

£5 FOR FIVE MINUTES' WORK!

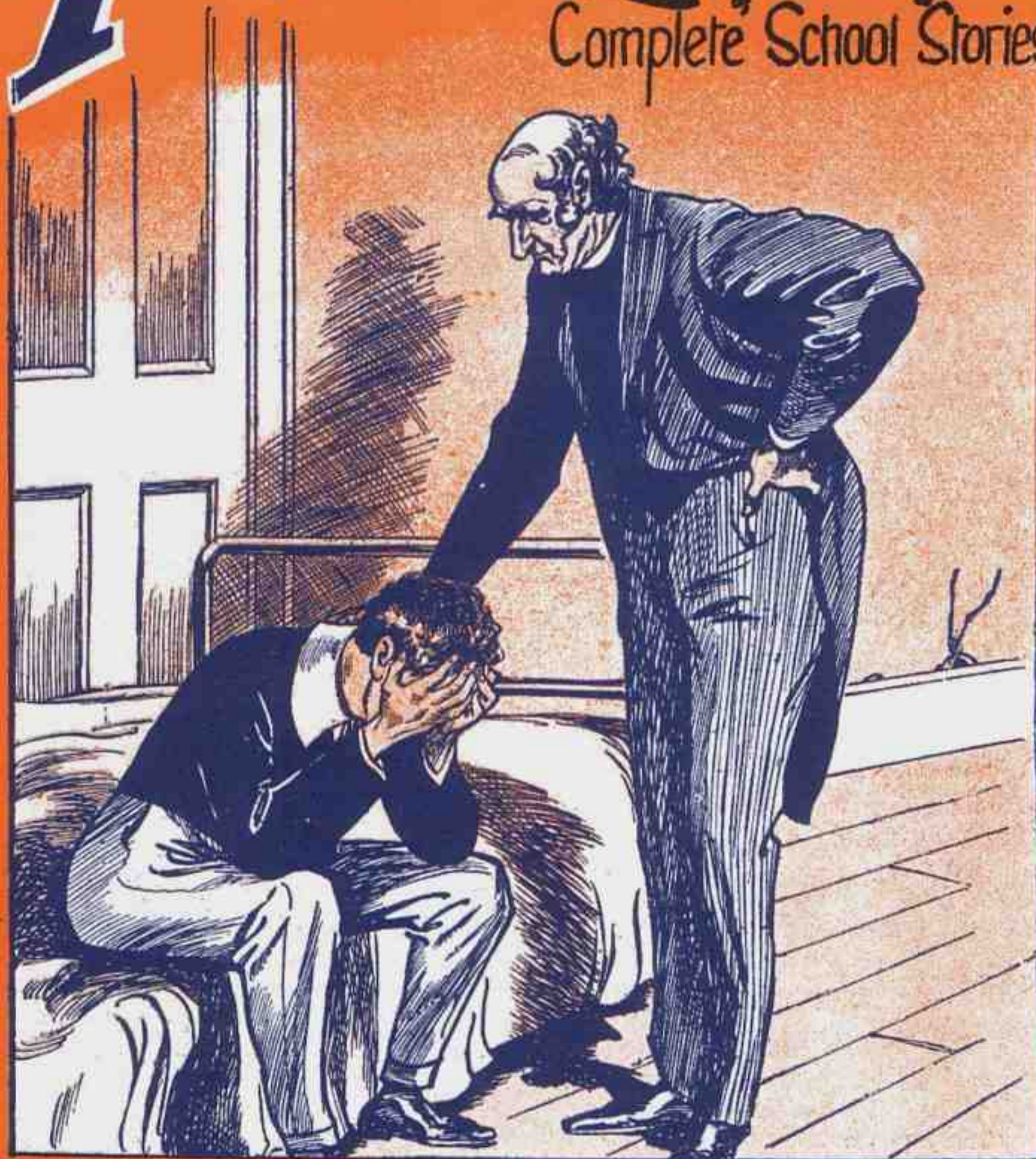
See the Simple
Limerick
Competition Inside.

No. 889. Vol. XXVII.

Week Ending February 14th, 1925.

The Magnet 2^d

Library EVERY MONDAY.
Complete School Stories.



EXPULSION OR—?

HARRY WHARTON'S LAST CHANCE!

(A powerful incident from the extra long complete story of Grenfriars School—inside).



THIS is a competition in which every one of you can join. You are all familiar with the Cross Words that fly between schoolboys, and you are all familiar with the time-honoured Limerick.

For the benefit of those unacquainted with completing an unfinished Limerick I will give a few hints that may be found helpful. Now, suppose you were required to complete the following verse:

Said Brown to Bally Silvester
In tones that courted disaster:
"Yah, go and eat coke,
Hit some other bloke,"

You must make your last line scan with the first two. That's the most important thing to remember in completing a Limerick.

For instance, such a line as:

"Then Brown ran—but Silvester was the faster"

is obviously far too long. A more suitable last line would be:

"Now Brown's requiring some plaster."

I don't say that this is a clever line, but it fulfils the requirements of a Limerick and scans correctly with the first two lines.

Another point is, don't try to be too clever. A simple but forceful line is what is wanted—a line that rhymes and scans with the first two.

Now that you have got the hang of the thing fill in the coupon below.

To the sender of the "last line," which in the Editor's opinion is the best, will be awarded the handsome money prize of FIVE POUNDS. To the 12 next best, Consolation Prizes of SPLENDID POCKET-KNIVES will be awarded.

DIRECTIONS.

When you have thought out a really good last line fill in the coupon below, taking care to write your name and address clearly IN INK, and post it to:—

"Cross Words" Limerick Competition, No. 4.
c/o MAGNET, Gough House,
Gough Square, London, E.C. 4.

REPLY to reach that address not later than February 17th, 1925.

You may send in as many attempts as you like, but all efforts must be written on the proper Entrance Form.

It is a distinct condition of entry that the Editor's decision must be regarded as final.

NEXT MONDAY'S PROGRAMME!

"TO SHIELD HIS FATHER!"

By Frank Richards.

By way of a change next week's long complete story of Greyfriars will deal with a fag in the Second Form—to wit, Edwin Myers. Young Myers has figured in Greyfriars yarns before, so most of you are familiar with his character. In this coming treat we see how a fag can shoulder a responsibility manfully, how he can play a part, although that part is fraught with manifold difficulties. I'm not going to let the "cat out of the bag"—to do so would be tantamount to spoiling a good thing. Now you can all look forward to next week's Greyfriars story with the assurance from me that it is *Al, top-hole, the goods*—in other words, a typical Frank Richards' yarn. 'Nuff said!

"THE DEPUTY DETECTIVE!"

By Hedley Scott.

Young Jack Drake is steadily progressing along the lines he has set himself; every day brings him nearer his ambition—i.e., the placing of the mystery man at the head of the notorious motor bandits in the dock. Next week's instalment is full of exciting situations. Don't miss it, chums!

"CROSS WORD" PUZZLES SUPPLEMENT.

Magnetites can look forward to a ripping supplement dealing with the latest craze that has taken the world by storm. Harry Wharton & Co. have a lot to say on the subject of cross word puzzles, likewise Billy Bunter.

"HARMSWORTH'S BUSINESS ENCYCLOPEDIA."

Several readers lately have written to me asking for a good encyclopedia to help them in their business. The queries have arrived at just the right moment. On every bookstall, at every newsagent's, will be found just the very thing these readers are looking for. "Harmsworth's Business Encyclopedia" will help you along, no matter what profession you follow. Its contributors include Treasury officials, Cabinet Ministers, bank managers, shipping magnates—all tip-top men who know the particular subject upon which they write from A to Z. Take my tip, boys, and ask to be shown a copy of this wonderful guide book to knowledge. Once you've seen it you'll want it. Parts 1 to 3 are now on sale.

"CROSS WORD" PUZZLE!

Next Monday's bumper issue of the MAGNET will contain another fascinating Cross Word Puzzle, together with the solution of this week's puzzle. Magnetites will be able to extract great amusement from these simple little problems by arranging a competition amongst a party of friends to see who can fill in the puzzle first. Get the idea?

Your Editor.

"CROSS WORDS" LIMERICK COMPETITION.

No. 4.

"You boys is a pesterin' lot!"
Cried Gosling, in anger red-hot.
"All young ribs on this earth
Should be drowned at birth!"

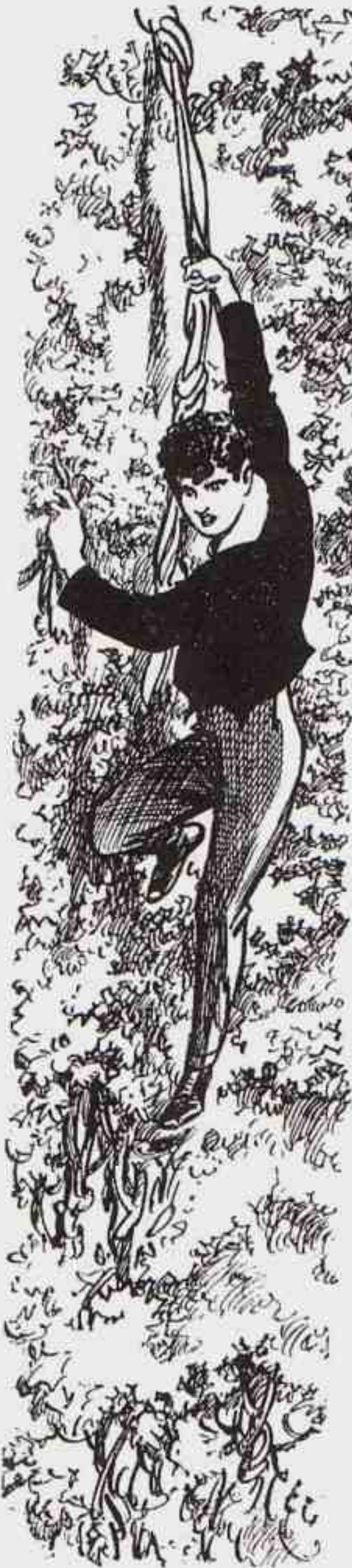
Name

Address

Last Line.....

Closing date, February 17th.

THE TURN OF THE TIDE! Harry Wharton, the rebel of the Remove, has run his course—expulsion stares him in the face. He thinks of the shock this disgrace will bring to his guardian and with the reflection comes repentance—and a chance to make good.



Harry Wharton's Last Chance!

A rattling long complete story of Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

"For It!"

"WHARTON'S for it!"

It was the one topic in the Greyfriars Remove that morning. Harry Wharton, once the captain of the Remove, now the rebel of the Form, was "for it"—without a doubt.

"The worst boy at Greyfriars"—according to his Form master, Mr. Quelch—was locked up in the punishment-room.

He had not appeared at the Remove breakfast-table that morning.

Some of the fellows had seen Trotter, the page, taking a tray up to the secluded punishment-room. Harry Wharton had breakfasted alone, under lock and key!

That morning he was to be expelled from Greyfriars.

The sentence had not yet been promulgated, but no one had any doubt on the subject. The cup of his offences was full. He had gone from bad to worse, from one reckless act to another, and now he had, as Skinner said, "done it."

Mr. Quelch's face that morning was grim and stern. That frowning visage showed that the culprit had no mercy to expect from his Form master. From the Head he could expect none.

He was "for it!"

Bob Cherry tramped out into the quad after breakfast with his hands driven deep into his pockets and a deep wrinkle in his brow. Bob's face, usually the sunniest in the school, was utterly miserable.

The blow had fallen upon the fellow who had once been his chum. He had long expected it to fall, and yet, now that it had fallen, Bob could scarcely believe that it was true! Harry Wharton expelled! It seemed too bad to be true.

His friends could not help him. They were no longer his friends—the Famous Five had long been parted. The quarrel had grown from trifling causes, but it had grown till the breach was impassable. A passionate temper on one side, resentment—perhaps impatience—on the other, had sufficed to break a friendship that had bade fair to be lifelong.

But resentment and remembrance of offences were far from Bob Cherry's thoughts now. There was little he would not have done to save his former friend from the fate he had brought upon himself.

He stopped and looked up at a little barred window high up in the wall—the window of the punishment-room. In that room Wharton was locked—to remain there till he was taken before the Head to receive the sentence of expulsion.

Bob stood looking dismally up at the high window. Perhaps he hoped to see Wharton's face there, looking down; but the window remained blank; Frank Nugent joined him as he stood there, and then Johnny Bull and Hurroo-Jamset Ram Singh. All the Co. were looking dismal. Even Johnny Bull, the least placable of the four, had forgotten all offences now in his dismay at the blow that had fallen on his former friend.

"It's rotten, you chaps!" muttered Bob, his lip quivering. "It's too rotten to believe, almost! And—there's no chance for him!"

"None at all," said Frank Nugent, in a low voice. "He's going—to-day! Sacked from the school! I—I can't help thinking—if we'd stood by him—we might have kept him from this."

"We couldn't," said Johnny Bull. "He threw us over and went his own way. But—it's awfully rotten!"

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"The rottenfulness is great!" muttered Hurree Singh. The nabob's dusky face was the picture of despondency.

"It's partly our fault—mine, at least," said Frank. "If I'd been a bit more patient—and I might have been—it mightn't have come to this. But it's too late to think of that now."

The four juniors stared up gloomily at the little barred window. The same thought was in all their minds. The fault had been on Wharton's side, but perhaps not all the fault. A little more patience—a little more forbearance—might have done much. When pride and a passionate temper were leading the unhappy junior to his ruin he had needed his friends, and they had stood aside. Could they have helped it? The doubt was a tormenting one now—now that the blow had fallen, and their former friend was to be expelled in disgrace from the school.

"I say, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter rolled up to the four as they stood in gloomy silence. Bob Cherry made an impatient gesture.

"Get away, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Get out!" growled Johnny Bull.

"I say, you fellows, they're taking him to the Head!" persisted Bunter. "Queelch's just gone up for him."

"Oh!"

"Fancy Wharton being sacked!" said Bunter. "I'm really rather sorry in a way, you know. Of course, he was rather a beast!"

"What?"

"Only yesterday," went on Bunter—"only yesterday he refused to cash a postal-order for me in the most selfish way. I must say he always was selfish. Still, I'm sorry in a way."

"You fat idiot!"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Shut up, for goodness' sake!" snapped Bob.

"That's all very well," said Bunter. "Of course, I understand how you feel, Cherry."

"Do you?" growled Bob.

"Yes. You're glad, of course."

"Glad?" repeated Bob.

"Of course. You're captain of the Remove now. You've got Wharton's job, but, of course, you haven't got it safe while he's still here. He would have got it back all right if he hadn't played the goat and got the Beaks down on him. I quite understand how you feel. But really, you know, I'm rather shocked at you, Cherry!"

Bob stared blankly at the Owl of the Remove.

"Now he's for it you might really feel sorry for the chap!" said Bunter, in a tone of lofty admonition. "You might really, you know. Sorrow doesn't cost anything, you know!"

"Will you shut up?" breathed Bob.

"Well, I'm rather shocked at you!" said Bunter, blinking severely at Bob through his big spectacles. "This isn't a time to remember what a bad-tempered beast he was. Of course, he had a rotten temper, and he was a beast in a lot of ways—selfish, too; in fact, I dare say he was a rotter. But all the same, I say—yarrroooooooooop!"

Billy Bunter found himself suddenly sitting on the hard, unempathetic ground.

He sat there and roared, while Bob Cherry & Co. walked away towards the School House.

Vernon-Smith met them at the door. "They're fetching him down," he said. "Looks as if he's going to get the beat before classes. Well, he kept on askin' for it."

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Bob Cherry gave the Bounder a glare. "You helped him, too!" he growled. "If you'd let him alone—"

"Oh, rot!" snapped the Bounder rather uneasily. As a matter of fact, Smithy's conscience was not wholly at ease.

The juniors entered the House. Skinner of the Remove met them with a grin on his face.

"All up with his Highness!" Skinner remarked. "His giddy Magnificence is for it at last! What a jolly old come-down—what?"

Bang!

Bob Cherry did not reply in words. He grasped Skinner by the collar, and Skinner's head banged on the wall. There was an indignant howl of anguish from Harold Skinner.

"Why, you rotter—ow—wow—you cheeky cad! Oh!"

Bob Cherry & Co. walked on, leaving Skinner rubbing his head. Skinner had been quite entertained by the state of affairs, having the peculiar gift of being able to draw entertainment from the misfortunes of others. But it was impressed upon Skinner's mind now that this was no time for making merry.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Sentenced!

HARRY WHARTON rose to his feet as the key turned in the lock.

He had been waiting alone in the punishment-room, with a thoughtful, somewhat troubled look on his face.

But as the key turned and the door opened, his expression changed.

It was a cool, calm, impassive face that Mr. Quelch saw as he entered the room.

That he was "for it," Wharton knew as well as any other fellow at Greyfriars. His reckless course had reached its end at last. He was going, in disgrace, and the old school would know him no more. He had risked it. He had known, indeed, that sooner or later it must come if he did not change his ways. And he had not chosen to change. He had not cared, or at least he had said to himself that he did not care.

Now that the blow had fallen he was not the fellow to shrink or to ask for mercy. The pride that had been his undoing was his support now, in the hour of disgrace and ruin. No one, at least, should see him flinch. If the Greyfriars fellows remembered him, they should remember him as a fellow who was game to the last.

"Follow me, Wharton!" said Mr. Quelch curtly.

If Mr. Quelch had felt a momentary impulse of compassion, the cool, defiant face, with a sardonic smile lurking upon it, banished that impulse at once. In his view Wharton was incorrigible—the worst boy at Greyfriars. The sooner he went, the better for the school; the better for all concerned.

"Certainly, sir," drawled Wharton. "I suppose it's the sack."

"You will be expelled from Greyfriars, Wharton, if that is what you mean," answered Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, that's what I mean," said Wharton coolly. "You've wanted it for a long time, sir, I know."

Mr. Quelch made no answer to that. He rustled out of the room, and the Remove fellow followed him, down the corridor, and down the stairs.

The lower hall was packed with fellows.

Nearly all the Remove had gathered to see the rebel of the Form on his way to judgment, and there were a good many of the Third, the Fourth, and the Fifth

as well. A sea of eyes were turned on Harry Wharton as he came down with his Form master. All the fellows were wondering how he would take it—how he would carry himself in his last hours at Greyfriars.

There was no change in him. Whatever he felt he did not show it in his face. His head was erect, his expression indifferent and slightly bored.

"He's got nerve!" murmured the Bounder.

Through the gazing crowd Harry Wharton followed the Remove master to the door of the Head's study.

That door opened and closed, and the culprit was lost to sight, leaving an excited crowd buzzing in the corridors.

Wharton entered the presence of the headmaster with a firm step. Dr. Locke fixed his eyes upon him.

There was more sorrow than anger in the look of the kind old Head. In Mr. Quelch's face there was very much more anger than sorrow. Ever since the beginning of the term Wharton had given him more trouble than all the rest of the Lower Fourth put together, and the Form master's patience had been quite worn out. He was only anxious to see the last of the worst boy in his Form.

"Wharton!" The Head's voice was very deep. "You know why you are brought before me?"

"Yes, sir!"

To Mr. Quelch Wharton's manner had verged on insolence. But his answer to the Head was respectful. Arrogant as was his temper, bitter as were his feelings, he realised that his headmaster wished him well—that the old gentleman was grieved and pained by the duty that had fallen upon him now.

"Last night," went on the Head, "you left your dormitory by the window, breaking bounds at a late hour."

"Yes, sir!"

"Only a few days ago you were flogged for breaking bounds and visiting a disreputable resort. On that occasion you were warned what to expect if such a thing recurred."

"Yes, sir."

"Your Form master, who once held a high opinion of you, tells me that you are the worst boy in his Form—indeed, in all the school!"

"I'm not surprised at that, sir!" said Wharton bitterly. "I dare say Mr. Quelch thinks so!"

"You have forced a very painful duty upon me, Wharton! Your Form master is of opinion that you should be expelled from Greyfriars; and I cannot but agree with him. You have been given opportunities to amend, and you have not taken advantage of them. You seem to have gloried in rebellion and insolence."

Wharton was silent.

"You were found one day at a place called the Cross Keys—a disreputable place, strictly out of school bounds. You were warned that if you repeated such conduct you would have to leave the school. Yet last night you broke bounds again. You were going to that disreputable resort, I have no doubt!"

"I have none, sir!" said Mr. Quelch.

Wharton gave the Remove master a bitter look.

