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Week Ending January 1st, 1927.

No. 985. Vol. XXXI.

The Magnet 2^d

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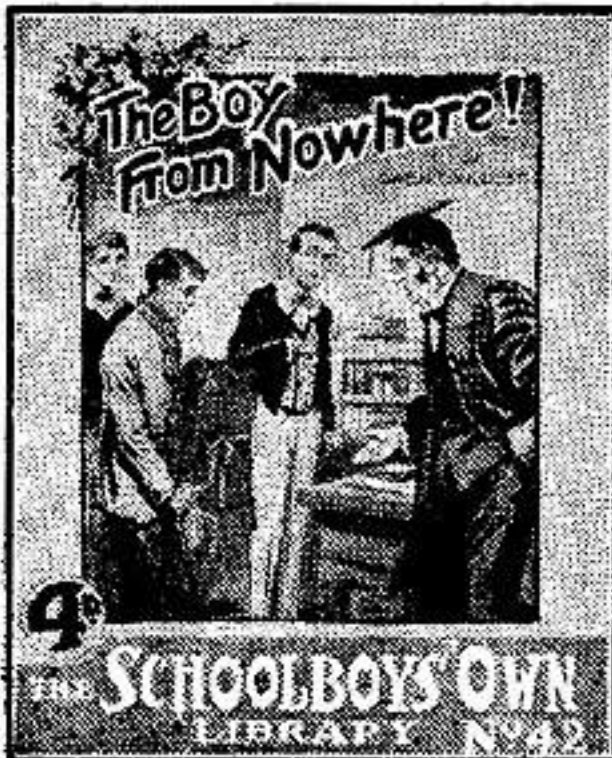
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THE NEW YEAR.

ALTHOUGH this issue of the MAGNET is before you during the last few days of December, owing to the Christmas holidays, it bears, as you will see, the "week-end" date of January 1st, 1927—New Year's Day. Therefore I take this opportunity of wishing you all a Happy New Year. May health and prosperity be yours. The strains of "Auld Lang Syne" are running through my head as I write this Chat, and they make me wish that I could "join hands" with my thousands of readers all over the world on that grand occasion when we see the Old Year out and the New Year in. But that, of course, is impossible. I shall be with you all in spirit, nevertheless, and my voice will be as sincere and as loud as any when we come to those stirring words:

"And here's a hand, my trusty fier,
And gie's a hand o' thine,
And we'll tak' a right guid willie-yaught
For auld lang syne!"

This New Year is eagerly looked forward to by most people. We are in the habit of thinking that we can improve upon the results of the passing year, for they are small and insignificant compared with the ambitions of the days that lie in front of us. When we look back we do so resignedly. What has gone is gone. The future holds—well, it holds all that we cherish most dearly. May all those things we most desire come true—at least, those things that are good for us. And now, talking of ambitions, let me add that mine is to see the good old MAGNET putting on weight, so to speak, as no other boys' paper can or does. Already we are at the top of the tree. But the top, where ambition is concerned, knows no limit. Let us go on, you and me, striving to enrol new readers to the MAGNET banner. From my end I will do my utmost to serve you. In return, I would like you to recommend what pleases you so much to a non-reader pal. In effect, this was my plea at the beginning of 1926, and I am happy to say it fell on keen, enthusiastic ears. The MAGNET has made rapid strides during 1926—wonderful strides—thanks, in no small measure, to the loyal support of its myriad readers. And we're going to keep up the pace. No slackening off at this end, no less enthusiasm at your end. And between us we'll hit the skies. Are you on? Of course you are!

Next Monday's Programme:

"THE BRUISER OF THE REMOVE!"

By Frank Richards.

The Game Kid doesn't find life at Greyfriars quite so nappy as he anticipated. In many respects Huggins' Ring, where this youthful exponent of the noble art of self defence spent his earlier boyhood, was much better. But the Game Kid doesn't take the count until he's knocked clean out, and that painful stage is a long way off yet. You'll like this powerful yarn, chums. It's a good sample of the splendid treats in store for the New Year.

"THE MYSTERY OF FLYING V RANCH!"

And the next instalment of this popular Wild West Detective Adventure serial is better than ever. Thrills you'll find in it galore. Don't miss it!

"A RIFT IN THE LOOT!"

By Dicky Nugent.

This has nothing to do with a burglary as some of you might think at first glance. It's another ripping "non-sensical" yarn from the pen of young Dicky Nugent. You'll enjoy it no end. Chin, chin, chums!

YOUR EDITOR.

FROM BRUISER TO PUBLIC SCHOOLBOY! For years the Game Kid, a plucky little chap who fights in the boxing ring for his daily bread, has longed for a chance to "learn things" at a decent school. And that chance comes his way at last in astonishing circumstances!

The Game Kid!



A Magnificent New Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co., the Cheery Chums of Greyfriars, introducing something new in the way of New Boys. By FRANK RICHARDS,

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Stole Away!

"SOFTLY!" murmured Bob Cherry. There was a subdued chuckle. In the grey winter morning, Harry Wharton & Co., of the Greyfriars Remove, were up and doing at an early hour.

Judging by their cautious manner and their stealthy tread, they might have been engaged upon a burglary in Holly House, the residence of Horace Coker's uncle.

But it was not so bad as that.

Harry Wharton & Co. had spent Christmas with Coker, and their stay with the great Horace had now come to an end. They were catching an early train on this grey, misty morning. It was quite important that they should catch that train; and still more important that Billy Bunter should not catch it.

Billy Bunter was still fast asleep in his room; the Famous Five could hear his stentorian snore as they passed his door on tiptoe.

Bunter was not likely to turn out early. He was very unlikely to turn out before ten o'clock at least, if he was left undisturbed. Only one thing could have made him turn out of bed betimes; and that was the knowledge that the other guests at Holly House were departing. That knowledge the Famous Five had carefully kept from William George Bunter.

Bunter was—in his own estimation, at least—a popular fellow; a fascinating chap whose company was yearned for by all sorts and conditions of people. But the Famous Five, at least, seemed to have had enough of Bunter's fascinating society. Bunter had announced his intention of "going on" with the chums of the Remove when they left Holly House. It was useless to argue that

point with Bunter; Bunter meant business. So the Greyfriars fellows had hit upon the simple device of taking their departure while W. G. Bunter was still safely wrapped in slumber.

"Oh, listen to the band!" murmured Bob Cherry, as Billy Bunter's deep and powerful snore came booming from his room.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Quiet!"

"The soft-fulness is the proper caper," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Snore!

The chuckle outside his room had not disturbed Bunter. Nothing but a thunderclap was likely to disturb him—and only an unusually hefty thunderclap was likely to do it.

But the chums of the Remove were not taking risks. They trod by on tiptoe, and Bunter's deep snore faded away behind them. Still with soft and silent tread, the juniors went down the staircase.

Coker of the Fifth was waiting for them in the hall. Coker gave the juniors a genial nod.

"Ready?" he asked.

"Quite."

"The quietfulness is terrific, my esteemed Coker."

"Right-ho!" said Coker of the Fifth. "Come on, then. Your bags have been put on."

And the Famous Five followed Coker from the house.

A car stood on the drive, with the bags piled on. Harry Wharton & Co. glanced up at the windows of Holly House. Bunter's blind was still drawn; the Owl of the Remove had not awakened. He was still safe in the arms of Morpheus, while the five juniors, like the desert Arabs, stole silently away!

The juniors grinned as they took their places in the car.

All had gone according to plan!

Harry Wharton & Co. were going on to Wharton Lodge for the New Year, and William George Bunter would have been superfluous there. He had been superfluous at Holly House, for that matter. Bunter generally was superfluous.

To stand Bunter during the term at Greyfriars was, as Johnny Bull remarked, enough for any fellow. To stand him also during the vacation was asking altogether too much.

The Famous Five had said good-bye to Uncle Henry and Aunt Judith overnight; they had breakfasted in their room at an early hour, and now they were going. Bunter, all unsuspecting, snored on in balmy slumber.

The car ran down the drive, and turned into the road for Waddon. Frank Nugent looked at his watch.

"Lots of time for the train," he remarked.

"Bunter still asleep?" asked Coker.

"Like a top!"

Coker grinned.

"No need to tell him where we're gone, or—or anything!" remarked Harry Wharton.

"Not a word," agreed Coker.

Coker of the Fifth was in a very genial mood that morning. Possibly that was because he was speeding the parting guests.

Owing to a curious conjuncture of circumstances, Coker of the Fifth had asked the Lower Fourth fellows home for Christmas. He had done his very best to be genial and hospitable, and not to be, so to speak, too "Fifth-Formy." But Coker could not help being conscious of the fact that it was not in keeping with his great importance as a Fifth Form man of Greyfriars to have fag guests in the vacation. Especially he had realised this since Potter and Greene, his pals in the Greyfriars Fifth, had arrived at Holly

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House. Potter and Greene had raised their eyebrows very significantly at the sight of a mob of fags, as they described the heroes of the Remove. Insensibly, Coker had grown more and more "Fifth-Formy"; his manners and customs had approximated more and more to his manners and customs at Greyfriars.

