stood not upon the order of his going, but went at once.

"Dear old Coker!" grinned Bob Cherry, as the Famous Five came back into Study No. 1. "Always butting his head against a stone wall! Hallo, hallo, hallo! Bunter's unpacked the cake!"

Billy Bunter had left the other fellows to deal with Coker. He was busy getting the cake out of its wrappings.

It was really a handsome cake that was exposed to view when Bunter lifted the lid of the cardboard box inside the wrapping-paper. It weighed at least seven pounds, it was of a fragrant richness, and the top was stacked with marzipan, and in decorative letters thereon appeared the words "Many Happy Returns."

"My hat! What a ripping cake!" ejaculated Nugent.

"Top-hole!"

"The topholefulness is terrific."

"Fancy Bunter whacking out a cake like that! Wonders will never cease!" said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Top-hole, and no mistake," said Peter Todd, looking in at the door. "I didn't know it was your birthday, Bunter."

"It isn't," said Bunter.

"That's a birthday cake."

"I—I mean, it is my birthday," said Bunter. "I haven't had one for—four months!"

"Oh, my hat! How many birthdays do you have in a year?" demanded Peter Todd.

"Oh, really, Peter—"

"Well, it's a ripping cake, and it's very sporting of Bunter to offer to whack it out in this study," said Harry Wharton. "Trot out a knife, somebody."

"Hold on!" exclaimed Peter.

"Eh? Why?"

"Well, I'd make sure it was Bunter's cake before I cut it, if I were you," drawled Peter. "That's a birthday cake, and it isn't Bunter's birthday. It may be somebody else's birthday—and somebody else's cake."

"Great pip!"

"It's my cake!" roared Bunter. "Look here, Peter—"

"If it's your cake, old fat pippin, I'll help you get rid of it," said Peter. "But if it isn't—"

"Gimme that knife, Bob Cherry."

Bob Cherry did not give Bunter the knife. Peter Todd's timely hint came as a warning to the Famous Five. They knew their Bunter; and they sagely decided to settle the question of the ownership of the cake beyond the shadow of a doubt before they disposed of it internally.

"It must be Bunter's if it's addressed to him," said Frank Nugent doubtfully.

"But is it?" asked Peter.

"Well, I suppose you looked at the label, Bob, before you bagged it in Quelch's study?"

"How could I look at any old label, with Coker jumping on my neck?" demanded Bob. "I thought it was Bunter's, as he said so."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Well, the label's here, somewhere,"

"True as Steel!"—next Monday's thrilling story of—

said Harry Wharton. "We can easily look at it."

He sorted out the label from the wrappings.

"It's all right, you fellows!" exclaimed Bunter hastily. "It's from my father, you know."

"Has your father addressed it to Mr. Quelch?" exclaimed Wharton, holding up the label.

"Yes! Exactly!"

The juniors stared at the label. The address was H. Quelch, Esq., Greyfriars. A further inscription showed that it had come from Chunkley's Stores in Courtfield.

"Quelchy!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, aghast. "It—it—it isn't Bunter's at all!"

"Phew!"

"Lucky you haven't scoffed it!" remarked Peter Todd dryly.

"Great Scott!"

The juniors glared at Bunter. They began to understand now why he had so generously offered to "whack out" that handsome cake in Study No. 1. It was not Bunter's cake, but evidently the property of Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove. What Bunter had wanted was some temerarious youth to raid it for him from the Form master's study!

"I—I say, you fellows, it's all right!" gasped Bunter. "My—my pater addressed it care of Mr. Quelch, you know—"

"It's not addressed care of Quelchy—it's addressed to Mr. Quelch!" roared Bob.

"Ye-e-es; that's all right! Safer, you know!" gasped the Owl of the Remove.

"I—I asked the pater to address it to Quelchy, so—so—so that it would be—be safer in the post—"

"It hasn't come by post! There's no stamp on it!"

"Eh?"

"It must have been delivered by Chunkley's van from Courtfield," said Peter Todd. "Blessed if I know what Quelchy wants with a birthday-cake—but it's his!"

"And we nearly scoffed it!" murmured Wharton.

"I—I say, you fellows, it's all right! It really isn't Quelchy's cake," urged Bunter. "My pater sent it specially—"

"Your pater doesn't deal with Courtfield shops, you fat villain!"

"Nunno! You see, he telephoned to Chunkley's—"

"Better get it back to Quelchy's study before he comes in," grinned Peter Todd. "If Quelchy misses it and begins inquiring after it, there'll be trouble for somebody."

"Look here, you fellows, I'm going to whack it out, you know!" howled Bunter. "You can have some, Peter. Gimme a knife!"

"You fat burglar—"

"It's my cake, you know. If you fellows think I heard Quelchy telephoning to Chunkley's this morning, you're making a mistake. Quelchy didn't order this cake to send to his kid nephew for his birthday. I don't believe he's got a nephew."

"Oh, my hat!"

"He never telephoned to Chunkley's at all, and I didn't hear him at the phone," said Bunter. "And he never said anything about wanting a specially nice cake with marzipan for his little nephew, and didn't mention that it was to be delivered here this afternoon. I never saw Chunkley's van come; in fact, it hasn't been anywhere near Greyfriars to-day. And if you think I got Bob Cherry to fetch the cake so that Quelchy



Bob Cherry swung round the big package in both hands, and it came into collision with Horace Coker's nose. Coker staggered back, and sat down on Mr. Quelch's carpet with a heavy bump. "Ow!" he roared. "Ow! Wait till I get you—yow!" (See Chapter 1.)

wouldn't know that I'd had it, I can only say you're jolly suspicious."

"Oh, bump him!" said Bob.

"I say, you fellows—I say—yooooop!"

Bump!

Billy Bunter sat down on the floor of Study No. 1, with a concussion that made the dust rise from the carpet.

The yell he gave was heard from end to end of the Remove passage. He sat and roared while the juniors hurriedly replaced the wrappings on the cake, and tied it up again. They were in breathless haste to get the cake back to where it belonged, before it was missed. As soon as it was wrapped up, Bob Cherry hurried out of the study with it.

"Taking the jolly old cake home again?" asked Skinner, meeting him on the stairs.

"Yes; it's not Bunter's."

"Great pip! Did you think it was?" yelled Skinner.

"He said it was—"

"Ha, ha! If Bunter said it was, that would make me think it wasn't," chortled Skinner.

Bob Cherry hurried on, and Skinner strolled down the staircase after him, grinning. There was no sign of Coker in the passages now—the great man of the Fifth was in his own quarters repairing damages. Bob Cherry hastened into Mr. Quelch's study, thankful that the Remove master had not yet returned.

He replaced the parcel on Mr. Quelch's

table and left the study, and breathed more freely when he turned the corner of the passage. The Famous Five had had a narrow escape. What would have happened, had they "scoffed" the cake Mr. Quelch had specially ordered for his nephew's birthday, was really too awful to contemplate. Bob returned to Study No. 1, feeling that he had time to kick Bunter now that the cake had been returned to its proper place.

He was in time to see William George Bunter ejected from Study No. 1, with four feet behind to help him depart. Bob hurried up to add a fifth foot, and Bunter roared and rolled away.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.
Wrathy!

MR. QUELCH, the master of the Remove, looked cross. His looks indicated exactly what he was feeling like.

Shakespeare has remarked that when sorrows come, they come not as single spies, but in battalions. It is the same with the smaller troubles of this troublesome earth. Small troubles had accumulated upon Mr. Quelch that day.

He had walked over to the vicarage to play chess with the vicar. It had rained, and he had omitted to take an umbrella. He had played one game, with the Muzio opening, and had had to play black. Naturally, Mr. Lambe had mated him.

—Harry Wharton & Co. ! Don't miss it, chaps—it's great !

In a second game Mr. Quelch would have had white, and with the same opening he would have avenged his defeat. But the vicar was called away.

The Remove Form master had walked home to Greyfriars, and it still rained. He had thought of borrowing an umbrella at the vicarage, but a delusive few minutes of sunshine had decided him not to do so. Out of sight of the vicarage, the rain had come down with redoubled vim.

A passing motor-car had splashed Mr. Quelch with mud in Friardale Lane. So he came in wet and muddy and cross.

Having changed, he repaired to his study, to find that, in spite of special instructions, the fire had been allowed to go out. It was cold and dismal.

This accumulation of trifling worries made Mr. Quelch breathe hard through his nose. Had he been a married gentleman he might have found relief in addressing a few dry and cutting remarks to Mrs. Quelch. But he was a single gentleman, so this relief was denied him. There was only Trotter, the page, to whom cutting remarks could be addressed—and Trotter had a solid stolidity under such inflictions which was disheartening. However, Mr. Quelch was about to ring for Trotter, to talk about the fire which should have been kept in, but wasn't, when he remembered the cake. He glanced at his table, but there was no package to be seen.

Mr. Quelch's eyes glinted.

He made a stride to the telephone. He jerked the receiver off the hooks, and gave the exchange the number of Chunkley's Stores in Courtfield. Strict orders had been given by Mr. Quelch that as soon as the cake was delivered from Chunkley's, it was to be placed in his study, and he had no doubt whatever that Mrs. Kebble would have carried out those orders had the cake arrived. Mr. Quelch was not exactly conscious of the fact that he was yearning to rag somebody, in revenge for the petty worries that had piled on him that afternoon. But undoubtedly he rang up Chunkley's in a warlike frame of mind.

"Chunkley's!" came a voice through the instrument. They always answered like that from Chunkley's in Courtfield, in imitation of the big London stores.

"That is Chunkley's?"

"Yes, sir."

"Mr. Quelch speaking from Greyfriars School. The cake has not been delivered."

"The gate?"

"Cake!" roared Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, cake! You said cake?"

"Yes, cake!"

"I will put you through to the confectionery department."

Mr. Quelch waited and fumed. It was a cold day, and the rim of the receiver, jammed to his ear, was very cold—in fact, icy. The icy rim of a receiver was irritating to a middle-aged gentleman who was subject to attacks of neuralgia on rainy days. Mr. Quelch waited, his eyes glinting more than ever at the transmitter.

"Are you through?" came a soft feminine voice from the exchange.

"Eh! What?"

"Are you through?"

"Yes!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, very well!"

Another wait. Mr. Quelch grew impatient. Apparently the gentleman at Chunkley's who had undertaken to put him through to the confectionery department had walked away and forgotten his existence. Mr. Quelch jammed at the hooks to ring up the exchange.

"Number, please."

"Kindly ring up Chunkley's again for me!"

"Eh?"

"Courtfield one double 0!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "I cannot get an answer."

"I will ring them again," said the feminine voice, with a tone of reproof in it.

Another wait. Then:

"Chunkley!" came over the wires.

"I am telephoning to inquire about a cake that should have been delivered here this afternoon!"

"Who is speaking?"

"Mr. Quelch, Greyfriars School."

"Mr. Squelch?"

"Quelch!" shrieked the Remove master. "Mr. Quelch."

"Oh, Quelch! Very good. Did you say a rake? I will put you through to the ironmongery department."

"Not a rake—a cake!" roared Mr. Quelch.

But it was too late. Another voice came through:

"Chunkley's!"

"I am inquiring about a cake—"

"This is the ironmongery department. Cakes are in the confectionery department. I will put you through."

Mr. Quelch's eyes were like summer lightning now. He waited, but the confectionery department at Chunkley's Stores was not so rapid in its methods as the ironmongery department. He waited and waited, and at last a voice came:

"Chunkley's!"

"Is that the confectionery department?" hissed Mr. Quelch.

"No; this is the inquiry office. Can I put you through to the confectionery department?"

"Yes!"

Buzzzzzz!

"Chunkley's!" came a voice.

"Is that the confectionery department?"

"Yes; confectionery department, Chunkley's."

Mr. Quelch felt that he was "getting warm," as it were, in this game of hide-and-seek.

"A cake should have been delivered to me by your van this afternoon—"

"Who is speaking?"

"Mr. Quelch, Greyfriars School. The cake was ordered by telephone this morning, and delivery was promised—"

"That would be the telephone orders department. I will put you through."

Buzzzzzz!

"Chunkley's!" came a new voice.

"Is that the telephone orders department?" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Yes. Who is speaking?"

"Mr. Quelch, Greyfriars School. A cake was ordered by telephone this morning, and has not yet been delivered."

"Our van will deliver it to-morrow morning—"

"It was specially promised for delivery this afternoon—"

"Oh, quite so! That would be in the special orders department. Please hold on, and I will put you through."

The division of labour at Chunkley's Stores was evidently on the lines of the biggest London emporiums. Mr. Quelch was getting a little breathless with this prolonged chase.

"Chunkley's!" came a fresh voice.

"Is that the special orders department?" breathed Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir!"

"I have rung up to inquire—"

"Have you finished?" came the soft feminine voice from the exchange.

"No!" shrieked Mr. Quelch.

"Oh!"

"Chunkley's! Is that Chunkley's?" foamed Mr. Quelch. "I am inquiring about a cake—"

"That would be in the confectionery department. I will put you through—"

"Stop!" yelled Mr. Quelch.

"Eh?"

"Hold on! Answer me! It was a special order, for delivery this afternoon by your motor-van. The cake has not arrived."

"Please hold on a few moments while I inquire."

Mr. Quelch held on more than a few moments. Indeed, it seemed to him that he had been holding on for a good part of a lifetime, when the voice came through again.

"Are you there?"

"Yes!" snorted Mr. Quelch.

"What name, please?"

"Mr. Quelch, Greyfriars School."

"Hold on a moment."

Another wait. Then the voice:

"No order was booked to-day for a Mr. Mooch. There was a birthday-cake for delivery to a Mr. Quelch—"

"My name is Quelch."

"Are you not Mr. Mooch?"

"No!" raved the Remove master. "I am not Mr. Mooch!"

"But you gave the name of Mooch—"

"I gave the name of Quelch!"

"I thought you said Mooch—"

"I am not responsible for what you thought, if indeed you are capable of thinking at all!" howled the Remove master.

"Eh?"

"Is that cake coming to-day?"

"Hold on while I inquire."

Mr. Quelch seemed to be understudying Roderick Dhu as he stood at the telephone, at that period when, as the poet tells us, "dark lightnings flashed from Roderick's eye."

But the voice from Chunkley's came through again at last.

"Are you there?"

"I am here!" hissed Mr. Quelch.

"A birthday-cake, ordered by telephone for special delivery this afternoon—is that correct?"

"Yes, sir; that is correct. And you must allow me to say that your method of conducting business is extremely unbusinesslike, not to say stupid and exasperating. The cake was promised for delivery this afternoon without fail, and it has not been delivered."

"Allow me—"

"It was my desire to send that cake by post this afternoon, and the local post-office closes at six, and—"

"But—"

"I shall not be able to despatch it. Can you deliver that cake in time for the post. That is what I want to know."

"Quite so. The cake was delivered by the motor-van at three-thirty this afternoon."

"What?"

"Our carman has the receipt signed by a Mrs. Pebble, or Stebble—"

"Mrs. Kebble. The housekeeper."

"Quite so. Mrs. Kebble. You will find that the cake has been delivered, sir. Is there anything more we can do for you?"

Mr. Quelch hung up the receiver without answering. He was rather red in the face. Evidently the cake had been delivered as arranged, and he had slanged Messrs. Chunkley for nothing. But if the cake had been delivered, why was it not in his study as ordered? It was utterly unlike the Greyfriars housekeeper to forget her instructions. Mr. Quelch jumped for the bell and rang it.

"Yessir!"

Tom Redwing is the central figure in this coming treat—

Trotter put his shock head in at the doorway. He eyed Mr. Quelch rather warily. He did not like the look in the Form master's eye.

"Trotter, inquire at once of Mrs. Kebble whether a cake was delivered from Chunkley's this afternoon."

"Yessir! I brought it 'ere, sir, according to orders."

"You brought it here?"

"Yessir."

"To this study?"

"Yessir."

"Then where is it?"

"On the table, sir."

"Are you blind, Trotter?"

"Eh? No, sir, I 'ope not!"

"Look at the table!"

Trotter looked at the table.

"Well, where is the cake?"

"I put it on the table, sir, according to horders," said Trotter. "It ain't my fault if it ain't there now, sir."

Mr. Quelch tried to calm himself. He was conscious that a state of fuming irritation was not consistent with the dignity of a Form master.

"You are sure you placed the cake on the table, Trotter?"

"Yessir, leastways the parcel, and Mrs. Kebble said it was a cake, sir."

"Then where is it now?"

"I don't know, sir!"

"When did you place it on the table?"

"Soon as it was delivered, sir."

"I mean at what time?"

Trotter scratched his head.

"I think about four o'clock, sir."

"Then it has been removed since," exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Well, I don't see it on the blooming table now, sir," admitted Trotter.

"Kindly do not use such adjectives in my presence, Trotter. It is most un-seemly."

"Oh! Yessir."

"You may go, Trotter."

"Yessir."

Trotter went. Below stairs he reported to an interested circle that old Quelch was in one of his "blooming tantrums." Fortunately, Mr. Quelch

did not know that his majestic wrath was described in such terms.

He proceeded to look about the study for the cake. It was possible that some disrespectful fag, of a practical joking turn, had seen the cake, and put it out of sight. But he looked for it in vain. The cake was not in the study; evidently it had been taken away. Mr. Quelch could scarcely credit that even the groodiest and most reckless fag could have had the nerve to raid a cake that was his property, and from his study. But it was gone, and there was no other conclusion to be drawn. In a white heat of wrath Mr. Quelch proceeded to make extensive and exhaustive inquiries after the missing cake.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Quelch on the War-Path!

"CHERRY!"

The door of Study No. 13 in the Remove opened quite suddenly. Four juniors jumped to their feet at once. Bob Cherry and Mark Linley, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh and Wun Lung the Chinese, were all there, when Mr. Quelch appeared like a bolt from the blue.

The look on Mr. Quelch's face was alarming.

Naturally the juniors did not know anything about a lost game of chess, a forgotten umbrella, a walk in the rain, or a telephonic argument with various departments in Chunkley's Stores at Courtfield. They did not even know anything yet about a missing cake. But Mr. Quelch's look was enough to tell them that there was danger in the air, and that it behoved them to be very respectful and very wary. Mr. Quelch generally was a just master, though a severe one; but it was well known in the Remove that Quelchy had to be given his head.

"Cherry!"

Three juniors felt a sense of relief at hearing that name pronounced; one felt

a sense of consternation. That one was the owner of the name.

"Yes, sir?" gasped Bob.

He wondered what Mr. Quelch was on the war-path for this time. He could not remember any recent sins of commission or omission.

"Cherry! Where is the cake?"

"The—the cake?"

"The cake that you purloined from my study during my absence this afternoon?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Oh crumbs!"

"What, what?"

"I—I mean—" stammered Bob.

"Where is it? Have you dared to consume it—to devour it?"

"Nunno! I never—"

"Do you deny having purloined the cake from my study?"

"Yes! No! That is—hem—I—oh—um—" stuttered Bob.

"Boy, answer me directly! I have evidence that you were seen to enter my study and remove the package containing the cake. A Fifth Form boy saw you!"

"Oh! That ass Coker—"

"What?"

"I—I mean—you see, sir!" gasped Bob. "I—I did and I didn't! I—I fetched the cake away for Bun—for a chap. I thought it was his."

"Nonsense!"

"I did, sir! Then I found out that it wasn't his, and took it back again," said Bob, recovering his self-possession a little. "It's all right, sir. The cake wasn't damaged the least little bit."

Mr. Quelch's eyes gleamed at Bob.

"Listen to me, Cherry! The cake is missing from my study. It was placed there when delivered this afternoon from Chunkley's Stores. I have made inquiries—a whole hour of my time has been expended on making inquiries. Finally, I learned that a Fifth Form boy not only saw you enter my study, but followed you in, thinking that you intended to play a trick there. He actually saw you take the parcel away



"If you do not immediately open this door, Bunter," rapped Mr. Quelch, "it is very probable that you will be expelled from the school, instead of being flogged!" "I don't care," howled Billy Bunter. "I'd rather be sacked than flogged any day!" "Wha-at! Open this door at once!" "Sha'n't!" retorted Bunter defiantly. (See Chapter 7.)

—and the sailor-lad proves his mettle 'gainst heavy odds!

and escape to the Remove passage with it. Do you deny this?"

"Oh, no, sir! But—"

"Then what?"

"Oh dear!" gasped Bob.

At that moment Bob Cherry would have enjoyed kicking Billy Bunter with the biggest and heaviest football-boot imaginable. But, naturally, he did not want to mention Bunter's name to Mr. Quelch. Mark Linley came to the rescue.