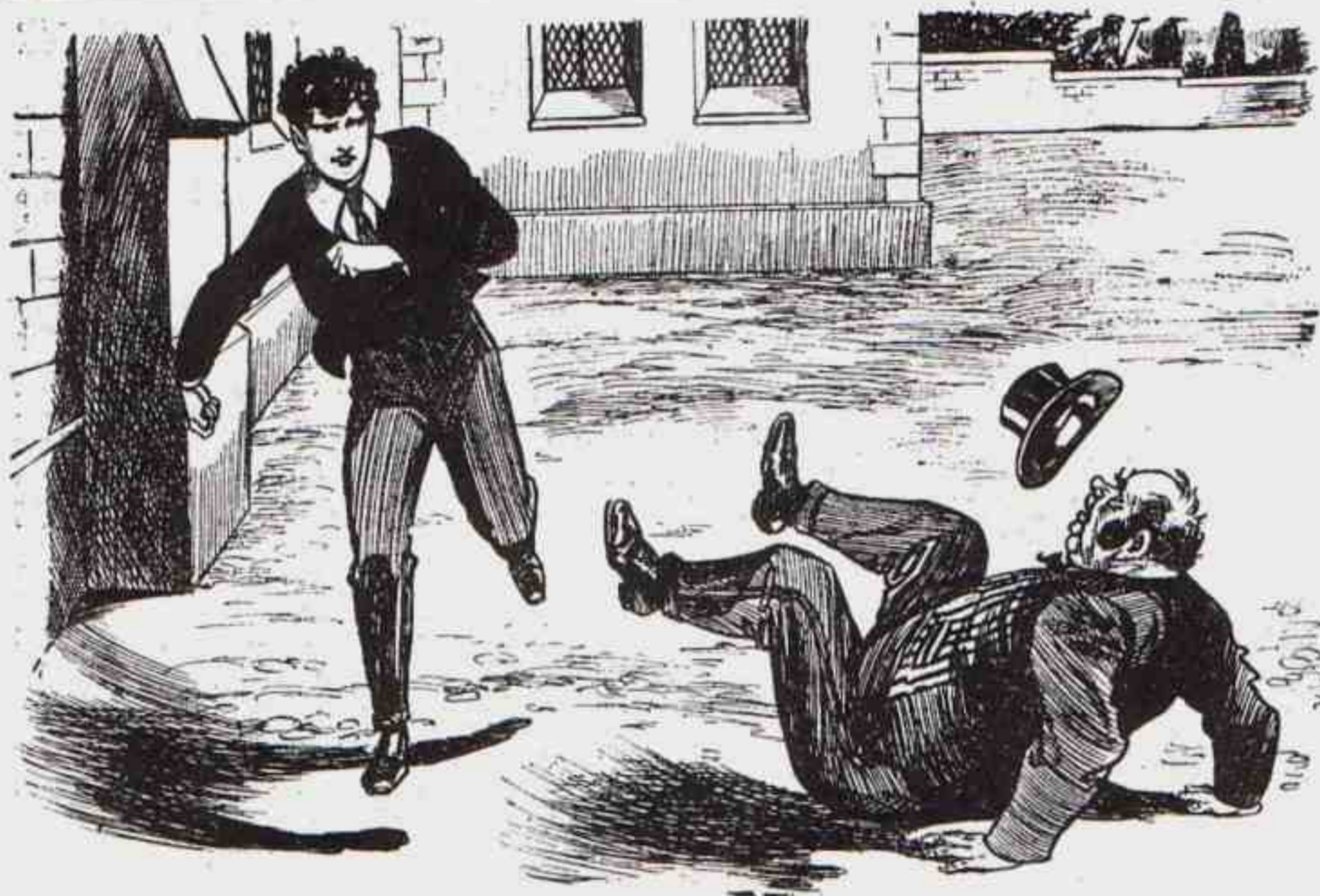
"Have you anything to say, unhappy boy?" asked the Head quietly.

"What's the good of saying anything, sir?" said Harry. "I got out of bounds last night, because I was gated in the afternoon—a half-holiday—for nothing. I never meant to go anywhere in particular. I was just breaking bounds!"

"You were gated in the afternoon because you could not be trusted out of the school, Wharton!"

No answer.

The Head sighed.



“Now, you 'old on!” panted Gosling, running to intercept Wharton. “Wot I says is this 'ere, you 'old on!” Harry Wharton came straight at the old porter, who met him in full career. Crash! “Oh!” William Gosling went spinning to the ground while Wharton sped on. (See Chapter 3.)

“This cannot continue,” he said. “I had great hopes of you once, Wharton. I had every belief that you would bring credit to your school. You have disappointed me cruelly. You have made it impossible for me to give you another chance!”

Wharton's face hardened.

“You have nothing more to say, Wharton?”

“No, sir.”

“Very well! It is impossible for you to remain at Greyfriars. But because you once bore the best of characters in the school, and from consideration for your guardian, Colonel Wharton, I shall spare you the disgrace of a public expulsion.”

Wharton's lip quivered for a moment.

“You will now be taken back to the punishment-room,” said the Head. “You will remain there until arrangements are made for removing you from the school. Your guardian is now abroad, and I must communicate with him. Take him away, Mr. Quelch!”

“Follow me, Wharton!”

Harry Wharton followed the Remove master from the study. They passed down the broad corridor through a gazing crowd. There was eager inquiry in all faces; but Wharton's look expressed nothing.

But at the foot of the staircase Bob Cherry started forward. He touched Wharton's arm.

“Harry—”

Wharton gave him a cool stare, and shook off his hand.

Bob reddened.

“Is it the sack?” he whispered.

Wharton laughed mockingly.

“Yes. Good news for you. Make the most of it!”

And he followed Mr. Quelch up the stairs.

“The sack!” repeated Bob, and he turned away.

“Sacked!”

“Wharton's sacked!”

The news ran like wildfire through the crowd of Greyfriars fellows. They had expected it—it had been quite certain; but it caused a sensation, nevertheless, now that it was definite and beyond doubt.

Wharton—sacked from the school!

The key of the punishment-room turned once more upon the condemned junior. Wharton was a prisoner again, to await the hour when he was to be taken away and the gates of Greyfriars were to close behind him for ever. The Removites were buzzing with excitement when the bell rang for lessons, and they trooped into their Form-room—where one place was vacant now. Harry Wharton's place was empty—never to be filled again by the fellow who had once been the leader of the Remove.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Desperate Attempt!

EXPELLED!

Harry Wharton could scarcely have expected anything else.

Yet, now that it had come, it came as a strange shock to him. As he sat on the edge of the bed in the punishment-room, in solitude and silence, he thought it over, and still it seemed strange and almost incredible. Down below, in the Form-rooms, the Greyfriars fellows were at classes—classes he was never to join again.

Never?

It was a hard word.

What had he done to deserve this? In the eyes of his Form master his offences were numberless; and the Head, rather in sorrow than in anger, had condemned him. In the Remove he had lost his popularity. He had rebelled fiercely against Mr. Quelch's act of authority in turning him out of the captaincy of the Form, yet there were few fellows in the Remove who did not consider that Mr. Quelch had acted rightly and justly. Public opinion was against him all along the line.

Yet his arrogant pride rose against his condemnation; in his own eyes he was still the victim of injustice; and his pride, at least, was unconquered. He could not, or would not, look at the matter from any point of view but his own.

The heaviest blow had fallen upon him; but he would not, at least, flinch; he would leave Greyfriars with his head erect, indifference in his face, whatever might be in his heart. And yet—and yet—

Now that the hour had come he realized how dear the old school was to him, how dear even the friends whom he had spurned, how deeply, how passionately, he wanted to stay.

Again and again he had risked it; and yet, somehow, he had never envisaged clearly the hour of parting—the time when he would have to turn his back on Greyfriars for ever.

What would the fellows think of him when he was gone? A fellow who had been game to the last—a fellow who had refused to be subdued or conquered? Or a headstrong, foolish fellow who had

thrown away his chance, a "lame duck," to be regarded with a mingling of compassion and derision.

His cheeks burned at that thought. They would watch him go, they would see the station cab bear him away, doubtless with a master or a prefect in charge of him. He could imagine Skinner's derisive chuckle, the Boulder's cynical grin, the grave concern and compassion of better fellows—compassion that would be more bitter and galling to him than mockery or hatred could have been.

He sprang up at last. That, at least, he would never endure. If he was to go, he would not wait to be turned out under the eyes of all the school. Better anything than that.

His mind was made up; he had taken his resolution. He approached the window and tested the bars with his strong grip. It was not difficult to displace one of the old bars—they had rather the appearance than the reality of security. He wrenched out a bar, and put his head and shoulders from the window, and looked out.

The quadrangle, so far as he could see it, was deserted. All the fellows were in the Form rooms.

Far in the distance, past a corner of the buildings, he could see old Gosling at the door of his lodge. No one else was to be seen.

He examined the wall below the window.

Thick, ancient ivy clambered there, offering a secure hold to a climber with plenty of nerve. But it did not reach within six feet of the window-sill.

He turned back, and stripped the sheets from the bed, tearing them and plaiting the strips into a rope.

He worked steadily, swiftly.

In a very short time the rope was ready; strong enough to bear his weight.

He knotted one end to the window-bar that remained intact, and dropped the rope outside, dangling against the ivy below.

Then, with a cool and steady head, he worked his way out of the window, unshaken, undisturbed by a sheer drop of seventy feet below him. A fall meant instant death, and he knew it; but he did not hesitate.

He swung from the window-sill, and worked his way hand-below-hand down the rope.

His feet swept the ivy, lower and lower, to the end of the rope, and his grasp closed on the strong tendrils.

The ivy swayed and rustled, here and there it pulled away from the wall, and his heart leaped as he swung.

But, without a pause, he worked his way down.

He knew that it must be near the end of second lesson now; and second lesson was followed by the morning's break, when the quad would be swarming with fellows.

Lower and lower—till he dropped to the ground. He paused a moment to take breath, and then ran.

There was a shout in the distance.

"Hi! Stop!"

Gosling had seen him.

The old porter had caught sight of the clinging figure working down the ivied wall, and for some moments Gosling had watched him, in the wintry sunlight, too amazed to move. But as Wharton cut across towards the school wall on the road Gosling darted to intercept him.

The junior set his teeth.

He swerved, as Gosling barred his way, and cut across towards the Head's

garden. Gosling was behind him now, running in pursuit.

"Stop!" roared Gosling.

Wharton did not heed; he ran on fleetly.

"Stop! Hi! Mimble!" yelled Gosling.

Mr. Mimble, the Head's gardener, came into view, staring over the headmaster's private gate into the quad.

"Stop him!" shouted Gosling.

Mr. Mimble was evidently preparing to stop the fugitive, and Harry Wharton halted.

He turned on Gosling.

"Now, you 'old on!" panted Gosling.

"Wot I says is this 'ere. You 'old on and come with me— Oh! Oh crumbs!"

Wharton came straight at the old porter.

Gosling met him in full career, and went spinning.

Crash!

"Oh!"

William Gosling was on the ground, gasping for breath; and Harry Wharton was speeding on desperately.

He was heading for the gates now. The gates were closed, but easy enough for an active fellow to climb.

He reached them with the sound of shouting in his ears, but without wasting a second in looking back. Wingate of the Sixth had come out of the House at a run, and behind him came Loder and Gwynne. The chase had been seen from the windows of the Sixth Form-room by the Head himself—with amazed eyes. The three prefects raced on the track of the runaway.

Wharton reached the gates and clambered desperately.

"Stop!"

"You young rascal! Stop!"

Wharton did not heed.

He clambered on, but a sudden grip fastened on his ankle, and he was held. Holding to the top of the gate, he looked down savagely; it was Wingate who had grasped him.

"Now, come down, you young idiot!" growled the captain of Greyfriars.

"Let go!"

"Come down, I tell you!"

"Let go, you fool!" shouted Wharton.

"Collar him!"

Wharton kicked desperately with his free foot. But Gwynne of the Sixth had reached him, and he grasped the other ankle.

"Now then!" said Gwynne.

"Will you come down?" shouted Wingate angrily.

"No!" said Wharton, between his teeth.

He clung desperately to the gate. It was his last chance; for after that attempt he knew that he would have no other opportunity of bolting before he was expelled.

But luck was against the rebel of the Remove. He struggled fiercely and savagely; but there was no escape from the grasp of the two Sixth Form fellows.

Loder came up, panting, and his grasp also was laid on the struggling junior.

"Now, then, down with him!" growled Wingate.

And the tug of three strong pairs of hands fairly dragged Wharton from his hold.

He came down heavily, and dragged Gwynne to the ground with him as he fell; but in a moment more he was picked up and walked away towards the School House.

The Head met him at the door.

With a stern glance, he eyed the flushed, dishevelled, defiant junior. Wharton returned his gaze with defiance.

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Wharton returned his gaze with defiance.

"Wharton, were you attempting to run away from school?" exclaimed Dr. Locke.

"Yes!" panted Wharton.

"Take him in, Wingate! Wharton, how did you escape from the punishment-room? Who helped you?" demanded the Head.

"No one. I climbed down from the window."

"You utterly reckless boy! At the risk of your life!"

"I didn't care."

"You should have cared, Wharton! Take him back to the punishment-room, Wingate."

"Yes, sir."

Wharton went quietly, with the captain of Greyfriars, up the winding staircases. He was powerless in the grasp of the big Sixth-Former, and it was useless to struggle further. With a face pale with rage and chagrin, the rebel of the Remove was led into the punishment-room once more.

Dr. Locke glanced at the window, with its displaced bar, and the rope of sheets dangling down to the ivy.

"He will not be safe here, sir," said Wingate.

The Head frowned.

"You have given us all trouble enough, Wharton. Why should you add this last offence, when you are about to leave Greyfriars for ever?"

"Let me go, then!" said Wharton passionately. "You're going to kick me out—what does it matter if I go an hour sooner? I will not stay here!"

"You will go, in proper custody, to be placed in responsible hands!" said the Head sternly. "Until then you will remain here, Wharton."

"I will not—I will not!"

"I will not descend to such an expedient as placing bonds upon a Greyfriars boy," said the Head; and there was an accent of contempt in his voice that stung Wharton, in spite of his blind anger.

"Either you will give me your word of honour to remain in this room until sent for, or I shall request a prefect to keep you company and watch you."

Wharton stared at him.

"My word of honour!" he repeated.

"Yes."

"You—you will take my word, sir?" stammered Harry.

"Yes."

"I—I promise, sir," said Wharton in a low voice.

"Very good."

The Head signed to Wingate, who left the room. Dr. Locke followed, and closed the door; but he did not lock it. Wharton, who had waited for the click of the key, heard only the receding footsteps of his headmaster.

He threw himself on the bed, fatigued, almost exhausted by his desperate attempt to escape.

The door was unsecured; the rope of sheets still hung at the window. There was nothing to bar his escape—save the promise he had given to his headmaster. But that promise held him as iron manacles could not have held him. "The worst boy at Greyfriars" was incapable of breaking his word—and the Head knew it.

The Head trusted him. The Head had taken his word, freely, without a doubt, without a misgiving. He knew that Wharton would not break it. How did he know?

It seemed to Harry Wharton, in those moments, that a veil had been lifted—that the scales had fallen from his eyes, and he saw his folly as he had never seen it before.

If only he had another chance—a chance to make good, a chance to prove to his headmaster that he was worthy of trust! But it was too late—too late!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Too Late!

THIRD lesson was in progress at Greyfriars.

In the morning break most of the fellows had been discussing the junior in the punishment-room. Not only the Remove, but the other Forms discussed the matter with keen interest. Even the prefects of the Sixth gave it some attention. Certainly Wharton had given the prefects plenty of trouble of late, and there was no doubt that they agreed with Mr. Quelch's view, that Greyfriars was no place for the rebel.

But third lesson came along, the quad and the passages were deserted once more, and in the punishment-room, with unlocked but impassable door, Harry Wharton sat alone, in deep and troubled thought. A knock at the door interrupted his reflections, and a letter was slid under the door, evidently by Trotter, the page.

Wharton rose and stepped across to take the letter.

He understood that it had arrived by that morning's delivery of the post. In the usual course, it would have been placed in the rack, to be claimed at "break" by the owner. But Mr. Quelch had had to send this particular missive up to the punishment-room.

Wharton started a little as he noticed that the stamp and postmark on the envelope were foreign, and recognised his uncle's hand in the superscription.

The letter was from Colonel Wharton. The junior stood holding it in his hand, without opening it, for long minutes.

In his rebellion against authority at Greyfriars, in his wild and reckless rush to disaster, he had not forgotten his uncle. But somehow the thought of him, and of how he would be affected by such disaster, had been at the back of his mind. Perhaps he had deliberately kept the idea out of his thoughts—subconsciously. But any flimsy self-deception had to dissolve away at sight of the well-known handwriting of his uncle, his kind friend and guardian, hundreds of miles away from him now, and nothing doubting that his nephew was progressing as usual at his school, little dreaming of the disaster and disgrace that had fallen upon the boy whom he was so proud.

What would Colonel Wharton think?

How would he feel this?

Such questions, which the headstrong boy had deliberately or half deliberately barred from his thoughts, could not be excluded now. How would his uncle take that sentence of expulsion from Greyfriars? What would he think and feel when his nephew was sent away disgraced?

Anger and punishment Wharton did not fear. Indeed, it would have been a solace to him to know that he had to face an angry man. Anger could be faced with defiance, punishment with sullen endurance. But the pain that the old gentleman would feel, his bitter disappointment at the failure of all his hopes and plans!

For the first time it came clearly into Harry's mind that the passionate rebellion against injustice, as he had regarded it, was little more than the indulgence of a wilful and passionate temper, and that the results did not and could not fall upon himself alone. From step

step he had gone on, justified in his own eyes, thinking, as he now realized, only of himself, or chiefly of himself, though he had always despised a fellow who thought of himself before others. Why had he not thought of his uncle earlier?

Too late! Too late!

He opened the letter at last, and sat on the edge of the bed to read it. It was written from the villa at Cannes, where the colonel had gone with his sister, Wharton's aunt, after his return from Russia. It was brief, like all Colonel Wharton's letters, but every word in it came like a blow to the unhappy junior.

Not the slightest suspicion had the old gentleman of how matters were with his nephew at Greyfriars. Wharton, naturally, had written nothing on such a subject. Indeed, of late he had not written at all. His thoughts, as he now comprehended with unavailing remorse, had been fixed on himself and his own affairs, on his wrongs and grievances, real or fancied. It was unhealthy and unmanly to brood over grievances, and he knew it well enough. Yet that was what he had done, almost glorying in it. Why had he been so blind?

The letter ran:

"Dear Harry,—I have not heard from you lately. I hope all is going well with you. You will be pleased to hear that this southern climate has done me good,

and that I have quite recovered from the effects of my journey in Russia. Your aunt is quite well, and sends her love. We are staying on here a few weeks longer, but shall be home in good time for the Easter holidays, when we want to see you and all your friends at the Lodge. The Christmas vacation was rather spoiled for you, I fear, but we must try to make up for it at Easter.

"Your affectionate uncle,
"JAMES WHARTON."

Harry Wharton crumpled the letter in his hand.

He moved restlessly about the narrow limits of the room.

"Not a suspicion of what had happened at Greyfriars, not the remotest knowledge that his letter would reach his nephew on the very morning that the boy was to leave Greyfriars for ever.

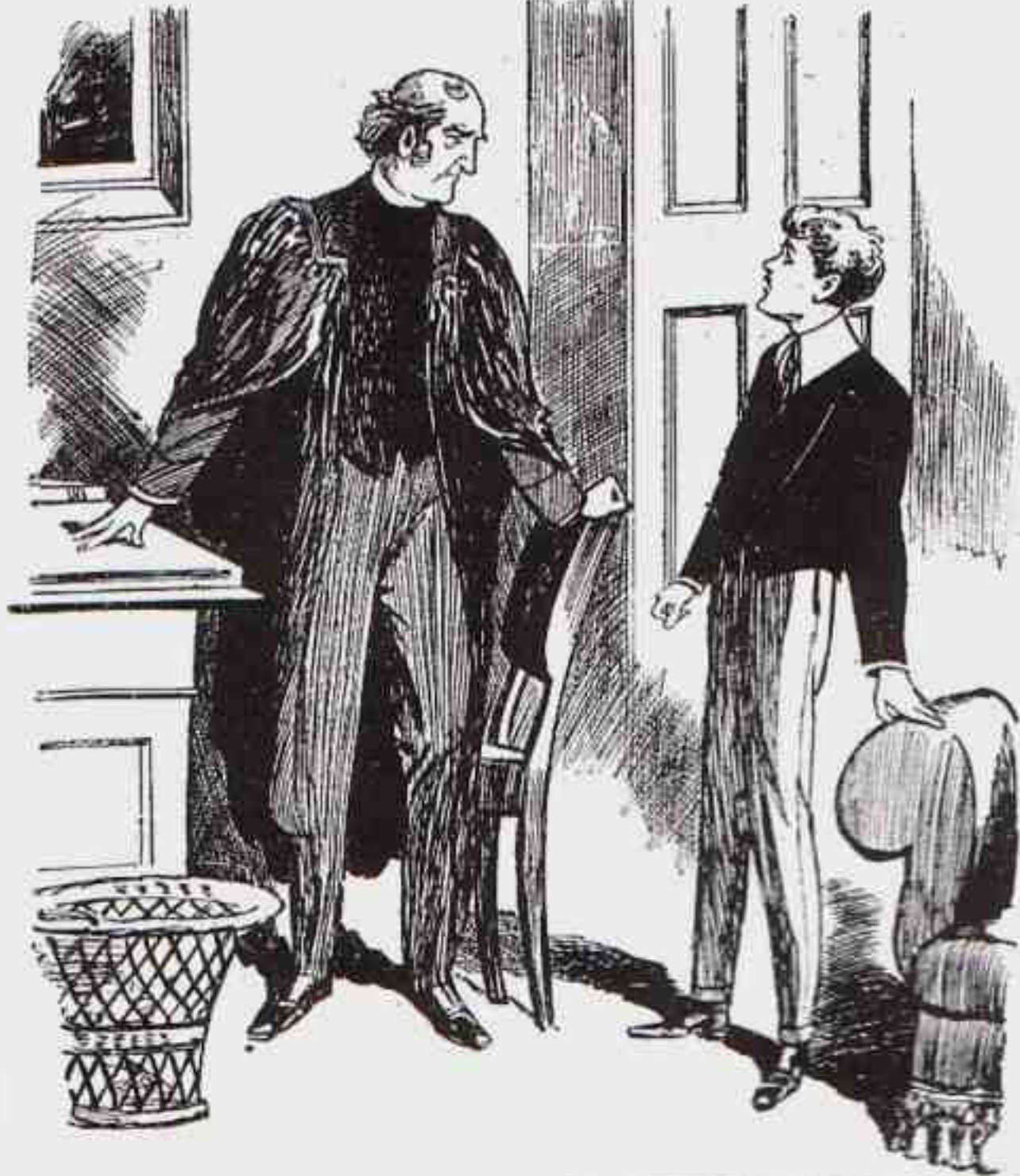
Indeed, it was only because his guardian was abroad that Wharton was not already gone. It was necessary for the Head to communicate with another relative in the colonel's absence.