At school, Coker had a short way with fags, and prided himself on the fact. A short way with guests was, of course, not at all the thing, and Coker had done his best to avoid it. But though the spirit was willing, the flesh was weak. Signs of strained relations had appeared on the horizon; and on both sides the day of departure was not unwelcome. Harry Wharton & Co. would have been distinctly sorry to bump their host on the floor of his uncle's house; it was, as Bob Cherry observed, a thing that was not done in the best circles. But it might have come to that.

So the news that Colonel Wharton had returned to Wharton Lodge, and was anxious for his nephew and his friends to come there for the New Year, was good news. Horace Coker was now in a mood of determined geniality, keeping up a resolute hospitality to the very finish.

The Famous Five also had their best manners on.

Having succeeded in keeping the peace for so long, they wanted to part with Coker on friendly terms. Coker was, after all, a good sort. No doubt he had the manners of a bear, the voice of a bull, and the intellect of an ass. But he was all right in his way. His way, perhaps, required getting used to; Coker was, so to speak, an acquired taste.

The juniors turned out of the car at the station, and Coker, an attentive host to the last, accompanied them to the platform, and saw them into their carriage. He stood at the door of the carriage, shook hands all round, and wished them good-bye. There was rather a thoughtful shade on Coker's rugged brow.

"We've had a ripping good time, Coker," said Harry Wharton politely. "Many thanks, old bean!"

"Oh, not at all!" said Coker.

"The goodness of the time has been terrific, my esteemed and ludicrous Coker," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry.

"See you again at Greyfriars," said Nugent amicably.

Coker's brow grew still more thoughtful.

"The fact is, I was just thinking about that," he said.

"Yes, old scout?" said Wharton.

"You've been my guests here," said Coker. "I've tried to treat you decently—"

"Oh, quite!"

"I haven't rubbed it in that I'm a Fifth Form man and you're only a gang of scrubby fags, have I?" said Coker.

"Eh?"

"Oh!"

"Hem!"

"My esteemed fathead Coker—"

"We're parting now," said Coker of the Fifth. "We sha'n't meet again till the new term at Greyfriars. Of course, you kids will have a little tact."

"Wha-a-at?"

"It's different at Greyfriars, of course," explained Coker patiently. "I don't want a mob of fags coming up

to me in the quad and claiming acquaintance and all that. See?"

"Oh!"

"Ah!"

"You can see that it wouldn't do," said Coker genially. "You don't mind my mentioning it? It's all right here, but at Greyfriars a fellow has to consider his position, you know."

The Famous Five gazed at Coker of the Fifth.

"No need to tell a lot of other fags that you've been with me for Christmas, if you come to that," continued Horace Coker. "Of course, I was glad to have you and so on, but it's rather against a Fifth Form man. You'll understand that, Wharton; you're an intelligent kid."

"Thanks!" said Wharton.

"No offence, you know; but just bear in mind what I've said," added the genial Horace.

"Certainly!" assented the captain of the Remove. "But one good turn deserves another, Coker."

"Eh—how do you mean?"

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ON SALE WEDNESDAY.

"When the term begins at Greyfriars, don't you come butting into the Remove passage claiming acquaintance with us, you know."

"Eh?"

"No need to mention to a lot of the Fifth that we've been with you for Christmas," went on Wharton, with great gravity. "We were glad to stay with you, and so on, but it's rather against a Remove man. You'll understand that, Coker—as an intelligent kid!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Co., greatly taken by the expression on Horace Coker's face.

"Why, you—you—you——" gasped Coker.

"No offence, you know," said Wharton cheerily. "But just bear in mind what I've said!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a whistle from the engine; the train was about to start. Doors were slamming along the carriages.

"You—you—you cheeky young scoundrel!" roared Coker, quite forgetting his determination to play the courteous host up to the very last moment.

And he reached into the carriage towards Wharton's ear to give it a pull before parting—a thing that most certainly was not done in the best circles.

But he did not reach Wharton's ear. His hand was knocked aside, and Wharton reached out in his turn.

Crash!

"Whoop!"

Horace Coker's hat was flattened on his head by a terrific thump. There was a yell from Coker and a roar of laughter from the carriage.

A porter pushed Coker back. The train was moving.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The windows of the carriage were crowded with grinning, youthful faces as the train rolled out of the station. Harry Wharton & Co. waved their hands to Horace Coker on the platform, and as the train rushed on, their last glimpse of Horace showed him struggling frantically to extract his head from his squashed hat.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good-bye, Coker!"

And the great Horace vanished from sight, still struggling with his hat.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Left in the Lurch!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter had come down. It was eleven o'clock, and William George Bunter, having put in about twelve or thirteen hours' sleep, was feeling rested and refreshed—and very hungry. He was more than ready for breakfast.

But he found the breakfast-room empty as he rolled in; there was no reply to his greeting.

Bunter grunted.

"Beasts! Gone out, I suppose!"

Bunter rang the bell, and James brought in his breakfast. Having disposed of an ample meal, Bunter rolled out in search of the Famous Five.

He did not find them.

The place seemed quite deserted. Not a member of the Famous Five was to be seen. Miss Judith Coker was in Mr. Henry Coker's study, reading to the invalid old gentleman—not that Bunter was anxious for the society of Aunt Judy. Coker and Potter and Greene had gone out for the morning. Billy Bunter felt very neglected and ill-used and indignant. Possibly he expected fellows to hang about till he rose at eleven o'clock in case he might happen to want them when he turned out. Bunter often expected things that were not likely to happen.

It did not yet dawn upon his fat mind that the chums of the Remove were gone for good.

He had told Harry Wharton quite distinctly that he was "going on" with the party when they left Holly House.

That settled it—at least, Bunter considered that that settled it.

Bunter was getting a little "fed" with Holly House, and Coker, and Aunt Judy, and Potter and Greene. Holly House had one attraction for Bunter—the supply of good things in the comestible line was absolutely unlimited. But he had very serious complaints to make of Horace Coker's manners—which really were not all that could be desired so far as Bunter was concerned. Bunter had succeeded in "wedging" into the party at Holly House; he had wonderful skill in wedging in anywhere. Coker had let him run on, as it were; but he had not wasted very much politeness on him. Bunter considered—and

with good reason—that Coker had not treated him as a distinguished and honoured guest. There was no doubt that Coker hadn't!

Billy Bunter came in for lunch, expecting to find the Famous Five there. But Harry Wharton & Co. were conspicuous by their absence. Aunt Judy was lunching with Uncle Henry in his study, and only Coker and Potter and Greene were at the table.

Coker gave Bunter a short nod; Potter and Greene eyed him with unconcealed disdain.

To one another, in private, Potter and Greene had confided their indignation at Coker's "neck" in asking them to Holly House to meet a mob of Lower Fourth fags. And of all the Lower Fourth, William George Bunter was the one they regarded with the most profound contempt.

"I say, you fellows," said Bunter, as he sat down, addressing the Fifth-Formers just as if they were common mortals, "where are those chaps?"

Potter and Greene disdained to take any heed of the fact that Bunter had spoken.

"Aren't they coming in to lunch?" asked Bunter.

"No!" said Coker curtly.

"That's all very well," said Bunter peevishly. "But I want to see them—to make arrangements, you know. We're going on to-day."

Coker grinned.

"By the way, what train are we catching Coker?" asked Potter.

The three Fifth-Formers were also leaving Holly House that day, going on to Horace's father's place for the New Year.

"Four-thirty," said Coker.

"You fellows leaving?" asked Bunter, blinking across the table through his big spectacles.

Again Potter and Greene passed by the Owl's remark as the idle wind they regarded not.

Coker could make them sit down to lunch with a Remove fag, if he liked, but he couldn't make them talk to his fag guest! Not if Potter and Greene knew it!

Coker fully shared his friends' feelings, as a matter of fact; but he was, after all, Bunter's host. So he spoke.

"We're going on to my father's place," he said. "I always spend Christmas with my Aunt Judy, and the New Year at home. What train are you catching, Bunter?"

"Same as Wharton."

"Oh!"

"My arrangements are made," said Bunter loftily. "I'm sorry I sha'n't be able to come with you, Coker."

"Eh?"

"Sorry; but it can't be done!" said Bunter.

As Coker had not asked Bunter to go on with him to Mr. Coker's place, and as he had not the slightest intention of allowing the Owl of the Remove to do so, this was rather cool. Horace began to glare, and Potter and Greene grinned.

"Quite impossible," said Bunter calmly. "After all, I've given you a week, Coker."

"Why, you—you—" stammered Coker.

"I have a lot of engagements in vac, you know," said Bunter. "I've really given you more time than I should have done, Coker. To a certain extent, I have to ration fellows, as it were."

"Oh, gad!" ejaculated Coker.

"So I'm sorry and all that, but it can't be done."

"You fat idiot!" roared Coker.



"You—you—you cheeky young scoundrel!" roared Coker, and he reached out to pull Harry Wharton's ear. But his hand did not reach Wharton's ear; it was knocked aside, and the captain of the Remove reached out in his turn. Crash! "Whooop!" Horace Coker's hat was flattened on his head by a terrific thump. "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Famous Five. (See Chapter 1.)

"Oh, really, Coker—"

"You cheeky, fat dummy—"

"I'm sorry, but it's no good losing your temper, Coker," said the Owl of the Remove firmly. "I've given you all the time I can spare; and I simply can't give you any more. As a matter of fact, I shall have to think very seriously about passing another vac with you. Your manners are not quite what I'm accustomed to at Bunter Court."