"Bob was told by another fellow that the cake was his, sir. He asked Bob to fetch it from your study."

"Absurd!"

"It's true, sir!" gasped Bob. "We—we didn't look at the label till we got it into Wharton's study, and then we found out that it was addressed to you, sir."

"You were deceived by another boy into believing that the cake was his?" demanded Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir, until we looked at the label."

"Then you learned that the cake was my property?"

"Yes, sir. And I took it back to your study, and put it where I had found it."

"The cake is not in my study now."

"But—but it must be!" gasped Bob. "I—I left it there. Oh, my hat!" he added suddenly. "That fat idiot—hem—um—I beg your pardon, sir!"

Bob guessed, while he was speaking, that Billy Bunter had gone after the cake again. Having failed to throw the responsibility for bagging it upon Harry Wharton & Co., the Owl of the Remove had taken the matter into his own fat hands. That explanation occurred to Bob in a flash.

"Do you give me your word, Cherry, that you replaced the cake in my study after discovering your mistake?"

"Certainly, sir!"

"I should like to believe you; but the cake is not there. You were led into taking it, in the first place, by a false statement made by another boy?"

"H'm! Yes, sir."

"His name?"

Bob Cherry wriggled uneasily. He did not want to give Bunter's name.

"If what you state is correct, Cherry, it was doubtless that boy who possessed himself of the cake after you had replaced it?"

"I—I suppose so, sir."

"I require to know his name at once."

Bob looked helplessly at his study-mates. There was a deep silence in the study.

"I am waiting for your answer, Cherry," said Mr. Quelch, in a grinding voice. "A theft has been committed—the purloining of the cake is a theft. The thief will be flogged by the headmaster, if indeed he is not expelled from the school. I give you the chance of clearing yourself by helping me to discover the truth."

"The—the chap isn't a thief, sir," stammered Bob. "He—he's only a born idiot, sir! He thinks anything is his if he wants it, especially grub—I mean, tuck."

"Are you speaking of Bunter?"

"H'm!"

"I will speak to Bunter before questioning you further, Cherry."

Mr. Quelch whisked out of Study No. 13, and whisked along the Remove passage to Study No. 7. Most of the study doors were open now, and the Removites were on the qui vive. The alarm had spread that the Remove master was up among the studies on the warpath, and the juniors were anxious

to know what was the matter, and especially who was to be the victim.

Mr. Quelch threw open the door of Study No. 7, where he found Peter Todd and Dutton and William George Bunter.

"Bunter!"

"Oh! Yes, sir," stuttered Bunter, jumping up. "I didn't, sir."

"What?"

"I never did it, sir."

"You never did what?"

"Oh—er—anything, sir!" gasped Bunter, realising that he had been a little too "previous," as it were, with his denial. It would really have been more judicious to learn first what Mr. Quelch had come to the study for.

"Did you purloin a cake from my study, Bunter?"

"Certainly not, sir!"

"Did you tell Robert Cherry that a cake in my study was yours?"

"Oh, no, sir; nothing of the kind! I never said a word on the subject. I never knew you had a cake, sir. Wharton can prove that. He was present the whole time."

"What time?"

"The time I was telling them about the cake—I—I mean, the time I wasn't telling them, sir. That is to say—"

"The culprit is found, I think," said Mr. Quelch grimly. "Bunter, you told Cherry that a cake in my study was your property in order to induce him to get it for you."

"I—I—" Bunter stuttered. "It's all right, sir. It was taken back again. When they saw the label the beasts made out that it wasn't my cake!"

"What!"

"I—I mean, as soon as I saw the label I pointed out that it wasn't my cake, and—and insisted upon Cherry taking it back, sir."

"I am aware that Cherry replaced the cake in my study, Bunter. It was taken away afterwards."

"W-w-w-w-was it, sir?"

"It was, and by you!"

"Oh, no, sir! I—I never saw it again!" gasped Bunter, in great alarm. "Nothing of the kind, sir. I never went near your study."

"I cannot believe that statement, Bunter! You have already told me half a dozen falsehoods in the last few minutes. You induced Cherry to fetch away the cake by false representations, and when he discovered your trickery he very properly replaced it. It is perfectly clear that you then obtained possession of it yourself."

"I—I—I—"

"Your object, no doubt, was to allow the blame to fall upon Cherry in the first place. Having failed in that—that nefarious design, you took the risk yourself."

"Oh, no, sir! I—"

"That will do! I am now going to report the matter to the headmaster. You may accept my assurance, Bunter, that you will be flogged to-morrow morning if Dr. Locke does not consider it more judicious to expel you from Greyfriars."

"Oh lor!"

Mr. Quelch swept out of the study. He left consternation behind him.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

For It!

"BUNTER!"
"You awful ass!"
"You've done it now!"
"Fairly done it!"

"The donefulness is terrific!"
Study No. 7 was crowded with Remove fellows; the passage outside was crowded. Mr. Quelch had gone, and the juniors felt as if a thunderbolt had passed their way, just missing them.

Billy Bunter sat in the armchair in Study No. 7, utterly overcome with dismay. He blinked dully and dazedly at the Removites. Prep was suspended for the time all along the Remove passage.

"You shrieking ass!" said Peter Todd, in measured tones. "You've landed yourself at last!"

"Oh, really, Peter!" mumbled Bunter.

"You fat idiot!" roared Bob Cherry. "Why hadn't you sense enough to leave the cake alone after I'd put it back?"

"Has Bunter sense enough for anything?" said Vernon-Smith.

"I never touched it!" shrieked Bunter.

"Gammon!"

"Rot!"

"Keep that for the Head!"

"I thought even Bunter would keep clear of Quelch's study in his grub-raiding," said Harry Wharton. "It was a dirty trick to try to get us to raid the cake for him; but I never thought he would have the nerve to raid it himself."

"Same here!" remarked Nugent.

"Oh, Bunter's got plenty of nerve when there's tuck to be had!" said Skinner. "He might have whacked out the cake."

"I never had it!" yelled Bunter.

"Bow-wow!"

"I swear—"

"What's the good of giving that to us?" asked Skinner. "Keep it for the Head, you fat duffer!"

"I never went near Quelch's study!" roared Bunter. "At least, I never went in."

"Oh, you did go near it?" grinned Squiff.

"Well, I may have gone as far as the door," said Bunter cautiously. "I—I thought of bagging that cake. I—I wanted to give you some for tea, Toddy."

"Rats!"

"But I never bagged it," said Bunter. "I thought it would be too thick. You see, I knew Quelch would make a row when he missed it. So I gave it a miss."

"Then where's the cake?" asked Johnny Bull.

"How should I know?"

"Only the X-rays could discover that cake now," chuckled the Bunder.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I never had it!" howled Bunter. "I suppose you fellows can take my word?"

"Your word! My hat!"

"Who had it if you didn't?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"I don't know. Perhaps you never took it back to Quelch's room at all. Most likely you scoffed it, and only pretended you'd taken it back."

"What!" bawled Bob Cherry.

"Well, that seems to me jolly likely," said Bunter. "You were the last person to see it alive—I mean—"

"After all, who's going to prove that Bob Cherry did take the cake back?" asked Snoop.

Bob gave Sidney James Snoop a ferocious glare.

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY PRICE 2.

"Modern Smuggling!"—told by Bob Cherry—next week!



Gosling jammed the pointed end of the crowbar between the lock and the door jamb, and began thumping on the end with the hammer to drive it home. Clang! Bang! The din was terrific. Fellows of all Forms came crowding to the scene. From within the box-room came the answering sound of a hammer. Billy Bunter, the rebel, was barricading himself in. (See Chapter 9.)

"If my word isn't good enough for you, Snoop, I've got a list here!" he roared.

Snoop backed away rather hastily. "Besides, Skinner saw me," went on Bob, looking round. "Skinner was coming downstairs, and he saw me do it."

"That's so," assented Skinner. "I'm a jolly old witness, as it turns out. I saw Cherry taking the cake home to its dad."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Somebody bagged it afterwards," said Wharton, "and it's pretty clear who that somebody was."

"Yes, rather!" "Bunter was after the cake!" remarked Skinner. "He tried to get another fellow to bag it for him, and failed. The rest is pretty clear, I should say."

"The clearfulness is terrific." "I say, you fellows——" "Well, it will be a flogging," said Peter Todd. "I must say that Bunter has asked for it."

"Oh, really, Toddy——" "Happy prospect for the morning, Bunter," remarked Vernon-Smith; and he walked away grinning.

Bunter blinked round at the juniors. "I say, you fellows, I never had the cake. I—I say, Wharton, you're going to stand by me, old chap! You're not going to let me be flogged for something I never did."

"But you did do it!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove. "I didn't! I'm innocent!"

"Rats!" "On my honour——" gasped Bunter. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Your jolly old honour is a bit too mouldy!" remarked Bol-over major. "Cut that out, Bunter!"

"I say, you fellows, you ought to back me up, when I'm innocent as the babe unborn!" wailed Bunter. "I swear I never touched the cake. I'm not going to be flogged for nothing! Look here, Wharton——"

"Well, what can I do, ass?" "You fellows can all go to the Head together," said Bunter eagerly. "Tell him you know I didn't touch the cake, and——"

"But we know you did." "I didn't!" shrieked Bunter. "Br-r-r-r-r!"

The Removites dispersed to their own studies. No. 7 was left to itself. Peter Todd resumed his prep, while Bunter sat in a collapsed state in the armchair, and blinked at him pathetically.

"Peter, old man——" "Shurrup!"

"I never touched the cake, Peter!" "Bosh!"

"I'm not going to be flogged." "Tell the Head so! No good telling me! I'm not the jolly old executioner."

"I—I say, Peter, do you really think it will be a flogging?" "Quelchy looked like it."

"But I'm innocent!" wailed Bunter. "Chuck it!"

"D-d-don't you believe me, Peter?" "Believe you! My only hat!" "I swear——"

"Give us a rest!" "Beast!"

Peter resumed his prep once more; but William George Bunter did not think of prep. He was much too worried to care anything about prep. The bare thought of a flogging made the fat junior quiver like a jelly. A Head's flogging was no joke—much pluckier fellows than Bunter would have regarded it with serious apprehension. Billy Bunter was wont to raise the roof if he received a mere caning. And a flogging—— That simply did not bear thinking of. But Bunter found that he could think of nothing else.

Half an hour later there was a heavy tread in the Remove passage, and Wingate of the Sixth looked into Study No. 7.

"Bunter here?" asked the prefect. A whimpering groan answered him from the depths of the armchair.

"Oh, you're there! Head's message,"

said Wingate briefly. "You're to go into Dr. Locke's study to-morrow morning, Bunter, when the Remove go into Form."

"Wha-a-at for?" asked Bunter faintly. "Head's flogging."

"Ow!" The captain of Greyfriars, having delivered his message, walked away. Bunter gave Peter Todd a dolorous blink.

"I—I say, Peter, what's a chap to do?"

"Keep your hands from picking and stealing!" suggested Peter. "Honesty is the best policy!"

"I never touched the cake!" "Ass! Better put a couple of exercise-books in your bags to-morrow morning!"

"I'm not going to be flogged!" yelled Bunter. "Looks to me as if you are!"

"I'm innocent!" "Fathead!"

That was all the sympathy that William George Bunter received. Probably it was as much as William George deserved.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Impossible!

THERE was an extremely lugubrious face at the Remove table the following morning.

It was the fat face of William George Bunter.

The impending flogging weighed upon Bunter's spirits, affecting them as the impending sword affected Damocles of old.

So very lugubrious was William George that many of the Remove fellows felt quite sympathetic.

But sympathy was of no use to Bunter.

In its way it was, perhaps, grateful and comforting; but what Bunter really

—and a screaming farce—"The Vanished Trezure!"—by Billy Bunter!

wanted was rescue from the threatening birch.

And there was no rescue.

The fiat had gone forth. Mr. Quelch had stated the case to the Head, and the Head had fully concurred in Mr. Quelch's opinion that a flogging was essential. Mr. Quelch's opinion on that point was fixed and immutable. A cake for which he had paid seventeen-and-six had been purloined. A promised present for his little nephew had not been despatched in time. Mr. Quelch had had to invest in a second cake, which was certain to arrive late on the festive occasion. These were serious things; and, moreover, Mr. Quelch felt that his authority had been specially flouted by this outrage in his own study. The Remove master was merciless; the flogging was a sure thing.

At the breakfast-table Bunter ventured to send an imploring blink towards his Form master at the head of the table. But Mr. Quelch's expression was as unbending as that of a stone image.

There was no hope in that quarter.

Neither was there any hope in the Head! It was absolutely certain that Dr. Locke would not even listen to Bunter's asseverations of his innocence.

Bunter was too well known. Moreover, there was the undoubted fact that he had attempted to purloin the cake by means of Bob Cherry. Bunter was found guilty and sentenced, and only the execution remained to be carried out. And Skinner remarked that, on Bunter's looks, he would have to be carried out, too, when it was over. Certainly the Owl of the Remove did not look as if he would go through it with anything like fortitude.

In point of fact, Bunter felt that he couldn't, wouldn't, and shouldn't go through it. It was, in fact, quite impossible. Floggings apportioned to other fellows were light matters—indeed, rather entertaining in some ways. A flogging apportioned to Bunter was quite a different matter. When it was William George Bunter who was going to be flogged, things became serious.

After breakfast Bunter rolled out dismally into the quad, misty with yesterday's rain. Some of the juniors were punting about a football, but Bunter did not join them.

He drove his hands deep into his pockets, and loafed about in the lowest of spirits. His brother Sammy, of the Second Form, joined him with an unbrotherly grin on his face.

"You're for it, old man!" said Bunter minor.

"I'm innocent, Sammy!"

"He, he, he!"

"What are you cackling at, you fat little beast?" demanded Bunter major indignantly.

"Well, you might have whacked out the cake," said Sammy Bunter. "I'd have let you have some if I'd bagged it!"

"I never bagged it!"

"He, he, he!"

"And I'm not going to be flogged!" gasped Bunter. "I—I couldn't stand it, Sammy!"

"You won't have to stand," said Sammy. "You'll be bending over Gosling's back. Gosling will have to stand it. He, he, he!"

Billy Bunter gave his minor a glare through his big spectacles. Sammy evidently saw something funny in the whole business, and was greatly entertained. It was unsympathetic, and it was unbrotherly. Billy Bunter made a

grab at Sammy's collar and whirled him round and planted a large size in boots on Sammy.

There was a roar from Bunter minor. "Yaroooh!"

Billy Bunter stalked away and Sammy roared.

"Yah! I hope you'll get it hot! Ow!"

Bunter rolled on dismally. There had been a momentary solace in kicking Sammy, but it did not last; Bunter's troubles returned thick upon him.

When the bell rang for classes the Removites started for their Form-room, but Bunter did not go with them. Bunter was due in the Head's study.

Bob Cherry clapped him on the shoulder.

"Cheer up, fatty! Make up your mind to it, you know; there's no getting out of it now."

"I never did it!" groaned Bunter.

"Oh rats!" said Bob.

And he followed the rest of the Remove, leaving Bunter standing like a fat statue of woe in the corridor. Mr. Quelch came along to the Form-room and called to the Owl of the Remove.

"Bunter!"

"Ow! Yes, sir?"

"Go to the Head's study."

"I'm innocent, sir!"

"Go to the Head's study at once, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch in a voice of thunder. And he rustled into the Remove-room.

Billy Bunter rolled away. But he did not proceed in the direction of the Head's study. Bunter was not of the stuff of which heroes are made—and even a plucky fellow might well have hesitated to disobey his Form master and defy the Head. But Bunter simply couldn't stand the flogging; it was too much for flesh and blood to bear. He rolled away from the staircase, and disappeared upstairs.

Meanwhile, Gosling, the porter, had arrived in Dr. Locke's study for the business of "hoisting" the victim of the execution. Dr. Locke arrived a minute or two later and glanced round.

"Where is the boy, Gosling?" he asked.

"He ain't 'ere, sir."

"Dear me!" said Dr. Locke. He glanced at his watch. "I am due in the Sixth Form room in five minutes. Kindly proceed to the Remove room, Gosling, and request Mr. Quelch to send Bunter here."

"Yessir!"

Gosling proceeded to the Remove room. He tapped and looked in. Class was just beginning, and Mr. Quelch glanced round with an irritated expression.

"Well, Gosling?" he rapped out.

"The 'Ead's sent me for Master Bunter, sir."

"Bunter is waiting in the Head's study."

"He ain't, sir!"

"What? I distinctly ordered Bunter to proceed to Dr. Locke's study at once!" exclaimed the Remove master.

"Well, sir, he ain't there."

"Nonsense! He must be there."

Gosling grunted.

"Well, the 'Ead 'ave sent me 'ere for him," he answered. "What ham I to say to the 'Ead, sir?"

Mr. Quelch breathed hard and deep.

"Wharton, I shall leave you in charge of the class for a few minutes."

"Yes, sir!" said Harry.

Mr. Quelch whisked out of the Form-room. Gosling, with a faint grin on

his gnarled countenance, followed him. A buzz broke out in the Remove-room as soon as they were gone.

"Bunter's bunked!" grinned Skinner. "Dodging the jolly old flogging," said Peter Todd. "He must be an ass! The Head will lay it on harder if he's kept waiting!"

There was great excitement in the Remove-room. The juniors waited anxiously for Mr. Quelch to return, eager to guess from his looks what had happened. But minute followed minute, and Mr. Quelch did not return.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Defiance!

"MR. QUELCH—"

"Dr. Locke—"

"Where is Bunter?"

"Is he not here?"

"Obviously not," said the Head dryly. "I think I requested you to send him here, Mr. Quelch."

"I ordered him to come here only a few minutes ago, sir."

"Bless my soul! Is it possible that he has disobeyed your order?"

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips.

"It appears so, sir. I will find him, and—"

Dr. Locke consulted his watch.

"I am keeping the Sixth Form waiting, Mr. Quelch. I cannot delay any longer now. Please let Bunter be brought here at eleven o'clock, when I shall be at liberty."

"Very well, sir," said the Remove master.

Dr. Locke rustled away; he was taking the Sixth in Greek that morning, and he did not know how glad the Sixth would have been had he been delayed a good deal longer.

Mr. Quelch followed him from the study, with tight lips and a glint in his eyes.

Bunter had put the lid on, so to speak. To all his other sins he had added direct disobedience and defiance.

Mr. Quelch's class was waiting for him. But he did not give them a thought just then. He wanted Bunter.

He proceeded to look for that elusive youth.

He looked in vain.

In the passages, in the visitors' room, in the changing-room, in the lobby, up and down and round about, there was no sign of William George Bunter.

Mr. Quelch ascended to the Remove passage. Study No. 7 was vacant. He looked in the other studies. No sign of Bunter.

At the top of a little staircase at the end of the Remove passage there was a box-room. Mr. Quelch ascended that little staircase, with crimson cheeks and baleful eyes. The door of the box-room did not open to his touch.

He rattled the knob, feeling fairly certain that he had run William George Bunter to earth at last.

"Bunter!"

"Ow!"

"Bunter! Boy!"

"I—I'm not here, sir!"

"What?"

"I—I mean—"

"Is this door locked, Bunter?"

"I—I think so, sir."

"Unlock it at once!"

No answer.

"Do you hear me, Bunter?" bawled Mr. Quelch.

"Ow! Yes, sir."

"Admit me immediately! How dare you conceal yourself in this box-room,

A laugh, a scream, a roar—"The Hidden Horde!"—by Dicky Nugent!

Bunter, instead of going to Dr. Locke's study, as I commanded you!"

"I never did it, sir! I never touched the cake!"

"Open this door!"

"I'm not going to be flogged!"

"What—what?"

"I'm not going to be flogged!" roared Bunter. "I won't stand it! So there!"

"Are you mad, boy?"

"Yah!"

"Bless my soul! If you do not immediately submit to authority, Bunter, it is very probable that you will be expelled from the school, instead of being flogged."

"I don't care!"

"What! You do not care?"

"I'd rather be sacked than flogged, any day!" retorted Bunter. "I've never had justice here. I'm not going to be flogged!"

"Open this door at once!"

"Sha'n't!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Sha'n't!" roared Bunter.

It was rebellion, with a vengeance. Extreme funk had made Bunter recklessly brave. Expulsion from Greyfriars was, in his opinion, infinitely preferable to a flogging. Expulsion meant that the trouble of the affair would fall chiefly upon his people. A flogging meant that it would fall entirely upon himself. That was more than enough for Bunter.