What would his uncle think?

Wharton passed his hand across his eyes; there were tears there now.

Why had he done this?

Even if he had been wronged, if he had been unjustly persecuted, even if his own headstrong temper had not called it upon him—even so, could he not have endured it for his uncle's sake, for the



"What is it you have come to ask me, Cherry?" inquired the Head, in a very gentle voice. "Could you, sir—e-c-could you—" Bob stammered. "Could I what?" "Could you give Wharton another chance, sir?" faltered Bob. (See Chapter 5.)

sake of the man who had stood in the place of the father he scarcely remembered, who had been a kind and patient friend to him from his earliest years?

He could have and should have endured all, rather than have brought this grief and trouble upon his guardian. He knew it only too well now—now that it was too late.

The colonel hoped to see him "with all his friends" at Wharton Lodge for the Easter vacation. His friends. He had no friends now. He had worn out their patience and left them, and they had left him to his own wilful ways. When his uncle saw him again he would see him alone—a fellow turned out of his school in disgrace!

What would he think, what would he feel? Even then, Wharton knew, the old gentleman's kindness would not fail. But how had he repaid that kindness?

He read the letter through again, and the tears rolled down his cheeks, seldom so wetted.

It was too late—too late. At last he saw clearly. With a terrible distinctness he saw his conduct as it must appear in the eyes of others as, somehow, he had never been able to see it before, or, at least, had never chosen to see it before. What he had to face himself for his recklessness he could endure; but others had to suffer for his wrongdoing, and that was the bitterest of all.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Bob Does His Best!

BOB CHERRY drew several sharp reprimands from Mr. Quelch during third lesson in the Remove room that morning.

Bob was not a brilliant pupil, but he was generally painstaking, and did his best. But on this particular morning Bob simply could not put his mind into the Form work.

He was thinking of the expelled junior in the punishment-room, the fellow who had been his friend, and who was under sentence to go. It was settled, inevitable. But Bob could not resign himself to it. It was in his mind that something might yet be done, that an appeal to the Head might possibly yet obtain mercy for the culprit.

To venture into the headmaster's presence, there to make an appeal for a fellow who had been expelled, and deservedly expelled, required a great deal of nerve, and there was little likelihood that it would be successful. But the thought haunted Bob, quite to the exclusion of third lesson. Indeed, after the Remove were dismissed, Bob could hardly have remembered the subject of third lesson, and hardly remembered that he had received a hundred lines from Mr. Quelch.

When the Remove came out Bob went into the quad with his friends—Nugent and Hurree Janset Ram Singh and Johnny Bull. They were all troubled and dismayed. The split in the Co. had lasted long. None of them had thought that it could ever be bridged again. They had thought, too, that they were "fed up" with Wharton and his passionate temper and obstinate ways. But the blow that had fallen upon him had changed all that. He was down now, and when he was down and out the instinct of his old friends was to help him if they could.

"Something's got to be done, you chaps," said Bob glumly. "Look here! I'm captain of the Remove now, you know, and a Form captain has the right to speak to the Head. Suppose I go to

him—" Bob paused, and looked at his friends.

"N.G.," said Johnny Bull. "The Head's a good sort, and he can't like bunking a chap out of the school. But when he's made up his mind, what's the good of asking him to change it? He can't."

"I suppose he couldn't," said Frank Nugent, in a low voice. "But it wouldn't do any harm, Bob, if it didn't do any good."

"Might get a licking for your cheek," said Johnny Bull.

Bob smiled faintly.

"I don't think so. But I shouldn't mind that, anyhow."

"The esteemed Wharton is done for," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh sadly. "He has askfully demanded it, and he has got it neckfully. Suppose the esteemed and ludicrous Head gave him another chance—"

"He might," said Bob hopefully.

"But if he did the samefulness would happen once morefully; and next time the excellent and obstinate Wharton would have to go."

"He might have a little more sense."

The nabob shook his dusty head.

"But the talkfulness to the esteemed Head would do no harm," he said. "The tryfulness is the proper caper."

"I'm going to try it on," said Bob resolutely. "It would be rotten to let Wharton go like this if a fellow could help. I suppose he will ask for trouble again and get it; but, at least, we shall have done all we can. I'm going to the Head."

"Good luck!" said Nugent.

Bob Cherry went back into the House in a rather uneasy frame of mind, but quite determined.

Dr. Locke was just out of the Sixth Form room, and he was on his way to his study, and Bob followed him there. The Head entered his study and glanced at the junior in the doorway. Bob flushed under his inquiring glance.

"May I speak to you, sir, for a minute?" he asked diffidently.

"Certainly, Cherry! You may come in."

Bob came in, and stood with a red face before the Head, who regarded him with a kindly curiosity. He found it rather difficult to begin. It dawned upon him what a colossal "cheek" it was for a Lower Fourth fellow to ask his headmaster to think again over a decision, for that was what it amounted to. Bob's courage almost failed him.

"Well, what is it, Cherry?"

Bob took his courage in both hands, so to speak, and made the plunge.

"It—it's about Wharton, sir," he blurted.

"Indeed!"

"He—he's going to be expelled, sir," mumbled Bob. "I'm not friends with him now, sir, but—but—"

"But what, my boy?" asked the Head kindly.

"He's not a bad sort, sir," said Bob cagerly. "I know he's done wrong; lots of it. But it's all rot—"

"What?"

"I—I mean—" Bob reddened still more and stammered. "I—I mean, sir, he's done some shady things—going to that rotten show the Cross Keys and so on, and breaking dorm bounds. But he's not that sort really. If he were I wouldn't say a word for him. He never was a blackguard, or anything like it. He did it just out of temper and obstinacy, just to show that he wouldn't toe the line."

The Head's thoughtful face relaxed a little.

"I am of your opinion, Cherry. I

have been very patient with Wharton, knowing that his faults were rather of temper than of anything more serious. I am glad to see that he has not lost the good opinion of the captain of his Form."

"And there's that, too, sir," stammered Bob. "Mr. Quelch turned him out of the captaincy. Of course, he was right, only Wharton couldn't see it. He took it very badly. But I know a fellow shouldn't let his temper have such a run. I—I mean, he oughtn't to play the goat. I—I mean—" Bob floundered helplessly. "But, sir, it isn't as if he was bad. He's been rather a fool, that's all. And—and when it started he was awfully worried about his uncle who had gone to Russia. He used to fancy that Colonel Wharton might never come back alive, and it made him irritable and sulky. Of course, it shouldn't have, but it did. Mr. Quelch didn't know all that, of course. He didn't know Wharton's uncle was gone to Russia, and was in danger there from the Bolshies. But it makes a difference, doesn't it, sir?"

Bob paused.

He could not quite understand the expression on Dr. Locke's face, but that expression certainly was not discouraging.

"What is it you have come to ask me, Cherry?" inquired the Head, in a very gentle voice.

"Could you, sir—c-c-could you—" Bob stammered.

"Could I what?"

"Could you give him another chance, sir?" faltered Bob.

"Have you any reason to suppose, Cherry, that if I gave Wharton another chance, as you express it, he would amend his conduct?"

Bob was miserably silent.

He could not answer in the affirmative. Indeed, it seemed to him only too certain that, given another chance, Wharton would take it only as an opportunity to continue as he had begun.

The Head regarded him thoughtfully.

"Well, Cherry?"

"I—I hope he might have a little more sense, sir," muttered Bob at last. "He's a good chap, one of the very best when he doesn't let his temper get the upper hand. There isn't a better chap at Greyfriars than Wharton, really, only—"

He broke off again.

"I shall think over what you have said, Cherry," said the Head gently. "The fact is, my boy, that I have not yet definitely made up my mind. It was my intention to weigh the matter further before sending Wharton away from the school. I am very glad that you came and spoke to me. You may go now, my boy."

"Thank you, sir!" faltered Bob. "I—I know it was a cheek, sir, but—but thank you, sir!"

And Bob backed out of the Head's study.

He went out into the quad, and was received with eager looks by his chums.

"Nothing doing?" asked Johnny Bull.

"I'm not sure. I think there's a chance for him—the ghost of a chance, anyhow," said Bob hopefully.

"Well, I hope so, but I don't see it. Quelch's bitter against him, and you can't wonder at it. The Head would have to jaw Quelch, and he's bound to back up a Form master."

"Quelch's bark is worse than his bite," said Bob. "I—I wonder if it would be any good putting in a word with him?"

"No jolly fear."

"The no-fearfulness is terrific."

But Bob was in a hopeful mood.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There he is!" he exclaimed, as he caught sight of Mr.

Quelch in the quadrangle. "I'm going to chance it."

The Remove-master's look was not encouraging. He was frowning as he walked under the elms. But Bob Cherry, feeling that it would do no harm if it did no good, came up to him.

"If you please, sir—"

"Well?"

"May I speak a word, sir, about Wharton?"

"You can have nothing to say to me about Wharton, Cherry."

"I—I mean, sir—" stammered Bob.

"Well, what do you mean?" asked Mr. Quelch irascibly.

"If—if you'd think fit to—give him another chance, sir—" gasped Bob.

The steely glitter of Mr. Quelch's eyes stopped him.

"How dare you address such a remark to me, Cherry! It is not for you to offer advice to your Form master."

"I—I know, sir; but—"

"Take a hundred lines!"

"Yes, sir," gasped Bob. "But—"

"Take two hundred lines!"

Mr. Quelch turned his back on the captain of the Remove and walked away.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob.

Evidently there was "nothing doing," as far as Mr. Quelch was concerned. What hope there was centred in the Head; and faint as it was, it was all that was left.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Harry Wharton's Chance!

HARRY WHARTON raised a tear-stained face from his cupped hands as the door of the punishment-room opened.

Dr. Locke came into the room, and glanced sharply at the dejected junior before him.

Wharton understood that this was the finish; the Head had come for him, and he was to go! But the rebel of the Remove was in a different mood now. He was quietly steadfast and resolute; his determination was still strong not to flinch or show a sign of weakness. But the defiance, the insolence, were all gone. Harry Wharton was himself again once more.

"I find you still here, Wharton," said the Head.

"I gave you my word, sir," said Harry.

"And I trusted you," said Dr. Locke. "I wish I could trust you as implicitly in other matters."

Wharton flushed and was silent.

"You have disappointed me very much, Wharton."

"I—I know, sir."

"You have still more bitterly disappointed your uncle and guardian, I fear. This will be very painful news for Colonel Wharton and for Miss Wharton. Had you thought of that?"

"I—I hadn't, sir!" Wharton choked. "I—I suppose I ought to say I wouldn't. It can't be helped now. I'm ready, sir."

"Ready for what?"

"To go, sir. I—I—I'd like to get it over, sir, if you'll let me go at once. If you don't mind, I'd rather not see the fellows again."

There was a short silence.

"And suppose, Wharton, that I should offer you one more opportunity of redeeming your character, and of regaining your old place in the school—and earning the good opinion of your Form master, which you have justly forfeited?"

Wharton started.

"You don't mean, sir—"



"Wharton is here, sir," said Loder grimly. "Shall I take him back to the punishment-room?" Mr. Quelch made a sound like a gulp. "No, Loder. It is by the Head's orders!" "Oh!" ejaculated the prefect blankly. (See Chapter 6.)

"I mean, Wharton, that if you could give me some ground for placing faith in you, I would allow you to remain at Greyfriars, and put your good resolutions to the test."

"Oh, sir!"

Wharton leaned his hand on the table, feeling almost giddy. He was thinking of a bronzed face, a kind old face, that perhaps after all need never be clouded with disappointment and pain. If only he had another chance, he would not make a fool of himself again.

"Well, what do you say, Wharton? Mr. Quelch is very much incensed against you, and with reason; but I have no doubt that he will accede to a request from me, and give you yet one more opportunity."

"I—I'm afraid Mr. Quelch dislikes me very much, sir," faltered Harry.

"Have you not given him cause?"

"Yes, sir," said Wharton. "All the same—" He broke off. "I—I suppose I was sulky—and he didn't understand. I know I've given him a lot of trouble, but—"

"He had a very high opinion of you last term, Wharton. Why has he changed it? Whose fault could it be?"

"Mine, I suppose, sir," said Harry, with an effort. "I—I never thought him unjust till this term, I know that. But I'd stand anything, rather than let my uncle see me expelled—it would be an awful blow to him. I don't know how it is I didn't think so much about it before. I—I was a sulky brute, I suppose."

The Head smiled faintly.

"I've had a letter from him this morning, sir," went on Harry. "He

hasn't any idea how matters stand here. If only he need never know—" He faltered and broke off again.

"I know, Wharton, that your word can be trusted," said the Head. "You have been guilty of very serious faults. But if you will give me your word to do your best to amend, I shall give you an opportunity to make good."

"Oh, sir!"

The Head rose.

"Well, what is it to be, Wharton?" he asked.

"If you'll give me a chance, sir, I don't think you'll be sorry for it," said Harry earnestly. "I—I never meant—at least, I don't think I ever meant to play the goat as I've done. I can see it now plain enough. I suppose it was just rotten temper, and quarrelling with my friends, and—and other things. The day I broke bounds to go to Folkestone Mr. Quelch was very wild with me, and I never told him why I went. I ought to have told him—I know it now."

"Why did you go, Wharton?"

"My uncle was coming home from abroad, sir, and he asked me to meet him coming off the boat. I—I was detained, and—and—"

"If you had told Mr. Quelch that, Wharton—"

"He wouldn't listen, sir."

"And why would he not listen?"

Wharton was silent for a moment. But when his answer came it was frank enough:

"Because I'd checked him, sir, and—and I suppose he thought it was some more cheek. It was my own fault."

"I am glad you can see that."

"I could have told him afterwards, and I wouldn't. I know I ought to have. I'm sorry!"

"I think, Wharton, that I shall not regret giving you an opportunity to make good," said the Head. "You must earn Mr. Quelch's good opinion again; you must justify me by your conduct."

"I'll do my very best, sir."

"That is all I can ask, or do ask."

Wharton's face was bright now.

"I'll play up, sir—I will, really! I mean it! If you will let me off with a flogging this time—"

The Head smiled.

"There will be no flogging, Wharton. You have done wrong, but I trust you to make amends. You will now leave the punishment-room and rejoin your Form—you will go on as if nothing had happened. And when you are tempted to give way to temper or unruly pride, you must remember that you are bound to justify my faith in you."

"Oh, sir!" faltered Wharton.

With a kind glance, the Head was gone.

He left the door wide open behind him.

Harry Wharton stood for some minutes, his brain almost in a whirl.

The blow that had fallen, shattering all things for him—it had been averted after all; he had a chance again! A chance to make good—a chance to prove that he was not the sullen rebel, the dingy blackguard, the headstrong fellow obstinate in perversity, that his Form master and most of the Greyfriars fellows believed him to be.

All was against him still. He had thrown away his friends, he had lost his popularity in his Form, he was an object of suspicion to the prefects, he was disliked by his Form master. In all Greyfriars, apparently, he had only one friend, and that was his headmaster. But the Head had faith in him, and that faith the rebel of the Remove was passionately determined to justify.

He left the punishment-room at last, not as he had expected to leave it—in charge of a master or a prefect to go to the station. He was not to go—and his heart was very light. There was uphill work before him; but he had a chance, and that was all he wanted.

The Greyfriars fellows were going in to dinner when he came down. There was a buzz of astonishment in the Remove when Wharton quietly joined his Form and went into the dining-hall with them. Skinner stared at him; Billy Bunter almost cracked his big spectacles in the intensity of his astonished stare. Bob Cherry & Co. exchanged glances of surprise and satisfaction. All eyes were upon the rebel of the Remove, and from other tables came stares and curious glances.

Wharton did not seem to observe it. He sat sedately in his place at the Remove table, cool and calm.

Russell leaned over to speak.

"Still here, Wharton?"

"Looks like it," said Harry.

"Aren't you sacked?" demanded Peter Todd.

"Pass the salt, will you?"

"The—the salt?"

"Yes, the salt."

Peter passed the salt in rather a dazed way.

"I say, you fellows, he's got off!" squeaked Billy Bunter. "I say, that's rather rotten, you know. Favouritism, I call it! It's because his uncle's a governor of the school, you know."

"That's it!" sneered Skinner.

"Oh, that's it all right!" said Snoop.

"Cheese it!" said Harry Wharton.

sharply. "If you want me to punch you after dinner, that's the way to ask for it!"

"Well, I'm glad, Wharton," said Squiff—"jolly glad! I suppose you'll be asking for the sack again to-morrow, though."

"And getting it!" said Russell.

Wharton made no reply to that.

The Remove table was in a buzz. Mr. Quelch, who generally lunched when the Remove dined, was not present yet. Wharton wondered whether he was then interviewing the Head. He knew very well that Dr. Locke's decision would be very unwelcome to the Form master, and that the interview would not be a pleasant one for Mr. Quelch.

Loder of the Sixth came across from the top table where the prefects sat. He dropped a hand on Wharton's shoulder.

"What the thump are you doing here, Wharton?" he snapped.

Harry looked up.

"Having my dinner," he answered.

"Don't give me any cheek."

"I answered your question, Loder."

"Well, get out of it!"

"The Head told me—"

"Rubbish! Get up at once!" growled the bully of the Sixth.

Mr. Quelch entered the room at that moment. His face was quite pale and his brows set hard and black. Evidently he had interviewed the Head, and heard his unwelcome decision with regard to Wharton.

Loder looked at him.

"Wharton is here, sir. Shall I take him back to the punishment-room?"

Mr. Quelch made a sound like a gulp.

"No, Loder. It is by the Head's orders!"

"Oh!" said Loder, astonished and disappointed. And he went back sulkily to the prefects' table.

Mr. Quelch did not look at Harry. He took his seat at the head of the table, and his look silenced the whispering Removites at once. Mr. Quelch had no intention of displaying his feelings; but it was clear to all his Form that he was taking the Head's decision badly—very badly indeed. During the rest of dinner not a sound was heard at the Remove table, and all the fellows were glad when it was over and they could get away from the Remove master's glinting eyes.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Uphill!

THERE was almost breathless excitement in the Remove Form-room that afternoon after the bell had rung for classes.

Harry Wharton came into the Form-room with the rest—the room which he had been expected never to enter again.

That Mr. Quelch was down upon him with a very heavy down—that he had desired the rebel of the Form to be expelled from Greyfriars—was no secret.

He had obviously been overruled by the Head. Doubtless the Head had requested him to give the delinquent another chance; but a request from the Head was tantamount to a command. In theory, Mr. Quelch could have refused such a request; in practice, he had no choice but to accede to it. So he had acceded.

But the plain truth was that he had been overruled, and he was not likely to believe that he had been overruled by a superior and wiser judgment than his own. That could hardly be expected, Mr. Quelch being human and having his full allowance of human nature.

The situation was, therefore, that the rebel of the Form had defied and disregarded his Form master—had kicked over the traces in the most wilful and reckless manner, and had escaped all punishment against the opinion and judgment of a master who felt insulted and flouted.

No Form master could be expected to take that smilingly.

The general expectation in the Remove was that Mr. Quelch would take it out of the rebel in every possible way, and in the humour he had displayed of late Wharton was certain to give him many opportunities.

There was to be trouble, and once more Wharton would be "up before the beaks"—not to escape the next time!

So the Remove were breathlessly excited when Mr. Quelch stepped in, prepared for the fray, as it were.

The Remove master took no special notice of Wharton. He seemed indeed to overlook him in the class.

But the juniors noticed that Harry was very quiet and sedate and attentive to the lesson. There was no lounging on the form, with his hands in his pockets, no scribbling on his blotting-pad while the master was speaking—no impertinent yawning. Apparently the most troublesome boy in the form had decided to behave himself at last. Skinner whispered to Snoop that Wharton had been "scared"—a whisper that he was careful to let the late captain of the Remove overhear.

A flush came into Harry's cheeks as he heard it.

He had not thought of it before; in his gratitude to the Head, and his new resolution to play the game. But he saw now that an amendment of his conduct might very well be supposed to be due to a "scare." The fellows would judge that he had been terrified by the near approach of the "sack," and had surrendered.

In spite of his good resolutions and of his realisation of the folly of his previous conduct, Harry Wharton felt a deep bitterness at the thought.

It was for his uncle's sake more than his own that he was prepared to endure anything rather than bring disgrace upon his name. He would have disdained to explain such a thing to a fellow like Skinner—not that Skinner would have believed anything of the kind.

But it was hard after his long and reckless struggle against the authorities of the school to be set down as a "funk," when it certainly was not want of pluck and determination that had brought about the change in his line of conduct.

The temptation was strong upon him to show Skinner & Co. that he was not by any means scared—to prove it by some reckless act in defiance of the Form master.

That temptation was all the stronger, because Mr. Quelch was turning attention to him now with an acid severity that would have been trying to any fellow's temper.

Mr. Quelch was right in his own eyes. He had been kind and patient, and his kindness and patience had been spurned. Now he was ruthless in dealing with the fellow whom he regarded as the worst boy at Greyfriars. The slightest forgetfulness or carelessness—a venial fault in any other fellow, was deliberate insolence on Wharton's part in the judgment of his Form master. And Mr. Quelch was not in the mood to forgive the slightest fault in the junior who had caused more trouble that term than all the rest of the Remove put together.