"You—you—you—" stammered Coker.

Bunter waved a fat hand.

"Say no more, old fellow. I'm sorry, as I said; but it can't be done. I'm going on with Wharton, and it's a settled thing."

"You fat bounder!" growled Coker. "Wharton's gone."

"Eh?"

"They left this morning—"

"Left!"

"Yes; and I want to see the last of you before I go, so you'd better fix up a train, you crass ass!"

Bunter dropped his fork in his dismay.

"Mean to say that those beasts have gone and left me behind?" he gasped.

"Just that!"

"Where have they gone?"

"They asked me not to tell you."

"But I've arranged to go with them!" roared Bunter.

"They don't seem to have arranged it!" said Coker sarcastically. "They seem to be fed up with you."

"Beast!"

"Shut up!" said Coker.

Horace Coker's manners—never very reliable—were failing him at long last.

Billy Bunter blinked at his host in dismay, and blinked at the grinning faces of Potter and Greene. Then he resumed his lunch. It was his last day at Holly House; and it began to look doubtful whether he would "go on" with Harry Wharton & Co., as arranged—by Bunter. But the lunch

was good and ample, and well deserving of attention. Billy Bunter gave it his best attention till Coker & Co. rose from the table.

"I say, Coker, have those beasts really gone and left me in the lurch?" he demanded.

"Yes, ass."

"Of course, I don't think much of those chaps," said Bunter. "I was rather doubtful about going on with them, really. Have they gone to Wharton Lodge?"

"Find out!"

"In the circumstances, I shall refuse to stay with Wharton," said Bunter. "I dare say they mean it only as a joke; but I don't approve of such jokes. Not in good taste, you know. You can rely on me, Coker."

"What?"

"Did you say the four-thirty?" said Bunter. "I'll be ready."

Coker's rugged face assumed a quite extraordinary expression. He glared at Bunter as if at a loss for words.

"After all, I dare say it will be all right at your pater's place, Coker. If it's not exactly what I'm accustomed to, I can stand it."

"You—you—you can stand it?"

"Certainly, I can rough it a bit."

"R-r-rough it?"

"Yes, old chap. I'll come."

"Will you?" gasped Coker. "I—I think not. Not quite."

"I mean it, old chap."

Coker breathed hard.

"There's a train from Waddon at half-past three, Bunter," he said. "I'll order the car to meet that train. Be ready for the car."

"But you're not going at half-past three, old fellow."

"You are!"

"Oh, really, Coker!"

"If you're not ready to step into the car, Bunter, I shall take you by the

neck and chuck you in!" said Coker deliberately.

"I—I say——"
"That's a tip!" said Coker. "Come on, you fellows!"

And Coker strode to the door, followed by the grinning Potter and Greene.

Billy Bunter breathed hard. He had asked for it; and now he had got it.

Coker's manners had failed him, which really was not surprising with such a guest as William George Bunter. There was no doubt that Horace Coker meant exactly what he said.

"I shall certainly decline to stay here any longer, Coker," said the Owl of the Remove. "I also decline to come to your pater's place. I see now that I made a mistake in taking you up at all in the vac. You're ungrateful."

Coker turned back; and the look on his face was so alarming that Billy Bunter dodged round the dining-table. But the great man of the Fifth restrained his feelings, and strode out of the room with Potter and Greene.

"Beast!" gasped Bunter.
At half-past three precisely Billy Bunter stepped into a train at Waddon Station. Christmas with Coker was over; and the New Year with Harry Wharton & Co. was extremely problematic. Billy Bunter felt a much-injured youth as the train rolled away with him.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Pleasant Prospects!

"THE Head!"
"Oh!"
"Hem!"

Colonel Wharton smiled.

"No doubt you will be glad to see your headmaster," he remarked.

A judge of faces might have guessed, from the expressions of the Famous Five, that there was some considerable doubt on the subject.

Harry Wharton & Co. were at the Lodge now, glad to find themselves there. They were done with Coker of the Fifth, and hoped that they were done with William George Bunter. They looked forward to some cheerful holidays together, before Bob Cherry, Nugent, and Johnny Bull dispersed to their own homes. Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh, who, of course, had no relatives in England, was staying on with Wharton till the new term started at school.

It had been quite a fine day, for the time of year, when the chums of the Remove arrived at Wharton Lodge. But darkness had set in early with a heavy fall of snow, and a keen wind whistled and sang round the old roofs and chimneys. There was the promise of a rough and stormy night. But in the old house all was bright and cheerful, and the chums of the Remove were in the best of spirits till Colonel Wharton gave them the rather startling information that Dr. Locke, the headmaster of Greyfriars, was expected at the lodge to dinner that evening.

"The Head!" said Bob Cherry. "Oh, my hat! We shall have to pull up our socks, and mind our p's and q's."

"The mindfulness will have to be terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"Dr. Locke is staying in the neighbourhood, and naturally he has called," said the colonel, smiling. "I am sure you will be pleased to see him this evening."

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Perhaps the colonel was not quite sure.

The juniors looked as cheerful as they could. They had, of course, an immense respect for the Head of Greyfriars. But Dr. Locke was rather a terrifying personage to the Lower Fourth fellows, and they had a natural preference for respecting him at a safe distance.

Colonel Wharton left them, and the Famous Five looked at one another rather uncertainly.

"What a go!" murmured Bob Cherry. "The go-fulness is terrific!" said Hurree Singh dismally. "But we must be ludicrously civil and respectful to the esteemed and ridiculous Head. After all, he will be a guest, and he will perhaps leave the head-masterfulness in the background."

"He can't tell us to bend over here, anyhow," remarked Frank Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Out of the frying-pan into the fire!" said Harry, with a grimace. "We've got away from Bunter, and landed on the Head. Still, of the two, I think I prefer the beak."

"Dr. Locke would be flattered!" grinned Bob.

"After all, it's only for once," said Johnny Bull philosophically. "Even headmasters don't bite."

"And the weatherfulness is terrific!" said Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh hopefully. "The esteemed and absurd Head may decide not to venture out in this terrific snowfulness."

"There's a chance!" agreed Bob, and there was a general brightening of faces.

Meeting their headmaster at dinner was undoubtedly a tremendous honour for Lower Fourth fellows. Equally undoubtedly, the heroes of the Lower Fourth could have dispensed with that honour with great fortitude. It was probable, as Bob Cherry suggested, that Dr. Locke might drop the "beak," and behave just like a human being. But the juniors could not help feeling that headmasters were safer at arm's-length.

Harry Wharton looked from the window. The snow was coming down steadily, and great flakes were tossed against the panes by the winter wind.

"Quite likely the Head will chuck it," he said. "Blessed if I see how a car will get along the roads in this snow. Likely enough he will phone and put it off."

"Let's hope for the best!" said Nugent.

And the chums of the Remove hoped for the best, and when the telephone-bell was heard to ring a little later, they really thought that their hopes were to be realised.

"Ten to one it's the beak, to say he can't get over!" said Bob Cherry cheerily.

But a few moments later Harry Wharton was informed that the call was for him. The hopes of the Famous Five sank to zero again. Obviously, it was not the Head who was telephoning, as the call was for the captain of the Remove.

Wharton went to the telephone. He had a suspicion that he was about to hear a familiar voice, and his suspicion was well founded.

"That you, Harry, old chap?"

"Bunter!"

There was a fat chuckle on the telephone.

"Little me, old pal."

"You fat bounder!"

"Awfully obliged to you, old chap, for letting me have my sleep out this morning," said Bunter calmly. "It was really considerate of you."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I shouldn't have cared to start early, of course," said Bunter.

Wharton glared at the telephone. Evidently Bunter had guessed the destination of the Famous Five, but he had rung up in order to make sure before coming on edge. He had made sure now!

"Coker was very pressing, trying to make me go on with him to his pater's," went on Bunter. "But I felt that I couldn't let you down, Harry, old chap, when you were expecting me."

"I'm not expecting you!" said Wharton grimly.

"I get to Wharton Magnus Station about six," went on Bunter, unheeding. "You'll send the car for me?"

"No!"

"The weather looks horrid. But if you can't send the car, I'll manage to get along somehow."

"Look here, Bunter——"

"My mistake," said the Owl of the Remove calmly. "I'm accustomed to the decencies of life at Bunter Court, you know, and I forgot that most likely your people can't afford a car."

"Eh?"

"That's all right. Don't apologise, old chap."

"A-a-apologise!" gasped Wharton.

"Nothing to be ashamed of in honest poverty," said Bunter. "I'm not a snob, I hope. Of course, you can't send a car to the station if your people can't afford to keep one. He, he, he! I shall manage——"

"You—you—you——" stammered Wharton.

"Right-ho, old fellow! I must ring off now. See you later."

"Look here, Bunter——" the captain of the Remove roared into the transmitter.

But there was no reply. Billy Bunter had rung off, and Wharton put up the receiver with feelings that could not have been expressed in words.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

In Strange Company!

"BLINKIN' WEATHER, this 'ere!"

"You're right, Kid!"

"Orrid!"

"Beastly!"

Billy Bunter blinked through his big spectacles at his fellow-passengers, with a lofty and disdainful blink.