"Did—did—did you say 'sha'n't'?" ejaculated Mr. Quelch, scarcely believing his ears.

"Yes, I did!"

"Open this door!"

"Sha'n't!"

"I command you——"

"Sha'n't!"

"For the last time, Bunter——"

"Sha'n't!"

"Bless my soul!"

Mr. Quelch gave it up. There was no getting through a thick oak door, locked on the inside, to deal with Bunter. In all his career as a Form-master, Mr. Quelch had never come up against circumstances like these before, and he was fairly at a loss. The Remove master, in a gasping state, retreated down the stairs, and Bunter was left triumphant—for the present.

Mr. Quelch returned to the Remove room. He had kept his class waiting half an hour—which was quite unparalleled. A murmur of voices greeted him as he arrived. Evidently the Removites were in a state of excitement.

"Where the thump is old Quelch all this time?" Bolsover major was saying, as the Form-master put his hand on the door.

Bolsover major's question was answered the next second, as Mr. Quelch appeared in the doorway. Bolsover major blinked at him.

"Bolsover!"

"Ye-e-e-es, sir."

"Did you allude to your Form-master, sir, as Old Quelch?"

"Oh! Ah! Yes, sir!"

"Stand out before the class, Bolsover."

Bolsover major very reluctantly stood out before the class. Mr. Quelch picked up his cane.

Swish, swish, swish!

"No doubt you will speak more respectfully of your Form-master on another occasion, Bolsover."

"Ow, ow, ow!"

"Cease that ridiculous noise, and go to your place. Wharton!"

"Hem! Yes, sir!" said the captain of the Remove.

"I left you in charge of this class."

"Certainly, sir."

"Possibly you understood that it was my desire that you, as head boy of the Form, should keep order in my absence?"

"Um! Yes, sir!"

"I find the class in a state of disorder on my return, Wharton. You will take two hundred lines."

"Oh!"

"Cherry!"

"Yes, sir!"

"You were out of your place when I came in."

"Wa-a-a-was I, sir?"

"Do you not know that you were, Cherry?"

"Hem!"

"Hold out your hand!"

Swish!

Mr. Quelch's gimlet eye gleamed over the Remove as if in search of further victims. Every fellow tried hard not to meet his eye. He laid down the cane.

"We shall now commence," he said.

They commenced; and never had the Remove been so orderly, so attentive, so

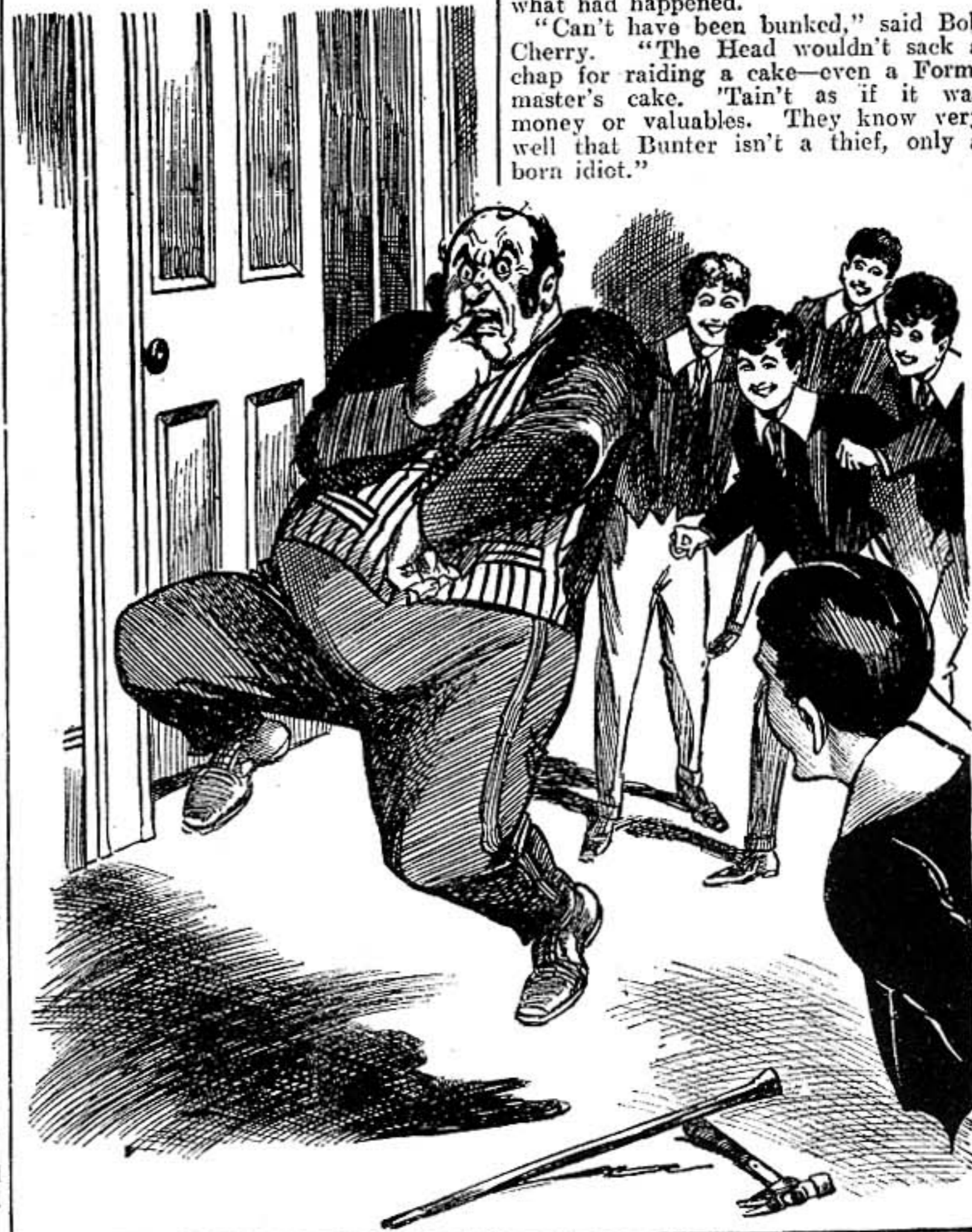
almost passionately interested in the words of wisdom that fell from the lips of their Form-master. It was obvious that "Quelch" was in one of his "tantrums"—a particularly severe tantrum, and that he was not to be trifled with. So the Remove hung upon Mr. Quelch's words, and all was calm, if not bright.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Going Strong!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. came out of the Remove room in a state of some little excitement that morning. Billy Bunter had not appeared in his place in class; neither had the echoes of fearful yells been heard. Apparently the threatened flogging had not taken place, which was surprising; and Bunter had vanished, which was more surprising still. As a rule, the more Bunter vanished, the better the Removites were pleased. Bunter was a fellow whose absence could be borne with perfect equanimity. But for once the Remove were interested in Bunter—for one occasion only they were quite keen to see him, and to learn what had happened.

"Can't have been bunked," said Bob Cherry. "The Head wouldn't sack a chap for raiding a cake—even a Form-master's cake. 'Tain't as if it was money or valuables. They know very well that Bunter isn't a thief, only a born idiot."



"You put your paws in here again, Gosling," roared Bunter from the other side of the box-room door. "I've got the hammer ready. Yah!" "Ow! Wow!" howled Gosling between the intervals of frantically sucking his damaged finger. "My finger's broke! Yowp!" "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Removites. (See Chapter 9.)

A special long instalment of our football and detective serial next week!

"That's so," assented Wharton. "But if he hasn't been kicked out, where is he?"

"Echo answers that the wherefulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Anybody seen Bunter?" bawled Bob Cherry.

"Where's Bunter?"

"Toddy, where's your prize pig? You're his keeper."

"Where on earth is Bunter?"

But nobody could answer the question. Bunter had disappeared; he was hunted in the quad, searched for in the studies—fellows wandered up and down corridors looking for Bunter, but they found him not. It was not till Squiff suggested "drawing" the box-rooms that the whereabouts of the fat junior were discovered.

"Hallo! This door's locked!" exclaimed Frank Nugent, as he tried the little box-room above the Remove passage.

There was a gathering at once.

The landing outside was small, the staircase narrow. Both were quickly crowded with Remove fellows, shouting to Bunter.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, fatty!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Are you there, Bunter?"

"Speak up, fatty!"

"Bunter! Bunter! Bunter!"

"I say, you fellows—" came a voice from within.

"He's there!"

"Run to earth!" grinned Nugent.

"What are you doing there, Bunter?" demanded Harry Wharton.

"It's a barring-out!"

"What!" yelled the captain of the Remove.

"A barring-out!" squeaked Bunter.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites fairly roared. A barring-out by Billy Bunter, on his lonely own, took them by storm. As Skinner remarked, it really put the lid on.

"Oh, gad!" said Lord Mauleverer. "This does take the giddy old cake, you know. I say, Bunter, are you potty, old bean?"

"Yah!"

"Have you told Quelch you're barring him out?" yelled Johnny Bull.

"Yes."

"Great pip!"

"That's why he came back on the war-path!" grinned Bob. "I thought this morning that Quelch was annoyed."

"Ha, ha, ha! Just a few."

Harry Wharton rapped on the door.

"Bunter, you fat duffer! Chuck this rot! You've got to have the flogging!"

"Yah!"

"If you play the goat like this it may be the sack instead."

"I don't care!"

"Do you want to be bunked from the school?" roared Bob.

"I don't mind!" squeaked Bunter through the keyhole. "I never was properly treated here. I should be much more appreciated at Eton. I'm going to make my pater send me to Eton if I leave Greyfriars."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Bunter, you awful ass!" said Peter Todd. "Do chuck it! You're only making an ass of yourself."

"Go and eat coke!"

"What?" howled Peter.

"Yah! You're no good, Peter! You're a silly ass! I despise you!"

"Oh!" gasped Peter Todd.

The locked door was giving Bunter

unusual courage. Now that he was 'for it' he was taking advantage of the circumstances to utter some plain truths. It was a pleasure to him to tell Peter Todd for once what he thought of him.

"You clear off!" continued Bunter. "I've stood you a long time, Peter, and I'm fed up with you! Go and chop chips!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let me get at you, you fat villain!" roared Toddy.

"Yah! I'd come out and lick you if I wasn't barring out old Quelch!"

"Come out and lick me!" repeated Toddy dazedly. "You—you slug! You snail! You worm! You—you—you—"

"Oh, shut up!"

"I'm dreaming this," said Peter Todd.

"Oh, go away, you ass!" said Bunter.

"Are you there, Wharton?"

"I'm here, fatty."

"Well, get out! You're a silly ass, just like Peter. I'm only sorry I've got to keep this door locked. Otherwise, I'd come out and boot you along the Remove passage from end to end."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bunter's improving, ain't he?" grinned Johnny Bull.

"That you, Bull? Fathead!"

"What?"

"Silly fathead!" howled Bunter through the keyhole.

"My hat! I—I—I—"

"The cheekfulness of the esteemed Bunter is terrific!"

"That you, Inky? Take your nigger's face away!"

"Mum-my what?" gasped the nabob of Bhanipur.

"Your nigger's face! The best thing you can do is to go and offer yourself for an advertisement for Day and Martin!"

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

The dusky face of the nabob of Bhanipur was a study.

"You there, Nugent?"

"Yes, I'm here," said Frank.

"You're a milksop! I despise you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cave!" called out Jimmy Vivian from the staircase. "Here comes the Head!"

There was a scattering of the juniors. The Head and Mr. Quelch were coming along the Remove passage to the box-room staircase. Some of the juniors scuttled down, and some scuttled up the upper stair, which led to some disused garrets. Dr. Locke, stately and dignified, came slowly up to the box-room landing—very slowly. He was not so good at climbing staircases as he had been forty years before.

He turned the handle of the box-room door.

"Bunter!"

"Oh! Ah! Yes, sir!"

"Ah! You are there, Bunter? Open this door at once!"

No answer. Even Billy Bunter, utterly reckless as he was now, hesitated to cheek the Head.

"Bunter! It is your headmaster speaking," said Dr. Locke mildly. "Mr. Quelch informs me that you have locked yourself in this room, to escape your just punishment. It is a most unheard-of proceeding, which I can only account for by supposing you to be an almost incredibly stupid boy! Open the door at once!"

The Head and Mr. Quelch waited for the door to be opened. They had no doubt whatever that the authority of the

Head would quell the fat junior's rebellion at once. But the door did not open. Any other fellow at Greyfriars, however truculent, would have thought twice, if not three times, before disobeying the Head in person. And most of the fellows had more courage in their little fingers than Bunter had in his whole fat circumference. But there is no animal so dangerous as an enraged sheep, and no one more reckless than a funk in a state of desperation. Billy Bunter did what all the rest of Greyfriars would never have ventured to do.

"Do you hear me, Bunter?" asked the Head, in surprise, as the door remained fast.

"Yes, sir. I'm not going to open the door!"

"Wha-a-t?"

"I'm not going to be flogged!"

"Bless my soul!"

"I'm innocent!"

"Nonsense!"

"I never touched the cake!"

"I cannot argue with you, Bunter! If you do not immediately come out of that room I shall order the door to be forced!"

"I sha'n't come out!"

"What?"

"Sha'n't!"

"Upon my word!" gasped Dr. Locke, his face very pink. "Mr. Quelch, this—this is most—most extraordinary! I—I trust that that unfortunate boy is not out of his senses!"

"It would really seem so, sir," said the Remove master.

"Will you instruct Gosling to obtain some—some implement and force this door, Mr. Quelch?"

"Certainly, sir!"

"The foolish boy may then be brought to my study," said Dr. Locke. And the scandalised Head hastily departed.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

No Surrender!

"WELL, my hat!" Bob Cherry spoke in tones of utter amazement. Crowded on the stair above the Famous Five and some other fellows had heard all that passed. They had heard Bunter cheek the Head—a thing that nobody at Greyfriars had ever expected to hear.

"It beats the whole giddy band!" said Peter Todd. "Hallo, what's going on now?"

There was a sound of heavy bumping in the box-room. That sound did not need much explanation. Bunter was dragging boxes and trunks to the door to build up a barricade. Harry Wharton tapped at the door.

"Bunter, old man—"

"Oh, shut up!"

"Chuck it up, you fat chump!"

"Yah!"

"I say, Bunter, you'll miss your dinner," said Vernon-Smith.

"I don't care!"

"You don't care about missing your dinner!" yelled the Bounder, in astonishment.

"No, I don't! I've got some grub here," answered Bunter. "I got it out of your study, Smithy."

"My study!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith.

"Yes, you don't mind, I suppose? I bagged all there was in your cupboard, you know."

"Why, I—I—I'll smash you!" roared Smithy.

"Yah!"

Look out for "The Greyfriars Smugglers!"—a thrilling—

"He's laid in provisions for a siege!" chuckled Redwing.

"Lucky he hadn't time to go through all the studies," said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, my hat! Rather!" ejaculated Skinner.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes Gosling!"

Gosling, the porter, came panting up the narrow stair. The juniors did not clear off for Gosling as they had for the Head. They greeted him with chuckles.

"Go it, Gossy! Butt your head on the door and bust it in!" advised Bob Cherry. "When wood meets wood, you know—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gosling gave a snort.

"Wot I say is this 'ere," he grunted. "You young rips clear hoff! I've got my dooty to do. You clear hoff!"

But the Removites did not clear off. They were too interested in Bunter's barring-out for that.

Gosling was armed with a crowbar and a coke-hammer. He jammed the pointed end of the crowbar between the lock and the door-jamb, and began thumping on the end with the hammer to drive it home.

Clang, clang! Bang! Clang!

The din was terrific; it rang and echoed through the house. Fellows of all Forms came crowding along the Remove passage to stare up at the box-room, in a buzz of excitement.

Clang! Bang! Bang! Clang!

The door creaked and groaned; the lock was being put to a heavy strain. It was clear that it would not hold much longer. But from within the box-room came the answering sound of a hammer. Billy Bunter had acted with unusual forethought. He had Bob Cherry's tool-box with him; and he was using hammer and nails recklessly.

"What are you up to, Bunter?" shouted Bob Cherry.

"I'm nailing boxes inside the door, nailing them to the floor."

"Oh, my hat! Whose boxes?"

"Yours—"

"Eh?"

"And Smithy's—"

"You fat villain!" yelled the Bounder.

"And Mauly's—"

"Oh gad!" ejaculated Lord Mauleverer.

Bang, bang! Clang! Bang!

With a loud crack, the lock gave at last, as Gosling wrenched on the crowbar. The door opened about half an inch.

"Now, then, you young rip—" gasped Gosling.

"Oh, go away and bury yourself, you old chump!" answered Bunter.

"Wot I says is this 'ere—"

"Yah!"

Gosling breathed hard, and shoved at the door. It opened about another inch. But it could go no farther. Boxes nailed to the floor just inside barricaded it effectually.

"Checkmate!" grinned Nugent.

"You move them boxes away, young Bunter!" howled Gosling. "I've got horders to take you to the 'Ead, I 'ave."

"Go and eat coke, and tell the Head to do the same!" retorted Bunter.

"Oh, my eye!" gasped Gosling.

He grasped the edge of the door, to push at it. The next moment he uttered a fearful howl, and jerked his hand away.

"Ow, ow! Wow! I'm injured! Yow-ow-ow!"

"What on earth—" exclaimed Wharton.

"You put your paws in again!"



"Boys!" snapped Mr. Quelch irritably. "You will hand over your keys to Wingate." There was a buzz in the Remove as the juniors obeyed. That this matter had something to do with the missing cake was pretty clear. Keys, singly and in bunches, were handed over to the captain of Greyfriars in confusing numbers. (See Chapter 11.)

howled Bunter. "I've got the hammer ready! Yah!"

Gosling stuck a finger into his mouth, and howled in the intervals of frantically sucking it. In grasping the edge of the door, he had had to put his fingers inside. Evidently Bunter had rapped with his hammer.

"Ow, ow, ow! Groogh! Wow! Whooop!" howled Gosling. "Ow! My finger's broke! It's squashed! Ow, ow, wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Gosling!" roared the Bounder. "You've got some more fingers!"

But Gosling declined to go it. Leaving his crowbar and hammer on the landing, he tramped down the stairs, sucking his damaged finger. A roar of laughter followed him.

"First goal to Bunter!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

In the Remove passage Mr. Quelch was waiting. As Gosling reappeared from the box-room stair, the Remove master hastened towards him.

"You have secured him, Gosling—"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Eh? What did you say?"

"Yow-ow! Gug-gug!"

"Bless my soul! Have you opened the box-room door, Gosling, or have you not opened the box-room door?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Which I ain't!" roared the incensed Gosling. "Which I've 'ad a finger smashed by a young 'ound with a 'ammer, and which I ain't going to 'ave no more fingers smashed, Mr. Quelch, not if I knows it, so you can put that in your pipe and smoke it, sir!"

"Gosling, you are impertinent!"

"So'd you be, I dessay, if you'd 'ad a finger squashed into a blooming jelly with a 'ammer!" howled Gosling. And the old gentleman sucked his finger furiously.

"You—you mean to say that—that

Bunter struck your hand with—with a hammer?" ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

"Ow! Wow! Wow! Ow!"

That was all the answer Gosling made. He tramped on, sucking his damaged finger; leaving the Remove master staring.

Mr. Quelch ascended the box-room stairs, with a grim set face. He found Bunter's door ajar.

"Bunter—"

"Yah!"

Mr. Quelch pressed on the door. It did not move. And M. Quelch did not put his fingers into the opening.

"You will be punished for this, Bunter."

"Rats!"

"Upon my word! I think it most likely, Bunter, that you will be expelled from the school now!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"I don't care! Why don't you try to find out who really bagged your rotten old cake, instead of going for me?" howled Bunter. "Haven't I told you I'm innocent? Can't you take a fellow's word?"

"Cease this insolence at once—"

"Sha'n't!"

"Will you remove whatever you have placed against this door, and allow me to enter?"

"No, I won't!"

"Boys, leave this spot at once!" said Mr. Quelch, frowning round at the juniors. "This is no place for you. Bunter, I warn you for the last time that you had better cease this rebellious nonsense!"

"Yah!"

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips. He shepherded the Remove fellows down the staircase, and—by a sort of after-thought—gave them a hundred lines each. Then he rustled away.

(Continued on page 16.)

—“Herald” contribution, by Tom Brown—next Monday!

GRAND "FOOTER" COMPETITION!