That he was a little unjust now was certain, though he had no intention of being so. The juniors had been told to bring in their maps for the lesson; but Wharton, having been in the punishment-room that morning, was not aware of it. He had no map. To blame him, in the circumstances, was scarcely reasonable; but the Form master was "sick" with him, as the Removeites expressed it.

"Where is your map, Wharton?"

"In my study, sir."

"Fetch it at once, and take fifty lines!"

Harry Wharton hesitated.

There was a low buzz in the Form. It was time for the rebel of the Remove to break out again. Skinner & Co. almost held their breath with eagerness. Better fellows than Skinner & Co. looked uneasy. Wharton had few, if any, friends left in the Form; but, after all, the fellows did not like seeing him rush into trouble in the reckless way they knew so well. As he hesitated, Bob Cherry rose.

"If you please, sir——"

"Sit down, Cherry!"

"Wharton wasn't here when you told us to bring in the maps, sir."

"Take a hundred lines, Cherry!"

"Oh!"

Bob Cherry sat down.

Harry Wharton gave him a rather curious look. He crossed to the door and left the Form-room.

It did not take many minutes to reach Study No. 1 in the Remove, find a map, and return to the Form-room. But it took some minutes. Harry Wharton returned as soon as he possibly could, map in hand.

Mr. Quelch's snapping voice arrested him on his way to his place.

"Wharton!"

"Yes, sir," said Harry, stopping.

"Why have you been absent so long?"

"I went as quickly as I could, sir."

"You did nothing of the kind, Wharton! You will take a hundred lines for wasting time in class."

A hot retort trembled on Wharton's lips. But he closed them hard, and went to his place and sat down.

Mr. Quelch's glinting glance followed him. It was possible that he was even disappointed by the respectful submission of the junior he disliked. Had he been able to attribute it to repentance, to a better frame of mind, no doubt he would have been mollified. But Mr. Quelch had long given up expecting anything of that kind from Harry Wharton.

Twice or thrice, before the lesson ended, the Remove master's sharp voice rapped out at Harry; and each time the rebel of the Remove answered quietly and respectfully, rigidly controlling the burning anger in his breast.

The mocking look on Skinner's face was almost unendurable. It was in vain that Wharton told himself that Skinner was a cad and a mischief-maker—that his mockery was intended to provoke the rebel of the Form to renewed rashness. He knew that it was so; and yet it was intolerable for even a cad like Skinner to suppose that he was "scared."

Fortunately, he kept his deep irritation in check.

Wharton was no fool; though of late he had acted with the rashest folly. He was not to be provoked into a fresh outbreak by the sneers of Harold Skinner, for his own ruin and Skinner's amusement. But he quivered with suppressed anger when he caught Skinner's sneering glances, or overheard his whispers to Snoop and Stott.

He was glad when classes were over.

The Remove was dismissed, and Harry Wharton went out with the crowd of juniors. He went to his study at once.

He had a hundred and fifty lines to write; and there was time before tea to get them done and hand them in. It meant hard work; but he was determined that his Form master, just or unjust, should have no reasonable cause of complaint against him.

When the other Remove fellows were at tea, Harry Wharton tapped at Mr. Quelch's study door, and entered with the impot in his hand. The Remove master gave him a steely look.

"Well?"

"My lines, sir."

"Oh!"

Mr. Quelch was taken aback. He had not expected the imposition so soon—he had, in fact, expected to have to double it for being left undone, and to follow that up with a caning because the lines were still unwritten.

"Place them on the table."

Wharton placed them on the table and moved to the door.

"Stop!"

Wharton stopped.

The Remove master examined the impot carefully, meticulously. As plainly as if he had said so, Wharton knew that he was looking for faults; expecting and perhaps hoping to find them. Impots in the Lower Fourth were generally written in haste, and

more often than not there were faults to be found if anyone cared to find them.

But Mr. Quelch was disappointed this time. The lines had been written quickly, but they had been written with care. Every sheet was clean and neatly written; and in other circumstances the Form master would have uttered a word or two of commendation.

Now he simply glanced coldly at the junior, and said curtly:

"You may go!"

Wharton went.

More than once of late, in quitting his master's study, he had closed the door hard, almost with a bang. On this occasion Mr. Quelch waited for the bang—his hand already straying to his cane.

But the door closed quietly and softly.

Either the rebel of the Remove was reforming, or else he was "lying low" for the time and playing for safety. Unfortunately, the latter was Mr. Quelch's opinion.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Clouds Roll By!

FRANK NUGENT was in Study No. 1 when Wharton came back there.

Wharton came in with a clouded face.

He was conscious of the fact that his



"Wharton!" It was a sharp voice as Mr. Quelch stepped from a footpath into the lane. The Remove master glanced disdainfully at Mr. Banks. "Yes, sir?" "Come with me, Wharton!" said Mr. Quelch icily. "Mornin', sir," said Banks affably. "Nice mornin' for a walk, as I was a-saying to my young friend here." Mr. Quelch gave the sharper a glance of cold contempt. (See Chapter 9.)

Forma master was hard and unforgiving, but he also had a glimmering of the undoubted truth that he had worn out Mr. Quelch's patience, and could expect nothing better. But it was clear that he had an uphill fight before him, and that there would be many temptations to slip back into his old mood of sulky defiance. He wondered rather restively whether he could trust his temper to the required extent. He had the old feeling that he had had so often of late, that he was an Ishmael in the school—his hand against every other, and every hand against him.

He started at the sight of Nugent in the study. After the hapless split in the Co., Nugent had changed out of that study at the beginning of the term, and had never, of course, been a visitor there. Only once had he entered the study—during Wharton's absence, to write an imput Wharton had neglected, and thus to save the reckless fellow from punishment.

"You!" said Harry.

Nugent coloured.

"Don't you want me here?" he asked.

"I—I don't catch on."

"This was my study," said Frank slowly, hesitatingly.

"You changed out."

"I know. If you don't want me here I'll keep to my new study. But—I'd like to come back."

Wharton stood silent.

It was the olive-branch once more, and he understood it. Nugent had forgiven him long ago—he knew that, too, and in his hard and uncaring humour he had rejected the forgiveness and the friendship that were his for the taking.

But he was in a different mood now. Wharton was not the fellow to do things by halves. As he had gone "the whole hog" when he was the rebel of the Form and the "worst boy at Greyfriars," so he had gone the "whole hog" in his repentance and his resolve to win back the position he had lost. He had hardly hoped that his old friends would make a sign again—and his pride was still too strong to allow him to make advances. But his pride was humbled now into shame.

"Frank, old man"—Wharton's voice was unsteady—"do you mean that you're willing to make it up again?"

"Yes—if you are."

"I've acted like a rotter, Frank. I ought to have come to you and asked you—and I wouldn't. You've spoken the first word—I ought to have done it. I'm jolly well ashamed of myself!"

Nugent smiled.

"It's all right, Harry."

"After we had that row in the vac, I—I wanted to make it up. I told you, didn't I? You wouldn't then. But it was all my fault. I've been a fool and a sulky brute!"

"Not a bit of it."

"Well, you know I have, old chap," said Harry remorsefully. "Blessed if I quite know how it all came about—one thing and another, and a rotten bad temper behind it all. Do you really want to come back to the study, Frank?"

"If you want me."

"Of course I do. Lucky that fat brute Bunter changed back to Study No. 7," said Harry, smiling. "Shall we make a go of it, then? I—I—" He gulped a little. "I'll try to be a bit more—a bit more sensible! I know the fault was on my side."

"Not all of it," said Nugent. "Most of it, old man. It's no good humbugging, so I'll say that. But it takes two to make a quarrel, after all; so the fault must have been divided more or

less between us. And there was a lot of misunderstanding, and mischief-making cads like Skinner butting in, and mischief-making fools like Bunter. Let's chuck it all out of our minds and start afresh!"

"Only too jolly glad!" said Harry. "You'll do your prep here?"

"Yes, rather."

"Bring along your books, then, while I cut down to the tuck-shop and get something for tea."

"Good man! But what"—Nugent paused—"what about the other chaps? We're making peace all round—what?"

Wharton hesitated.

"I know it's a bit rotten for you, Harry—Bob being captain of the Form now. But—"

Wharton drew a deep breath.

"Bob's all right," he said. "I chucked the thing away, like a fool; and Bob picked it up. I don't care much about it; blessed if I know why I ever cared so much—rotten temper and pride, I suppose. If the other fellows will come, I'll be jolly glad to see them!"

Nugent's face was bright.

"Then I'll jolly well gather in the clan!" he said.

"Do, old fellow!"

Harry Wharton went downstairs to fetch the supplies for tea—a study spread that was to be a feast of reconciliation. Nugent went in search of the other members of the Co.

Wharton was soon back, with a large bundle under his arm. He proceeded to stir up the fire and lay the table, and make little preparations for the expected guests. His face was bright and happy. With his old friends round him he had a new heart for the difficulties that lay before him; he felt now quite able to meet them and to overcome them.

There was a footstep in the doorway, and he looked round cheerfully. But it was the face of William George Bunter that blinked into the study.

Billy Bunter grinned a friendly and propitiatory grin at the former captain of the Remove.

"Here we are again, old bean!" he said.

"Are we?"

"Yes, old chap." Bunter rolled in.

"I say, Wharton, old man, you know I changed into the study at the beginning of the term—taking pity on your loneliness, you know."

"That was kind of you!" said Wharton sarcastically.

Bunter nodded; he was blind and deaf to sarcasm.

"The fact is, it was my intention to be kind," he said. "I'm a kind-hearted chap, you know. Kindest friend and noblest foe, you know, as some poet or other puts it. Blessed if I see anything to cackle at, Wharton! Well, I changed back to Study No. 7 because—because—"

"Because I didn't feed you," suggested Wharton.

"Beast! I changed back to Study No. 7 because Toddy missed me so much—he fairly begged of me to change back!"

"Ananias!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! But the fact is, I can't stand Toddy," said Bunter, with a shake of the head. "Can't really clam up with a poor devil of a solicitor's

son, you know! It's not to be expected of a fellow of my standing! What are you cackling at, you dummy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So I'm coming back here," said Bunter brightly. "You see, you're a sort of outcast, nobody speaking to you, and I'm sorry for you! Really sorry, you know! I'm going to take pity on you! My kind heart, you know!"

"Would you mind taking your kind heart farther along the passage, and your fat carcass along with it?" asked Wharton politely.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"And buck up!"

"That's pretty cheeky, for a fellow who hasn't a friend in the school!" sneered Bunter. "But I'm going to be kind to you, Wharton! I'm taking pity on you, as I said. I thought it over—"

"You saw me getting tuck at the shop, you mean, and you've come here for a whack in it?"

"Oh really, Wharton—"

"Buzz off!"

"Look here, you cheeky cad!" roared Bunter. "I don't want any cheek from a fellow that nobody speaks to—an outcast and a reprobate. That's what you are—a reprobate! Mr. Quelch says so!"

"Well, Mr. Quelch may say anything he likes; but you mustn't! You'll get my boot if you do!"

"Yah! On second thoughts, I refuse to come back to this study!" said Bunter. "I'm a kind-hearted chap, but there's a limit! I can't very well consort with a reprobate—the worst fellow at Greyfriars! You've got nobody to speak to, and I feel bound to turn you down! A fellow without a friend in the Form is—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

Smack!

It was Bob Cherry's cheery voice, and he greeted Bunter with a sounding smack on the shoulder, as he found the Owl of the Remove inside the study doorway.

"Yaroooooh!"

"Here we are, old chap," said Bob, coming into the study, as breezy and cheery as if there had never been any trouble in the Famous Five.

"Trot in!" said Harry. "Jolly glad to see you!"

"The jolly gladfulness is terrific in my esteemed and ridiculous self!" declared Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

Johnny Bull grunted as he came in—more slowly. Indeed, Frank Nugent, who brought up the rear, almost had to push Johnny into the study.

Wharton looked at him.

"You'll come in, Johnny? I hope we're all friends again now."

"I hope so!" said Johnny Bull. "But I feel bound to say—"

"Least said soonest mended!" interposed Bob Cherry hastily.

"I feel bound to say—"

"The speechfulness is silver, but the silence is the cracked pitcher that goes longest to the well, my esteemed Johnny!" murmured Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

Grunt!

"You can interrupt me as often as you like," said Johnny Bull stolidly; "but I'm going to say my say, all the same!"

Wharton's face set a little.

"Let him speak," he said.

"I'm going to," said Johnny Bull calmly. "I'm glad to be friends again, if it comes to that; but I'm not going to admit for a minute that I was to blame for the trouble. That was Wharton's fault."

"Admitted!" said Harry, very quietly.

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY—PRICE 2!

"Oh!" said Johnny. "One thing more—"

"Isn't that enough?" growled Bob Cherry.

"No! I'd like no end to have the old footing back again," said Johnny Bull. "But I'd like to hear Wharton say that he's given up playing Skinner's dirty games. I'm not chumming with a fellow who sneaks out of bounds and goes to shows like the Cross Keys; and it will save misunderstanding if I say so plainly!"

"That's all right!" said Nugent sharply.

"Is it?" said Johnny Bull stolidly. "If it's all right Wharton can say so, I suppose. He's got a tongue in his head!"

Harry Wharton breathed hard. The old arrogance, the old pride, rose strong in his breast. But his resolution overcame it. For a moment or two he was silent, and then he spoke in a low voice.

"It's all right about that, Bull! That was only rot! I never wanted anything of the kind. Is that enough?"

"Quite," said Johnny Bull. "Nothing like having things out plain, is there?"

He glanced round at the clouded faces in the study, and pondered.

"Well, perhaps I needn't have said all that," he remarked. "I didn't mean to be calling you over the coals, Wharton! If I've put my foot in it, I'm sorry!"

Wharton smiled.

"All serene, old man! I've got a lot to be sorry for—and I say so. Let's forget all about it!"

"Good!"

"The bygonefulness is now the bygonefulness," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The least said, the soonest the stitch in time saves nine, as the English proverb says."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The nabob's English proverb had the effect of restoring general good-humour. The Famous Five gathered round the study table with cheery faces—as in the happy days before there had been a split in the Co.

Meanwhile, Billy Bunter had blinked on at the scene, with his little round eyes wide open behind his big spectacles. The chums of the Remove had hardly noticed that he was still present. But they noticed him as he gathered round the table with the Famous Five.

"I say, you fellows, I'm jolly glad to see you make it up again," said Bunter. "I'll begin on the cake. After all, Wharton can't help being a bit of a rotter, can he?"

"What!" roared Bob Cherry.

"And I dare say you were to blame, Cherry. You're a bit of a silly idiot, if you don't mind my mentioning it."

"You fat dummy!"

"And Bull is really the limit. Never saw such manners," said Bunter brightly. "Pig, I call him! Don't you, Wharton?"

Harry Wharton rose to his feet. He did not answer Bunter's question, but he gripped the fat junior by the back of his collar. With a swing of his powerful arm, he landed Bunter in the Remove passage.

Bump!

"Ow! Yow! Yooop!"

The door of Study No. 1 closed on William George Bunter.

In that study a merry party chatted amicably, carefully avoiding all matters of offence, while Bunter rolled away to the Rag, to startle the fellows with the amazing news that the Famous Five had made it up again, and that with Harry Wharton & Co. All was calm and bright.



"I have said these lines are slovenly," rapped Mr. Quelch. "Take them away and bring me the imposition cleanly and properly written." Wharton flushed with anger. "Mr. Quelch, someone has done this!" he exclaimed. "I thought the lines were all right—I left them all right. It's a trick!" (See Chapter 12.)

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Under Suspicion!

"A IN'T seed you lately, sir." Harry Wharton started.

A fat, squat man addressed him as he came along Friar-dale Lane a couple of days later.

It was Mr. Joe Banks, of the Cross Keys.

Wharton had completely forgotten his existence.

In that couple of days the change had been great in Harry Wharton. There was perhaps some little sign of strain in the renewed friendship of the Famous Five. All the members of the famous Co. were very anxious that there should be no recurrence of trouble, and this made them so very careful that sometimes it was a little irksome.

But that was wearing off. And if nothing should transpire to spoil the reconciliation it was clear that the chums of the Remove would soon be on their old, free familiar footing once more.

In the Remove many fellows were glad to see the reunion of the Co., and the best fellows, such as Squiff and Tom Brown and Peter Todd and Lord Mauloverer, and Russell and Ogilvy, gave the one-time rebel of the Form the "glad hand" with glad hearts, only too pleased to welcome him back into the fold, so to speak. They were glad to forget offences, to pass a sponge over the slate.

Other fellows, such as Skinner & Co., were disappointed. "His Magnificence" had had a great fall, like Humpty-Dumpty. But, unlike Humpty-Dumpty, he was up again, little the worse for it. And that was very annoying to Skinner. In his outcast days Wharton had rather palled with Skinner; but the cad of the Remove had shunned him when, owing to his recklessness, he became a rather dangerous companion, liable to bring down the wrath of masters and prefects upon his own head, and the heads of any who associated with him.

As Skinner had shunned him in his adversity, he could scarcely complain of being dropped in his turn. Nevertheless, he did complain, and was excessively annoyed at finding himself kept at a rigid arm's length by Wharton.

Mr. Quelch was implacable. That could not be helped. But Wharton was more patient under the dislike of his Form master now that his old friends had rallied round him. He was no longer Ishmael. He was getting back by degrees his old footing in the Form, and in his present reasonable and reflective mood, he realised that he could not expect to undo in an hour all that he had unfortunately done by whole weeks of rash perverseness.

But among the many difficulties before him he had certainly not counted Joseph

(Continued on page 16.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 868.



Supplement No. 211.

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON

Week Ending February 14th, 1925.



My Favourite Indoor Pastime!

Some Curious Confessions
of our Contributors.

BOB CHERRY:

I am no great lover of indoor games. Even when the wind is wailing, and the snow is snowing, and the rain is pelting down by the pailful, I prefer to be exercising my limbs out of doors. But if I feel particularly fagged after a hard game of footer, I don't mind a game of table-tennis, or blow-football. Chess I don't much care for. Ludo isn't what you might call a tensely exciting game. And I leave snakes-and-ladders to the fags in the First. As for card-games, they are banned by the powers that be—and quite rightly, in my opinion.

BILLY BUNTER:

My favorite indoor pastime is rather a queer one. I love to lie back in my armchair—it's Toddy's armchair, really, but I pay him tuppence a week for the use of it—and imagine that I have been invited out to dinner by some Big Pot. Resting a writing-pad on my knee, I scribble out an imaginary meenu—different sorts of soup, joints, puddings, outrays, and so fourth. This is a very enjoyable game, but it has one great drawback. It gives you a ravenous appytite. After you've been playing it about five minnits, your mouth begins to water, and you feel an aching void inside you. I've written out scores and scores of imaginary meenus. But between "meenu," as the saying goes, I wish they were real ones!

LORD MAULEVERER:

No need for me to state my favourite pastime when indoors. I'm always keen on "Nap"—not of the card variety, but on my study sofa! As Dick Penfold once wrote of me:

"The slacker loves to lie asleep,
Upon his couch you'll find him;
With cosy cushions, soft and deep,
Before him and behind him!"

"Sense me now, dear boys. I'm just dropping off into a blissful repose!"

MR. PROUT:

My favourite indoor pastime is cleaning and polishing my famous Winchester repeater. It is a task I perform daily; and whilst I briskly rub my

rifle—my trusty companion in many fierce and thrilling adventures—I pine for my lost youth, and recall those hectic days when I pursued wild beasts in the Rocky Mountains. What crowded hours of glorious life! What narrow escapes from death and destruction! The personal deeds of valour and heroism which I performed would fill a whole volume—

(Quite possibly, sir; but they are not going to fill a whole issue of the GREYFRIARS HERALD!—Ed.)

ALONZO TODD:

How I love the grand old game of Ludo! It is far and away my favourite sport. Even in my dreams I hear the rattle of the dice-box, and watch the coloured discs moving along the squares of the ludo-board! How thrilling it is, to be sure, when you and your opponent have each got three men home, and the last man is racing to get to his goal! Prate not to me of the joys of football, or the thrills and spills of hockey, or the raptures of "road-hogging" on a push-bicycle! Ludo beats all your outdoor sport. I am just going to challenge my cousin Peter to a game, and already my cheeks begin to glow with the joy of battle. Bring hither the ludo-board and the dice, and let the stern and strenuous struggle commence forthwith!

MR. QUELCH:

There is surely no need for me to mention my favourite indoor pastime. It is the writing of that formidable work, "The History of Greyfriars." I heard Desmond of the Remove remark to another boy the other day, "Old Quelch's just written the three millionth chapter of his History!" This is quite erroneous. I have only just reached the seven hundred and ninety-seventh chapter!

GERALD LODER:

My favourite indoor pastime is hoisting small, inoffensive fags across my study table, and tanning their young hides with an ash-plant, cricket-stamp, poker, or any other instrument of torture which happens to be handy. I recommend this indoor exercise as being a jolly good thing for developing the biceps!

EDITORIAL!

By Harry Wharton.

IN the interval between tea and "prep" indoor games are indulged in by the majority of the Greyfriars fellows. There is a wide range of games to choose from, and tastes vary. We have our chess maniacs, and our draughts fanatics, and our ludo champions. We also have our ping-pong prodigies and our blow-football experts. In fact, all sorts of minor championships are competed for in that glorious interval between tea and prep.