Bunter was travelling third-class.

Bunter was accustomed to travelling first-class, when he could "touch" somebody else for his railway-fare. On the present occasion, no one had been available for touching. So Bunter was travelling third, and in the third-class carriage he had two fellow-travellers, whom he disdainfully regarded as the "limit."

One of them was a stout gentleman with a red face and a pug nose, with only one eye, and several front teeth missing. He was a good-humoured-looking gentleman, jovial, in fact. But there was no doubt that he was a rather rough customer. He was smoking a powerful cigar which had certainly never had the most distant acquaintance with Havana, and it filled the carriage with a rank smoke that made Bunter cough occasionally.

The other passenger was a lad of about Bunter's own age; but as different from the Owl of the Remove in every other respect as chalk from cheese. He was addressed as the Kid.

He had a bullet head and a round

face, remarkably sharp and watchful eyes, a square chin, and a rugged expression of good temper. His physical development was remarkable in a boy of his years, and he looked in the pink of condition. He was, in Bunter's opinion, a low fellow; but he was certainly a fellow who could have picked up the Owl of the Remove, heavy as he was, and tossed him anywhere.

These two passengers had been talking a great deal, and Bunter had heard from their talk that the stout gentleman was a boxing trainer, and had once been a boxer himself, and that his youthful companion was a boy pugilist. Apparently the Kid was in training somewhere near the village of Wharton Magnus, for the two were travelling to the same station as Bunter. The stout gentleman appeared to rejoice in the name of Bobby Huggins.

The two boxers talked to one another cheerily, taking no heed of Bunter, and apparently unconscious of the fact that the great William George regarded them as low persons, who ought really never to have ventured to enter the same railway-carriage as his noble self. They were warmly wrapped in rugs, which seemed to Bunter another example of low cheek. Bunter had no rug. So far from understanding that it was like his cheek to come between the wind and Bunter's nobility, the Kid turned to the fat Greyfriars junior with a cheery remark.

"Find it cold, sir?"

"Yes," said Bunter distantly.

"Give you a corner of my rug if you like," said the Kid.

"Thank you, no!" said Bunter loftily.

The Kid's keen, quick eyes rested on him for a moment, and then he shrugged his shoulders.

"Please yourself," he answered, and he turned back to his companion.

It had been quite a good-natured offer, and Bunter rather regretted that he had not accepted it. Undoubtedly it was very cold in the railway-carriage, with the snow falling thickly past the windows. But there was a snobbish satisfaction to Bunter in snubbing a fellow to whom he deemed himself superior.

"Tain't fur to Wharton Magnus now, Kid," the elderly boxer remarked, blowing out a cloud of pungent smoke.

Bunter coughed again.

"Look here!" he exclaimed.

Mr. Huggins looked there.

"What's biting you?" he inquired.

"This isn't a smoking carriage!" said Bunter loftily.

"Ain't it?" said Mr. Huggins.

"No, it isn't."

"Blessed if I'd noticed it," said Mr. Huggins. "Like me to chuck away my cigar—what?"

"Certainly!" snapped Bunter.

"You can like!" said Mr. Huggins.

And he smoked on complacently. Bunter's manner had not pleased the boxing gentleman. He was obviously quite unaware of the respect that was due to William George Bunter of the Greyfriars Remove.

Bunter blinked at him angrily. Mr. Huggins' manner was contemptuous, a manner that was quite out of place in a low person who happened to be Bunter's travelling companion, owing to the unfortunate circumstance that Bunter had been unable to "touch" anybody for a first-class fare.

"Look here, I shall complain at the station!" said Bunter.

"Oh, cheese it, lad!" said Mr. Huggins.

"I shall certainly complain—"

The Kid turned to Bunter.

"I don't know who you are, young feller-me-lad," he said; "but you talk too much. Shut up!"

"Why, you cheeky cad——" exclaimed Bunter.

"Eh?"

"How dare you!" exclaimed Bunter, in great wrath. "You cheeky young hooligan——"

The Kid rose from his seat, and reached over to Bunter. Billy Bunter shrank back as far as he could.

"You—you dare to lay a finger on me——" he stammered.

The Kid chuckled.

"More'n a finger, young feller-me-lad," he said. "A 'ole paw—what! You're too cheeky, fatty. If you knowed you was talking to the Game Kid, I dessay you'd known better. Why, I've knocked a man's front teeth through the back of his neck for less'n that, ain't I, Bobby Huggins?"

and indignation. But he carefully paid no attention to his pugilistic travelling companions after that.

They, for their part, took no further heed of the fat junior, but chatted on cheerily about their own business, in which they seemed deeply interested.

Bunter was glad when the train stopped at Wharton Magnus. He rolled out of the carriage, and rolled away down the platform; but as he left the station he heard the cheery voices of the Kid and Bobby Huggins behind him. They also had got out at Wharton Magnus, and they left the little village station on the heels of the Owl of the Remove.

Outside, the snow was powdering the village street, and a keen wind whistled through the leafless branches. Bunter shivered and pulled his coat about him, and blinked round for a vehicle. There was no sign of a car from Wharton

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ON SALE AT ALL NEWSAGENTS!

Mr. Huggins chuckled.

"Hands off!" gasped Bunter. "I—I— Yarooooooh!"

The Game Kid grasped Bunter by his collar, and jerked him out of his seat. Bunter was a heavy-weight—indeed, his weight was justly described by Hurree Janset Ram Singh as terrific. The strength displayed by the Kid was remarkable, for Bunter was swept off his seat by a single swing of the boy-boxer's arm.

Thud!

Billy Bunter sat down on the floor of the carriage, with a concussion that made him splutter.

The Kid grinned down at him.

"'Ave another?" he asked.

"Ow!"

The Game Kid chuckled and sat down again. Bunter staggered to his feet. He was as disdainful as ever; but he was careful not to display his disdain any more. A fellow who could swing Bunter about like a sack of coke was not a fellow to be treated disrespectfully.

Bunter sat down again in his corner, gasping for breath and pink with wrath

Lodge, and no sign of any vehicle waiting for hire at the station. Indeed, the snow was so thick on the country road that it was doubtful whether a car could have got along to the lodge, if one had been available.

From the remarks of Mr. Huggins and the Kid, the dismayed Owl learned that they also had expected to find a cab at the station.

"What's the odds, old 'un?" said the Game Kid cheerily. "What's the matter with 'oofing it?"

"Orlright for you, Kid," answered Mr. Huggins; "I ain't a whale on oofing it. But there don't seem no choice. Let's drop in at the pub yonder first. I want warming."

"Not me," said the Kid.

"Course not you," said Mr. Huggins. "Let me catch you mopping it up, that's all, you young hass! Pretty sort of a show you would put up in the ring, if you was to mop it up!"

The Kid chuckled.

"If it won't do me any good, it won't do you any good, old 'un."

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"Don't you set up to teach your elders, Kid," said Mr. Huggins. "You wait for me in the porch while I push one back."

The two boxers crossed the snowy village street to the Wharton Arms, where the Kid waited in the porch, whistling shrilly, while Mr. Huggins went in to "push one back," as he elegantly expressed it.

Billy Bunter was taking no heed of them. It was clear to Bunter that if he was to reach Wharton Lodge at all he had to walk it. And he started. He knew the way well enough, and tramped on through snow and wind, and left the village behind him.

It was a lonely road, all the more lonely in the bitter winter weather. For half a mile Bunter did not pass a soul on the way. But half-way to the Lodge three figures loomed up in the shadows, and Bunter's fat heart palpitated as he blinked at them. They were burly, roughly-clad tramps—loafing under a tree by the wayside, smoking foul pipes and talking in muttering voices.

All three of them moved out into the open road as Bunter came tramping by; and the Owl of the Remove, with a sudden alarm, broke into a run and went panting on as fast as his fat little legs could carry him. A voice shouted behind him, and he heard tramping footsteps, and Billy Bunter fairly flew.

"Oh, lor'!" he panted, as he ran.

Bunter was not a good sprinter; but the speed he put on now was really creditable. One look at those three hulking ruffians had been enough—he knew that they were footpads, and that they were loafing about the lonely country road for purposes of robbery.

Bunter had not many valuables about him, but he did not want to be roughly handled, and he did not want to lose even his rolled-gold watch. He put on a speed that would have made the Removites of Greyfriars stare, had they seen him; his fat little legs fairly twinkled as he flew.

For a few moments he heard voices and footsteps, and then there was silence, save for his own stertorous, panting breath.

"Oh, dear!" gasped Bunter.

He slacked down at last, gasping for breath, and blinked back along the shadowy, snowy road. There was no sign of pursuit now.

"Beasts!" gasped Bunter.

And he tramped on through the falling snowflakes, towards Wharton Lodge, at a more moderate pace, still panting and gasping. And he was glad when the lights of the Lodge gleamed through the winter gloom.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Fight Against Odds!

"BLESS my soul!"

Had any Greyfriars fellow been on the lonely road in the falling snow, he would have recognised, at once, the voice of Dr. Locke, the headmaster of Greyfriars School.

"Bless my soul!" repeated the Head. The old gentleman stopped.