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ALL YOU HAVE TO DO is to write IN INK in the allotted space under each of the puzzle-pictures the name of the footballer which you think the picture represents. You will find on pages 15 and 27 the full list of names used throughout the competition, so that you have only to fit the correct name to each picture. Having done this, fill in the coupon under this picture-set and cut out the whole tablet—DO NOT CUT THE PICTURES AND COUPON APART. Next collect the other seven sets, see that you have filled in your answers properly in all the spaces, remembering that only one name may be written in each space, then pin them together and post to:

LAST WEEK.		FINAL SET.
43	44	45
46	47	48

RULES AND CONDITIONS
 which must be strictly adhered to.

- 1.—The First Prize of \$100 in cash will be awarded to the competitor who sends in the correct, or most nearly correct, solution of all eight sets of the pictures according to the Editor's official solution.
- 2.—The Second Prize of £50, and the others in the splendid variety of prizes, will be awarded in order of merit.
- 3.—All the prizes will be awarded. If two or more competitors tie, however, the prize or prizes, or their value, will be divided, and the Editor reserves full rights in this respect.
- 4.—Any number of entries may be made, but in each case only the complete series of eight picture-sets (pictures Nos. 1 to 48, that is to say) will be admissible. No responsibility will be accepted for any communication lost or delayed in the post. Any entry arriving after the closing date, Tuesday, December 18th, will be disqualified.

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 c/o "MAGNET,"
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 so as to reach that address not later than Tuesday, Dec. 18th.

In entering "FOOTBALLERS' NAMES" competition, I agree to accept the Editor's decision as absolutely final and binding.

NAME

ADDRESS

Closing Date, Tuesday, December 18th. M.

The first seven sets of pictures are reproduced on pages 15 & 27 for the benefit of MAGNET readers who missed the previous issues.

WRITE YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS CLEARLY!

5.—The names under the pictures must be written IN INK.

6.—Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.

7.—Entry to this competition is on the full understanding that the Editor's decision is final and legally binding throughout.

Readers of "The Champion," "Boys' Realm," "Union Jack," "Boys' Friend," "Pluck," "Boys' Cinema," "Young Britain," "Gem," "The Popular," "The Rocket," and "Nelson Lee Library" are also taking part in the Contest, so that additional attempts may be made with the pictures from these allied journals.

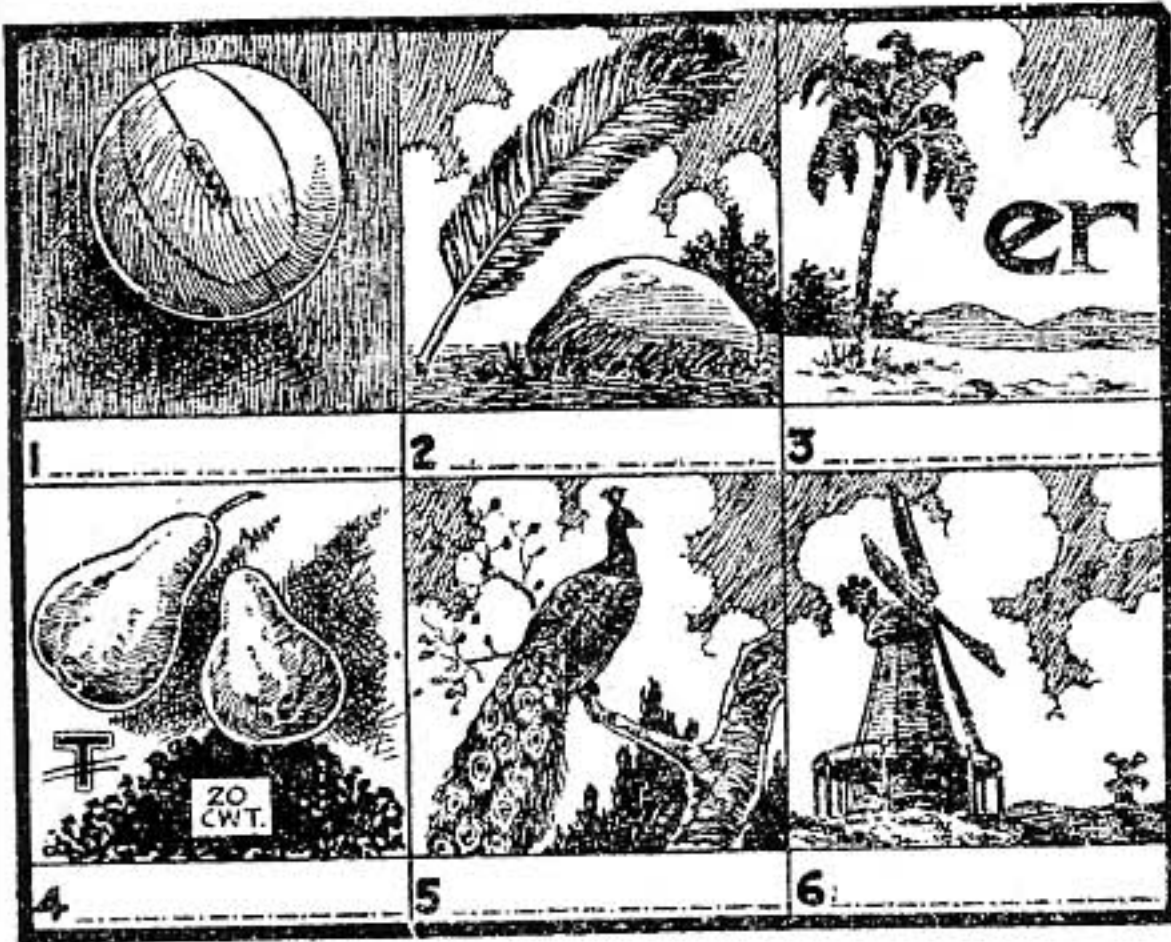
FOOTBALLERS' NAMES.

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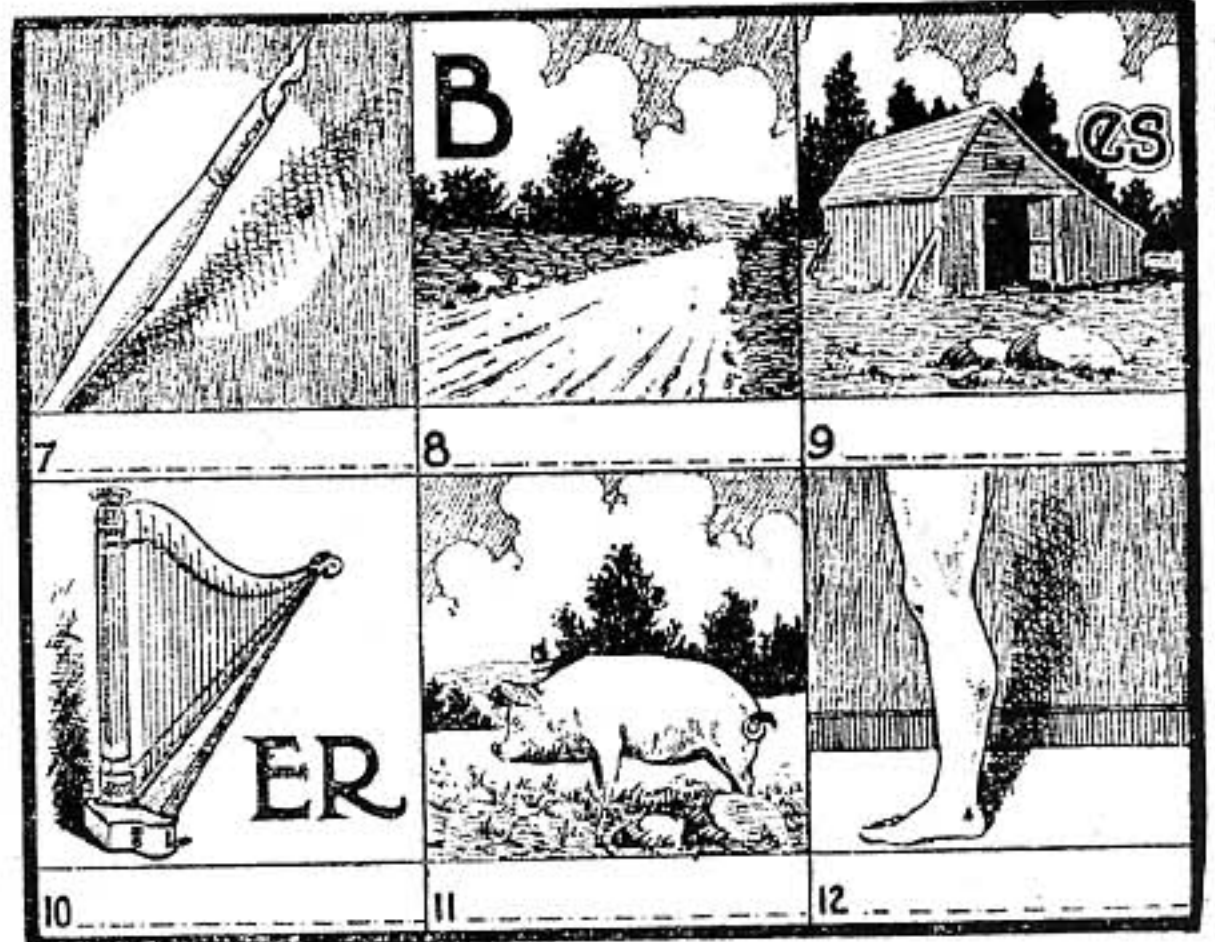
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(Continued on page 27.)

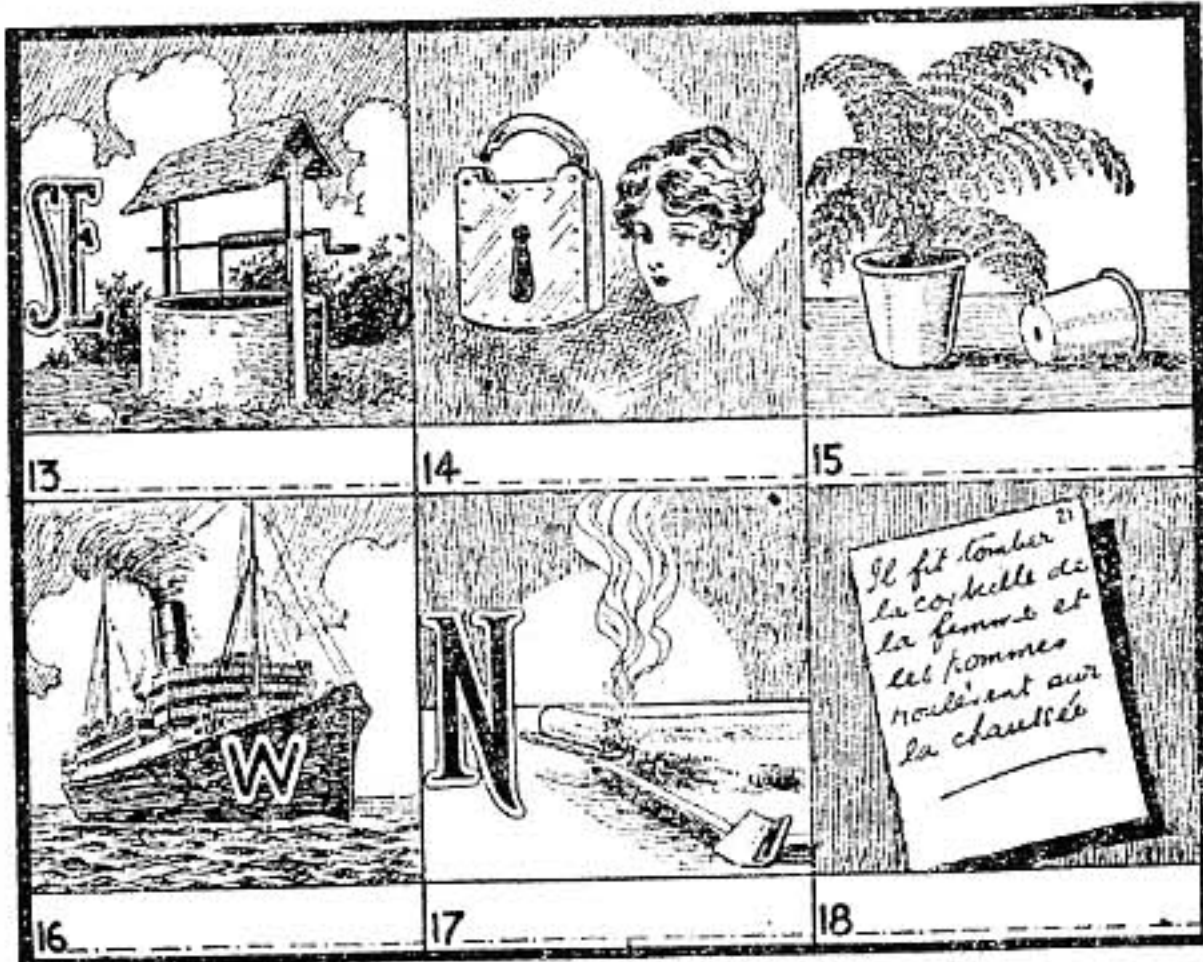
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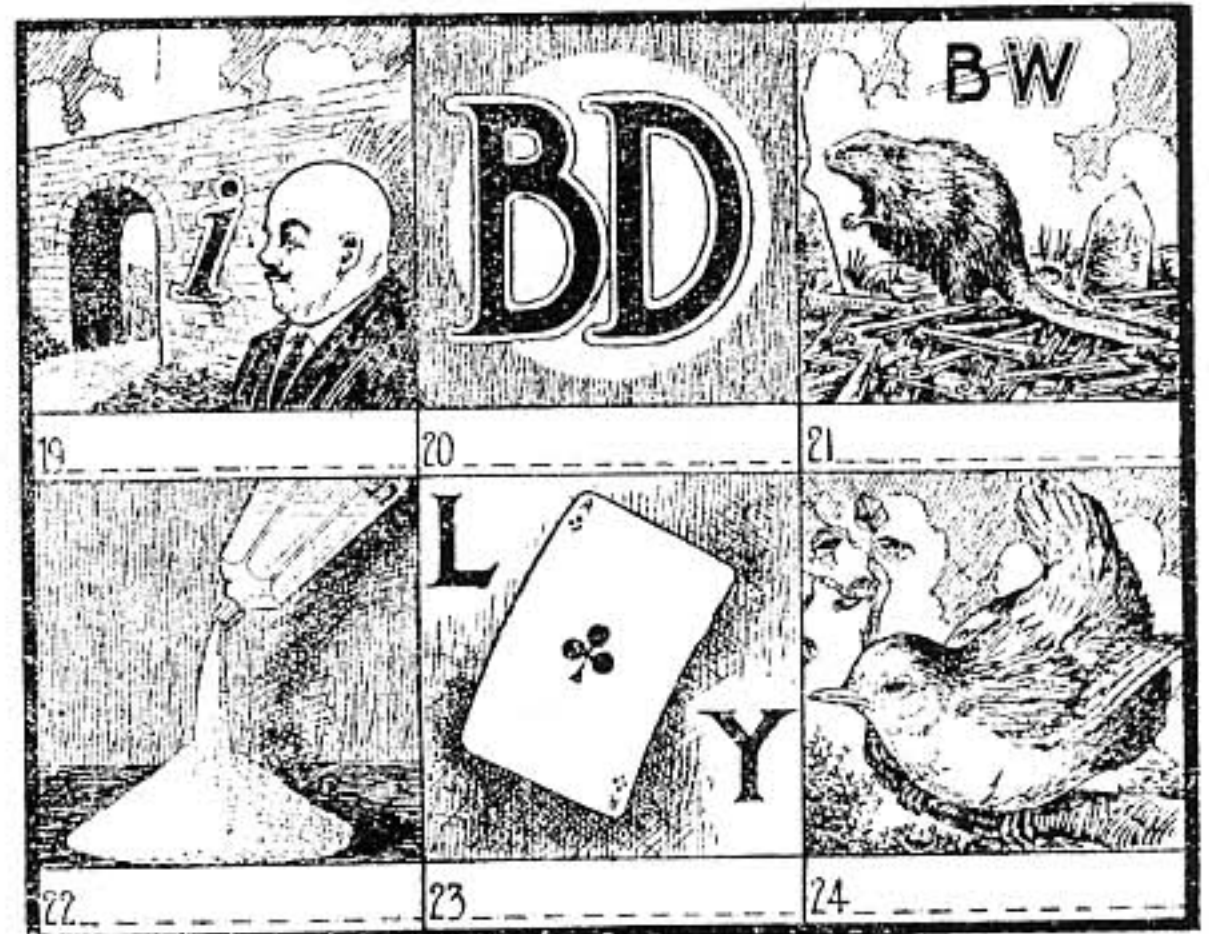
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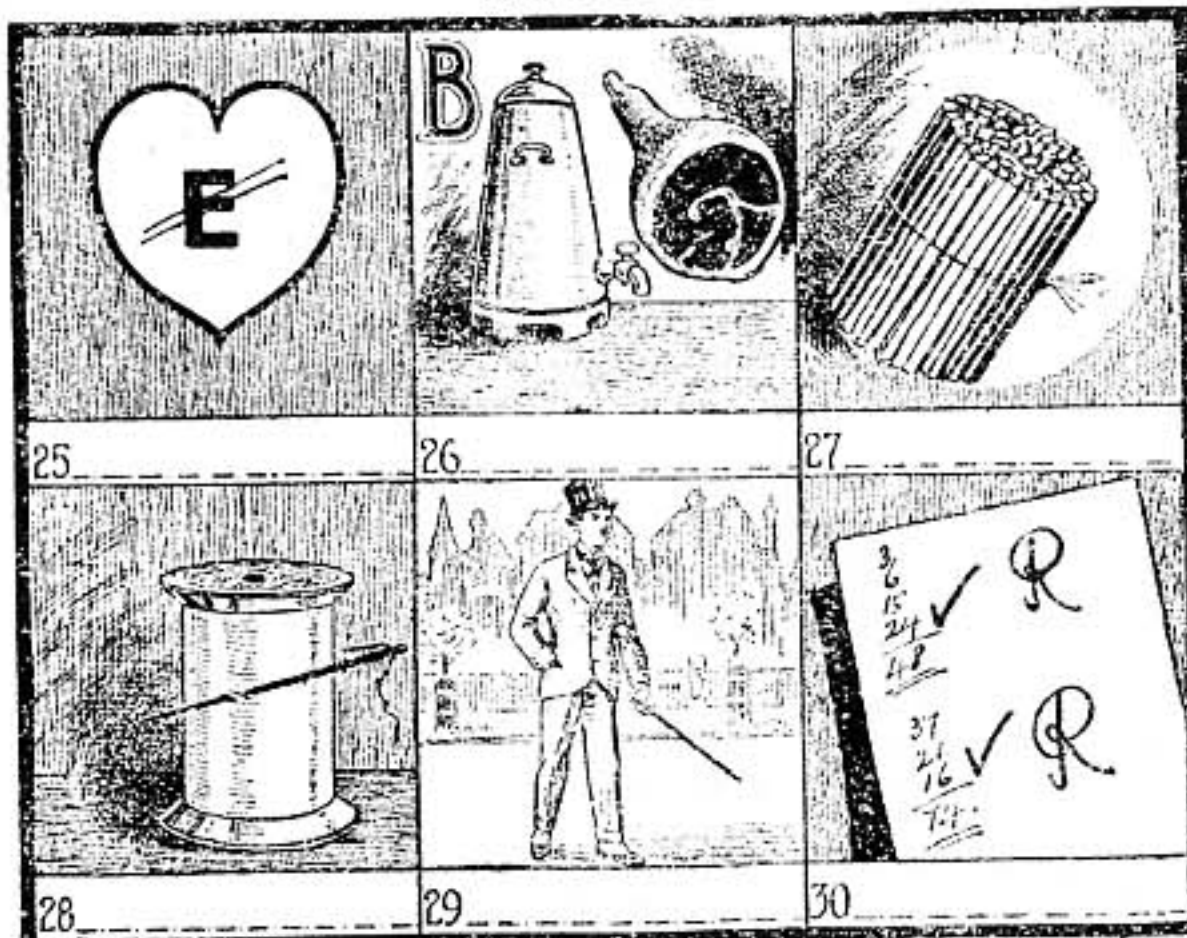
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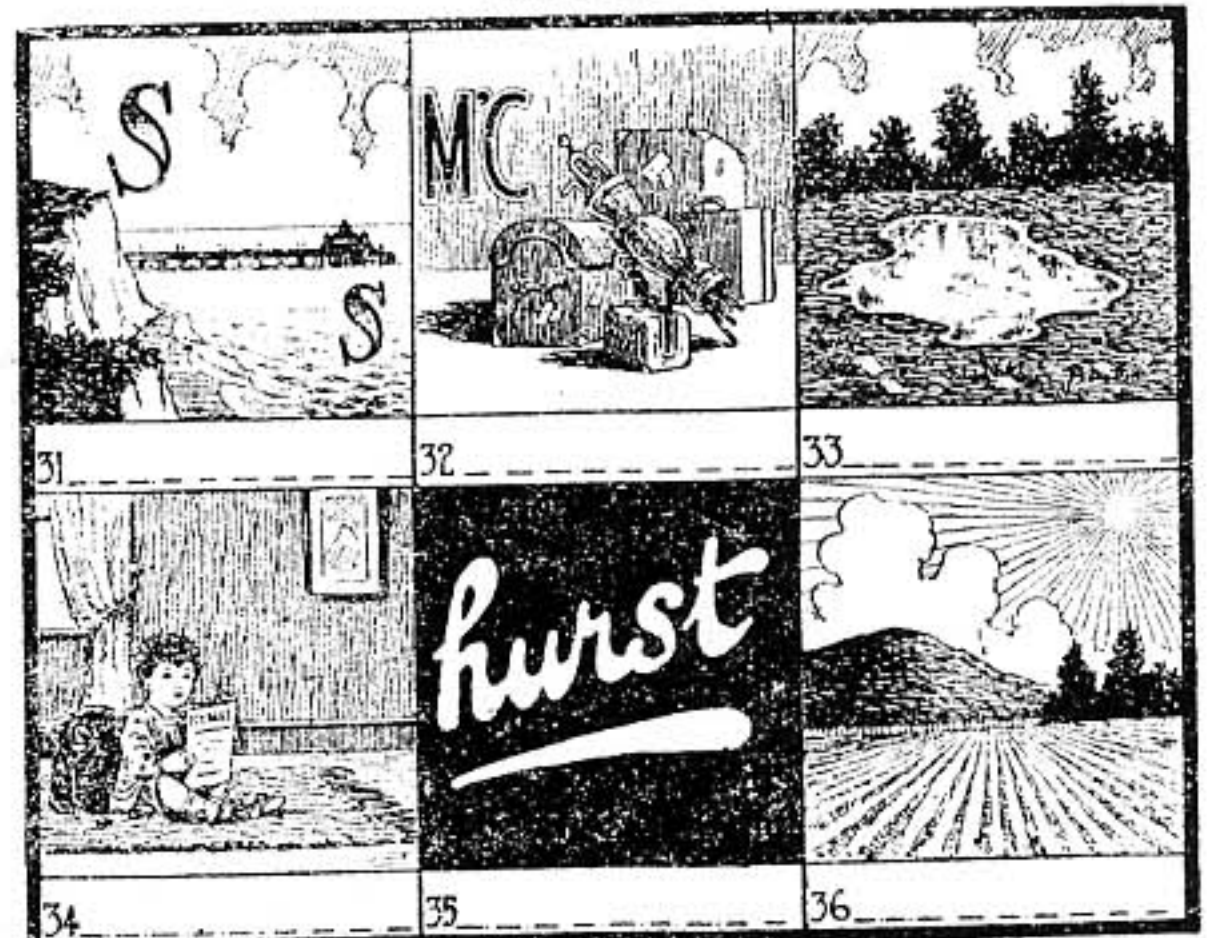
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No. 6 SET.