So far as the hard-working staff of the "Greyfriars Herald" is concerned, we have precious little time for indoor games. We are busy writing our contributions. But this is such a pleasant occupation that we do not envy the throwers of the dice, or the blow-footballers, or those who take part in fierce games of battledore and shuttlecock.

I suppose that chess holds pride of place among indoor pastimes. But it is a mystery to me why fellows who have been racking their brains all day in the Form-room should wish to rack them still further in the evening by playing chess. For chess demands brain-power, and plenty of it. It is no game for brainless Bunters, but rather for studious Linleys.

I don't think we have ever published a chess story in the "Greyfriars Herald." So, in order to break fresh ground, I prevailed upon Dicky Nugent to give us a chess yarn, and Dicky has risen to the occasion in rare style. I don't think he knows much about chess, and I'm jolly certain that the headmaster of St. Sam's doesn't!

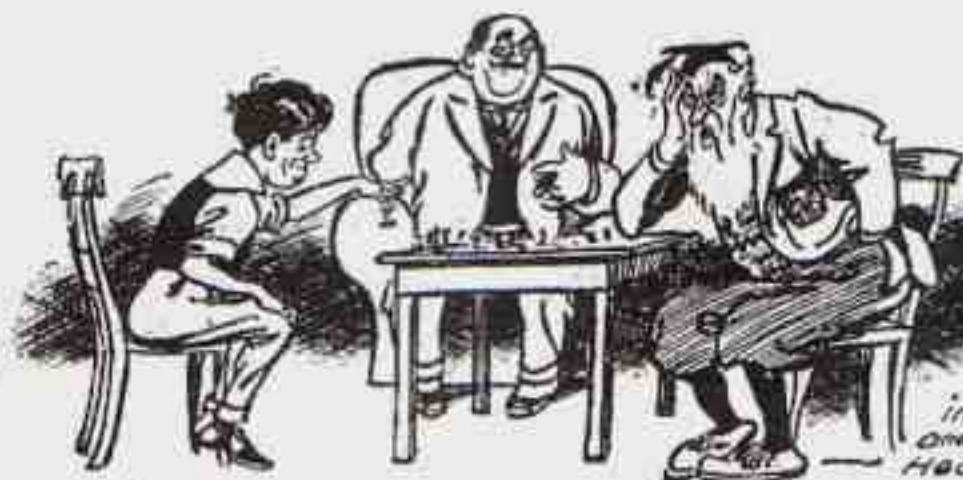
Personally, I don't think indoor games are to be compared with those of the outdoor variety. But a special number dealing with the games which are played within four walls is bound to be acceptable to my reader-chums.

By the way, we are giving you a special "Cross Word" Puzzle Supplement next Monday. Billy Bunter has his own ideas of Cross Word puzzles, and his own very original notions of spelling. To solve Bunter's problem requires great skill. In fact, the only person in the Remove who could solve it was the great William George himself! One begins to wonder how long this Cross Word puzzle craze will last—everywhere I go I see people poring over these puzzles. Up till now, however, it has had a splendid run of success.

FUN IN THE FORM-ROOM!

Bunter: "If you please, sir—"
Mr. Quelch (standing with his back to the fire): "Silence, Bunter!"
Bunter: "Oh, really, sir! I simply must tell you—"
Mr. Quelch: "Take a hundred lines, Bunter!"
Bunter: "Oh erms! Please, sir, do let me point out—"
Mr. Quelch: "Two hundred lines, Bunter—Why, bless my soul, the tail of my gown is on fire!"
Bunter: "That's just what I wanted to tell you, sir!"
Mr. Quelch: "Then why did you not tell me, you foolish boy? Take five hundred lines, Bunter!"
Collapse of Billy Bunter!

[Supplement i.]



THE GRATE CHESS! TORNYMENT!

By

DICKY NUGENT

Another Exciting Story of that impossible Old School, St. Sam's, and that equally impossible Headmaster, Doctor Birchmell.

"GOING in for the Chess Tornyment, Jack?" inquired Merry of the Fourth.

Jack Jolly shook his head.

"Chess," he said scornfully, "is an old woman's game! It's a jolly sight too tame for my liking. I prefer sunthing more thrilling, such as bull-baiting, or big-game shooting."

"But surely you'd like to win the Gold Cup that's being prezented by the Guvverners?" said Bright.

"Ratts! I've won so many Gold Cups already that the study's simply swarming with 'em. I'll let one of the chess maniacs win this one—Knight of the Sixth, or Castle of the Fifth, or Bishop of the Fourth. I'm fed-up with Cups and Sheelds and Meddles!"

This conversation took place in front of the school notiss-board, on which the following announcement had been stuck.

"NOTISS TO ALL AND SUNDERY!

"The Guvverning Boddy of St. Samuel's will have grate plezzure in prezenting a Maggnifiscent Gold Cup to the master or boy who proves himself the chess champion of the school. The tornyment will be conducted on the knock-out system, and it is open to all. General Blaize Popham, O.B.E., will prezent the hansom trofie to the winner."

Now, there were several people at St. Sam's who were bent on collering that Cup. Not everybody viewed the grand old game of chess with scorn and despision, like Jack Jolly.

The Head, who had taken lessons in chess from the world's champion, Signor Mateintwomoves, announced his intention of entering the fray. And Mr. Lickham, the master of the Fourth, who often played a frendly game of chess with the Head after dinner, and who always got licked, determined to turn the tables on this occasion by walking off with the hansom Gold Cup.

But the masters were not likely to have matters all their own way. There were some famous chess-players among the rank and file of St. Sam's. Knight of the Sixth was hot-stuff; Castle of the Fifth was pretty warm; and Bishop of the Fourth was mustard. Young Bishop was a chess maniac. All his life he had loved the game. At the tender age of three, he had won the Joovenile Chess Championship, open to every babe in Brittan. On coming to St. Sam's, he had wiped up the board with all the so-called champions. He had even had the ordassity to challenge the Head to a game; but the Head had got on his dignity, and refused. Unkind critricks had wispered that he was in a blue funk.

When the draw for the first round of the Grate Tornyment was made known, there was tremendous eggitement.

The Head found himself paired with Midgett of the First. This caused a

grate deal of merrymint. The Head himself had conducted the draw, so he had probably wangled a "soft" match for himself.

Anyway, little Midgett didn't feel equal to meeting such a mity man as the Head in mortle combatt, so to speak. He cried off; and the Head thus had a walk-over into the second round.

Bishop of the Fourth came through the first round all right. He licked his opponent by an innings and about fifty moves. Bishop's chums were confident that he would get into the final, and they rather hoped that his opponent would be the Head. It would be grate sport, to see the pompous Doctor Birchmell licked by a fellow in the Fourth.

Mr. Lickham was another who had managed to struggle through the first round; but in the second round his chances of bagging the Gold Cup disappeared for ever. For he was drawn against the Head, who bent him with ease. So skilfully did the Head cheat that not a soul suspected.

Mr. Lickham took his defeat with a very bad grace. He was furious with the Head for having made him look an awful duffer in public; and he badly wanted to see Doctor Birchmell come a cropper in the tornyment.

Events worked out just as the proffits had predicted. The Head, and Bishop of the Fourth, were paired together in the Final! It was to be played in Big Hall, in the presents of the whole school.

Just before the grate game was due to be played, Bishop received a summons to Mr. Lickham's study.

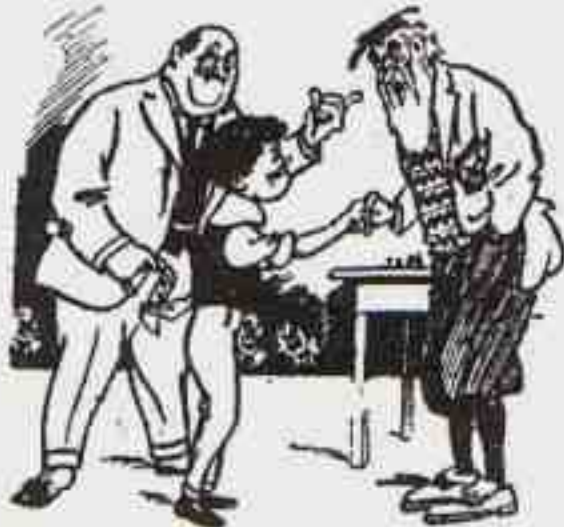
Mr. Lickham was still feeling very sore on the subject of his defeat at the hands of the Head. But he mustard a smile when Bishop trotted in.

"I want a word with you, Bishop," said the master of the Fourth. "Are you feeling in form, my boy?"

"I never felt fitter in my life, sir!" said Bishop.

"Do you think you can defeat the Head?" asked Mr. Lickham anxiously.

"I don't think anything about it, sir. I know I can! I'm simply basting with confidence."



"Take your defeat like a sportsman, sir!" said Mr. Justiss to the Head.
"Ring your conkeror by the hand!"

"But the Head is a very clever player—"

"Yes—when the umpire isn't looking!" said Bishop, with a grin. "I'm sorry to have to say it, sir, but the Head's an awful cheet. In his younger days, he was a Senior Wangler at Oxford; and he's still a wangler! But Mr. Justiss is going to umpire the final, so the Head won't have a chance to get up to his trix. I shall lick him hollo!"

"If you do, Bishop," said Mr. Lickham earnestly, "it will be worth a five-pound note to you."

And he drew from his pocket a crisp and ruffling fiver, at the sight of which Bishop's eyes glistered with avvariss.

"That fiver's mine, sir!" said the junior confidently.

And at that moment the bell rang, to summon all St. Sam's to Big Hall.

The fellows were frantick with eggitement as they flocked into their plaices.

Then the Head came into Big Hall with his majestick stride. He had donned a sports coat and plus fours for the occasion.

There was a tence silense. It was broken at length by the horse command of Mr. Justiss, the umpire.

"Seconds out of the ring! Time!"

The Head started off by taking one of Bishop's bishops. But it was a fowl move, and Mr. Justiss made him put it back again.

There was a marked contrast in the demenner of the two players. The Head was all hot and bothered; Bishop was as cool as a strobberly ice. Slowly but surely, Bishop swept the Head's pieces from the board. A bishop here, and a knight there, and a pawn there; and the Head's chances of victory began to look pretty sick. In desperation, he tried to cheat his opponent, but Mr. Justiss seezed him by the collar, and said he wasn't going to have that sort of thing.

"Play the game, sir!" said Mr. Justiss. "If there is any further attempt at cheating, it will be my painful duty to diskwallify you!"

So Bishop carried on with the good work. He got the Head into a hopeless muddle, and won the game in the shortest time on record.

Doctor Birchmell sprang to his feet, his face purple with pashun.

"I will flog—I will expel—" he began wildly.

"You will do nothing of the sort," said Mr. Justiss coldly. "Take your defeat like a sportsman, sir. Ring your conkeror by the hand!"

Very reluctantly, the Head obeyed.

It was a proud moment for Bishop; and a prouder moment still awaited him, when General Blaize Popham prezented him with the maggnifiscent Gold Cup, and acclaimed him the Chess Champion of St. Sam's!

THE END.

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Harry Wharton's Last Chance!

(Continued from page 13.)

Banks. In his days of disgrace, in a sort of desperation he had dropped into the dingy blackguardism of Skinner & Co. His heart had never been in it. It sickened him. Even if he had not resolved on better things generally, he would at least have dropped that phase. Now it was all over, he was only too glad to give the Cross Keys a wide berth and to forget the existence of Mr. Joseph Banks.

Mr. Banks seemingly did not want to be forgotten. He stopped directly before Wharton and nodded and grinned. It was Sunday, and Wharton was taking a stroll by himself after morning service, thinking of many things. He was certainly not thinking of Mr. Banks, and he started as he saw the squat figure and the hard, puffy face and little twinkling eyes of the sharper.

"You've been giving an old pal the go-by, sir," said Mr. Banks affably. "Any trouble up at the school?"

Wharton paused. Three or four times he had visited the Cross Keys and seen Mr. Banks, once with the Bouncer, once or twice with Skinner, once or twice alone. The man disgusted him; but he felt that, since he was never to speak to him again, he ought to say a civil word at parting. The man had no claim upon him whatsoever, unless fleecing him at cards gave Mr. Banks a claim. But Wharton, unusually patient and forbearing now that the tide had turned, did not want to hurt even Mr. Banks' feelings.

"I know they was arter you one day when you came to see me, sir," said Mr. Banks sympathetically. "I s'pose you got it 'ot?"

Wharton smiled faintly. "Yes," he said, "I did." "Ard lines," said Mr. Banks. "Never you mind, sir, you get your own back on 'em. You come in now and 'ave a little game."

"That's done with, Mr. Banks," said Harry quietly. "I've rather payed the fool, but I've chucked it now."

"Eh?" "I'm not blaming you," said Harry. "It was my own fault. But it's over and done with, and I'm not breaking bounds again, or playing the goat. Good-morning, Mr. Banks!"

He made a movement to pass on. Joe Banks' amiable grin vanished, and an extremely unpleasant expression took its place. He did not move for the Greyfriars junior to pass him. His squat figure blocked Wharton's way.

"Hoity-toity!" he sneered. "So that's 'ow the wind blows, is it? You've 'ad a bad scare, 'ave you?"

"That's not your business, at all events. Let me pass, please."

"Takin' a man up and droppin' 'im," said Mr. Banks. "Cheek! Done with it, 'ave you? P'r'aps Joe Banks ain't done with you, Mister Cheeky Wharton."

Wharton's eyes glinted. "You have!" he answered. "I didn't want to be uncivil, Mr. Banks, but you're forcing me to speak plainly. You were a blackguard to play cards with a schoolboy, and you've nothing to complain of. I've no doubt whatever that you were laughing in your sleeve all the time, and thinking me the fool I really was. Don't speak to me again. And now let me pass."

"So that's the tune, is it?"

"Will you let me pass?" exclaimed Wharton impatiently.

"You wasn't in such a 'urry last time I seed you!" sneered Joe Banks. "Afraid that your master might see you talking to me—eh? Well, I don't mind if he does."

"Wharton!" It was a sharp voice as Mr. Quelch stepped from a footpath into the lane. The Remove master was also taking a stroll that fine Sunday morning.

Wharton compressed his lips. Mr. Quelch could not have chanced upon him at a more unfortunate moment.

"Yes, sir," he said.

Mr. Banks gave the Remove master an impudent nod. His little piggy eyes gleamed with satisfaction. He was dropped, and his hope of future profit from the "worst boy at Greyfriars" was completely gone. It was a satisfaction to Mr. Banks to cause Wharton trouble with his Form master in return.

"Mornin', sir!" he said. "Nice mornin' for a walk, as I was a-saying to my young friend here."

Mr. Quelch gave him a glance of cold contempt.

"Wharton, come with me!"

"Yes, sir." "Well, so-long, kid!" said Mr. Banks. "See you again—what?"

And Mr. Banks walked back to the Cross Keys, feeling that he had got even with the Greyfriars junior who had turned him down.

Harry Wharton, with a set face, walked by the side of his Form master. Mr. Quelch was looking hard and grim.

He was not in the slightest degree surprised to have found Wharton in talk with the dingy racing-man. It confirmed his opinion of the worst boy in his class if it had needed confirming.

He did not speak until the school was reached.

Many fellows strolling in the quad glanced at the Form master and the silent boy by his side as they crossed to the House.

"More trouble for Wharton!" Bolsover major remarked to Skinner; and Skinner grinned.

Mr. Quelch went directly to his study and Wharton followed him in. Then the Remove master fixed his eyes on the junior grimly.

"Have you anything to say, Wharton?"

"What do you expect me to say, sir?"

The Remove master's eyes glinted. That answer was quite in the sulky style of the worst boy at Greyfriars.

"I found you talking with a man of bad character—the worst character in the district!" he said. "You were flogged a short time ago for associating with that rascally man. But for the Head's unexampled leniency, you would have been expelled."

"I know that, sir!"

"Yet I find you associating with him again."

"I was not associating with him!"

"I can believe the evidence of my eyes, and, unfortunately, I cannot trust you, Wharton! The Head's leniency is wasted upon you, as I was quite assured that it would be. I had not the slightest doubt upon that point. Have you, for the last time, anything to say in your defence?"

Wharton gritted his teeth and did not speak.

"Very well!" said Mr. Quelch. "I shall report this to the Head, and represent to him very strongly that you are not a fit boy to remain at Greyfriars! Go!"

Wharton went.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Humble Pie!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry's cheery voice rang in the doorway of Study No. 1.

Harry Wharton was there. Bob's cheery expression changed as he saw the expression on Wharton's face—dark and clouded and sullen.

He came into the study. "Anything up?" he asked.

"Yes."

The answer was curt and sharp, and for a moment Bob Cherry was tempted to walk out of the study and leave his reconciled friend to himself. Was it all beginning again? Was there to be no end to passionate irritation and un-governed temper? Did Wharton expect fellows to stand anything he chose to inflict on them—to smile when he smiled and to look serious when he looked serious—to come when they were called and to back out tactfully when he was cross? If that was the state of affairs he was making a mistake, and the renewed union of the Famous Five was not likely to last long.

Wharton's friends had been severely tried, and they had forgiven much. But there was a limit.

Bob was silent, his cheery face clouded, debating in his mind what he should do.

But he was, as it happened, unjust to his chum, though it was natural enough in the circumstances.

"I'm for it again," went on Wharton. "It's not my fault, Bob. On my word I've done nothing this time! But it's no good trying to keep on the right side of Quelchy. I'm giving that up."

Bob's face cleared again. "Tell a chap about it," he said amicably.

Harry Wharton explained the unfortunate incident in Friardale Lane. Bob listened very attentively.

"Of course, you weren't to blame," he said. "Like the man's beastly cheek to speak to you at all! But look here! Quelch is suspicious of you, and you can hardly blame him. But he would listen to reason. Do you mean to say that he didn't believe you when you told him the man spoke to you against your will, taking advantage of your having played the goat as you did before?"

The colour came into Wharton's cheeks.

"I didn't explain to Quelchy," he said.

"You didn't?" ejaculated Bob.

"No."

"Why not?"

Wharton made no reply to that question.

Bob Cherry's expression grew very serious. The arrogant pride that had been Wharton's undoing was evidently not yet in hand.

"Look here, old chap," said Bob. "this won't do! You can't expect Quelchy not to be suspicious."

"Can't I?"

"Certainly not, after what you've done!" said Bob warmly. "You've been in a row for associating with that rotter. What's Quelchy to think when he sees you chatting with him again?"

Wharton's face hardened.

"He's no right to suppose——" he began.

"He has every right to suppose just what he supposes," said Bob. "If you think a minute you'll see it just as well as I do. You ought to have explained to him at once."

"Well, I didn't, and I won't!"

"It won't do, Wharton! To put it plainly, who the thump are you to refuse

an explanation to your Form master? Are you really thinking yourself a little tin god, as Skinner says?"

There was a long silence in Study No. 1.

Bob had spoken sharply, and he did not regret his sharpness. He wanted very much to keep on friendly terms with his old friend. But if friendship with Wharton meant backing him up in wilful waywardness and ungovernable pride, Bob had had enough of it.

In those minutes the renewed friendship of the chums of the Remove trembled in the balance.

It was well for Harry Wharton that he had the saving grace of common-sense; that, having once seen clearly the folly of his ways, he had the strength of character to keep in the new path he had marked out for himself.

There was a struggle in his breast, and bitter words were on his lips. But he did not utter them.

He turned away, and for some minutes he stood staring out of the study window at the peaceful old quad and the fellows strolling there in the sunshine.

Bob Cherry waited grimly. It was touch and go now, and he knew it. And he was quite resolute. With the old Wharton, the fellow he had known and liked, he wanted to be friends. He wanted it very much. But he had no use for a "little tin god."

Harry turned round to him at last. There was a faint smile on his handsome face. The struggle was over, and Wharton's better nature had won.

"You're a good pal, Bob, old man!" he said. "Of course, you're right. It's a bit of a pill to eat humble pie to Quelch, but I'll do it. I'll go to him now."

"Good man!" said Bob.

Wharton went down the Remove staircase, not in a happy mood. But he

knew his duty, and he was going to do it.

He tapped at Mr. Quelch's door.

"Come in!"

The Remove master's face was cold and uncompromising as he looked at the junior.

"Well?"

The interrogation came like a bullet.

"I'm sorry, sir, that I did not explain to you when you questioned me a little while ago," said Harry. "If you will allow me, I will explain now."

"If you have any explanation to give it is my duty to hear it," said Mr. Quelch icily. "I see no reason whatever why you could not have given it to me at the time."

"I admit I was wrong, sir, and I am sorry," said Wharton, in a low voice.

"I—I—I apologise, sir!"

"Well, what have you to say?"

"I did not meet that man Banks this morning. He spoke to me, and I told him that I was done with him and should never play the fool again, and that he was never to speak to me any more. That was what I was saying when you came up, sir."

Mr. Quelch gave him a very searching look.

"This explanation comes very late, Wharton."

"I know it, sir," said Wharton humbly. "I am sorry!"

"It does not tally with what I heard Banks say to you when you left him."

"That was said to get me into trouble, if he could. He was ratty—I mean, angry—at my turning him down."

"Why did you not tell me so before?"

Wharton drew a deep breath. Uncompromising distrust was hard to bear, but he had himself well in hand now.

"I—I suppose I was sulky, sir. I've said I'm sorry!"

"And do you consider, Wharton, that

your Form master's study is the proper place for a display of sulky temper?"

"No, sir."

Mr. Quelch stood silent for a moment or two. His scrutiny of the junior's face was very keen.

"You are asking me to take a great deal upon trust, Wharton," he said, at last. "Last term I should have taken your word without hesitation. Can you expect me to take it now?"

Wharton crimsoned.