He was wrapped warmly from head to foot, and his umbrella was coated with snow. Dr. Locke was on his way to Wharton Lodge, and he was walking it; walking being the only practicable means of locomotion in the present state of the country roads. Dr. Locke was a hale and well-preserved old

gentleman, and a walk through the snow did not deter him. He was prepared to face the weather; but certainly he was not prepared for what was happening now.

Three burly, bulky figures lined up on the road before him, emerging from the shadow of a wayside tree as the schoolmaster came along. And Dr. Locke stopped, with a surprised ejaculation.

A quarter of an hour before, Billy Bunter had passed that way, and he had promptly taken to his heels at the sight of the loafing tramps. But Dr. Locke had reached a time of life when taking to his heels was out of the question for him; apart from such a proceeding being too undignified for the old gentleman to think of it.

He stopped, and stared at the three ruffians from under his snowy umbrella, with a stern stare.

He did not need telling that the rascals were loafing on that lonely road, on the look-out for lonely passengers. Their rough, stubbly, evil faces, and their actions, told their character at once. But the headmaster of Greyfriars was a gentleman of courage, and he was not scared by their evil looks. His old heart beat a little faster, but he faced them with a calm and stern countenance.

"Old on!" said a hoarse, husky voice.

"What do you want?" rapped out Dr. Locke.

There was a husky chuckle.

"Jest all that you've got about you, old gent," answered the footpad. "That's all! Only jest that!"

"Jest that, old bloke!" said another husky, beery voice.

"Stand aside, you rascals!"

"Eh?"

"Wot!"

"Stand aside, and let me pass, at once!" exclaimed the schoolmaster.

"My eye! He's an old game-cock, and no blinkin' error. Give him one on the mug, Mike!"

A rough hand dropped on the schoolmaster's shoulder. To the surprise of "Mike," the hand was knocked aside at once. And then, as the three ruffians closed in on him, Dr. Locke closed his umbrella, clubbed it, and swept it round. Mike caught it across his stubbly face, and went over in the snow, with a roar of rage. The schoolmaster struck again; but the next moment the footpads had grasped him, and he was hurled to the ground.

"Oh!" gasped the Head, as he went down.

He was struggling vainly, the next moment, in the savage grasp of three pairs of hands. A brutal blow from a heavy fist almost stunned him; but he was still resisting feebly as thievish hands ran through his pockets.

"Help, help!" he shouted.

"Shut up, you ole fool you!" hissed Mike savagely.

"Help!" panted Dr. Locke.

There was a sound of running feet in the snow.

The footpads glared round, in alarm. From the direction of the distant village, a boyish figure came running.

"Only a kid!" panted Mike. "It's all right!"

"Help!"

The newcomer came panting up.

"What's this game?" he exclaimed, stopping as he reached the spot where the schoolmaster was still struggling feebly in the rough grasp of the footpads.

Mike glared up at him.

"Mind your own business, and get

out of 'it," he snarled. "Get out afore you get hurt."

"Let that old gent alone!"

"Wot!"

"Let him alone, I tell you."

Mike spat out an oath.

"You wait a tick till I get 'old of you," he hissed, and leaving the schoolmaster to his companions, the footpad sprang up and jumped at the newcomer.

What happened next was astonishing to the footpad. Exactly how it happened he hardly knew. But he knew that he was lying on his back in the snow with a feeling in his nose as if it had been driven through the back of his head.

There was a chuckle from the newcomer.

"Now let that ole gent alone!" he said.

And the Game Kid came on, with his fists clenched, and his eyes gleaming over them.

The Game Kid was alone. He had waited in the porch of the village inn, while Bobby Huggins was "pushing one back." But after pushing one back, the "old 'un" had pushed back another, and then another; by which time the old 'un was in a state of hilarity, and nowise disposed to leave the bar of the Wharton Arms. And the Kid, after calling him two or three times, had left him to it, and started off by himself. He was quite accustomed to these hilarious proceedings on the part of the elderly boxer, and he knew that Mr. Huggins would not leave the bar-room until he was turned out.

The Kid was tramping along the road cheerily, when Dr. Locke's call for help reached his ears. And he had come on at once to the old gentleman's help; with painful results to Mike. Mike sprawled in the snow, hugging his nose with groans of anguish, while the Game Kid proceeded to deal with the other two.

They jumped up to face him, and came at him together, with savage faces and lashing fists. They were not aware yet that they had to deal with a youthful prize-fighter; though that fact was soon to dawn upon them.

"Come on, mateys!" grinned the Kid.

There were three of the footpads, and every one of them was head and shoulders taller than the Kid. But anything like fear seemed to have been left out of the game one's composition.

He met the ruffians with left and right; receiving, without heeding, a crashing blow in the face. Two reeling figures went sprawling in the snow, with oaths.

The Kid dashed a spurt of blood from his nose, and bent over Dr. Locke.

"All right now, old gent. I'll look after you!" he said; and he gave the schoolmaster a helping hand up.

"Bless my soul!" said Dr. Locke faintly.

He stood unsteadily on his feet, breathing spasmodically. The Kid pushed him back towards the park wall which bounded the road on one side, standing between him and the footpads, watching the latter with eyes as keen as a hawk's. Quite well the Kid knew that the trouble was not over; that it was, in fact, only just beginning.

The three footpads had picked themselves up, and gathered in a bunch, glaring at the young boxer. All three of them were hurt, and all three savagely enraged. The attack held off for a moment, but it was evidently



"Hands off!" gasped Billy Bunter. "I—I—yaroooooh!" The Game Kid grasped the fat junior by his collar and jerked him out of his seat with a single swing of his arm. Thud! Billy Bunter sat down on the floor of the carriage, with a concussion that made him splutter. "Ave another?" asked the Game Kid. "Ow!" gasped Bunter. (See Chapter 4.)

coming. The boy's prowess had astounded the ruffians; but he was only a boy against three men, and they had no doubt at all of overwhelming him with a rush.

"You keep back, sir," said the Kid quietly. "You ain't any use in this 'ere, sir—you stand out. I can handle them."

"My boy—my brave lad!" gasped the Head of Greyfriars. "I cannot allow you—I—I—"

"Leave it to me, sir," grinned the Kid.

The Head had no choice about that. He leaned on the park wall, breathless and exhausted, utterly at the mercy of the footpads, but for the boyish figure between.

The ruffians were coming on now. They came on in a savage rush together, and what followed seemed like some uncanny nightmare to the schoolmaster.

The Kid, game as he was, had a large proposition to tackle, and he tackled it gamely. His coolness, his steadiness, his agility were amazing, and still more amazing was the muscular strength he displayed. The trio of footpads had expected to rush him down at once, to get their savage grasp on him, to smash him down into the road, and to hammer and stamp on him when they had got him there. But it did not work out like that. They closed round him, grasping and hitting, and the Kid seemed like a wild-cat in the midst of the three.

It was only for a few seconds that he had three to tackle; then a terrible upper-cut crashed on Mike's stubby chin and almost lifted him from his feet, and he went backwards with a crash.

He lay groaning in the road, fairly knocked out.

But the other two had fastened on the Game Kid, and blows rained on him.

He did not heed them.

Probably, in his boxing bouts in Bobby Huggins' Ring he had received more severe punishment, and had learned to disregard it.

His left came out like a steam-hammer, and another footpad joined Mike in the snow, half-stunned by a crash between the eyes.

Then the Kid gave all his attention to the third man.

The footpad was driven back, right and left crashing on him—driven right across the road under raining blows, till a final punch landed him on his back in a snowdrift.

The Game Kid turned from him, in time to see two terrified rascals scramble to their feet and dart away, panting, up the road. Evidently they had had enough.

The Kid grinned, and came back to Dr. Locke. The man in the snowdrift dragged himself out, plunged through a hedge, and went fleeing across a dark field.

It seemed like the shifting scenes of a theatre to Dr. Locke's amazed eyes. A few moments before his youthful protector had been struggling against heavy odds. Now he stood alone, and the footpads had vanished into the darkness.

"Bless my soul!" said the Head faintly.

"All O.K. now, sir!" said the Kid cheerily.

He dabbed his streaming nose, and rubbed his left eye, which was rapidly darkening. The Kid had come off by

no means scatheless in the struggle, though he had proved the victor.

"My boy, you are hurt!"

"That's nothin', sir," said the Kid. "I'm used to it, sir. By gum, though, I'm going to 'ave a coloured peeper, and I wonder what Bobby Huggins will say to that! Can't be 'elped."

"I—I—I can scarcely believe what my eyes have seen," gasped Dr. Locke. "Have those—those ruffians really gone?"

"They've mizzled, sir. They've had enough," chuckled the Kid. "I reckon they'd have mizzled without asking for trouble if they'd knowed it was the Game Kid of Huggins' Ring they was tackling. Bless your 'art, sir, this ain't nothing to me! Like me to see you 'ome, sir, in case they turn up again after I'm gone?"

Dr. Locke gasped.

"If—if you would kindly walk with me as far as the gates of Wharton Lodge, my lad—"

"Suttingly, sir."

The Kid picked up Dr. Locke's hat and umbrella and handed them to him. Still in a state of great amazement, Dr. Locke started on his way, the Kid walking cheerily by his side, apparently little troubled by his swollen nose and blackening eye.

The Head had recovered a little by the time the gates of Wharton Lodge were reached. He stopped, and turned his benevolent gaze on the cheery Kid.