YOU WILL FIND No. 7 SET ON PAGE 27, BOYS!

THE REBEL OF THE REMOVE!*(Continued from page 13.)*

In the box-room, Billy Bunter remained victorious—for the present, at least. Bunter's barring-out was still going strong.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.**Wingate Takes a Hand!**

BILLY BUNTER did not appear at the Remove table for dinner. For once—almost the first time on record—Bunter missed a meal. It was very probable, however, that the barring-out would have ended at dinner-time, had not Bunter taken the precaution of raiding the Bunder's well-supplied study-cupboard.

There was scarcely subdued excitement at the Remove table. Even Mr. Quelch's severe face and frowning glances could not quite subdue the hum of whispering. At other tables, too, there were grinning faces and murmuring voices. The Fourth and the Shell were keenly interested in Bunter's barring-out; the Fifth grinned over it; even the high and mighty Sixth discussed it. It was so unprecedented a happening that all Greyfriars could not fail to be interested in it. Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, remarked to Mr. Capper, of the Fourth, that things like this did not occur in his Form; and Mr. Capper observed that such a thing was impossible in the Fourth. Mr. Hacker remarked that he was thankful that in the Shell such disrespect and indiscipline would never be dreamed of.

Mr. Quelch did not hear the remarks of his colleagues; but perhaps he guessed the trend of their remarks. His face was thunderous during dinner. All this excitement and disturbance was caused by a member of his Form; and it was going to be a topic in Masters' Common-room for weeks to come, he knew that. He would get ponderous advice from Mr. Prout on the proper method of managing juniors; he would listen to little cutting observations from Mr. Hacker. Good-natured Mr. Capper would express sympathy. It really was very hard for the Remove master to have to bear all this.

After dinner, Mr. Quelch sought Wingate of the Sixth. It was for the prefects to restore order. Gosling was already on the casualty list, and of no further use. But Billy Bunter's defiance of authority could not possibly be allowed to continue. Mr. Quelch dropped into the prefects' room, where he found Wingate and Gwynne and some others of the Sixth. The Sixth-Formers dutifully repressed an inclination to smile. They knew why the Remove master had come.

"You—you are aware of the present unprecedented and disgraceful state of affairs, Wingate?" Mr. Quelch began.

"Yes, sir," said the captain of Greyfriars. "If I can be of any assistance—"

"Bunter, of my Form, has barricaded himself in one of the box-rooms. The door must be forced. The Head will give you leave from class for the purpose. I shall be obliged if you will force the door of the box-room and secure that rebellious boy. In order to avoid excitement, it will be better to act while all the boys are in their Form-rooms this afternoon."

"Certainly, sir. But—" Wingate

hesitated. "May I be allowed to make a suggestion, sir?"

"Pray proceed."

"Is it absolutely certain that Bunter was guilty of purloining the cake from your study, sir?"

Mr. Quelch stared.

"Undoubtedly. I presume you do not imagine that I should have reported him to the Head for a flogging had he been innocent?"

"Of—of course not, sir! But I've been looking into the matter," said Wingate diffidently. "It's clear enough that the young ass—I—I mean Bunter—had designs on the—the cake. He tried to get another fellow to raid it for him. If the others hadn't discovered the label on it, Bunter certainly would have had the cake. But—"

"That makes the matter clear."

"Well, it looks like it, sir—only there's a chance, at least, that some other fellow took advantage of the circumstances to bag the cake. You see, sir, that after what had happened, it was certain that the blame would be laid on Bunter, and so any other young rascal who had the nerve could have bagged the cake in perfect safety."

"Hem! I think that theory a little far-fetched, Wingate. In any case, nothing can excuse Bunter's rebellion, which cannot be allowed to continue."

"Quite so, sir. But—"

"Surely, Wingate, it is not your opinion that Bunter is a victim of injustice?" exclaimed the Remove master warmly.

"Oh, no, sir! If he'd taken his flogging, I shouldn't have thought about the matter at all. But what he's done is—is very remarkable, if he is guilty. He's not what you would call a reckless fellow, as a rule. But a fellow who was innocent might act very recklessly, after being condemned to a flogging. What I mean is, that it's barely possible that Bunter was not guilty in this case."

"It is a very slight possibility, I think," said the Remove master dryly.

"That is so, sir; but, with your permission, I might look into the matter this afternoon, while your boys are in class. If nothing comes of it, I will then force open the box-room and take Bunter to the Head, before classes are dismissed."

"Very well, Wingate."

Mr. Quelch quitted the prefects' room, not looking pleased. Wingate smiled slightly at Gwynne.

"The dear old boy is rather ratty," he remarked. "But fair play's a jewel. Bunter meant to have the jolly old cake if he could; but if he didn't, he oughtn't to be flogged for what he didn't do."

"That's so," assented Gwynne. "But I don't see how you're going to catch the giddy culprit if it's not Bunter. He will have eaten the cake by this time, I suppose."

Wingate shook his head.

"I've thought that out," he said. "It was, I understand, a tremendous birthday cake—one fellow, even Bunter, could scarcely have disposed of it internally in one day without being sick. And the thief would not be likely to share it out with others—he couldn't risk the secret getting out, you see, with all this fuss going on. You can imagine what he will get if it comes out that he's got the cake and put the blame on Bunter. Well, whoever bagged that cake can't have finished it yet; so there must be some left. The fellow, whoever he is, is feeling quite safe, with all the blame put

on Bunter. I'm going after the remnants of that cake, and if I find them, I hope I can show who bagged the goods—Bunter or another. See?"

"I see," assented Gwynne.

"After all, it's a prefect's duty to see fair play among the fags," said the Greyfriars captain. "Bunter's a greedy little beast, but that's no reason why he shouldn't have justice."

"Right as rain!" said Gwynne.

And when the Remove went into their Form-room that afternoon, Wingate of the Sixth asked leave of the Head for half an hour, and proceeded with the line of investigation he had marked out. Meanwhile, Billy Bunter remained in the box-room, barricaded and defiant, keeping up his courage on the remains of the provisions he had raided from Vernon-Smith's study.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.**Not Bunter!**

MR. QUELCH had scarcely commenced with his class in the Remove Form-room that afternoon, when there was a tap at the door, and George Wingate entered.

The Remove master glanced round. "Excuse me, sir," said Wingate. "All the Remove are here, I think, excepting Bunter?"

"Naturally."

"Very well, sir! I should like all the boys in this Form to hand over to me the keys of their lockers or desks, or anything that is locked, in their studies."

There was a buzz in the Form. That request was utterly unexpected and unlooked for. Harold Skinner gave an almost convulsive start, and slid his hand into his trousers pocket.

Mr. Quelch looked impatient. But he could not refuse. He had asked for the prefect's assistance, and given Wingate permission to follow up the matter in his own way.

"Oh, very well!" he said, or, rather, snapped. "Boys! You will hand over your keys to Wingate."

There was a buzz in the Remove as the juniors obeyed. That this matter had something to do with the missing cake was pretty clear, and it looked as if suspicion had turned in a new direction.

Keys, singly, and in bunches, were handed over to the captain of Greyfriars, in rather confusing numbers. Some of the juniors wondered what Wingate would do if he got them mixed. But the captain of Greyfriars had thought of that. He had a number of paper labels with him, and he attached one to each key or bunch of keys, with the number of the study pencilled thereon. This operation took time, and Mr. Quelch looked on with growing impatience and acerbity.

"I cannot help thinking that we are wasting time, Wingate," he said at last.

"I am sorry, sir," answered Wingate politely. "Now, that is all, I think. You have all given me your keys?"

"Yes, Wingate."

"In case of anything being locked, and the key missing, I shall have to force the lock," added Wingate.

Skinner caught his breath.

The captain of Greyfriars glanced round over the class, and quitted the Form-room.

"Mr. Quelch—sir!" said Skinner breathlessly.

"What is it, Skinner?"

"I've left my map in my study, sir. You told us we might bring maps for this lesson. May I fetch it?"

Don't miss next Monday's bumper number, boys—

"You may, Skinner; but do not waste time."

"Thank you, sir."

Skinner hurried out of the Form-room. The Removites looked at one another.

Mr. Quelch might believe, if he liked, that Skinner had gone to his study for a map. Fellows who knew Skinner were not likely to believe it. Skinner had gone to his study because the visit of the prefect had alarmed him.

"Cigarettes in Skinner's desk!" murmured Bob Cherry, with a grin.

"Or a cake!" said Harry Wharton quietly.

"Wha-a-t?"

"Well, we shall see. I noticed that Skinner didn't hand over any key to Wingate, and I know he keeps his desk locked."

"Phew!"

Skinner, trembling with excitement, hurried up to the Remove passage. He arrived there almost on the heels of Wingate of the Sixth. Wingate had gone into Study No. 1 to begin his search—though he certainly did not expect to find stolen goods in Harry Wharton's quarters. He stepped out quickly, at the sound of a footstep in the passage, soft and stealthy as that footfall was.

"Hallo, Skinner! What are you doing out of your class-room?" asked the captain of Greyfriars genially.

Skinner breathed hard.

"Mr. Quelch has sent me to my study for a map," he said.

"I'll come with you to get it."

"You—you needn't trouble, Wingate."

"No trouble at all," said Wingate, in the same genial tone. And he walked along the Remove passage with the wretched Skinner.

They entered Study No. 11 together. Skinner's face was quite white now, and his eyes had a hunted look. He glanced at his desk, which stood in a corner, and then crimsoned as he felt the eyes of the prefect upon him.

"Well, get your map," said Wingate.

Skinner fumbled about the study for a few minutes. He was waiting for Wingate to go. But the prefect evidently had no intention of going. He sat on the corner of the table and watched Skinner.

"Got your map?" he asked at last.

"No—no!"

"Then you'll have to go back to the Form-room without it; you can't keep Mr. Quelch waiting any longer," said Wingate gravely. "By the way, you did not give me any key, Skinner. Is anything of yours here locked?"

Skinner murmured something.

"Speak up!"

"No!" gasped Skinner.

"All serene. Get out!"

"I—I say, Wingate!"

"Get out!" The prefect took Skinner by the shoulder and twirled him out of the study. The hapless junior moved away—he knew that there was no hope now. With dragging footsteps he returned to the Form-room.

Wingate smiled quietly.

"I fancy there's no need to search the whole passage now," he murmured. "Anyhow, we'll see."

He took the keys labelled "No. 11," and tried the various locks they fitted. There was no key to the desk in the corner. Wingate did not need telling that this must be Skinner's property.

He had warned the Removites of what would happen if a key was withheld, and he did not waste time now. He took a chisel from his pocket, forced it under the lid of the desk, and wrenched



On the study table Wingate unwrapped the large parcel he had found in Skinner's desk. Two-thirds of a huge cake, studded with plums, and thickly covered with marzipan, came into view. "There's not much doubt now as to who the culprit is," muttered Wingate softly. (See Chapter 11.)

the lid up. The lock cracked, the lid flew up, and Skinner's secrets were laid bare. There were papers in the desk, and a loose cigarette or two, of which Wingate took no heed. He picked up a large packet that almost filled the available space in the desk.

It was wrapped in paper. On the study table Wingate unwrapped it. Two-thirds of a huge cake, studded with plums, and thickly covered with marzipan, came into view.

Five minutes later Wingate of the Sixth tapped at the door of the Remove Form-room and entered. Mr. Quelch was deep in geography by this time, and he almost glared at the captain of Greyfriars.

"Really, Wingate!" he snapped.

"I've found the cake, sir!"

"Wha-a-t?"

"What's left of it," said Wingate cheerfully. "About two-thirds of it, I should say. It was hidden in a desk in Study No. 11 in the Remove."

"Bless my soul! That is not Bunter's study!"

There was a murmur in the Remove. Mr. Quelch's gimlet eye swept over the class.

"The boys belonging to Study No. 11 will step out before the class," he snapped.

Skinner, Snoop, and Stott stepped out, looking scared.

"The cake was in a desk standing in

the corner, of which I was not given the key, sir," said Wingate. "I had to break open the lid."

"That's Skinner's desk!" gasped Stott.

"Yes, rather!" spluttered Snoop.

"I've not got any desk in the study. I gave you the key of my locker, Wingate."

"Snoop and Stott may return to their places," said Mr. Quelch. And Skinner's study-mates gladly obeyed.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

After the Feast!

HAROLD SKINNER stood with his knees knocking together. His face was white as chalk.

Discovery had come upon him like a thunderbolt. Not for a single instant had he dreamed of this.

It had been so certain—so absolutely certain—that Billy Bunter would be adjudged guilty of purloining the cake, that Skinner had purloined it without the slightest fear.

Bunter's attempt to purloin it by means of Bob Cherry was enough to convict him, added to his reputation as a grub-raider. With perfectly cynical indifference to Bunter's fate Skinner had raided the cake from Mr. Quelch's study, perhaps reflecting that if Bunter bagged a flogging it was, anyhow, no more than he deserved.

—and look out for the special 4-page supplement!

If Skinner had felt a doubt he had dismissed it when Bunter was sentenced to be flogged. After that there could be no danger—at least, he was assured of it. And now—

Wingate laid the cake on the Form master's desk. Mr. Quelch, with a terrible look in his eyes, gazed at Skinner.

"Well, Skinner?" he said in a grinding voice.

Skinner groaned. There was nothing he could say in his defence.

"You purloined the cake from my study yesterday, Skinner?"

"Ow! Yes, sir!" groaned Skinner.

"You deliberately allowed the blame to fall on Bunter?"

"He—he was after the cake, too, sir," mumbled Skinner. "He—he tried to get it and put the blame on Bob Cherry. I—I only played the same game on him, sir."

"That is no excuse, Skinner. The cost of this cake will be included in the bill sent to your father at the end of the term, with a full explanation of your duplicity. The flogging awarded to Bunter will be given to you, Skinner, and I shall specially request the Head to make it a very severe one!"

"Ow!"

"Wingate, I am very much obliged to you."

"Not at all, sir," said Wingate. And he quitted the Form-room. Mr. Quelch dropped a heavy hand on Skinner's shoulder.

"I am going to take you to the Head, Skinner. Come!"

With a white face Skinner walked out of the Form-room with Mr. Quelch. A few minutes later the sounds of woe

could be heard. Distant as the Remove-room was from the scene of execution, the wild howls of Harold Skinner reached the ears of his Form-fellows. Howl on howl, yell on yell echoed along the corridors. Evidently the Head had acceded to Mr. Quelch's request to make the flogging a severe one. But there was no sympathy for the victim in the Remove.

"Serve him jolly well right!" said Bob Cherry.

"Hear, hear!"

"The rightfulness is terrific!" said Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

And all the Remove agreed to that, excepting, no doubt, Skinner.

Billy Bunter's short life as a rebel was over. Skinner did not reappear in the Form-room after his flogging that afternoon, but when Mr. Quelch returned the Owl of the Remove rolled in. There was a grin of satisfaction on Bunter's fat face, and evidently all was well with him.

The Head and Mr. Quelch had agreed that Bunter's rebellious conduct should be pardoned, in view of the fact that he had, after all, been innocent of purloining the cake, and had very nearly been flogged for the sins of Skinner. So the fat junior had been informed at the box-room door that the truth was known, and that he was pardoned, and he had emerged, gladly enough, now that the dreaded flogging no longer impended over him, and all the more gladly because he had come to the end of his provisions.

Bunter grinned and nodded to the

Removites as he took his place in the Form. He seemed in high feather.

After lessons were over, and the Removites crowded out, Bob Cherry smacked the Owl of the Remove on the shoulder.

"So it's all over?" he said.

"Ow! Yes. Quelch apologized!"

"What?" roared the juniors.

"Well, practically apologized," said Bunter hastily. "I told him I'd overlook the occurrence. So it's all right!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. It was Skinner all the time. I hope he got a jolly good flogging?"

"To judge by the soundfulness the flogging was terrific," said the nabob of Bhanipur.

"Good! Sneaking rotter to bone Quelch's cake and put it on me," said Bunter virtuously. "I say, you fellows, was there much left of the cake?"

"A good bit," said Wharton.