"I—I suppose not, sir. But even when you thought me the worst fellow in the Form I never told you any lies to keep out of punishment. I've told you the truth now!"

There was another pause.

"Very well, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch at last. "If you have really reached a better frame of mind, I should be far from desiring to deal with you harshly. I cannot say that I trust you; but at least I shall give you the opportunity to earn my trust. I accept your explanation."

"Thank you, sir!"

Wharton left the study, leaving the Remove master in a very thoughtful mood. With good cause he had grown to regard Wharton as the worst boy at Greyfriars, and to desire his expulsion from the school. But if it was possible that the boy's reckless outbreak had been only a passing phase, he was willing to give him a chance to amend—without much faith or hope in his amendment, it is true. But at least he was willing to give him a chance.

Bob Cherry was waiting for Harry in the Remove passage.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the giddy verdict?" he asked.

"I'm let off!"

"Good!"

"Sort of on probation," said Wharton bitterly. "It's not pleasant."

"Could you expect anything else, old chap?"

SOMETHING FOR THE LEISURE HOUR!

Everywhere you go "Cross Word" puzzles seem to stare out at you. Nowadays the MAGNET would not be complete without one. Here is Puzzle No. 2.

All you will need is a pencil, rubber, and a little patience.

I want it to be clearly understood that these puzzles are published merely for your AMUSEMENT. There is no competition attached to the scheme. Readers are, therefore, requested not to send in their solutions.

Next week's MAGNET will contain the solution of this week's cross word puzzle, together with a new puzzle. Now for a few tips on solving cross word puzzles.

In the diagram alongside you will see a number of white and black squares, in some of which appear numbers. Each number in the puzzle indicates the position of the first letter of the word whose definition you will find in the clue column alongside the same number in the square. From this clue you are to decide what the word is and to place each of its letters in one square until the number of white squares allotted to this word has been filled.

Each word reads from left to right (across) or top to bottom (down) according to the positions indicated in the clue column.

Remember that each black square separates one word from another.

When you have completed the puzzle you will find that all the words that cross interlock.

It is advisable to pencil the letters in lightly at first, so that should they be wrong you will be able to erase them with a rubber, without mutilating the diagram. Now get busy, chums!

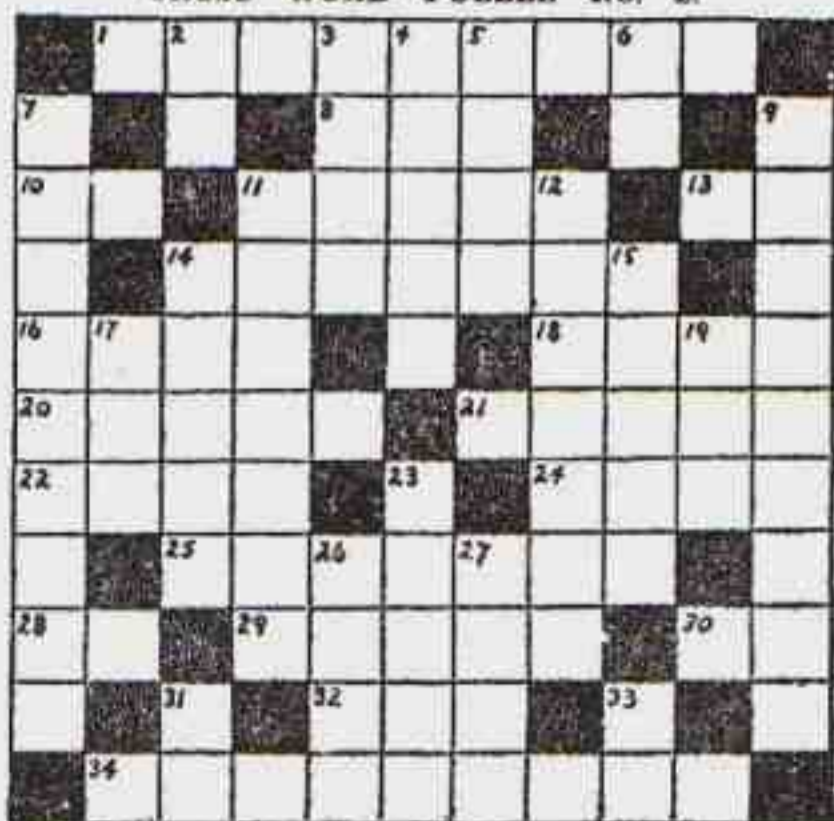
CLUES DOWN.

- 2. A district of London
- 3. Substance that sticks
- 4. Bunter eats them
- 5. Cain's brother
- 6. An exclamation
- 7. Getting ready
- 9. Tossing again
- 11. Popular schoolboy character
- 12. Land beside the sea
- 14. Exhausted
- 15. Makes dim
- 17. A monkey
- 19. Short for "telegram"
- 23. One who races
- 26. Having wisdom
- 27. To gather corn
- 31. Prefix meaning "two"
- 33. Said to a goose

CLUES ACROSS.

- 1. Taught in schools
- 8. To bowl underhand
- 10. With reference to
- 11. Rules (as pronounced by D'Arcy of St. Jim's)
- 13. To exist
- 14. Bombarded with shells
- 16. Child's name for father
- 18. Prefix meaning "self"
- 20. Those who copy others
- 21. Islands
- 22. Torn
- 24. Troubles
- 25. A direction
- 28. Negative
- 29. Wun Lung's rendering of "nice"
- 30. Within
- 32. The ocean
- 34. An English seaport

CROSS WORD PUZZLE No. 2.



Wharton did not reply for a moment. "Well, no!" he admitted at last. "That's all right, then. Now come out for a trot before dinner."

The two juniors walked out into the quad cheerily and amicably. The old friendship had stood its last strain, and from that hour it was not in danger. Harry Wharton was himself again.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Play Up!

"ABOUT Highcliffe?"

It was a week later, and Bob Cherry, captain of the Remove, was plunged into deep consideration. The return match with Highcliffe School was due—a matter of importance for the Remove, and of deep responsibility for the Remove skipper.

He came into Study No. 1, where Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent were chatting after prep.

In Study No. 1 there had not been a cloud since the reconciliation of the old friends. In the British way, they said nothing about it; but both of them were glad from the bottom of their hearts to be on the old friendly footing.

"About Highcliffe?" repeated Nugent as Bob came in. "Have you come to ask me to ornament the team?"

Bob grinned. "No, old chap! You won't bully-rag me if I leave you out?"

"Of course not, ass!" said Nugent, laughing. "I know I'm not up to Highcliffe weight, unless you want a reserve."

"What about you, Wharton?"

Bob Cherry eyed the former captain of the Remove a little doubtfully. He had not forgotten Wharton's passionate determination never to play under the new captain of the Form.

True, they were friends again now, but—Bob ruefully realised that there must always be a "but" where Wharton was concerned.

The late captain of the Remove had "chucked" footer; but since that interview with the Head in the punishment-room, when he had made a new resolve, he had been assiduous at games practice. So Bob hoped for the best.

Wharton smiled. "Do you want me?" he said. "Well, of course! But you said once—"

Bob paused awkwardly. "That was when I was a little tin god, you know!" said Harry, with a faint smile. "I've got over that. Of course, I'll play if you want me!"

Bob Cherry's rugged face expressed great satisfaction.

"Good! You'll take your old place, centre-forward! We'll give Highcliffe another beating!"

"What-ho!"

"I wish I could hand over the captaincy to you, old fellow!" said Bob. "Captain of the Remove is really a size too big for me."

"Oh, rot!"

"I mean it! If Quelchy would see reason—"

Harry Wharton shook his head. "You're a better captain of the Form than I ever was!" he said. "I'm not thinking of anything of the kind now. You're captain of the Remove, and you're keeping the job, Quelchy or no Quelchy!"

"Well, we'll see about that later," said Bob. "Quelchy isn't such a grim gorgon to you now as he has been. He seems to see that there may be a little good in you, after all."

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Wharton laughed. "I'll put your name down, then," said Bob brightly. "All the chaps will be glad to see it in the list."

In making that statement Bob was judging others by himself, which was his usual way. As a matter of fact, most of the Remove fellows were glad to see Wharton's name in the football list when the captain of the Remove posted it on the door of the Rag; but there were several fellows who were distinctly displeased.

"So Wharton's in!" sneered Skinner. "That's the end of his swank about chuekin' up footer!"

"Toeing the line again!" said Snoop. "I say, you fellows, he said he was never going to play footer again, so long as he didn't play as captain!"

grinned Billy Bunter. "Swank, you know—just like Wharton! Now he's come round. I'd have kept to it myself!"

"He had a scare!" said Skinner. "Fairly frightened out of his wits, you know! Goin' to be a good boy now, and all that!"

"Here he comes!" murmured Snoop, as Harry Wharton sauntered into the Rag with Frank Nugent.

Skinner did not heed; he had his back to Wharton, and affected not to know that he was present.

"Notice how jolly civil he is to Quelchy in class now?" went on Skinner. "Butter won't melt in his mouth these days! 'Yes, sir!' and 'Oh, sir!' and 'Please, sir!' and 'No, sir!' What? Fancy Wharton getting the wind up to that extent!"

Harry Wharton's brow darkened; and Frank quietly slipped his arm through his chum's, and led him on past Skinner.

"That cad's not worth rowing with, old man!" murmured Nugent. "Don't let him draw you!"

Wharton nodded.

Lord Mauleverer strolled up to speak to the chums of the Remove, with an amiable grin on his good-natured face.

"Jolly glad to see your name in the footer list again, Wharton—as glad as I am not to see my own name in it!" he remarked. "I'm coming along to cheer on Wednesday!"

"You're a good chap, Mauly!" said Wharton remorsefully. "I treated you rottenly when you were captain of the Remove—"

"Oh, bosh!" said Mauly. "I've forgotten that brief and inglorious episode in my jolly old career!"

"But I did, you know; but you know I'm sorry for it, don't you?"

"Of course I do!" said Lord Mauleverer cheerily. "I was one ass and you were another—what?"

"Well, yes, in a way. But I was rather a rotter, too, I'm afraid—and you could never be that."

"Oh, rot! Forget it!" said Mauly. "I've forgotten it. We're jolly good friends again now, aren't we?"

"I hope so," said Harry.

"Then it's all serene."

And Lord Mauleverer nodded amiably and strolled away.

Harry Wharton's brow was wrinkled a little.

"I don't deserve this, Frank," he said, in a low voice. "I—I'd let Mauly punch my head, if he wanted to, and—"

"Lucky he doesn't want to, then," said Nugent, with a smile. "Take his tip, and forget all about it!"

"Yes, that's best. There'll never be anything like it again," said Harry quietly. "I've been a fool, Frank—a dashed, obstinate fool, and a bit of a rotter, I'm afraid. But—"

He did not finish the sentence, and the subject dropped. A good many fellows gathered round Harry in the Rag that evening, and he was soon discussing football with the footballing fraternity, Skinner eyeing him sarcastically and unpleasantly from a distance.

Vernon-Smith joined the cheery circle, with a friendly air, and Harry Wharton greeted the Bounder civilly enough. They had had trouble, but Smithy seemed disposed to forget it, and Wharton was only too willing to do so. As for Skinner's sneering dislike, that did not trouble Harry at all—he had always had that, and he despised Skinner too much to care for his opinion.

On Wednesday afternoon, when the Greyfriars Remove went over to Highcliffe to play Courtenay & Co. on their own ground, Harry Wharton went with the team—centre-forward—to play under Bob Cherry's captaincy.

Many Remove fellows followed the team over, to watch the game, and they watched Wharton more curiously and keenly than anyone else. As a matter of fact, some of them wondered how it would "work." If Harry Wharton "swallowed" Bob as captain, and played up loyally under his orders, it should show, as Skinner sneered, that the age of miracles was not past—certainly it would show that Harry had learned a needed lesson.

Skinner & Co., little interested in football matches as they were, came over to watch the game—in the charitable hope of seeing trouble in the Remove eleven.

They were disappointed.

Bob Cherry was a good skipper, but neither he nor any other Remove fellow believed that he equalled Wharton in the captaincy. But his followers backed him up loyally; and none was more loyal than the former captain of the Remove.

Certainly there was no "swank" about Wharton now—not the faintest sign that he resented his new position in the eleven. In the first half the score was goal to goal; and it was close on the finish when Harry Wharton put in the winning kick, scoring from a pass received from Bob Cherry.

Greyfriars came off the field victors by two goals to one, and in a mood of considerable satisfaction—which was not shared by the amiable Skinner.

"We came over here for nothing, after all," grumbled Skinner; and he set out on a discontented tramp back to Greyfriars. "That's cad's gettin' up in the stirrups again, with all his old airs and graces. Shouldn't wonder if we see him captain of the Remove again next term. Rotten, I call it! Other fellows would have been sacked for what he did."

"Rotten favouritism!" said Snoop.

"Just what I think," said Skinner, and sniffed.

As a matter of fact, he did not think anything of the kind.

Nobody cared, however, whether Skinner was dissatisfied or not. The Greyfriars crowd rolled home in high good humour, with another victory to their credit and the Famous Five on the best of terms. After tea five merry juniors walked down the Remove passage together; and Skinner looked out of the doorway of his study, with a sneer.

"I say, Cherry!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob. Bob had always a cheery greeting, even for a discontented, sneering fellow like Skinner.

"I hear that Wharton's going to be captain of the Form again."

"Do you?" said Bob, with a grin. "What a lot of things you hear, Skinner."

"Anything in it?" asked Skinner.

"Nothing at all, Skinner," said Wharton. "That's a bit palpable, old bean. Do you think you can set two fellows by the ears as easily as all that?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob, and the Co. chuckled.

Skinner flushed with anger.

"Well, you're no great shakes of a skipper, Cherry!" he sneered. "From what I could see at the match to-day, Wharton was the big noise."

"Gather round, you fellows, and listen to Skinner on football!" called out Bob Cherry. "Listen to the man who knows!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Skinner!" chuckled Nugent. "Tell us the difference between a goal-keeper and a goalpost—if you know it?"

"The if-falness is terrific!" chorled Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, cackle away!" said Skinner savagely. "If I were captain, I'd jolly well be captain, I know that. You're one of the has-beens now, Cherry."

"Which is better than being one of the 'never-was's,'" said Bob cheerily.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Famous Five walked on, laughing, leaving the mischief-maker scowling. It was no longer in the power of a mischief-maker to cause trouble in the happy circle of the chums of the Remove.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Skinner Takes a Hand!

"SLOVENLY!"

Harry Wharton set his lips. He had stepped into Mr. Quelch's study, a couple of days after the Highcliffe match, with lines to deliver. In the opinion of most of the Remove, those lines had not been wholly deserved. It was undoubted that Mr. Quelch was still extremely severe with the junior who had given him so much trouble.

He had relaxed a good deal of late. But Wharton was not in his good graces by any means, and every slight fault was very sharply visited.

Wharton was patient under it; he had learned patience now. He knew very well that he had justly forfeited Mr. Quelch's good opinion, and that he could not hope to win it back in a day or a week.

But this time something of his old sulky anger revived, as Mr. Quelch pronounced his impot to be "slovenly." For Wharton had taken particular care with his lines, as now he always did; and he had expected at least to give satisfaction, if not to win commendation.

"Slovenly!" repeated Mr. Quelch sharply. "This will not do, Wharton! These lines must be written again."

"What's the matter with them, sir?" asked Harry, as respectfully as he could.

"I have said that they are slovenly. Take them away, and bring me the imposition properly and cleanly written."

Wharton took the lines back. He had finished that impot before tea, and left it in his study. It had to be taken in at six, and at six he had gone to Study No. 1 for it, and brought it down, without thinking of examining it. But now a sudden thought came into his mind, and he opened out the sheets and



Smack! The cad of the Remove staggered against the door of Mr. Quelch's study as Wharton's hand smote him. Next minute Skinner and Wharton were fighting. Mr. Quelch fairly glared at the two juniors fighting in the masters' corridor. "Boys! Cease this instantly!" he shouted. (See Chapter 12.)

looked at them. The top sheet was in good order; the second was smeared and blotted; and the third smeared and covered with dirty finger-marks.

Wharton flushed with anger. "Mr. Quelch, someone has done this!" he exclaimed. "I thought the lines were all right—I left them all right. It's a trick."

Mr. Quelch frowned. "This is a very extraordinary statement, Wharton, and you cannot expect me to accept such an explanation—from you, at least. You may go. I shall expect the lines before bed-time."

Wharton controlled his resentment, with difficulty.

"Very well, sir," he said quietly. He left the study, with the spoiled impot in his hand, and deep anger in his breast. Some malicious fellow, evidently, had visited his study and "mucked up" the lines, obviously to bring down Mr. Quelch's wrath upon him once more. Probably Skinner—perhaps Snoop. There was no evidence on the matter.

"Licked!" It was Skinner's voice, as Wharton turned away after shutting Mr. Quelch's door behind him.

Wharton looked quickly at the cad of the Remove. His eyes gleamed dangerously.

"So it was you, Skinner?" Skinner stared. "What was me, if a fellow may ask?" "I left my lines in my study, and someone has mucked them up, leaving the top sheet untouched, so that I took them to Mr. Quelch without knowing," said Harry savagely.

"Gammon!" "Was it you, you cad?" "Not guilty, my lord—if it happened," said Skinner. "Did you spin a yarn like that to Quelch?"

Wharton breathed hard. "You came along here expecting that I was getting a licking from Mr. Quelch," he said. "That looks as if you did it."

"What an intellect!" said Skinner admiringly. "Sherlock Holmes isn't in it with you, Wharton! You ought to be a detective. You've taken a dirty, smudgy impot in like that to Mr. Quelch, and you're not licked? What is the old fool letting you off for?"

Wharton almost laughed. Deeply annoyed as he was, there was something entertaining in Skinner's disappointment at the failure of his trickery. It was clear enough that Skinner had been loafing near the Form master's study, in the hope of hearing a "licking" going on. Once more Harold Skinner's amiable hopes had been blighted.

"I'd jolly well punch you," said Harry, "but you're not worth it—you're not fit for a decent fellow to touch."

"Are you a decent fellow?" yawned Skinner.

Wharton clenched his hands. But he unclenched them again. A "scrap" just outside the Form master's door was not the way to regain the good opinion of Mr. Quelch.

Skinner gave him a bitter look. "So you're sucking up to the old fool, and getting into his good graces again!" he said. "Blessed if I catch on! But THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 888.

there's no fool like an old fool—I suppose that's it."

"Are you calling Mr. Quelch a fool because he hasn't caned me for nothing?" said Harry contemptuously. "Well, I don't agree with you—and, what is more, I won't let you talk like that, Skinner. Cheese it!"

"Won't you?" jeered Skinner. "Are you getting fond of Quelch again? Mustn't a fellow even call him names? Well, he's an old fool! And I'll say it again if you like—a confounded old fool! Seo!"

And Skinner snapped his fingers in Wharton's face.

Smack!

The cad of the Remove reeled back from an open hand that smote him on the cheek with a crack like a pistol-shot.

He staggered against Mr. Quelch's door with a yell.

The next moment he was springing at Wharton.

"You rotter! Take that!"

They were fighting in a second more. Mr. Quelch's door was hurled wide open, as Skinner knew very well that it would be at the uproar of a fight outside in the corridor. The astute Skinner would not have tackled so hefty a fighting-man had he not been sure of an interruption.

Mr. Quelch fairly glared at the two juniors, fighting in the masters' corridor only a yard of two from his doorway.

"Boys! Cease this instantly!" he shouted.

Skinner jumped back. He was glad enough to cease; even in those few moments he had had enough, and more. His nose was streaming red.

"Yes, sir!" he gasped.

"Wharton! You are fighting here—at my very door! How dare you!"

Wharton's eyes blazed.

He was to blame—not Skinner, evidently. He was still the "worst boy at Greyfriars," in Mr. Quelch's eyes. Without a word of inquiry, the blame was placed on him! It was too much.

"I'm sorry, sir!" gasped Skinner. "I couldn't help it, sir!"

"You struck the first blow, I have no doubt, Wharton! I am only too well acquainted with your ungovernable temper."

"If you have no doubt, sir, I needn't trouble to answer!" exclaimed Wharton bitterly.

"No insolence, boy! Tell me directly—did you or did you not strike the first blow?"

"I did."

"I was sure of it! You may go, Skinner. Come into my study, Wharton."

Harry Wharton followed the Remove master into the room; and Skinner winked into space as he walked away. He had succeeded perfectly; he had provoked Wharton into a "scrap" in a spot where scrapping was an extremely serious offence, and he had calculated that the "worst boy at Greyfriars" would have to bear the brunt of the blame. In point of fact, the astute and unscrupulous Skinner was making use of Mr. Quelch to gratify his own petty malice—though such a thing, of course, was never likely to enter the Form master's thoughts.

Mr. Quelch picked up his cane and eyed Wharton grimly.

"Wharton! Of late I have had some hopes of you. I had even begun to think that Dr. Locke's leniency had not, after all, been misplaced. But you are evidently determined to go on in your own headstrong way. I shall punish you severely for attacking a boy in your own Form and fighting outside my study door."

"Oh, I know, sir," said Harry. "I

SOLUTION OF CROSS WORD PUZZLE No. 1.

P	H	O	T	O	G	R	A	R	H	Y	
R		W		G	E	E		C		E	
E	D		T	R	O	L	L		P	S	
P	S		E		I		B		T		
A	T	L	A	S		C	L	O	S	E	
R	U	E							O	E	R
A	B	E	A	M		T	I	T	A	N	
T	P		A		E		S		I		
I	F		F	O	G	E	Y		E	G	
O		W		R	A	T		M		H	
N	O	U	R	I	S	H	M	E	N	T	

can't set myself right with you, and it's no good trying! I'm ready!"