"You have saved me from robbery and ill-usage, my boy," he said, with emotion in his voice.

"That's all right, sir," said the Kid. "Safe now—what?"

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"I can scarcely understand how a lad of your age could deal in such a manner with a gang of ruffians—"

"It's in my line, you see, sir," said the Kid. "I'm a boxer. They call me the Game Kid on the posters."

"A—a—a prizefighter!" exclaimed the Head.

"Not exactly, sir," said the Kid good-humouredly. "Boxing with the gloves on, sir. We travel round giving boxing shows—me an' the old 'un."

"The—the old one?"

"Bobby Huggins, sir; he's the old 'un," said the Kid. "I s'pose a gent like you ain't hardly heard of such things. You ain't never took a ticket for a show in Huggins' Ring, sir."

And the Kid chuckled.

"Bless my soul!" said the Head. "What is your name, my boy?"

"Dicky Dury, sir; but I ain't never called anything but the Game Kid."

"My word!" he murmured. "I wonder who the old codger is? Seems a real gent, too! My word!"

And the Kid walked away, with his hands in his pockets, his shrill, cheery whistle echoing in the shadows and the falling snow as he went.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Arrives!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Bunter!"

"My only hat!" said Bob Cherry, as he stared at the Owl of the Remove in the hall of the Lodge.

"Bunter! If this doesn't take the whole giddy cake!"

"Of all the neck!" murmured Frank Nugent.

"The neckfulness is terrific, and the

I couldn't refuse, as old Coker has been quite decent, according to his lights. Still, I must say I was getting rather fed-up with Coker. Not my style, really. I hope I see you well, sir?"

"Thank you, I am quite well!" said the colonel, rather grimly.

"Haven't seen you, sir, since we had that trip to India," said Bunter. "Some fellows wouldn't have given up a summer vacation, as I did, to go to such a benighted country to take care of Inky, sir. But that's me all over—always ready to give up anything for a pal. Inky hasn't forgotten how I saved his life over and over again. Have you, Inky?"

"My esteemed, fatheaded Bunter—"

"I've had a rotten walk from the station," said Bunter. "Rotten journey altogether, in fact. Gang of low prize-fighters in the train—awful lot! And I nearly ran into a lot of tramps coming here. Luckily they saw that I could take care of myself, and were afraid to touch me. And here I am—not late for dinner, I hope!"

"Is Bunter staying with you, Harry?" asked Colonel Wharton.

The captain of the Remove made a grimace.

"He says so," he answered.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

The colonel smiled faintly.

"Well, he must stay the night, at all events," he said. "He can scarcely travel farther in this weather. Take him to your room now, Harry, and I will speak to your aunt, and a room shall be prepared for him. No doubt you will make further arrangements in the morning."

And the colonel walked away.

Bunter blinked after him.

"I suppose the old codger's glad to see me—what?" he asked.

A doubt seemed to have occurred to Bunter's fat mind.

"The what?" demanded Wharton.

"Hem! I mean the old gentleman," said Bunter hastily.

"You'd better say what you mean, then," said the Captain of the Remove dryly, "otherwise you may be kicked."

"Oh, really, you know—"

"Why should you suppose that anybody was glad to see you, Bunter?" inquired Frank Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Come up to my room, Bunter," said Wharton abruptly. And the Owl of the Remove followed him up the staircase.

William George Bunter was not thin-skinned. Over-sensitiveness was not numbered among his many weaknesses. But even Bunter was conscious of a chill in the atmosphere, and realised that he was not precisely "persona grata" at Wharton Lodge. He was naturally a little indignant, but he generously decided to overlook the coolness of his reception. After all, it was rather better than his reception at Coker's place. At Holly House he had been kicked out twice before Horace Coker had finally suffered him to hang on. Here, at least, he was not kicked; and that was so much to the good.

There was a log fire smouldering in Wharton's room, and Bunter warmed his fat hands at it with a grunt of satisfaction. He blinked round cheerily at the grim face of the captain of the Remove.

"Jolly cold weather—what?"

"Yes," said Harry.

"Let them put a fire in my room, will you? And a couple of hot-water bottles in my bed."

"Anything else?"

"Not for the moment; I'll mention it if I think of anything else."

"Oh, do!" said Wharton.

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THE FREAK

"You have done me a very great service, my boy, and I must show you that I am grateful," said the Head of Greyfriars.

"Tain't nothing, sir."

"I—I am very much shaken now," said Dr. Locke. "I must see you again, my boy. Are you staying in this neighbourhood?"

"Me and the old 'un are staying at Godder's Place, 'arf a mile from the village," said the Kid. "But don't you worry, sir. I ain't done nothing."

"You have acted very bravely and very generously," said the Head, in a moved voice. "I shall certainly see you again. I shall find some means of testifying my gratitude. For the present, good-bye, and I thank you from my heart, my brave lad."

And the schoolmaster shook hands with the Game Kid and went slowly up the drive to Wharton Lodge.

The Game Kid stood for a moment or two, blinking after him, and then he whistled.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 985.

kickfulness is the proper caper," remarked Hurree Singh.

"Oh, really, you fellows—"

"Say the word, Wharton," said Johnny Bull. "I'm ready to kick him out for you!"

Johnny Bull certainly looked ready. But Harry Wharton did not say the word. A servant was taking Bunter's snowy coat and wet hat. The Owl of the Remove had arrived, and he looked as if he had come to stay. Colonel Wharton came up, and glanced rather curiously at the fat junior.

"A friend of yours, Harry?"

"A Greyfriars chap, uncle," said the captain of the Remove. "You may remember Bunter?"

"Yes, I remember," said the colonel, eyeing the Owl of the Remove.

It did not appear that he remembered Bunter with favour.

"Glad to see you, sir," said Bunter cheerfully. "I should have got here with the others, but I rather over-slept myself this morning, and Coker pressed me hard to stay to lunch. I felt that

"Excuse my speaking of it, you know, but you're a bit careless with your guests, old chap," explained Bunter. "Not quite my style at Bunter Court, you know. I say, I suppose you can lend me some things? I didn't bring a bag with me to Coker's place, so, of course, I haven't brought a bag here. All right—what?"

"What have you done with the things we lent you at Holly House?" asked Wharton.

"Left 'em there," said Bunter cheerily. "I dare say Coker will send 'em on if you ask him. I suppose you didn't expect me to travel with shirts and pyjamas stuffed in my pockets, did you?"

"I didn't expect you here at all."

"Well, I telephoned," said Bunter. "Couldn't do more than that, could I? Anyhow, you'd better lend me a few things. I'll telephone to-morrow to Bunter Court for some things. Too late to-night. What time do you dine here?"

"Seven."

"Do we dine with the old codger—I mean with the colonel?"

"Yes."

"Anybody coming?"

"Dr. Locke."

Billy Bunter jumped.

"Do you mean the Beak?"

"Yes."

"My only hat! What the thump is a blinking schoolmaster coming for? Dash it all, Wharton. I think your uncle might have been a bit more considerate!" exclaimed Bunter warmly. "We have enough of Dr. Locke in the term without having him jammed at us in the hols. Look here, I jolly well don't want to meet the Beak on vacation, I can tell you!"

"Sure?" asked Harry.

"Quite!" said Bunter, with emphasis.

"Well, you know the way to the door."

"Hem! Of course, old chap, I don't mind meeting the Beak, if you come to that. In fact, I shall be quite civil to him," said Bunter. "Bit of a wet blanket, and all that, but, dash it all, I can stand it. Don't mind me!"

"I don't!" said Wharton.

"Hem! I'm a bit wet and muddy. I suppose you can lend me a change of clobber. And a shirt; and a collar! And a few other things. But don't bother. I'll go through your things and help myself. I never was a chap to give trouble!"

Wharton with feelings too deep for words, left the Owl of the Remove to his own devices. It seemed scarcely possible to take the fat junior by the scruff of the neck and drop him outside into the snow. And no gentler method seemed adequate.

The captain of the Remove went down and found that another guest had arrived. This time it was Dr. Locke. Colonel Wharton was greeting him when Harry came down the staircase.

The Head of Greyfriars was looking a little pale and shaken. He was explaining to the colonel what had happened to him on the road, and the colonel's brow darkened with wrath as he listened. The Remove juniors looked on at a respectful distance, amazed to see so sedate a gentleman as Dr. Locke arrive smothered with snow and mud, as if he had been rolling in it—as indeed he had! When the old gentleman had been taken upstairs to set himself to rights Colonel Wharton went to the telephone to ring up the police-station and set justice on the track of Mike & Co.

"Fancy the Head in a scrap!" murmured Bob Cherry, quite awed. "I shouldn't have thought that even a foot-

pad would have had the cheek to handle the Beak!"

"The cheekfulness was terrific!" remarked Hurree Singh.

"He says a kid came to his help and drove the rotters off!" said Johnny Bull. "I'd like to see a kid that could handle three tramps! Some kid!"

"Plucky chap, and no mistake!" said Harry.

"Yes, rather!"

"Jolly hefty, too," said Bob. "I can punch a little myself, but I shouldn't care to have to handle three tramps at once. I'd like to make the acquaintance of that giddy lad."