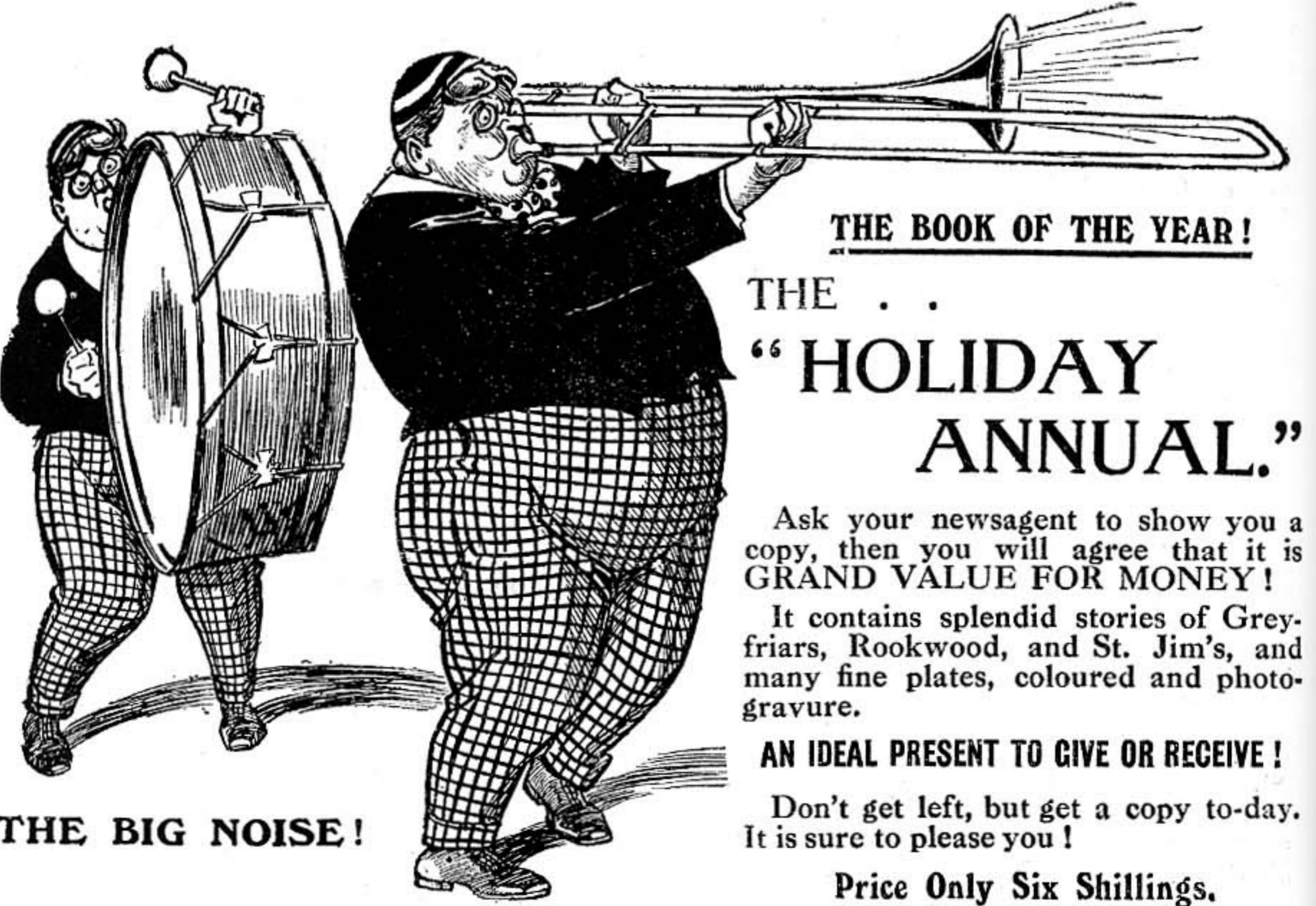
"Where did Quelch put it?"

"What?"

"After all I've gone through the least you fellows can do is to bag that cake and hand it over to me, and— Yarooooooh!"

Bump!

THE END.
(Next week's story of the chums of Greyfriars is entitled "True as Steel!" by Frank Richards. A very popular fellow in Tom Redwing plays a prominent part, and he is most assuredly placed in a terrible dilemma. The ingenuity of the Bounder is called for to solve a great mystery, and Vernon-Smith does not fail for want of trying. You must not miss this really splendid story, boys!)

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THE GREYFRIARS HERALD



Supplement No. 152.

HARRY WHARTON
EDITOR

Week ending December 8th, 1923.



Some Exciting Sea-Trips!

Related by famous folk of Greyfriars—and others.

BOB CHERRY:

I've had so many exciting sea-trips that I really can't pick out the most thrilling. When we sailed to the Congo some time back we got mixed up with a violent storm in the Bay of Biscay; and I also remember crossing the Channel when the seas were mountain high. On each occasion my complexion went green, and I was terribly seasick. And yet I'd cheerfully go on another sea-trip to-morrow, no matter how rough the sea might be! A life on the ocean wave is the proper caper. Yo-heave-ho, me hearties! Methinks one of my ancestors must have been a gallant sea-dog, for "the call of the sea" makes an irresistible appeal to me.

BILLY BUNTER:

My most eggsiting sea-trip took place one dark night in December. I happened to hear that there was a ship in distress, stranded on the rox about a quarter of a mile from Pegg, as the gull flies. It was a wild night, and Wharton and the others didn't dare to venture out. They stayed in bed, listening to the whaling of the wind and the booming of the brakers. But was W. G. B. in a state of pannick? No jolly fear! I rushed down to the shore, and manned the lifeboat single-handed, and put out to the reskew. The stranded vessel had two duzen soles on board. I saved the lot! With grate presents of mind, I slung out a rope, and they made it fast to their ship, which I then toed ashore. The angry seas dashed over my head in savvidge fury, and I thought I was doomed to a crool death by drowndation. But Fortune favored me, and I landed safe and sound on terror firmer. With the aid of fishermen I then dragged the shipwrecked vessel ashore.

(What a priceless imagination you have, Bunt! You'd make your fortune as a writer of sensational fiction!—Ed.)

ALONZO TODD:

I do not care for sea voyages, and always avoid them whenever possible. The most perilous trip I ever had was when I crossed from Portsmouth to the Isle of Wight. The sea was placid when we started, but presently the water became ruffled, and I declare I saw a wave at least four inches high! I thought

it would capsize the steamer! Then a dash of salt spray fell at my feet, and I became violently seasick. How grateful and relieved I felt when we at length landed at Ryde! I never want to go to sea any more.

DICKY NUGENT:

The most exciting Sea Voyage that i Remember was when i sailed the spanish mane. A Pirate Vessle came alongside, and there was a Feerce and Desprit Scrapp. "Cutlasses and knives were Glittering in the Sunshine, and the 1/4 deck was in a Shocking Mess. i thought i was going to get spiked by one of the Pirates. And i should have been, i expect, if i hadn't Woke up and found it was all a Dreem!

HORACE COKER:

My most perilous sea-trip took place a few months ago, when I rowed from Storm Island to Pegg with Potter and Greene, and a frightful storm arose. We should certainly have lost our lives, but for the great gallantry of little Bobbie Severn, my devoted fag, who lost his own life in attempting to save ours. I still feel very cut up about the tragedy, and the memory of that terrible night will haunt me as long as I live.

WILLIAM GOSLING:

Which I ain't never been to sea, so what's the use of asking a man to describe experiences what he ain't never had? Downright stoopid, I call it!

**EXTRA SPECIAL
FOUR PAGE
SUPPLEMENT
NEXT WEEK!**

»
**SPECIAL
SMUGGLERS NUMBER**

EDITORIAL!

By
HARRY WHARTON.

SOME of you may feel inclined to say, "It's the wrong time of the year to write about boating. Boat-races take place in the spring—not in the winter."

But we have no intention of writing about boat-races. This number deals with those who go boating for pleasure, either on the sea or on the River Sark.

Nearly every fellow at Greyfriars can wield a pair of oars; and our pleasure-boating isn't confined to the spring. At all times of the year we may be seen breasting the waves of the North Sea, or "shooting the rapids" of the Sark.

Boating has a fascination all its own. Whether you're a son of the sea, like Tom Redwing, or a humble landlubber, you enjoy a trip on the ocean wave. And if the sea happens to be a bit boisterous, and the wind is blowing great guns, so much the better!

Billy Bunter talks of building a boat for himself. None of the "single-seaters" in the school boathouse will accommodate Bunter's ample bulk! So Bunter intends to manufacture a tub of his own. I expect he'll christen it the "William George," or, possibly, "The Floating Porpoise." But whether it will float or not remains to be seen. Personally, I'd never venture out to sea in a boat that Bunter built!

Some of my reader-chums have asked me to publish a special number dealing with smugglers. Evidently our Special Highwayman Number and Special Pirate Number are still fresh in the public memory.

I will willingly tackle a number dealing with the smugglers who flourished in the dashing days of old; and I shall have to induce Dicky Nugent to favour us with one of his inimitable stories.

Don't forget to write and let me know the sort of numbers that appeal to you most. My chums' requests are always carefully considered, and many of the special numbers published in the past have been suggested by readers.

Talking of highwaymen reminds me that when I was last in London the Editor told me that he had secured a wonderful story of famous Claude Duval, who seems to have been a bit of a lad! The story is to be published in the "Popular" very shortly. Watch out for it!

I will now leave you to read of our merry boating exploits on sea and river.

A good shopping bargain—the "HOLIDAY ANNUAL"—now on sale!



"I FEEL I'd like a sail to-day, over the seas and far away!" said yung Gatty.

"Then, you shall have your hart's desire," I replied. "You and me and yung Myers will spend the afternoon on the briny ocean. We'll take provisions with us, and have tea on board."

"Ripping!" said Gatty.

So we went along to the tuckshop, and asked Mrs. Mible to make up a big hamper. We carried it down to the shore, and then we hired a big boat called the Sorcy Sally.

We dumped the hamper in the stern; then we took off our shooze and stockings—fags always wear stockings, you know—and pushed the boat off. As soon as it was fairly afloat, we hopped into it. Gatty and me took the oars, and we started singing in corus:

"We sail the ocean blew,
And our sorcy ship's a good 'un;
The oars are nice and new,
And the seats are hard and wooden!"

Away we went over the plassid waters, and the plashing of our oars made merry musick.

"What about tea?" asked Myers suddenly.

"Tea!" I said skornfully. "Why, we've only just started out! Wait till we're about two miles from the shore before we think of feeding our faces!"

But when we got out a good distance we didn't feel much like tea. A stiff breeze had sprung up, and the boat was rocking like Billy-oh.

Gatty was green about the gills, and so were Myers and me. We simply couldn't face the grubb, or we should have been horribly seesick.

"Better turn back, Dicky," said Gatty. "The blessed boat's playing pitch and toss, and the sea's getting ruffer and ruffer!"

We started to row back to the shore, but we found that we could make hardly any progress, owing to the currant.

We rowed until our hands were blistered, and our arms ached like the very dickens. But the shore seemed to be as far away as ever.

I wasn't a bit nervuss myself, but I saw that Gatty was trembling like a frightened rabbit. So was Myers. But I didn't turn a hare.

"We shall be food for fishes!" muttered Gatty. "We can't seem to make any headway!"

"Cheer up!" I said. "We'll rest for a bit, and then have another go with the oars!"

It was a mad pollicy, for as soon as we stopped rowing we drifted farther and farther out to sea.

Then it began to get dark, and I konfess that I began to feel just a tremmer of fear.

I'm pretty certain we should have gone down to Davy Jones' locker if the Pegg lifeboat hadn't put out to our reskew. But they had seen our danger, and they put out with all speed.

When we saw the lifeboat come leeping through the water, we gave a woop of joy and releef. It was a blissful site, I can tell you!

We were reskewed in the nick of time, just as the Sorcy Sally was about to capsaze.

Ropes were flung to us, and we were hauled on board the lifeboat. Then we were taken ashore, with the Sorcy Sally in toe.

I've had a good many thrilling advenchers in my time, but I reckon that was one of the most thrillingest.

We thanked the lifeboat crew, and had a whip-round on their behalf. And then we trotted back to Greyfriars, taking the tuck-hamper with us. A feed in the fags' Common-room would be a jolly site more happy-tising than a feed on the briny ocean, in the midst of a terribul gale!

BUNTER'S BOAT!

By DICK PENFOLD.

'Twas Bunter's boat, the Neverfloat,
That sailed the swirling Sark;
And all of us, with fret and fuss,
Watched William George embark.

"Bunty, you're daft! I'm sure that craft
Is never watertight!"

Thus Cherry cried. But Bill replied:
"Oh, rats! I'm quite all right!"

Ho shot downstream, then gave a
scream—

A scream of dire distress.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Brown. "He's
going down!"

He'll need our help, I guess."

We saw that boat, the Neverfloat,
Give one great lurch to port;

Then Bunter called, and roared and
bawled,

Demanding our support.

We rushed along, an eager throng,
To render timely aid;

Then in we went, with grim intent,
And many a splash we made.

Towards the shore, the form we bore
Of Bunter, W. G.

Limply he sank upon the bank,
And a dismal groan groaned he.

"My lovely boat, the Neverfloat!
Oh, rescue it!" he said.

But Bunter's tub (pause, friends, and
blub!)

Lay in the river-bed!

BOATING NEWS!

By H. VERNON-SMITH.

"NEVER mind the weather!" appears to be the motto of the gallant sea-dogs of the Greyfriars Remove. They go sailing in a snow-storm, and boating in a blizzard! And it's a perfect marvel to me that we don't hear of more calamities! The explanation seems to be that Fortune favours the brave!

Harry Wharton & Co. were involved in a thrilling adventure on Saturday afternoon. They went for a sail, on a rather choppy sea, and got into difficulties half a mile from the shore. Wharton's coolness and smart seamanship pulled them through the crisis, and after drifting a long way out of their course they managed to get back to the shore. It was quite dark when they landed, and the school authorities were beginning to get anxious. But trust the Famous Five to win through in an emergency!

Bulstrode and Hazeldene had a strange experience a few days ago. They were punting on the River Sark, when they were suddenly attacked by a couple of swans. The birds were very aggressive, and were only beaten off with the greatest difficulty. The juniors both looked a bit scared on their return to Greyfriars. Bulstrode says that the River Sark ought in future to be known as "the Swanny River!"

It is rumoured that a new boathouse is to be built in readiness for next summer. The present boathouse is not spacious enough, with the result that rowing-boats and punts and canoes are piled on top of each other in "most admired disorder." A new boathouse, with ample accommodation, will prove a godsend.

THE STUDY RAIDERS!

By Dick Penfold.

Half a yard, half a yard,
Half a yard—onward!
Into old Coker's den
Swarmed the half-hundred.
Charged into Coker's lair,
Battle-cries rent the air,
Panic reigned everywhere!
Into old Coker's den
Swarmed the half-hundred!

Chairs to the right of them,
Chairs to the left of them,
Chairs all around them,
Broken and battered.
Coker then clenched his fist.
Hit out, but often missed.
Gave a fierce shout, "Desist!"
Then Horace and his men
Swiftly were scattered!

Forward, the Bright Brigade!
Was there a chap dismayed?
Was there a boy afraid?
Perish the notion!
"Into the giddy fray!"
Cherry was heard to say.
"We'll be top-dogs to-day!"
In Horace Coker's den
Fierce the commotion!

When shall their glory fade?
Oh, the grand charge they made.
Valiant and unafraid!
All the school wondered.
Honour the charge they made,
Honour the Bright Brigade,
Fighters of finest grade.
Now behold Coker's den,
Looted and plundered!

Keep your eyes on Ronald Swiveller, boys!

A Marked Man!

by Hedley Scott.

A sensational story of League Football with a powerful detective theme.



A Strange Request!

BENEATH the welcoming rays of the sun that pierced the mist overhanging the spacious enclosure of the Middleham Rangers' Football Club, forty thousand people talked of nothing else but the forthcoming match between the home eleven and Portdale.

Mornington Hardacre, the managing director of the Rangers, looked over the multitude with a smile of satisfaction. It was a record "gate"—he could see that at a glance. Bobbing heads filled every inch of space on the mounds and in the stands.

The reason for this unparalleled attendance did not lie in the fact that the match was regarded as a popular fixture. For the Portdale eleven were an average team, and the Rangers had already beaten them away from home to the tune of three goals to nil. There was something far deeper than that.

The rumour which had spread throughout the town, that Jim Blakeney—the centre-forward of the Rangers—was playing a double game, and that he was "working" for the benefit of a book maker, had brought thousands of curious people who seldom attended a footer-match to investigate for themselves.

The air was tense with expectation of something about to happen—something sinister; something out of the usual run of excitement that is to be found in most matches.

"Here they come!"

The shout was taken up on all sides, rising to a shrill crescendo, as the Rangers, looking wonderfully fit in their black-and-gold jerseys, doubled out of their dressing-room on to the pitch.

"Hurrah!"

"No tricks, Blakeney!"

Underlying the welcome of the majority at sight of their favourites was an ominous outburst directed at the head of Jim Blakeney. He seemed oblivious of it, however, as he laughed and chatted with Harold Digby, the centre-half and skipper of the Rangers.

Another terrific burst of applause greeted the appearance of the Portdale eleven, who followed close on the heels of their rivals. From a physical standpoint they were an exceptionally fine team, but to anyone who knew anything about footer they were a trifle on the heavy side.

A hush settled on the vast concourse as the two captains tossed for choice of ends. But only for a moment. The teams were lining up now ready for the start, and from every part of that gigantic arena

a storm of cheering rang out. There was a fair sprinkling of Portdale supporters who flourished rattles, trumpets, and the like. What they lacked in numbers they were prepared to make up for in noise, judging by the din that rang out from their quarter as the ball was set in motion.

Right from the kick-off the visitors pressed with dogged persistency, and the play resulting from this attack was thrilling in the extreme. Time and again the Portdale eleven got within scoring distance, but the home backs never faltered. Their clever clearances

HOW THE STORY OPENS.

JIM BLAKENEY, the eighteen-year-old centre-forward of the Middleham Rangers, who is a nephew of

TIGER SLEEK, a notorious criminal, who has escaped the clutches of the police, and who now has designs upon a secret wireless ray invented by

MORNINGTON HARDACRE, the managing-director of the Middleham Rangers.

RONALD SWIVELLER, inside-left in the Rangers eleven, and nephew of Mornington Hardacre. Jealous of Blakeney's rapid strides into favour, Swiveller has sworn to get the centre-forward turned out of Middleham.

FERRERS LOCKE, the world-famous detective, and his clever young assistant,

JACK DRAKE, are engaged upon a case connected with the theft of a valuable pearl necklace. By a strange series of circumstances Ferrers Locke is thrown into contact with Jim Blakeney, who confides in the famous sleuth. It transpires that Tiger Sleek seeks to compel Jim Blakeney to steal the specifications of Mornington Hardacre's invention, and, when he finds the lad obstinate, resorts to brutal methods of persuasion. Ferrers Locke, who has rescued Blakeney from the River Twee, into which he had been thrown by six members of the Tiger's gang, offers to take a hand in the case, and announces his intention of residing in Middleham in the guise of Colonel Challis.

Mornington Hardacre is the recipient of an anonymous letter, which states that Jim Blakeney is a traitor to his side, and that it is his intention to "fake" the result of the forthcoming match between the Rangers and Portdale. The rumour runs through the town like wildfire, and everyone is on tenterhooks. Ferrers Locke gets on the track of the writer of the anonymous letter, and discovers that Ronald Swiveller is implicated in the plot to injure Blakeney. Tiger Sleek also learns that Swiveller shows a decided tendency to walk a crooked path, and declares his intention of using Swiveller to gain his ends by encouraging his animosity towards Jim Blakeney.

(Now read on.)

drew rounds of applause from the excited spectators, speedily followed by gasps of dismay as the Portdale halves secured possession of the leather once again. It was a forced pace the visitors were setting, and the Rangers were hard pressed for the first fifteen minutes. Then came the change.

A well-placed kick from Digby at centre-half put the ball at the feet of Jim Blakeney. Immediately the ground echoed and re-echoed to the encouragements of the crowd as the centre forward darted away, tricked the opposing half-back that came at him, and then passed to Micky Desmond on the right wing.

"Now then, Micky!"

The Rangers' outside-right took the ball in his stride, and sped along the touchline without interference until he saw the bulky shadow of the Portdale left-back looming before him.

"Pass!" shrieked the crowd.

But there was no need to urge Desmond on that account—he was a natural footballer. Without meeting the full-back he sent over as perfect a centre as the crowd had seen for many a day.

The Portdale right-back leaped in the air to intercept the passage of the sphere, but he missed it by a matter of inches. Before his feet had touched ground again the ball was speeding at a terrific pace towards the net. Jim Blakeney—ever an opportunist—had taken the ball at the first rebound and slammed it goalwards.

Anxious eyes watched the goalkeeper rise in the air in a prodigious leap. His outstretched fingers closed round the ball. But before he could clear to safety Ronald Swiveller had darted in and basuled the ball into the net.

"Played, Swiveller!"

For once in a way the crowd showed approval of Ronald Swiveller. The inside-left had opened the score for the home club.

"Played, sir!"

As Swiveller walked back to the centre of the pitch he felt extremely pleased with himself. Even Digby shook his hand and congratulated him on the goal he had scored. But when Jim Blakeney offered his congratulations, Swiveller met the centre-forward's smiling face with a glance of lofty contempt.