Mr. Quelch paused.

"Why did you attack Skinner?" he demanded.

"I can't tell you. But if I did, what difference would it make? Skinner wouldn't admit it, and you would believe him, not me. I'm the worst fellow at Greyfriars, I know!"

"You are the most audacious and defiant, Wharton, and you shall learn respect for your Form master!" said Mr. Quelch. "You will bend over that chair at once."

"Oh, I'm ready; I expected that!"

"Another insolent word, and—"

Tap!

Mr. Quelch looked round in great irritation as there was a knock. The door opened, and Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, glanced in. Apparently blind to Mr. Quelch's unwelcoming frown, the Fifth Form master rolled into the study, portly and pompous as usual; and the Remove master, signing to Wharton to wait, laid down the cane.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Light at Last!

MR. PROUT gave Wharton a blink, and then looked at Mr. Quelch. Harry Wharton stood and waited with a dark and lowering face.

"Excuse me, Mr. Quelch," said the portly master of the Fifth. "You were about, I think, to punish this boy—er—Wharton?"

EDWIN MYERS OF THE SECOND FORM AT GREYFRIARS,



WHO FIGURES PROMINENTLY IN NEXT
WEEK'S GRAND STORY—

"TO SHIELD HIS FATHER!"

"I was," said Mr. Quelch tartly. "And if you will excuse me for a few minutes, Mr. Prout—"

The Fifth Form master waved a podgy hand.

"Not at all, Mr. Quelch. I feel bound to speak to you before you punish Wharton."

"Really, Mr. Prout—"

"Far be it from me to intervene between another master and a boy belonging to his Form," said Mr. Prout, with dignity. "In my own case, I should never dream of allowing such interference. But I feel bound to bring to your knowledge a circumstance of which you are obviously unaware."

Mr. Quelch controlled his impatience with difficulty. He was a man of few words himself, and Mr. Prout was a man of many. In the best of tempers, Mr. Quelch sometimes found it difficult to listen patiently to the long-winded gentleman. And he was far from being in the best of tempers now.

"You are about to punish Wharton for—hem—fighting with another boy—the boy Skinner—"

"Quite so, Mr. Prout; and, really, I do not see why you need interest yourself in the matter," said the Remove master tartly.

"Doubtless you will see when I have explained, sir," said Mr. Prout, with a great deal of dignity. "I was a witness to the occurrence. I was about to leave my study, sir, and had opened the door, when I heard these two boys disputing, and I was shocked, sir—shocked and horrified at what I heard."

"If you would be so kind as to make your meaning clear, Mr. Prout—" suggested the Remove master, almost at the end of his patience. His tone really seemed to imply that he doubted whether Mr. Prout had any meaning at all to make clear.

"The boy Skinner, sir, alluded to you by an opprobrious epithet," said Mr. Prout ponderously.

"Indeed! That was not why Wharton struck him, I suppose?" said the Remove master sarcastically.

"He did not, I think, strike him. It was a slap," said Mr. Prout. "And certainly the boy deserved it. A boy who alludes to his Form master as a fool—"

"A—a—a what?"

"An old fool!"

"An—an—an old fool!" said Mr. Quelch dazedly.

"A confounded old fool, sir!" said Mr. Prout impressively.

"Bless my soul!"

"Perhaps it was not Wharton's business to check Skinner," said Mr. Prout. "Nevertheless, I can scarcely consider him blameworthy for having done so. If you consider him so, Mr. Quelch, you will proceed with his punishment. I have no desire whatever to interfere. I simply regarded it as my duty to place you in possession of the facts."

And with that Mr. Prout turned ponderously to the door, and sailed out of the study, portly and dignified.

There was silence in the study after the door had closed behind the Fifth Form master.

Mr. Quelch looked at Wharton, and Wharton looked at the floor.

When the Remove master spoke at last his voice was very quiet.

"Wharton!"

"Yes, sir."

"You did not tell me why you were fighting with Skinner. If the matter is as Mr. Prout tells me, you could scarcely repeat what Skinner had said. I acknowledge that. Nevertheless—"

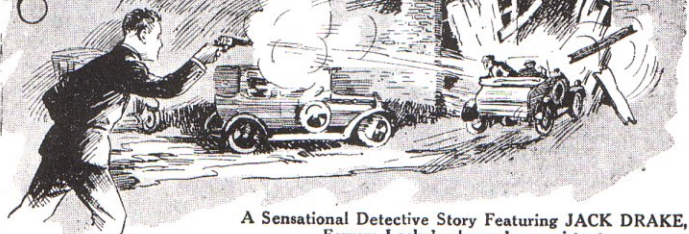
Mr. Quelch paused. "Now that I am

(Continued on page 25.)

HOW'S IT DONE? A room containing a vast quantity of valuables is locked up, its windows securely shuttered. Outside the locked door is a sentry, inside the room itself is another sentry, yet the notorious motor bandits manage to break in!

THE DEPUTY DETECTIVE

By Hedley Scott



A Sensational Detective Story Featuring JACK DRAKE, Ferrers Locke's clever boy assistant.

The Raid by Night!

LOOK, Watson—the signal!”
As the white handkerchief fluttered out from the grounds of Benjamin Foneyzy’s magnificent house a tall, dark figure peered over the broad stone parapet that girded the roof top and jerked his companion by the arm.

“Good!” was the grumbling reply. “Durned glad I am to hear it, Thomas. Why, I’m freezing up here!”

“There’ll be plenty of work to warm you up presently,” said Thomas significantly. “I don’t agree with the chief’s bombastic methods, though. It’s bad enough cracking a crib at any time, without being fool enough to tell the police beforehand the name of the place. Still,” added Thomas thoughtfully, “I rather think we shall get away with it!”

“Easy as winking!” chuckled Watson. “The bloomin’ fools of police have been watching for us on the ground while here we’ve been on the top of the blessed roof since dusk like a couple of birds—”

“Not yet gat-birds, either, eh?”
“Oh, you’re too funny to live! Ere, give us a hand with this confounded cylinder, and mind the bloomin’ thing doesn’t play tricks. Give me a jenny and a life-preserver every time to these modern tools of housebreaking, mate!”

The speaker hoisted a bulky-looking cylinder across his back while his companion strapped it into position.
“Now for the giddy masks, mate! Reminds me of Hun days!”

From a couple of small haversacks Watson and Thomas extracted two gas-masks, similar to those used in the Great War. These were donned, giving a weird touch to the appearance of these intrepid bandits.

“All ready?” asked Watson, in a whisper. “The drainpipe, luckily, runs right down the face of the wall, passing within a foot of the balcony that spans the room in which the swag is being guarded.”

“According to that signal the chief

gave us,” said Thomas, “there’s only one man guarding the stuff. Seems a pity to waste a full cylinder of gas upon him, don’t it, mate?”

But Watson was already peering over the parapet prior to climbing down the face of the wall. He made a gesture that brought his companion to his side.

“I’ll go first!” he whispered. “See, the road is clear. Foneyzy’s men are having a little light refreshment with

the chauffeurs over by the big gates. Expect the chief has sent ‘em out a few bottles to keep ‘em quiet,” added Watson, with a grin. “He never leaves anything to chance.”

Without another word, the two bandits began their perilous climb, Watson, on account of the cumbersome burden he carried, moving with more caution than his less burdened companion. Like two huge silhouetted flies, they descended foot by foot, with scarcely a slip. Hardened offenders, these bandits could climb a wall twice as difficult without courting a broken neck.

“Hiss!”
Watson uttered the warning as his feet came within a foot of the balcony-rail that spanned the window of the room in which Inspector Pycroft was mounting guard.

The climbers paused, breathing a trifle heavily, as they listened for any warning sounds from within the room. But all was quiet.

Watson began to shrug his shoulders as very faintly now came the opening bars of a popular dance-tune from the ball-room situated twenty or more yards away.

“Ever done a job like this to music, mate?” he whispered.

“Get on with it!” came the response in an equally subdued whisper. “I’m not a blessed fly! Can’t ‘ang on here all night!”

Watson grunted and swung one foot out so that it came to rest upon the balcony rail. Clinging the surface of the wall, he succeeded, without difficulty, in bringing his other foot on to the top of the balcony. Another second, and he had dropped to the stone flooring, his rubber-soled shoes making no sound.

He crept to the shuttered window and listened intently. From within came no sound. A slight motion of the hand signalled Thomas to continue his climb. Two more seconds and both these cool scoundrels were outside the barred shutters of the room in which Inspector

CHARACTERS YOU WILL MEET.

JACK DRAKE, a boy of fifteen with a gift for detective work, the assistant of Ferrers Locke, the world-famous scientific investigator.
INSPECTOR PYCROFT, of the C.I.D. at Scotland Yard, a friend of Locke and Drake’s.

THE CHIEF, a mysterious person who directs the coups of the notorious motor bandits, and of whose identity nothing is known to the police.

THOMAS and **WATSON**, members of the gang.

While Locke is away on the Continent Drake is given the opportunity of handling his first case, his instructions being to lay the rascally motor bandits by the heels.

He soon discovers that the chief of the motor bandits is in some way connected with a school.

After a whole heap of exciting adventures Drake accompanies Inspector Pycroft down to the house of a Mr. Benjamin Foneyzy, an Italian millionaire living at Chiddinglyfold. The occasion is the coming of age of Foneyzy’s daughter. As is to be expected, there is a wonderful array of jewellery, etc., on view. The notorious motor bandits have notified Scotland Yard in advance of their intention to “lift” the jewellery. In consequence, every precaution is taken. Armed sentries roam the grounds, armed footmen parade the passages, etc. Pycroft himself is locked inside the “gift” room after the presents have been viewed by the guests, a loaded revolver on his knees. The windows of the room are shuttered; the door is locked.

Meantime, Drake is prowling around on his lonesome. Chancing to stroll out into the grounds for a breath of fresh air, he is astonished to see someone signalling with a handkerchief towards the house.

(Now read on.)

croft, a revolver lying across his knees, was communing with himself as to the fatality of thieves trying to steal the precious stuff over which he mounted guard.

"Poor Pyecroft! He was doomed to be surprised on that score.

"Reckon this is one of the softest jobs I've ever struck!" he ruminated. "Guess I'll help myself to a little refreshment."

He rose from the comfortable armchair and poured himself out a drink—the first—it must be said in all fairness to him—he had had since his vigil started. Then he resumed his seat, toying absent-mindedly with his loaded revolver. For ten minutes he sat thus, keeping time with the strains of the music that reached him from the ball-room.

Suddenly his revolver arm began to flap; finally it came to rest on his lap. With a start, Inspector Pyecroft sat up.

"I'm sleepy!" he muttered, rubbing his eyes and shrugging his shoulders. "That drink must be about forty over proof if that's what it does for a chap." He grimaced to himself, but even that was a semi-failure, for his facial muscles seemed stiff—unresponsive to his will.

"This won't do!" he grunted, surprised at the sleepiness of his own voice. "Good lor!" he broke off sharply as a horrible suspicion entered his head. "Surely that drink was not drugged?"

The thought gave him temporary strength. With a great effort, he roused himself from the chair and half staggered over to the small decanter. His hands closed upon it, but only for a second. That peculiar tired feeling was robbing him of all his will power.

And yet the feeling that was fast stealing over him was anything but unpleasant—it was restful, alluring, all powerful.

One more—move he made to grip the decanter. His trembling right hand closed upon it, and then—

Thud!

Pyecroft, decanter in hand, had crashed to the carpeted floor in an unconscious heap.

The two masked bandits outside the barred window were listening for some such sound, and they exchanged triumphant glances as it reached their ears.

"He's put to sleep!" whispered Watson. "Jove, there was enough nitrous oxide in that cylinder to put a dozen fellows to sleep! Some constitution that feller's got!"

"Some medals he'll have, too, when they discover him asleep and the swag gone!" grinned Thomas. "And now for these cursed shutters!"

The two of them knelt on the flooring of the balcony and set to work. In two minutes a large square of glass had been quietly removed from the window-frame. In another three minutes the first metal band that held the shutters together had been "slipped" from its socket.

"Easy!" grunted Watson, who soon had the second bar in hand. "All serene, mate. We don't have to 'and in our cards and be announced now!"

But Thomas was in no mood for banter. He seized a portion of the shutter and bent it back upon its hinges. Softly, without a sound, it was swung inward, the white Watson's broad figure screened from the view of any prowlers below the flash of light thus displayed from the room. The window was similarly treated.

"Now!"

In two seconds Thomas had slipped through the aperture; in three, Watson had joined him. Just as swiftly and

noisily the window and shutters were swung back into position.

"Pyecroft!"

Both the bandits voiced the subdued exclamation as they beheld the sprawling figure of the C.I.D. man on the carpet before them. But their eyes were soon attracted to the glittering array of jewellery and silver that graced the long, narrow table.

"Worth all the trouble we've had," was Watson's comment. "Gee! There's a quarter of a million of stuff here if there's a penny!"

Without loss of time now the bandits began to bestow upon their persons all the most valuable articles the table contained: the pearl necklaces, the diamond bangles, the bejewelled watches. The larger presents were left untouched.

Used to their nefarious trade as they were, the bandits were obliged to pause and admire a beautiful string of blood-red rubies that sparkled in a platinum setting.

"Gee! Now these are real sparklers!" grinned Watson. "We shouldn't have to crack many cribs before retiring if they all contained stuff like these rubies."

"Those are the famous Montigny rubies!" whispered Thomas. "Foneyzy's daughter is engaged to Count Montigny. That's his present to her. Do you think the chief'll be able to dispose of them, mate?"

"Him? Why, he can dispose of anything. And his orders were that we should make a point of bagging these 'ere sparklers. He knows a good thing, don't he?"

"Not 'arf!"

The rubies followed the fate of their less important companions. There now remained the smaller pieces of silver plate to be "packed up." The haversacks that had originally contained the gas-masks now came in useful.

And while these cool customers went about their task as if it were a perfectly natural and legal thing to do, Inspector Pyecroft of the C.I.D., sprawled upon the carpet in an ungainly heap, deep in the arms of Morpheus. A little more observant, and he would have noticed, before it had been too late, the point of a small brass nozzle that poked through the ventilator grille just below the level of the ceiling, would have noticed, too, a slight discoloration of the bright metal of the grille that surrounded that same nozzle.

But Pyecroft had been blind to these significant "pointers," even as he was now blind to the two masked figures that moved noiselessly about him collecting the swag he had wagered his reputation no motor bandit would dare to "lift."

Alas for Inspector Pyecroft's reputation!

The Getaway!

AS Jack Drake stood peering into the inky blackness that encircled the grounds of Benjamin Foneyzy's house, the white shirt and cuffs of the man who had given the signal disappeared.

"Hang it!" grunted Blake, moving out from the cover of the wall. "Now, where the deuce has the fellow gone?"

He pulled the lapels of his own dress-jacket over the broad expanse of white shirt-front as he moved forward, and his action explained the mystery. The man in front must have done the same thing. How else could he have been swallowed up in the darkness? Where, on that stretch of lawn, could he have found cover?

"That's the wheeze!" muttered Drake, his eyes nearly bulging from their sockets in his eagerness to pierce that curtain of blackness. "The fellow's still out there!"

He broke into a trot, his slipped feet making scarcely a sound on the dew-speckled lawn. Gauging where he reckoned the man to have been the boy sleuth drew within a couple of yards of the spot and stopped.

But again he was doomed to disappointment. Not the slightest trace was there to be seen of the man who had made that mysterious signal. The earth might have opened and swallowed him up for all sign there was of him.

Undecided how to act, Drake stood still, listening. Suddenly his keen ears caught the sound of moving feet somewhere to his right. With brisk strides, the boy sleuth strode out in that direction.

The sounds were drawing nearer now. Was the man coming back to repeat his signal?

With fast-beating heart, the boy sleuth waited. He could hardly contain his excitement as a gleam of white came into view—the tell-tale gleam of a shirt-front. Larger and larger it grew as the wearer came nearer. Then suddenly, to Drake's further satisfaction, a white handkerchief fluttered out.

Crash!

Drake flung himself bodily at the man and rolled over with him on the dew-speckled grass.

"Got you, you scoundrel!"

But the boy sleuth's triumph died a swift death as the well-known voice of Benjamin Foneyzy reached his astonished ears.

"What the devil are you doing? How dare you! Who are you?"

Three questions were gasped out angrily by the millionaire. They completely took the wind out of Drake's sails. So thunderstruck was he that he remained with his knees pressed into the millionaire's portly waistcoat.

"Take your confounded knee away, you clumsy fool!" growled the incensed host. "Lor! Has a man to walk about his own grounds with a lantern to stop every blind bat of a fool barging into him?"

Drake seized on the explanation the Italian had put into his mouth, as it were. He jumped up, full of apologies.

"Oh, it's you, is it?"

Somewhat mollified when he saw who the "clumsy fool" was, Benjamin Foneyzy rubbed his injured "waistcoat," the while he listened to Drake's repeated apologies.

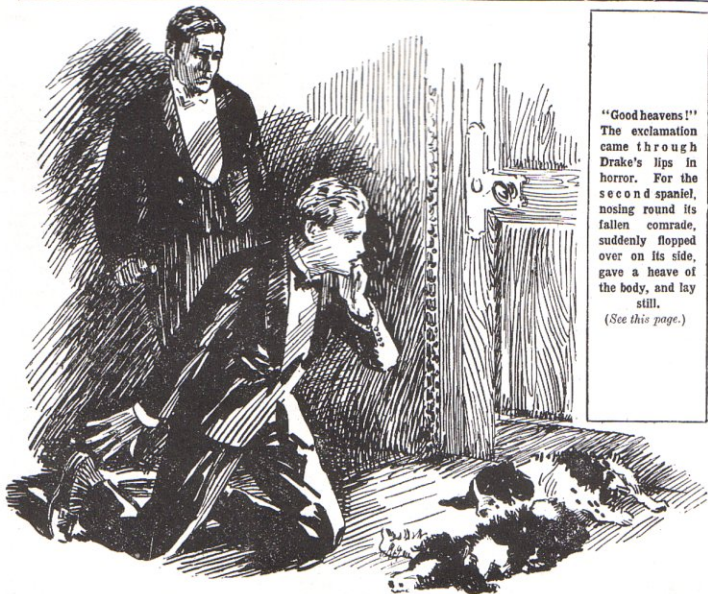
"I know it's confoundedly dark!" grunted the millionaire. "But you called me a scoundrel, if I remember rightly, young man. Doesn't seem as if it was an accident that you barged into me!"

Drake instantly wished Foneyzy's memory hadn't been so accurate. He was now forced to explain his actions, conscious all the time of a sense of ridicule.

Foneyzy was scornful of Drake's suggestion that a man—one of the guests—had signalled to somebody with a handkerchief.

"But the fellow might have been blowing his nose, even as I was about to when you charged at me," he said. "Pooh! If that's the way you detectives go to work I don't think much of your methods!"

And, grumbling to himself about "clumsy, idiotic boys playing at detectives," the incensed host walked back into the ball-room.



"Good heavens!"
The exclamation came through Drake's lips in horror. For the second spaniel, nosing round its fallen comrade, suddenly flopped over on its side, gave a heave of the body, and lay still.

(See this page.)

Drake was still firmly convinced, however, that his theory was right. Someone had signalled right enough. A man would have to be at least seven feet high to have wiped his nose in the position in which Drake had seen the handkerchief formerly. And he knew none of the guests was that height.

Perhaps Pycroft could throw some light on the mystery.

With a thoughtful frown upon his handsome face, Jack Drake sauntered back to the house. As he entered the main door two spaniels came leaping about his knees.

A dog-lover, the boy sleuth paused to fondle their heads, and then passed on up the staircase. The spaniels followed at his heels friskily.

Outside the door of the gift-room stood a footman whom Drake knew to be one of Pycroft's special squad. He had just finished his beat, which took him the whole length of the landing and the adjoining passage.

"All O.K.," he said, recognising Drake. "Reckon this is a soft job."

Drake did not reply, a circumstance that rather nettled the policeman, for he recommenced his tramp.

The boy sleuth was about to rap the panels of the door, in order to attract Pycroft's attention, when one of the spaniels leaped up and playfully tugged at his shirt cuff.

"Down, boy!" coaxed Drake, stooping to pat the animal.

Again his right hand travelled aloft to rap the panel of the door when, to his surprise and horror, one of the

spaniels dropped upon its side as if it had been the victim of a stroke.

Full of concern, and anxious to see what had happened to the animal, the boy sleuth knelt down beside it. The other spaniel began to nose round its fallen companion inquiringly.

"Good heavens!"
The exclamation came through Drake's lips in horror. For the second spaniel flopped over on its side, gave a heave of its body, and then lay still.

His brows knit together in perplexity, the boy sleuth knelt lower, observing the steady rise and fall of the animal's chest, denoting a normal breathing.

"What the thump has happened?" Drake asked himself the question.

And then he jumped to his feet, his right hand rubbing frantically at his eyes. For, kneeling in front of the door, he had become conscious of a powerful, sleepy feeling stealing over him that told its own story.

A few seconds after he had stood upright his head cleared, his senses returned to normal.

"Escape of gas!" he reflected. "By Jove—"

He broke off short as he reflected that none of the rooms, from the first floor upwards, was fitted with gas. Besides, he argued with himself, there was no odour to this escaping gas, and ordinary household gas would make its presence known in a much more "whiffy" manner.

Instinctively the boy sleuth knew that things were not as they should be. Gas was escaping from the room in which

the gifts were displayed—gas was escaping from a room in which no household gas was laid on!