Little as Bob Cherry supposed it at the moment, he was destined to make the acquaintance of the Head's rescuer, and in circumstances of which he certainly never would have dreamed. The Famous Five were fated, in the near future, to see a great deal of the Game Kid.

sat transfixed with apprehension till it was removed. Dr. Locke, however, naturally gave most of his attention to Colonel and Miss Wharton, and bestowed only a few encouraging words on the heroes of the Lower Fourth.

The ordeal ended with no bones broken, as Johnny Bull expressed it, and after it was over the juniors felt rather bucked at having gone through it so well. Indeed, it was something to relate, in the Remove passage next term, that they had dined with the Head, and that Johnny, with unparalleled nerve, had actually asked him to pass the salt!

Honour and distinction as it was, however, the juniors were glad when it was over and they got away. The Famous Five gathered in Wharton's den, and Billy Bunter gathered there with them.

"I say, you fellows, it's a bit thick, isn't it?" asked Bunter. "I suppose Locke isn't staying here, is he, Wharton?"

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THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Too Much Bunter!

DR. LOCKE was himself again by the time the dinner was announced. Harry Wharton & Co. had looked forward with considerable awe to dining with the Head. But they found that it was not so nerve-racking an ordeal as might have been feared. As Bob Cherry had hoped, Dr. Locke dropped the "Beak" completely and played up just like a human being. Indeed, few would have taken the kind and genial old gentleman for a schoolmaster at all. Bob whispered to Wharton that he did not look, just then, as if he were capable of ordering a fellow to "bend over" in a voice of thunder, and Wharton agreed that he didn't. Billy Bunter, certainly, eyed the Head very uneasily through his big spectacles. He really seemed haunted by a dread that the Beak might command him to bend over, even in the dining-room of Wharton Lodge, and if Dr. Locke's genial eye turned upon him the fat Owl

"Do you mean Dr. Locke?" asked Harry.

"Of course I do, fathead!" grunted Bunter. "Look here, Wharton, if the Beak is hanging on, I shall have to think very seriously about staying myself. I can't stand too much of it, you know. It's not to be expected!"

"Will the stayfulness of the esteemed Beak lead to the departfulness of the ludicrous Bunter?" asked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"That's it!" assented Bunter. "There's a limit, you know; and I bar schoolmasters in vacation."

"Then the hopefulness is great that the esteemed Beak will stay."

"Hear, hear!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Beast!"

"Dry up, Bunter, old fat bean!" said Nugent. "You're much more entertaining, you know, when you don't talk."

"The muchfulness is terrific."

Bunter grunted.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 985.

"Any smokes here, Wharton?" he asked.

"No, fathead!"

"What rot! We're on vac now," said Bunter. "I generally rather go it on holiday."

"Ass!"

"I like a cigarette after dinner," said Bunter, blinking at the Famous Five. "I'm rather gooy on a holiday. I suppose you're not funky because old Locke is downstairs?"

"Chump!"

"If that's what you call good manners, Wharton, I must say I don't agree with you. I don't talk to guests like that at Bunter Court."

"Oh, ring off, Bunter!"

"You could bag some of your uncle's cigars, if you haven't any cigarettes," suggested Bunter. "There's such a thing as hospitality to a guest, though you don't seem aware of it, Wharton. And I could do with a whisky-and-soda."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Look here, you cackling ass—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The idea of William George Bunter with a cigar and a whisky-and-soda seemed to take the juniors by storm. They roared. Billy Bunter blinked at them, his very spectacles gleaming with indignation.

"Oh, cackle!" he said. "You're a set of spoonies, that's what you are! No good asking any of you fellows to be a man like me!"

"No good at all!" chuckled Nugent. "My hat! I hope I shall never be a man like you, Bunt!"

"I jolly well wish I'd gone home with Coker now," grumbled Bunter discontentedly.

"The wishfulness of our esteemed selves is also great!"

"Yeh!"

Billy Bunter was silent for a few minutes.

"I say, you fellows, I've got a wheeze!" he said, blinking at the Famous Five. "You fellows know what a splendid ventriloquist I am—"

"No need for you to tell us all about it," said Johnny Bull. "Give your chin a rest, old fat man!"

"I've got a wheeze!" roared Bunter. "You chaps remember how I started a row once at Greyfriars between old Prout and Mr. Quelch—imitating old Prout's voice, you know, and making Mr. Quelch think Prouty was ragging him. Easy thing, you know, to a wonderful ventriloquist like me. Well, look here, Wharton, that's the way to get shut of the Beak."

"What?" ejaculated Wharton.

"I could play the same trick again, you know," said Bunter, evidently much taken with this brilliant idea. "I'll imitate your uncle's voice—see? Make the colonel say something to get the Beak's rag out. Easy as falling off a form. Then the Beak will get his back up, and he won't show up here again in the vac. What do you think of that?"

Wharton did not say what he thought of that wheeze. He stared blankly at the Owl of the Remove.

Bunter grinned complacently.

"Some scheme—what?" he asked.

"You fat villain!" roared the captain of the Remove.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"You—you—you—" Wharton gasped. "Let me catch you at it, that's all! I'll burst you!"

"If that's what you call gratitude, Wharton—"

"Shut up!"

"Look here—"

"Shut up!" roared Wharton. The captain of the Remove had made up his mind to bear with Bunter as politely as possible. But politeness really did not seem possible in dealing with William George Bunter.

The fat junior grunted, and shut up. For reasons quite inexplicable to Bunter, his scheme for getting rid of the "Beak" did not commend itself to the chums of the Remove.

Harry Wharton & Co. chatted round the crackling log-fire, almost forgetting the fat junior curled up in the armchair. Bunter was undoubtedly much better company when he was silent. But his little round eyes were gleaming behind his spectacles. Bunter was indignant; and the Greyfriars ventriloquist had his own ways of making fellows "sit up" when they offended him. Harry Wharton glanced from the window at a world of white, with the stars glittering in a steely sky.

"The snow's stopped," he remarked. "Looks like freezing. We shall get some skating to-morrow."

"Good!" said Bob Cherry.

"There's the car coming round for the Head, I suppose," said Harry, glancing down from the window. "It won't be easy driving with the roads in this state."

"Oh, blow the Head!"

"Eh?"

"I must say that your uncle was rather an ass to ask the Beak here."

"What?"

Wharton stared at Bob Cherry, who was putting a new log on the fire. The other fellows stared at him, too. Billy Bunter, in his armchair, grinned, and winked at the glowing logs.

"What did you say, Cherry?" asked Wharton, very quietly.

Bob glanced round from the fire.

"Eh? Nothing!"

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Wharton angrily. "You're a guest here, or—"

"Or what?" exclaimed Bob. "What the thump are you driving at?"

"You might speak respectfully of my uncle, I think," said the captain of the Remove, his eyes glinting. "I think you ought to be jolly well ashamed of yourself!"

Bob's face flushed.

"My hat! Do you think you can talk to me as if I were a fellow like Bunter?" he exclaimed. "Confound your impudence!"

"Order!" murmured Nugent.

"Look here—" began Wharton savagely.

"Oh, rot!" broke in Bob, equally angry. "By Jove, if you think you can talk to me like that, Wharton, you're making a mistake. Keep it for Bunter."

"Dash it all, Bob, you oughtn't to have spoken of Wharton's uncle like that!" said Johnny Bull.

"Like what?" roared Bob.

"Like you did."

"I never spoke of him at all that I know of."

"Oh, draw it mild!"

"Look here, Bull, you footling ass—"

"We all heard you, Bob," said Nugent.

"And I jolly well think—" began Wharton hotly.

"Oh, cheese it!" interrupted Bob Cherry, his face crimson. "I'm not a fellow like Bunter, to hang on in a place where I'm not wanted. I'll clear by the first train in the morning!"

And Bob tramped away towards the door.

"Hold on, my esteemed Bob," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "and you, my excellent and fat-headed Wharton, don't play the esteemed ox. It was the disgusting and ludicrous Bunter."

"Eh?"

"What?"

The Nabob of Bhanipur grasped Billy Bunter by the collar and jerked him out of his chair. There was a roar from Bunter as he landed on the floor.

"Yaroooh! It wasn't me! Ow-wow!"

Bob Cherry turned back.

"Bunter!" he exclaimed.

"Bunter!" gasped Harry Wharton.

The face of the captain of the Remove was a study for a moment. The voice he had heard was so exactly like Bob Cherry's that he had had no doubts; he had forgotten the Greyfriars ventriloquist.

"Bunter, you fat villain—"

"Yaroooh!"

"Bob, old chap, sorry!" gasped Wharton. "I—I thought—"

"You shouldn't have thought," said Bob shortly.

"I—I know. But—"

"Yow! Ow-ow! Leggo, Inky, you beast!" yelled Bunter, as the Nabob of Bhanipur proceeded to tap his head on the floor, with an iron grip on his collar. "Yow-ow-ow! Leggo! Whoop!"

"It was that fat villain with his rotten ventriloquism, of course!" said Harry.

"Bob, old chap—"

"Oh, all serene," said Bob. "Bump the fat rotter!"

"The bumpfulness is the proper caper," assented Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I—I say, you fellows, I didn't— Yaroooh! I never did! Whoop! It was only a j-j-joke!" spluttered Bunter. "Can't you fellows take a joke? Yaroooh!"

Bump! Bump! Bump!

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

Bump! Bump!