Jim bit his lip and turned away. He had felt the snub, and was annoyed. There was little time for him to ponder over it, however, for the referee had the whistle to his lips.

Pheep!

The ball was in motion again. The Portdale eleven were determined to wipe

You've enjoyed this instalment? Next week's instalment is better still!

off the slate that one goal deficit, but the Rangers held them at every phase of the game. Some of the rowdier spectators who favoured the home club began to jeer in consequence.

"Call this football!" roared one excited member in the cheaper stand. "Go home and play marbles, Portdale!"

"Where's Blakeney's double game now?" demanded another. "Who said the Rangers was goin' to get beat by the Portdale crush?"

"All bosh, 'Arry! Jim's the boy for us!"

"Straight as a die! There he goes—"

The excitement in the stands grew to a feverish pitch as Jim was seen to speed down the field with the ball at his feet. Tricking the half-back in a manner that drew the laughter of the spectators, he tested the goalie. There was no mistake this time. Good as the Portdale 'keeper undoubtedly was, he could do nothing with that shot. He was dismally aware of his failure as the roars of the spectatorate sang in his ears:

"Goal!"

"Good shot, Jim!"

"The stuff to give 'em!"

"Let's 'ear from you again!"

The cheers rang out long after the teams lined up for the re-start. Two goals in twenty minutes promised well for the Rangers. In their delight the spectators forgot their dislike of Ronald Swiveller, and cheered him to the echo. As a matter of fact, the inside-left, for purposes of his own, was playing the game of his life. His exhibition of football was faultless. The pity of it was that he knew it, and attempted to play to the gallery.

Thus it was in a spirited attack by the Rangers' forward line Swiveller came into contact with the opposing half-back—a giant of a man who stood well over six feet. Swiveller danced round the hefty fellow to the delight of the crowd, and to the growing rage of the half-back. But instead of passing to his wing Swiveller kept the ball to himself. The burly "half" panted after him, and—

Thud!

Swiveller went staggering a few yards from a heavy shoulder-charge, and finally pitched to the ground. The big half-back cleared, and the game continued for a few moments until the cries of the crowd drew the referee's attention to the Rangers' inside-left, who was sprawling on the ground in an inert heap.

"Man hurt, ref."

The whistle blew, and the game came to a temporary standstill. The Rangers crowded round their fallen forward and attempted to raise him. The referee, seeing that Swiveller was apparently more than winded, signalled to the First Aid man on the touchline.

He came running to the scene with a wet sponge and restoratives, and began to examine Swiveller. The douche of cold water from the sponge had the effect of opening the player's eyes. He blinked about him for a moment and then groaned.

"M-my head!" he muttered, and then swooned again.

The referee made a sign to the First Aid man to take the injured forward from the field. The crowd was strangely hushed as Swiveller, between two stalwart fellows, was half carried into the dressing-room. Jeff Dunstan came hurrying forward, full of concern. Swiveller was stretched out on the massage-table, and the old trainer ran his hands over him.

"Don't worry, Jeff," muttered Swiveller faintly. "I shall be all right in a moment. Must have hit my head on the ground when that fellow charged me."

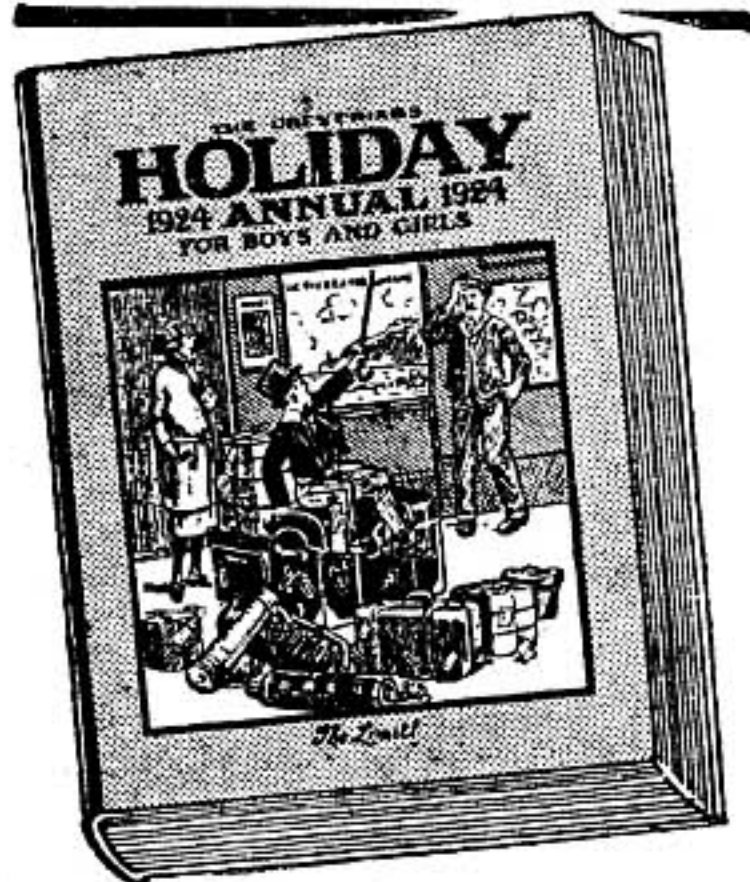
"H'm!" grunted the trainer. "Blessed if I can see any sign of a bump!"

Swiveller rose unsteadily to his feet, and with a protesting wave of the hand motioned Jeff Dunstan to leave him alone.

"Don't fuss, there's a good chap!" said the inside-left, with a forced smile. "I'm going on again in a moment."

The trainer scratched his head in perplexity. He was sorely puzzled to locate the trouble which had rendered Swiveller hors de combat. To all intents and purposes Swiveller looked as fit as a fiddle. With a grunt that sounded unintelligible, but which, however, conveyed a great deal of the old trainer's opinion of the whole thing all the same, Dunstan turned on his heel and vacated the dressing-room. He was anxious to witness the concluding stages of the first half.

The inside-left watched him go, a curious gleam of satisfaction lighting up



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his narrow, crafty eyes. Making a pretence of following Dunstan, Swiveller limped across the dressing-room. He paused for a fleeting moment beside the pegs upon which were suspended the players' ordinary clothes. Glancing furtively around him, Swiveller drew something from his own pocket and transferred it to a pocket of one of the coats hanging on the pegs.

The whole action took less than a minute to perform. The next, and Swiveller was limping out of the dressing-room, down the narrow gangway, and thence on to the field of play.

"Good old Swiveller!"

A section of the crowd saw the inside-left returning to the game and they set up a howl of cheering. He took his position in the forward line, and played a careful game until the referee finally blew his whistle, signalling half-time.

To the accompaniment of storms of cheers, the Rangers came off the ground for the few minutes' welcome respite. They entered the dressing-room, chatting and laughing amongst themselves,

what time Jeff Dunstan doled out the lemons. Jim was the last of the players to enter the narrow gangway leading to the dressing-room, and he was about to follow his companions inside, when a hand gripped his arm.

"A moment, Jim, my boy!"

The centre-forward turned, to see a tall, peppery-looking gentleman, whose grizzled face was tanned a deep bronze, smiling at him.

"Mr.—I mean, Colonel Challis—" began Jim, in surprise. "Didn't expect to see you here, sir!"

"Thank heavens, I am here!" muttered the "colonel," who was no other than Ferrers Locke. "Don't take any notice of the smile upon my face," he added quickly; "that's for the benefit of anyone who might be looking at us. But I'm dead serious, Jim! Listen to my instructions, and don't bother me with questions—they can be postponed until later. Now, when you arrive in the dressing-room you are to exchange your packet of chewing-gum with that in Swiveller's pocket. Don't stare at me like that! I know what I'm talking about, I assure you, and—" He broke off abruptly as he perceived Mornington Hardacre approaching. "You're playing fine, Jim; keep it up!"

The young centre-forward was well aware that the latter remark was intended for the managing-director's ears.

"Friend of mine, sir," he said, noting the look of inquiry on the director's face. "Colonel Challis—Mr. Hardacre."

The two shook hands and began to chat. Murmuring his excuses, Jim Blakeney, sorely puzzled at the detective's strange instructions, took the opportunity of slipping into the dressing-room. For the life of him he could not see how he was to perform the task Ferrers Locke had set him. But even as he closed the door of the dressing-room the voice of the world-famous detective—unnecessarily raised, thought Jim at the moment—reached him. And the words were significant.

"Thanks very much, Mr. Hardacre! I should indeed be pleased to have a look round!"

The Second Half!

JIM BLAKENEY felt a thrill of satisfaction steal over him as he heard the words of Ferrers Locke.

Crossing to where his clothes were hanging, the centre-forward took from his jacket-pocket a packet of chewing-gum and contemplated it for a fleeting moment.

To all intents and purposes it was exactly the same packet that he had placed there himself before the opening of the match against Portdale.

Jeff Dunstan, the trainer, made it a practice to give each member of the eleven two packets of chewing-gum before the commencement of any match. As a refresher, he swore by it. Jim had not taken kindly to the habit at first; but in course of time, like the remainder of his companions, he had come to appreciate it for what it was worth. Dunstan's iron rule of one packet of gum for each forty-five minutes of play was strictly observed by the Rangers.

But how Ferrers Locke had gained intelligence of this practice completely mystified Blakeney. And the detective's instructions to exchange his—Jim's—packet of gum with that of Swiveller's puzzled the young centre-forward the more he thought about it.

He was still endeavouring to solve the

"The Smugglers of Pegg!"—written specially by George Wingate—next week!

puzzle when Mornington Hardacre appeared in the dressing-room, accompanied by the pseudo Colonel Challis.

"This is the bath-room I have had specially arranged for the club, Colonel Challis," the director was saying. "I think you will agree with me that it is a model of its kind."

The director and the detective passed into the huge bath-room adjoining the dressing-room, and Jim's heart jumped. He realised now the move for which Ferrers Locke was playing. It materialised a moment or so later, when Mornington Hardacre put his head into the dressing-room.

"Come here, you fellows!" he announced cheerily. "Colonel Challis would like to be introduced to you all. Not you, Jim, of course," he added, with a smile. "You know him already."

The players crowded into the bath-room, and were formally introduced to the colonel, what time Jim Blakeney speedily negotiated the exchange of chewing-gum. With a smile of satisfaction upon his face which he could not conceal, Blakeney joined the throng in the bath-room and winked an expressive eye at Ferrers Locke. The celebrated detective was going great guns with the Rangers, and one and all voted him a good sort. He took his leave of them shortly before the interval expired, and the eleven made a general move in the direction of their clothes.

"Hallo, time's up!" suddenly exclaimed Digby, starting for the door. "Come on, chaps, and keep it up this half!"

Fortified with their second ration of chewing-gum, the home club trooped on to the pitch, determined to add still more to the score that stood to their credit. Once or twice Swiveller glanced in the direction of Jim Blakeney, and a peculiar twisted smile crossed his face, the reason for which Blakeney was at a complete loss to understand.

The second half of the game opened up with a concerted move on the part of the visitors to redeem their reputation. As a consequence, the spectators were treated to a thrilling five minutes of play in the region of the centre-line, in which both elevens struggled hard for the mastery.

Portdale brought all their superior weight into the scale, and the charging was unnecessarily heavy, but they could not break through the rigid defence of the home eleven.

Then the Rangers' forward line fell into movement, and away they streaked for their opponents' goal. The passing was well timed until Ronald Swiveller miskicked a simple ball that a schoolboy could have mastered.

"Come on, Swiveller!"

Conscious of a peculiar feeling akin to numbness stealing over his limbs, the inside-left bit his lip as the crowd began to jeer him. Another chance came his way again a few moments later to show this same unsympathetic crowd what he really could do. He judged, as he thought, his kick to a nicety, and, to his utter astonishment, missed the leather by a matter of six inches.

"Kick him off!"

"Play the game, Swiveller!"

A certain section of the spectorate were growing restive and abusive. The miskicks seemed obviously "faked." But to Jim Blakeney, who had at first been astonished to see such a hopeless performance from such a good forward, a dawning light of intelligence began to break.

The chewing-gum!

In a flash he realised the significance of Ferrers Locke's timely warning. He peered closely at the inside-left who was, even at that moment, mechanically chewing away at a piece of the gum, and a grim frown settled on his handsome face.

"And so that little packet was for me," muttered Blakeney, feeling no compunction in allowing Swiveller to continue chewing the gum. "By Jove! What a vile trick!"

He had no time to ponder further on the situation, for the ball was sailing towards him. Trapping neatly, he started away at a tangent, bamboozled the opposing centre-half, who rushed at him, and finally passed to Micky Desmond, the outside-right. That speedy winger was racing down the touchline like a flash of lightning, the ball under perfect control at his feet.



Glancing furtively about him, Swiveller drew something from his own pocket and transferred it to one of the coats hanging on the pegs. (See page 22.)

"Centre, Micky!"

The leather sailed in a perfect curve towards the oncoming forwards. Jim Blakeney leaped in the air to breast it, and was charged to the ground by a burly full-back. The ball, however, continued in its flight, finally to land almost at the feet of Ronald Swiveller. It was the chance of a lifetime. The goal was seven yards away, and Swiveller was unmarked.

"Now's your chance, Swiveller!"

"Shoot, man—shoot!"

Through the mist that had settled in his brain the inside-left dimly heard the shouts of the spectators. He steadied the ball, and was about to shoot for goal when a sharp pain shot through his leg. Then, and only then, did Ronald Swiveller become aware of what had happened. By some manner unknown

to him he had been eating of the very chewing-gum that was intended for Jim Blakeney—the drugged gum which he himself had safely placed in Blakeney's pocket a short time before.

"Wake up, man!"

"Shoot!" The Middleham Rangers' followers almost shrieked the cry.

Through the fierce reflections of his throbbing brain Swiveller heard again the shouts of the crowd. He tried to pull himself together. He must retrieve the mistake he had made.

Swoosh!

His right foot swept through the air with all the force that he could muster behind it. But it met nothing more tangible than the empty air. As Swiveller, carried away by his own momentum, pitched to the ground, he saw through the mist that dimmed his sight the ball still lying on the ground. He had missed it!

"Traitor!"

"Kick him off, ref!"

The indignant members of the grandstand were on their feet, shaking savage fists at the inside-left, who was slowly picking himself up. A certain goal, practically, had been thrown away. Thrown away! There was no other construction to place upon that miskick.

"We won't have him!"

"Stop the match!"

"Hi, ref—send that man off! He's a traitor!"

Mornington Hardacre had rubbed his eyes in astonishment at his nephew's first lapse. But now words and action seemed to fail him. He could only stand and stare as if paralysed at the inglorious figure of Ronald Swiveller. When action returned to him he stormed up and down the members' stand, uttering all manner of threats against his unfortunate nephew.

The Rangers themselves seemed to be smitten by the same inactivity for the moment. Ronald Swiveller's action had knocked the wind out of their sails.

And in that moment of general consternation the Portdale forward line broke through and scored their first point.

"Goal!"

Only a few spectators favouring the Rangers uttered the shout. It was left for the Portdale contingent to make the noise with their rattles, trumpets, and various other paraphernalia. But it had the effect of encouraging the Portdale eleven to further efforts. They lined up for the restart full of confidence—a confidence that received a severe setback, however, as the Rangers recovered from the shock Swiveller had given them. They were annoyed; and their tactics, perhaps, gave some indication of what they felt. A fierce scrimmage in mid-field drew the shouts of the Middleham faction round the touchlines, punctuated by the entreaties of the Portdale crowd. It was a regular ding-dong battle, in which hard knocks were taken with the smooth ones.

Ronald Swiveller, still with that peculiar miasma stealing through his limbs, glared savagely at Jim Blakeney as the two came near each other.

"You cur!" he muttered, beneath his breath.

The centre-forward took no notice of the insult, but continued his game, determined in his own mind to give Swiveller no more chances of making a fool of himself. But often in the game the ball landed near the feet of the rascally inside-left with the same result

every time. He could do nothing. The drug with which he had intended to bring about Blakeney's downfall was bringing about his own.

It would be difficult to describe the action of the drugged chewing-gum upon the rascally inside-left. It left him enough of his senses to realise what was going on about him, but a misty kind of film obscured his vision, and his limbs were half paralysed. Where he had shone brilliantly in the opening stages of the match he now floundered hopelessly.

And all the time he was treated to the wrath of the crowd—the wrath he had hoped to see hurled at the head of his enemy. It was poetic justice with a vengeance, and none amongst that whole multitude rejoiced more than the tall, soldierly-looking gentleman in the main grand stand.

"Mr. Swiveller," muttered Ferrers Locke, below his breath. "You've been poisoned by your own sting."

The remaining few minutes of that half were like a nightmare to Ronald Swiveller. He had been bowled out. The thought thrummed through his tired brain incessantly. The result of his scheming—he dared not ponder over it. Who had turned the tables on him? What did Jim Blakeney know? Never had a rogue repented of his misdeeds as did Ronald Swiveller at that moment. The sword of Damocles was poised above his head—he knew not which hand would deal the fatal stroke.

Mercifully for him, as it turned out, the referee's whistle put a stop to his wretched existence as a footballer for that afternoon. But even before that shrill blast he had the mortification of seeing his hated enemy break through the Portdale defence in the last few seconds of the game, and score with a low ground shot that registered the Rangers' third goal.

"Played, Jim!"

"Bravo, Rangers!"

In that moment of wild jubilation the mighty concourse forgot the existence of Ronald Swiveller, and that unhappy individual did not stay long enough on the ground to revive the interest. Burning with shame, he staggered—no other term is applicable—from the playing-field and entered the dressing-room. Jeff Dunstan, who was waiting there, turned his back on the inside-left and left him to his own devices.

When next the old trainer turned his head it was to find the figure of Ronald Swiveller stretched out prone upon the floor in an unconscious heap. Dunstan, with a cry of alarm, darted forward and knelt beside the silent figure. Even as he peered at the tightly-drawn face of Swiveller, the dressing-room door opened and the Rangers, at whose head was Mornington Hardacre, strode in.

"Swiveller——" began Hardacre grimly. "Where——" He broke off abruptly as he became aware of the still figure at his feet. "Why, what's happened, Dunstan?" he bellowed.

"Drugged, sir!" said the old trainer laconically.

"Great Heaven! Are you sure, man?"

"Positive!" grunted Dunstan, in his abrupt way.

"Better call a doctor," said Hardacre, turning on his heel. "Swiveller must be seen to at once. Drugged! Good heavens!"

Jim Blakeney, who had been the last to enter the dressing-room, gazed down at the unconscious figure of the man who

had tried to ruin him, and shook his head sadly. Despite the narrow shave he had had of being in exactly the same position as Hardacre's rascally nephew, Blakeney felt a twinge of sorrow and compassion for the silent figure lying outstretched at his feet.

But although Ferrers Locke had been clever enough to unearth the scheme which had been prepared for the downfall of Jim Blakeney, and quick enough to thwart it, he held no direct evidence upon which to charge or arrest the rascally Ronald Swiveller.

Even as Jim Blakeney gazed down at the Rangers' inside-left, the words of the great detective, uttered the moment before the young centre-forward had entered the dressing-room, rang through his brain:



"Shoot man, shoot!" Through the mist that had settled in his brain Swiveller heard the shouts of the crowd. Swoosh! His right foot swept through the air with all the force at his command. But it met nothing more tangible than the empty air. (See page 23.)

"Do nothing—say nothing. Leave Swiveller to explain as best he can. The time is not yet ripe to strike!"

Ferrers Locke Explains!

"AND now I suppose you are dying to know what everything means, eh?"

A genial smile lit up the grizzled face of the pseudo Colonel Challis as he leaned back in a comfortable armchair and pulled away at his favourite briar.

Jim Blakeney, seated the other side of the hearth, pulled his seat nearer the blaze.

"I'm dying to know—as you say, Mr. Locke!" he grinned. "Everything at

the moment resembles a puzzle of which I have solved only a part."

"Colonel Challis, if you please," admonished the great detective. "Even walls have ears, we are told."

"I beg your pardon—er—colonel," said Jim, smiling. "But tell me—how did you arrive at the bottom of this afternoon's plot?"

"Quite simply, as a matter of fact, my lad," returned the detective easily. "After you visited me the other day with the story of the anonymous letter, I made it my business to take a stroll into the town. Fortune favoured me, for I had hardly been tramping the streets five minutes when I caught sight of Ronald Swiveller. I shadowed him—to cut a long story short—to the offices of Michael Menzine, commission agent."