What did it mean?

He asked himself the question a dozen times as he stood there gazing down at the tiny slit between the bottom of the door and the flooring.

And then realisation came to him.

Two energetic movements of his arms and the two "gassed" spaniels were dragged across the landing where the air was purer.

Then Drake sped off like a hare. Down the staircase he went at a bound, much to the surprise of one or two guests who were strolling in his direction. Telling three of Poney's armed footmen to guard the door of the gift-room, he raced round the gravel drive to the side of the house.

A glance of his keen eyes told him what had happened. Attached to a long piece of rubber tubing he could see the outline of an object shaped like a cylinder that rested on the floor of the balcony twenty feet above his head.

Another glance, and he had traced the rubber tubing to the exterior of the ventilator grille.

And yet the window of the gift-room appeared to be shuttered.

Drake was about to give the alarm and chance making a fool of himself, when a shaft of light from the window of the gift-room almost blinded him. The shutter had been opened.

There was no mistake now. The thieves had carried out their threat. They had burgled Poney's place

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under the very noses of the police. They were making their get-away!

"Help! Thieves! This way!"
As Drake's stentorian yells rent the night air two burly figures appeared through the narrow strip of light from the room. They started violently. Drake saw that much as he dragged his revolver from his pocket.

"Hands up, you scoundrels!" he rapped, levelling the weapon at the two men who were now treading the balcony. "Stay where you are or I'll drill you!"

Crash!
Something heavy flew through the air. Drake did not know that it was a haversack loaded full with heavy silver plate. It caught him squarely in the face, bowling him over like a scuttled rabbit, half stunning him.

In a moment a long rope whizzed out from the balcony. A gleam of steel shone as a great hook attached to it was made fast round the balcony rail.

Then, even as there came the pad of many feet and the shouts of the startled guests, the gas-masked bandits swarmed down the rope like two monkeys and made a bolt for it, the hindmost stopping for a second or so to snatch up the haversack he had hurled at the boy sleuth.

Drake sat up, rubbing his damaged face.

"This way!" he yelled. "Quick! They're escaping!"

He scrambled to his feet, began to search for his revolver, which had fallen from his hand, and breathed a sigh of relief as his strong fingers closed upon it.

"They're heading for the cars!" he yelled, running after the fleeing bandits.

A score of guests, with Benjamin Foneyzy at their head, came tearing down the gravel drive. In response to Drake's yells they surged in a body towards the cars parked in front of the big gates.

But the bandits had got a three-minute start, and they made the most of it.

"Stop!" roared Drake. "Stop them, you fellows!"
The chauffeurs, who had been merrymaking on their own some distance away, realised that something was amiss. They, too, began to race towards the fugitives.

"Hang them, they'll escape!" growled Drake, coming to a halt. "I don't like this way, but it's the only thing I can do!"

His revolver glinted in the darkness as he took aim at the hindmost of the two fugitives.

Crack!
A spurt of flame, a loud report, and a scream followed. Evidently one of the bandits had been hit.

Drake saw the fellow stagger for a moment, and then saw him race on as if nothing had happened. Two seconds more and both the bandits were screened from their pursuers as they raced behind the parked cars.

The note of an engine suddenly boomed out, mingling weirdly enough with the frantic shouts of the guests, the high-pitched tones of Foneyzy, and the inquiring yells of the chauffeurs. They, unfortunately, were absolutely in the dark as to what had happened. Like sheep they now headed for Foneyzy & Co. instead of towards the cars.

"They're gone!" Drake howled the words savagely.

Next moment a small two-seater detached itself from the group of cars
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and bounded forward. In it, plainly revealed now by the rays of a flicker moon, could be seen the two bandits, still wearing their masks.

Crash!
With a recklessness that was in keeping with these notorious bandits, the driver of the car set the two-seater full-tilt at the big gates. It shot through them as if they were made of match-board, and raced on apparently little the worse for the contact.

Crack!
Another bullet sped away from Drake's revolver just as the two-seater and its passengers disappeared from the view of the pursuers round a bend in

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the road. But none knew better than the boy sleuth that he had missed his target.

"After them!" he yelled, jumping into the nearest car. "Don't let them escape!"

And by the time Benjamin Foneyzy and his swarm of guests reached the parked cars Jack Drake, the boy sleuth, was setting his car at the broken gates that enclosed the drive.

"My poor daughter!" moaned Foneyzy. "What a birthday-present! And none of the stuff insured!"

He stood there wringing his hands in misery and despair, the while the more younger members of his party were bundling into the various cars, keen to join in the chase.

Foneyzy was still wringing his hands and calling upon everyone to help in the chase when the last of the cars disappeared through the broken gate.

Still wringing his hands, he walked dismally back to the gift-room, unlocked the door, had the shock of his life when he saw all the most valuable presents gone, had an insane desire to kick the prostrate figure of Inspector Pycroft as he sprawled there on the floor, had a more insane desire to fall asleep himself as he began to inhale the pungent fumes of the nitrous oxide, and finally succumbed to this latter craving in as undignified a manner as Pycroft before him.

Meantime, a certain guest of the host and hostess peeped in at the open door of the gift-room, taking care to hold his thumb and finger over his nostrils, noticed, with a malicious grin, the two inert forms on the carpet, chuckled at the sight of the disordered table that had once contained so valuable a collection of birthday presents, and made the mental observation:

"Behold the sleeping beauties!"

Jack Drake's Triumph!

THE few residents of Chiddingfold were awakened from their slumbers by the shouts of thirty or more evening-clad gentlemen tearing along in their cars as if they were out to break all speed records.

One after the other they flashed by, one after another rang out the shrill blasts of the motor-horns and the more nerve-wracking groans of the Klaxons.

At unlighted windows showed night-capped heads, as these peaceful inhabitants stared out in righteous indignation at the stream of noisy traffic.

Meantime, the car containing the motor bandits was going all out. Only the rumble of its engine told Drake that he was on the right track, for no rear light gleamed out from the car in front, as was natural to expect.

The boy sleuth, who was as good at the driving-wheel of a car as he was on a motor-cycle, got the best out of the engine; but, unfortunately for him, it was a car that had seen better days. One by one the other pursuers began to overtake him.

On and on raced the stream of motor traffic, none of the guests, with the exception of Jack Drake, knowing really whom he had to follow. Thrills there were in plenty, as some of the sportsmen present began a race on their own. Cars leapt three abreast that winding road in their drivers' endeavours to overtake the next man.

Bewailing his misfortune at having jumped into one of the worst cars it was possible to have in a case of such emergency, the boy sleuth kept on, why he did not know.

The luck was against him. He realised that with a bitter feeling. If only he had had a decent bus he'd show these motor bandits whether they could give him the slip or not!

He drove on, the miserable chug-chug of his engine rousing all his animosity against an unkind fate. The rear lights of the cars in front of him made a peculiar, glittering picture along that stretch of road; they seemed to be coming from all directions. He understood why a moment later, for he came to a forked road that branched off in three directions. He wondered which road the bandits had taken.

And apparently some of the guests were in the same quandary. From a side turning farther along one stretch of

road came two or three cars. Evidently they had missed the trail and were doubling on their tracks.

Drake, staring fixedly through his windscreen, gritted his teeth and drove on.

For fully twenty minutes he remained like a Sphinx at the wheel.

Suddenly he jumped, an action that nigh cost him a nasty spill, for in so doing his hands left the steering-wheel. The car, perhaps having had its fill of the chase—one never knows the "mentality" of these old cars—ran straight for the hedge. With a dexterous twist of his wrists the boy sleuth brought the old "scrap iron" on to the level again, and opened up the engine to its fullest capacity.

He was nearer the motor bandits than he had dared dream.

Every now and then a speck of something hit against his windscreen—something dark of hue. It was that strange occurrence that had caused him to jump.

He knew what it meant now. Those dark specks were crimson in colour.

"The wounded man!" Drake voiced the words exultantly. For those specks of crimson that splashed consistently against his windscreen were daubs of blood.

With a whoop of triumph he set his car all out. Bit by bit it drew level with the car that had been in front.

"That's the car all right," reflected the boy sleuth, a thrill of excitement flooding his veins. "The wily scoundrels have doubled on their tracks and joined in the chase. What luck!"

He spoke as if he had drawn the first prize in a sweepstake. The risk of the affair never entered his youthful head.

He was going to capture these two wily bandits or die in the attempt.

There was no mistaking his quarry now. On drawing nearer Drake saw the huddled figure of one man propped up against one side of the car. His right arm trailed over the edge of the hood swaying to the pressure of the wind. And from this arm came the splashes of crimson.

"Now!"

The boy sleuth set his teeth as his car drew alongside the two-seater. It was only then that Drake realised that he was the last member of the chase—all the remaining guests having sped to the front.

The driver of the two-seater growled out a warning as the car containing the boy sleuth came perilously near his own. Little did he imagine that the driver crouched there was Jack Drake.

"Hi! Steady on! Do you want to send us all to perdition?"

Drake laughed aloud. What cared he for a risk like that? His triumph was at hand, he felt sure. Leaving the steering-wheel to take care of itself, he made a sudden jump for the car of his quarry.

It was a risky thing to do, but it served a double purpose. It meant that he was aboard the bandits' car, it meant that the driver of the car instinctively pulled up.

And by the time the brakes had slid on, by the time the driver of the two-seater had drawn pretty extensively upon a vulgar vocabulary, he found himself gazing down the barrel of a gleaming automatic.

"Hands up!" rapped Jack Drake grimly. "You can't pull the wool over my eyes!"

"Jack Drake!" gasped Thomas, for he

it was; and he was quick to understand the menace in the boy sleuth's voice. "You—you—"

"The game's up, my pretty bird!" said Drake harshly. "You beat me at the starting-gate, but I've headed you off at the winning-post—eh?"

The scared gaze of the bandit dwelt to left and right of him as if seeking a way of escape. But escape there was none. Drake was taking no chances. One glance had told him that the second bandit was badly hit, was unconscious, in fact. That eased his task considerably. His whole attention could be concentrated upon Mr. Thomas.

"You're going to back this car, Thomas," ordered the boy sleuth, "and you're going to drive to Fonzeny's place. I shall sit by your side ready to make you a present of an ounce of lead at the first sign of treachery. Get a move on. Fonzeny will be anxious to meet you. I'm sure. I only wish I could get my hands upon the man who gave you the signal—the fellow who waved the lanky!"

Thomas looked at the boy sleuth sharply. "Did—did you see that?" he asked incredulously.

"I did!"

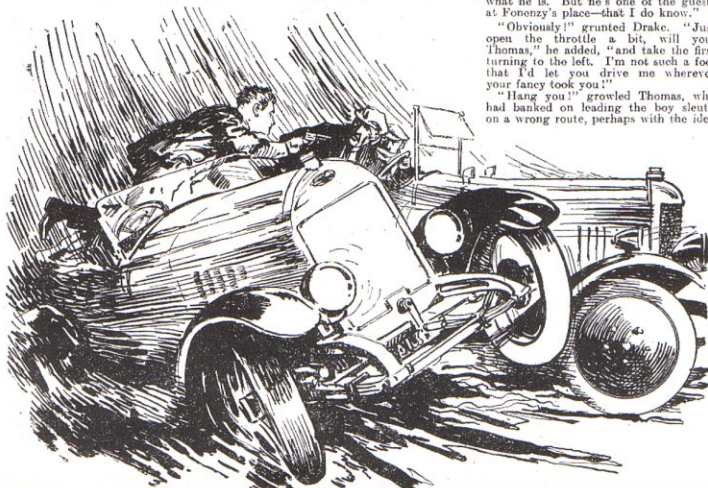
"You're sharper than I gave you credit for being," growled Thomas. "Then we've got the chief to blame for this little lot!"

"No doubt you'll get away scot-free if you care to split on him," said Drake cheerfully. "Tell me his name."

"I can't tell you anything about him, guv'nor," said Thomas, regretfully enough. "No one knows who he is or what he is. But he's one of the guests at Fonzeny's place—that I do know."

"Obviously!" granted Drake. "Just open the throttle a bit, will you, Thomas," he added, "and take the first turning to the left. I'm not such a fool that I'd let you drive me wherever your fancy took you!"

"Hang you!" growled Thomas, who had banked on leading the boy sleuth on a wrong route, perhaps with the idea



"Hi! Steady on!" roared the driver of the two-seater. "Do you want to send us all to perdition?" Drake laughed aloud. Leaving the steering wheel of his car to take care of itself, he made a sudden jump for the car of his quarry.

(See this page.)

of meeting some friends. "I see the game's up!"

And with as good a grace as he could muster the motor-bandit drove the two-seater car back to Benjamin Fonenzy's place.

As it purred up the drive a group of evening-clad gentlemen came hurrying to the scene. They had caught the glint of Drake's weapon, and instinctively they guessed he had returned with a prize.

Foremost among them was Count Montigny, wildly excited. Perhaps he was thinking of the family string of rubies he had parted with for ever.

"You have them?" he gasped, rushing up to Jack Drake. "You, a boy, have made a capture! You have scored where the police have failed!"

It was Thomas who made reply: "Yes, gov'nor, it's a fair cop! Young Jack Drake's worth a whole squad of official police."

Thomas submitted himself to the indignity of handcuffs—Drake was taking not the slightest chance with this slippery customer—and was escorted into the house by Fonenzy's armed guard, which latter was looking very sheepish with itself.

The injured bandit, still unconscious, was relieved of the jewellery and taken into one of the bed-rooms, where his wound was washed and dressed.

Thomas had the mortification of seeing all his share of the "swag" taken from him. He had also the comforting reflection that it was the last bit of swag he would see for a few years; the prison gates seemed to be yawning open for him.

In an excited body the guests made a rush at young Jack Drake and shouldered him aloft.

It was the proudest moment of the boy's life. Statesmen, men of letters, "lions" of the Stock Exchange—all paid their homage to the hero of the hour.

And in this fashion was Ferrers Locke's clever boy assistant escorted to the gift-room, where a terrified manservant had declared Benjamin Fonenzy and Inspector Pycroft were to be found.

They were found. As the wildly excited party filled the doorway the cheers died down. There was Benjamin Fonenzy sitting on the floor; there likewise was Inspector Pycroft. And both

were shaking infuriated fists in each other's faces.

There was a dramatic pause as these two victims of nitrous oxide saw the happy-looking throng in the doorway.

Both scrambled to their feet.

"What the thunder does this mean?" demanded Benjamin Fonenzy wrathfully. "Is it a laughing matter that my house has been burgled under the very noses of the police? Is it—" He broke off, his eyes almost starting from their sockets as a footman appeared carrying on a large silver salver all the missing birthday gifts. "Good lor'!"

As for Inspector Pycroft, he could hardly believe his eyes. During the list-shaking episode on the floor between him and Fonenzy the C.I.D. man had learnt of the bandits' daring entry, of Drake's discovery that they were at work, of their get-away.

And now this! He could not hide a tinge of jealousy as he gazed upon the victor of the hour—the boy young enough to be his own son. But his sporting nature came to the surface.

"Well done, Jack!" There was no lack of enthusiasm in his voice. "Let me be the first of the gassed victims to congratulate you, at any rate!"

He winked expressively at Fonenzy. But the little Italian millionaire, now wildly excited, pushed himself forward. He shook a diminutive fist under the C.I.D. man's nose.

"No, no!" he said emphatically. "I shall be the first. Or," he added significantly, "I'll do what I threatened to do to you, Inspector Pycroft, before we were interrupted."

The C.I.D. man gave in laughingly. Drake's hand was wrung for about five minutes by the excited millionaire. And after that the boy sleuth had to endure the voluble and energetic appreciation of Count Montigny. His beloved rubies were safe after all!

It was quite an hour before they let Drake go, and then, thankful to be away from it all, the boy sleuth retired to his room, closely followed by Inspector Pycroft.

They chatted for half an hour or more, until Drake signalled his intention of retiring.

"Well, I won't grudge you your sleep, old boy," grinned Pycroft ruefully.

'After all, I've had mine. But there's one consolation—we've broken the run of luck of these cursed bandits!"

"Yes, but we've still got ten more of the gang to reckon with, old scout," said Drake grimly. "And the chief is still at large, remember."

"Oh, we'll get him!"

"Sure thing! He was one of the guests here to-night. And I'm going to make it my business to find out which one. But sleep comes first. Cheerio, Pycroft, old bird—and close the door!"

(Now look out for next week's fine instalment of this wonderful yarn, chums!)

Harry Wharton's Last Chance!

(Continued from page 20.)

in possession of the facts, you may speak frankly. Is it actually the case that you—hem—checked Skinner because he was speaking insultingly of me?"

Wharton's face was crimson. "Bending over" would have been a pleasant experience in comparison with this.

"Yes, sir," he gasped.

Another long silence.

"I wish I had known," said Mr. Quelch. "I respect you for not having told me. I am very glad that Mr. Prout intervened. Wharton, if you care to reflect, you must know that you have given me great trouble, and given me cause to deal sternly with you. But I once had a high opinion of you, and I should be very glad to have that high opinion of you again. I hope—I believe now—that my former opinion of you was well founded, and I shall place faith in you to justify that belief. You may go, my boy," added Mr. Quelch, very kindly.

And Harry Wharton left the study with his ears burning. He had never felt such an "ass" in his life, yet somehow he was feeling glad, too.

He walked away to the Rag, where he smiled at the sight of Skinner's grinning face. Bob Cherry & Co. were there, and they came up.

"No more trouble with Quelch?" asked Bob.

Wharton explained. "Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Johnny Bull. "Skinner's done you a jolly good turn. Ha, ha, ha!"

Frank Nugent chuckled. "That will set you right with Quelch, old man. Fancy Skinner playing up like that—like a little man!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Good old Skinner!" grinned Bob. Wingate of the Sixth looked into the Rag.

"Skinner, you're wanted!" Harold Skinner followed the Greyfriars captain unwillingly. He did not come back to the Rag after seeing Mr. Quelch. He spent the next hour in groaning and gasping in his study, and undoubtedly he was likely to be very careful the next time he expressed his opinion of Mr. Quelch that no other master was in hearing.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER. The Election!

HARRY WHARTON found a change in the Remove Form room the next day.

Doubtless, in the long run, he would have succeeded in removing the

(Continued on page 28.)

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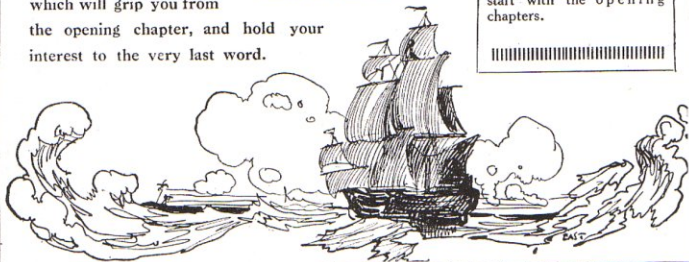
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EDITORIAL NOTE.

THIS is great and splendid news! In this week's issue of the "Popular" you will find the stirring opening chapters of the marvellous new serial by Francis Warwick, an author who is a front line favourite with readers of the "Popular." Now, I must say something not only concerning Mr. Francis Warwick, who has won so many laurel wreaths as a tip-top writer that he must be puzzled to know where to put them all, but of this magnificent romance of the olden time.

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Harry Wharton's Last Chance!

(Continued from page 26.)

had opinion Mr. Quelch had formed of him. Now, owing to Skinner's unintentional help, he had succeeded all at once.

Mr. Quelch was quite kind, and it was clear to all the Remove that Wharton was no longer in disgrace with his Form master, and most of the fellows were glad to see it.

It was only a week later that Wharton was in his old place at the head of the Form.

And a few days after that Bob Cherry was observed to enter the Remove master's study, and he remained there for some little time in talk with Mr. Quelch. And after that a notice was posted on the board, which was eagerly read by all the Remove.

It announced that Robert Cherry had resigned the captaincy of the Form, and that a new election would be held, for which every member of the Remove was eligible as a candidate. Wharton was

not mentioned by name, but he was evidently eligible with the rest. Wharton read that notice of Mr. Quelch's with mixed feelings, and sought out Bob at once.

"Look here, Bob—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob chuckled. "What's the merry row now, old bean?"

"You're jolly well not going to resign the captaincy?"

"I've jolly well done it!" grinned Bob.

"The donefulness is terrific," smiled Hurreo Janset Rain Singh.

"But I don't want—"

"It isn't what you want, old chap, it's what we want!" said Bob. "You're our candidate, old man, and you're going in to win."

"But—"

"Cut it out!" said Johnny Bull. "Bob's right, and we're all backing you up, Wharton."

"What-ho!" said Nugent.

"But—" Harry said again.

"You can 'but' till you're black in the face, but you're jolly well going to be captain of the Remove!" chuckled Bob.

"Hear, hear!"

And when the election came along

Harry Wharton, once captain of the Remove, stood for re-election with his Form master's full approval. The Co backed up their candidate enthusiastically, and most of the fellows rallied round, following their lead; and it was so clearly going to be a walk-over for Wharton that no rival candidate took the trouble to put up in opposition. And when the election was over there was a roar of cheering in the Rag for the captain of the Remove—Harry Wharton.

It was over.

Harry Wharton had been through dark days, but he had won through, and all was well with him again. No longer the rebel of the Form, no longer the "worst fellow at Grevfriars," once more captain of the Remove, and on the best of terms with his old friends and the rest of the Form, it only remained for Harry Wharton to strive to forget the past and strive to keep his resolves for the future, and to succeed.

THE END.

(Don't miss next week's grand story—"To shield His Father!" It's a winner, boys!)

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