"The bookmaker?"

"Exactly. Moreover, I visited the estimable Menzine myself and requested the pleasure of opening an account with him. A favourable opportunity presented itself for me to inspect at close quarters a certain typewriter on his desk. To my utmost satisfaction I discovered that the 'r' in the type-bar was out of alignment with the rest of the characters."

"Then the anonymous letter——" began Jim excitedly.

"Was written by our friend Menzine," continued Ferrers Locke. "Of course, the mere fact of the peculiarity in the type-bar being identical with that of the machine that wrote the anonymous letter was not sufficient evidence to lay the blame at the door of Michael Menzine; but that, coupled with Swiveller's visit, was enough to give me a theory."

"But the chewing-gum, Mr.—I mean colonel?"

"I'm coming to that," returned the great detective, with a smile. "There again Fortune played into my hands, for I chanced to meet early this morning an old friend of mine—a Mr. Roland Corbett, one-time crook. That corpulent gentleman was shaking his fist at the office window of Mr. Michael Menzine when I tapped him on the shoulder. Of course, he didn't recognise me in this disguise, but when I mentioned some facts concerning a jewel robbery that occurred three years ago, he showed an inclination to bolt."

"I managed, however, to lead him to a quiet cafe, where we talked. In return for my promising to let him go, he gave me the information I sought. It transpired that Mr. Roland Corbett was sacked from Mr. Michael Menzine's establishment this morning for refusing to submit to his wages being reduced. Unknown to Menzine, however, Mr. Clever Corbett had got wind of the plot against you. From him I learned that Ronald Swiveller had been bribed to exchange the packet of chewing-gum you generally—like most of the Rangers' eleven—kept in your jacket-pocket for the second half of the match for a drugged packet."

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Blakeney.

"The knock-out charge Swiveller faked very well," continued the detective, contemplating the curling wreaths of smoke from his briar, "for it gave him the opportunity he was playing for."

"Then he wasn't hurt at all?" interrupted Blakeney. "The cunning cad!"

"He's every bit and more of what you say, my lad," went on Locke. "And he nearly scored, too. In post haste I dashed to the ground, and was lucky enough to communicate with you before the plot materialised. But I knew by

Start solving the puzzle-pictures now, chums! It's not too late!

that time the drugged chewing-gum was in your pocket. You see, Swiveller and Menzine had laid their plans cunningly and—"

"I can see the rest now, sir," said Blakeney. "You gave me the opportunity of readjusting the exchange of chewing-gum, as it were, while you evinced interest in the bathroom and introduced yourself to the rest of the team."

"Exactly! But we can do nothing for the moment against Swiveller. You see, all the evidence is purely circumstantial. And to stir up a scene with Hardacre's nephew at this juncture would be both foolish and futile. Then, again, our other bird has flown—"

"What, Michael Menzine?"

"Exactly! I went along to his offices directly after the match, with the express intention of interviewing him. But he had been too quick for me. His clerk informed me that Menzine had packed his bag and departed in haste for London. The only evidence left behind is the portable typewriter with the damaged 'r' in the type-bar. But I am afraid that won't help us any."

"The scoundrel! I'd like to lay my hands upon him!" said Blakeney fiercely.

"Don't worry, my lad," said Locke, with a grim smile. "There'll be plenty more dying to lay hands on him before the day's finished. Just before you came here this evening a reporter from the local newspaper paid me a visit. He was athirst for news, and I gave him some."

"In my best Army manner I informed him that I was personally acquainted with Ferrers Locke, the great detective, who had been engaged upon tracking down Michael Menzine. Lightly passing over that, I mentioned the fact that this Ferrers Locke—ahem!—had informed me of the anonymous letter Menzine had written Hardacre. I dwelt upon the 'r' in the letter to Hardacre being out of alignment with the rest of the letters in that extraordinary missive, and I assured our friend the reporter that did he but visit Menzine's office he would find the typewriter with the gammy 'r'—"

"And did he?" burst out Blakeney.

"He did," replied Locke, laughing. "Moreover, he visited Hardacre and made him unearth the scraps of the anonymous letter, which had been pitched in the dustbin days ago. Then our enterprising reporter returned to Menzine's office, tried the typewriter, and found that that undoubtedly was the machine which had written the original anonymous letter."

"He certainly is enterprising," grinned Blakeney. "Is that the finish of his energies?"

"Not at all," went on Locke, laughing hugely. "He forthwith sits down and pens a remarkable story of his own creation, in which he surmises that the drugged chewing-gum intended for you by the rascally Menzine was, by some unlucky mischance, given to Ronald Swiveller—"

"But that will clear Swiveller!" exclaimed Blakeney. "He'll fasten on to that yarn like glue—if Menzine doesn't show up in the neighbourhood again."

"Let him!" said the detective quietly. "We can do nothing, anyway. But I rather fancy we haven't finished with Mr. Ronald Swiveller yet. I have an instinct which warns me of trouble to come from his direction in the near future, and I am ready to meet it. Next time, however, there will be no mistake. Mr. Ronald Swiveller is a marked man."

"It would seem also," said Blakeney somewhat bitterly, "that I'm a marked man, too. First it's the Tiger, then it's this chap Swiveller. What's going to be the end of it all, sir?"

"There you ask me something I cannot safely answer. But, come what may, Jim—from the Tiger or Swiveller—you can count on Ferrers Locke's backing. I'm your friend."

Jim Blakeney did not reply in words. With a glance of something almost akin to hero worship he grasped the hand of England's greatest detective and wrung it warmly.

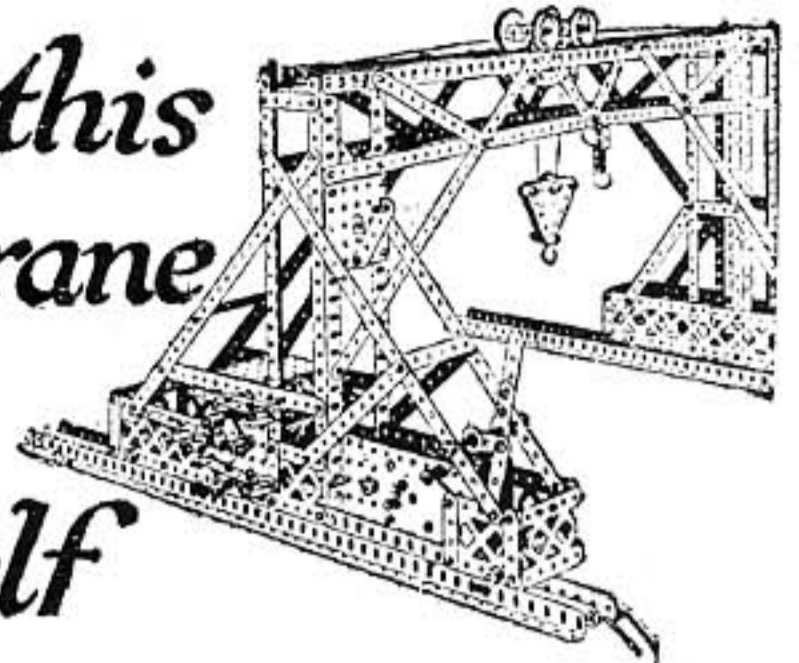
The following morning the local newspaper contained something in the nature of a bombshell for the inhabitants of Middleham. The reporter to whom the pseudo Colonel Challis had given the story of Michael Menzine and the anonymous letter had made the most of his "news." In glowing, dramatic style the reporter had drawn upon his fund of imagination and had presented his theory regarding the flight of the rascally bookmaker from the town of Middleham. By means of a London inquiry agent the reporter had gathered in the facts that Michael Menzine had engaged a passage to Amsterdam in one of the giant aeroplanes daily leaving Croydon, and was, at time of going to press, crossing the North Sea.

A visit to the bank in Middleham had also revealed that Michael Menzine had withdrawn the whole of his account, which significant fact aroused the wrath and indignation of

(Continued on page 26.)



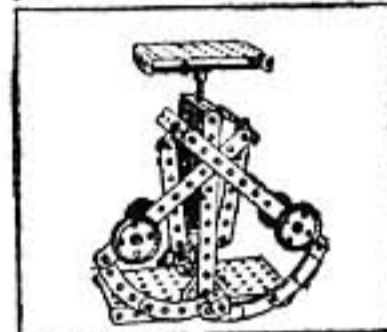
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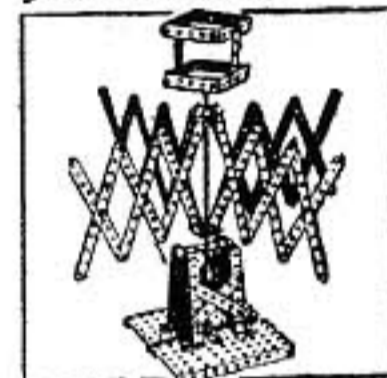
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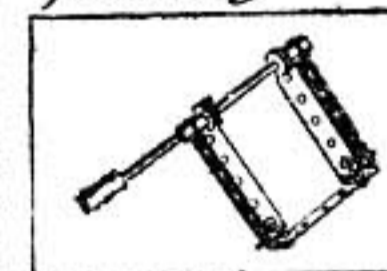
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certain inhabitants who were unfortunate enough to have been the rascally bookmaker's creditors.

The reference to the anonymous letter denouncing Jim Blakeney as a traitor to his side, and the subsequent attempt to drug him—which, alas! had found a victim in the "respectable" Ronald Swiveller—had the effect of rousing the whole town to a state of revenge. The rowdy spirits were eager to lay hands on Michael Menzine to compensate, as it were, the remarks and suspicions they had directed against the Rangers' popular centre-forward.

Ronald Swiveller, as he sat at his breakfast-table, smiled sardonically. The energetic newspaper reporter had, unknowingly, sheltered one of the prime movers in the campaign against Jim Blakeney behind his glowing theory of the case.

"What an escape!" murmured the scoundrelly nephew of Mornington Hardacre. "The tale this reporter merchant has put forward will suit me down to the ground. I'll sit tight and declare my innocence and ignorance of the whole drugging affair."

Swiveller laughed mirthlessly at his own cleverness. But behind that laugh a thought kept repeating itself in his brain.

"Who changed the drugged chewing-gum?"

Try as he might, Swiveller could not place the person who had foiled his scheme. But on one point he knew he was safe. Whoever knew the facts of the case was merely lying low on account of the lack of direct evidence. Swiveller was certain that no one had witnessed his act in the dressing-room when he had exchanged the chewing-gum in Blakeney's pocket for a drugged packet of the same commodity.

Could he, however, have glimpsed the grizzled face of the pseudo Colonel Challis at that moment, and the laughing, handsome countenance of Jim Blakeney, who was striding along by the "colonel's" side in the direction of the premises of Michael Menzine, he might have felt some cause for alarm.

Swiveller had been introduced to the "colonel," and had shaken him warmly by the hand. Little did he guess, however, that he had shaken hands with the celebrated detective Ferrers Locke, and still less did he know that that same individual was the person responsible for the foiling of his scheme and the subsequent flight of Michael Menzine.

"I reckon Swiveller's chuckling to himself this morning," said Locke grimly, as he paced along with Jim Blakeney. "He's as safe as houses, in his own estimation."

"It's a game of wait and see, sir," said Blakeney. "I— Oh, Great Scott!"

The twain had turned the corner of Fentiman Street, in which Michael Menzine's offices were situated. A strange sight met their gaze. A huge crowd of angry townspeople were congregated outside the premises of the bookmaker, and, despite the efforts of a posse of police, were striving to gain admittance to the building.

"Trouble brewing," said Locke quietly.

And the famous sleuth was right.

A determined move by the crowd swept the thin cordon of police like leaves before a gale. The infuriated mob fought their way into the building, yelling at the top of their voices.

"Smash him up!"



The windows of the bookmaker's offices were flung open, and the enraged townspeople began to pitch the furniture into the street. Their comrades below did their part in the work of destruction. Between them they tore up the furniture to bits. Police whistles sounded on every side, but the crowd was gaining in numbers considerably. (See this page.)

"Put him out of business for good and all!"

Crash, crash!

The windows of the bookmaker's offices were flung open and the enraged townspeople pitched the office furniture into the street. Their comrades in the roadway below did their part in the work of destruction.

Police-whistles were blowing on every side, but the crowd was gaining in numbers considerably. Hundreds of creditors who had expected their accounts to be settled by cheque that same morning were aware that they had lost their money. Menzine's closed account at the bank and his flight to the Continent were sufficient proof of that. The hotheads amongst them wanted compensation of some sort.

Chairs, desks, pictures, typewriters, carpets—everything the office contained was hurled out of the windows and trampled upon.

"This is where you chip in, sonny," said Locke quietly. "There'll be a regular riot in a moment or so. There's not sufficient police to hold the crowd in check."

"But where do I come in, sir?" asked Blakeney, in astonishment.

"Leave that to me," said the sleuth, as he darted away and mingled with the crowd.

"There's Blakeney!"

From amidst that struggling mob the cry rose shrill and sharp. For a moment the crowd paused in their work of destruction and turned their heads.

"Chair him, boys!"

Ferrers Locke was responsible for both of those remarks. With a lean forefinger he indicated the figure of Jim Blakeney standing on the pavement the other side of the thoroughfare.

With a whoop of delight and a volley of cheers, the mob surged in the direction of the centre-forward. Here, at least, they could show their enthusiasm for the man they had thought guilty of being a traitor at the cunning instigation of Michael Menzine.

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Jim!"

"Chair him!"

"Hooray!"

Like a pack of excited schoolboys the crowd gathered round Jim Blakeney and hoisted him aloft. Then, despite his good-natured protestations, the Rangers' centre-forward was carried shoulder-high round the town, accompanied by an ever-increasing crowd of people who rallied to do homage to the man they had doubted.

Ferrers Locke, smiling grimly at the success of his manoeuvre in diverting the crowd from Michael Menzine's offices, shook hands with the local police-inspector, who had witnessed the act.

"Saved the situation, colonel," said the inspector gratefully. "I'm much obliged."

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(Continued from page 15.)

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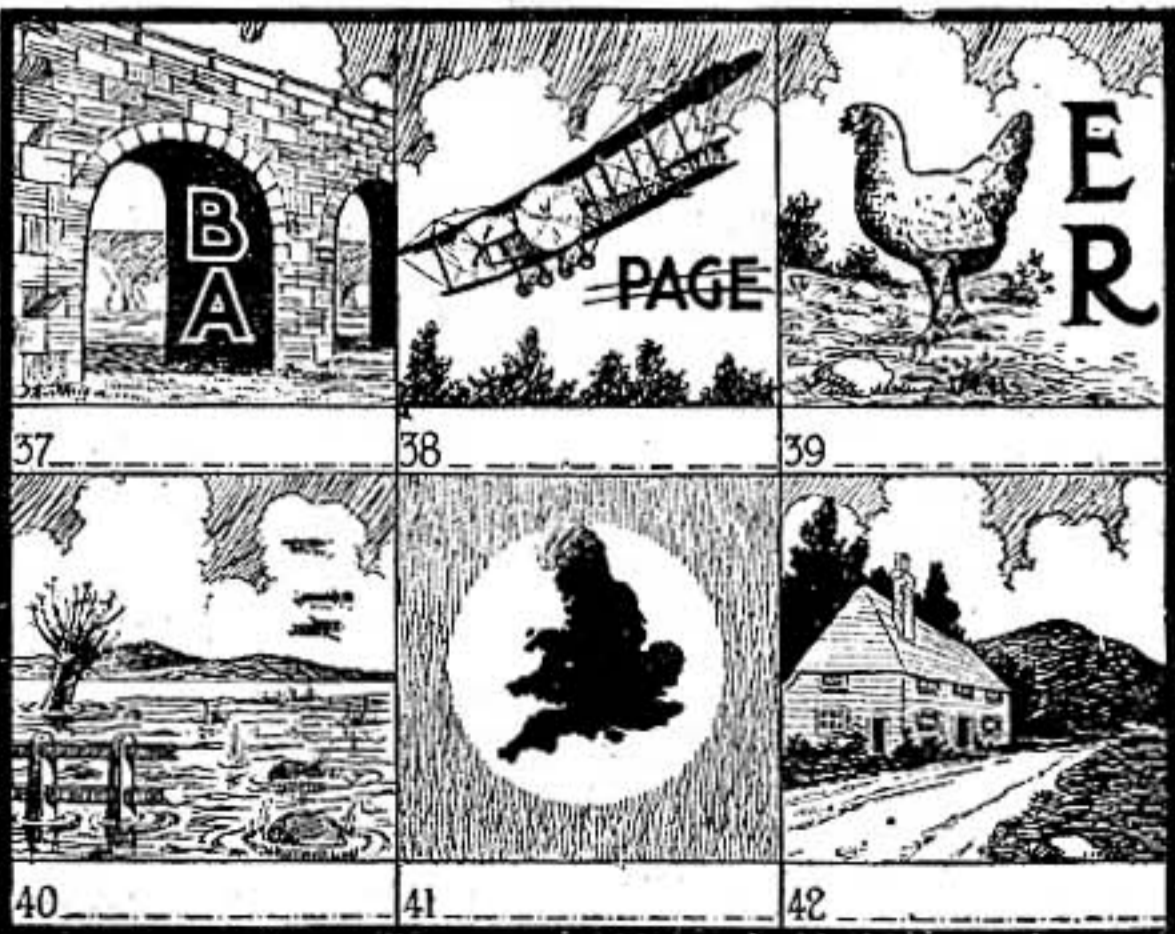
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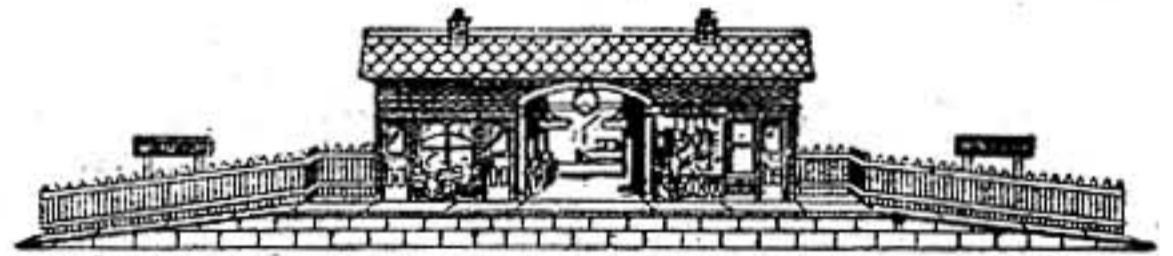
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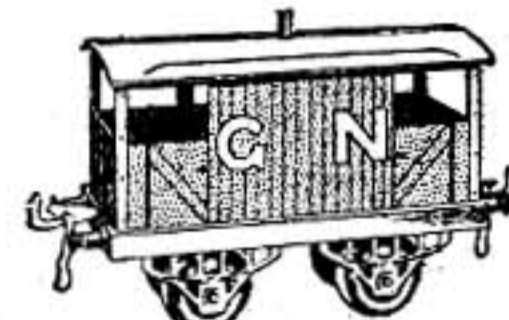
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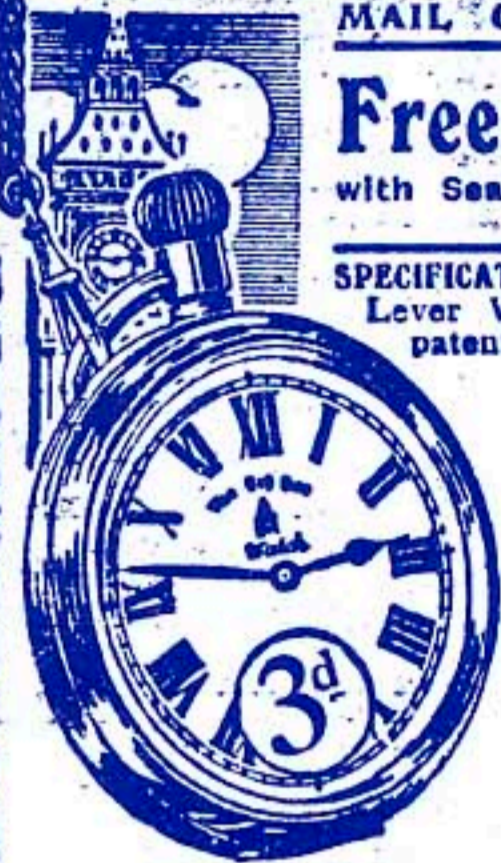
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