"Yaroooh! If this is what you call hospitality, Wharton— Yaroooooh! Leggo! I sha'n't stay here with you after this, I can tell you! Whoop!"

Bump!

Billy Bunter tore himself away at last, and fled.

The next morning Billy Bunter walked to the station, with the Famous Five as an escort. Bunter didn't want to walk there, but five juniors were determined that he should, and he did. He hesitated about taking his train, but Bob Cherry's heavy boot cut short his hesitation, and he plunged into the carriage with a howl. Wharton slammed the door on him.

A fat face and a pair of big spectacles glared from the carriage-window as the train began to move, and a fat fist was shaken at five grinning faces on the platform.

"Beasts!" roared Bunter.

And that was Billy Bunter's parting benediction as the train rolled away with him.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

New Prospects for the Kid!

"MY eye! It's the old Covey!" The Game Kid made that remark.

The rather stately old gentleman who was progressing up the field-path towards "Coddler's Place" had probably never been referred to as an "old covey" before. Indeed, it was doubtful whether the Head of Greyfriars, who knew many languages, was



"Stand aside, and let me pass!" exclaimed Dr. Locke. "My eye!" said one of the roughs. "He's an old game-cock, and no blinkin' error! Give him one on the mug, Mike!" A rough hand was dropped on the schoolmaster's shoulder, but to the surprise of Mike it was knocked aside at once. And then, as the three ruffians closed in on him, Dr. Locke clubbed his umbrella and swept it round. Mike caught it across his stubbly face, and went over in the snow with a roar. (See Chapter 5.)

acquainted with the word "covey" at all. But the Game Kid spoke a variety of English that differed very considerably from the English as spoken at Greyfriars.

It was a frosty morning, with a gleam of sun on the snowy fields and hedges. The Kid's face, as he loafed in a low porch and looked out over a white landscape, was rather thoughtful. He had not been thinking about the Head; he had almost forgotten the encounter with that old gentleman; indeed, would probably have forgotten it but for the lingering dark shade about his eye, and the swelling on his nose, reminders of the fight with the footpads.

The Kid was thinking of Bobby Huggins. Mr. Huggins and the Kid were staying at Codder's Place until it was time for the Kid to appear in Huggins' Ring at an early date in the New Year. But Mr. Huggins was now absent from Codder's Place, Mr. Huggins having come up against trouble. Bobby Huggins was, as a matter of fact, not seldom in trouble. The old pugilist made a good thing out of the "Ring," and a great part of his takings went in support of the drink traffic. The "old 'un" was past his fighting days, but when he had put an enemy in his mouth to steal away his brains, he often developed a warlike humour. Knocking off a policeman's helmet seemed to the old 'un, at such times, a light and necessary relaxation. It was natural that the wearer of the helmet should not look upon the incident in the same light. And at the present time Mr. Bobby Huggins,

having celebrated the New Year not wisely but too well, had retired from the public view for seven days.

So the Game Kid found himself deserted at Codder's Place, very concerned for the old 'un, but very much annoyed with him, too, and greatly inclined to give Mr. Huggins his left, when Mr. Huggins should emerge from what he called the stone jug.

The Game Kid was thinking about the little matter, when he sighted the headmaster of Greyfriars coming across the field to Codder's Place.

Mr. Codder, a gentleman with a broken nose, who had once been in the ring himself, joined the Kid in the porch and stared at the approaching schoolmaster.

"Friend o' yourn, Kid?" he asked in astonishment. "Looks a reglar old toff."

The Kid grinned.

"It's the old covey I told you about," he said. "I knocked out some tramps t'other night who was going through his rags."

"Oh, that covey!" said Mr. Codder. "Looks a nice old gent. May mean a fipun note, Kid."

The Kid made a grimace.

"I don't want the old covey's fipun notes," he answered.

"A fipun note is a fipun note," said Mr. Codder sagely. "You take wot's goin', Kid, and don't be a young hass."

And Mr. Codder disappeared into his tumbledown cottage, leaving the Kid to greet the headmaster of Greyfriars.

"Morning, sir!" said the Kid, raising

his cap as the old gentleman came up to the porch.

"Good-morning, my lad!" said Dr. Locke, with an amiable smile. "I am glad that I have found you at home."

"Will you come in and sit down, sir?"

"Thank you very much. I am a little tired. I had some little-difficulty in finding Codder's Place."

The Kid showed the old gentleman into a dingy sitting-room, and selected the best chair for him. He stood waiting to hear what Dr. Locke had to say, wondering what it might be. No doubt the old gentleman felt grateful for the assistance the Kid had rendered him, and desired to say so; but if it came to a matter of reward, the Kid was not, as he would have put it, taking any. The Kid was assuredly not rolling in money, but he had a certain rugged independence of spirit, and he did not want to be paid for a service he had rendered to an old gentleman in difficulties.

"Can I get you something, sir?" asked the Kid hospitably. "P'r'aps a whisky-and-soda, sir—"

"Bless my soul!" said the Head. "Thank you, no. I should like to talk with you a little, Dury, if you are not occupied just now."

"Not at all, sir," said the Kid, seating himself on a corner of the table. "Nothing doing at present. I'm jest hanging on 'ere, waiting for the old 'un to come out of quod. Fire away, sir!"

(Continued on page 17.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 985.

THE FORM MASTER'S SECRET!

(Continued from previous page.)

falter. Drawing his gown aside, he took a flying leap into the angry billers. Splash!

"Yaroooo!" yelled Mr. Lickham, as the icy water enveloped him like a garment.

Suddenly there was a patter of running feet, and Burleigh and Tallboy of the Sixth came on the scene.

"Quick!" panted Burleigh. "Old Lickham's tumbled in the fountane!"

The seniors pelted up. They grabbed at the floundering Form master, and hauled him out of his watery grave. Keen though he was on suetside, Mr. Lickham was not eggsactly sorry.

"Thank you, my boys!" he panted, shaking himself like a drenched ratt. "I was taking a walk in the quadrangle when I suddenly tripped up in the darkness, and found myself struggling in six inches of water. But for your promptness and presents of mind I should undoubtedly have been food for fishes!"

Burleigh and Tallboy assisted the Form master to his study, and fetched him a change of toggs. Little did they dream that Mr. Lickham's "tumble" into the fountane had been anything but accidental.

His plans having miscarried, Mr. Lickham was obliged to think of another way of shuffling off this mortlo coil. If he were found in the fountane a second time it would look jolly suspicious.

Having donned a change of toggs, plus a heavy overcoat and a fashionable berret, Mr. Lickham quitted the school presinks just as the clock was striking nine. He hurried out of gates and made his way to the railway-line. In ten minnits' time the night-male would be thundering on its way to London. And Mr. Lickham was resolved that it should thunder over his lifeless body!

Prozzantly he came to a lonely part of the line and laid down on the sleepers. He was just in time. No sooner had he laid down than the night-male, with a shrieking of wissles and a dazzling gleam of lights, came roaring round the curve.

When the hot breth of the enjin bore down upon him Mr. Lickham was

tempted to jump to his feet and leap for safety. But it was too late. The night-male thundered over his prostrate form and roared away into the night.

Mr. Lickham sat up and stared after it.

"Dash it!" he growled. "The blessed trane passed clean over me without hurting a hare of my head! It was the way I was lying, I suppose. I ought to have lain crosswise, not lengthwise!"

It seemed as if all Mr. Lickham's attempts at suetside were to be frustrated by a crool Fate. He picked himself up, and decided to go back to St. Sam's and poyson himself.

He was aware that Herr Guggenheimer had some German sossidges in his study cubbord. The sossidges were harmless enuff, so far as Herr Guggenheimer was concerned, but Mr. Lickham had heard that one man's meat was another man's poyson, and therefore if he ate one of the sossidges it was sure to prove fatal.

On returning to the school, Mr. Lickham found that the German master was in the musick-room, pracktissing on his new mouth-organ; so it was a simple matter to slip into Herr Guggenheimer's study and perloin the sossidge. Having done so, Mr. Lickham took it along to his own study and fried it.

"My deth-ration!" he muttered, as he watched the sossidge sizzling and sputtering in the frying-pan.

When it was done to a turn Mr. Lickham divested the sossidge of its jacket, and started to eat it. He was serprised to find that it tasted quite plezzant. He could not have chosen a more jolly death than this.

But Fate was still busy frustrating Mr. Lickham's desines. He finished the sossidge, and lay back in his chair waiting for the end. But the end never came.

Beyond a few pangs of India-gestion, the Form master felt no sort of discomfort. Certainly he was not poysoned.

"These proverbs are all wrong," he growled, getting to his feet at last. "One man's meat is not another man's poyson, or I should be cold mutton by now. I must find some other way of committing suetside."

The idea of throwing himself from the top of the school tower occurred to Mr. Lickham, but he rejected it. Instead of throwing himself on to the flagstones

of the quad, a hundred feet below, he decided to throw himself on to the Head's mercy, and make a clean brest of his trubbles. What was the use of trying to commit suetside when Fate was balking him at every turn?

Straight to the Head's study went Mr. Lickham, and into the ears of Dr. Birch-emaill he poured his trajjick-tail. Then, having got the confession off his chest, he waited for the Head to loose the viles of his wrath.

But the Head did nothing of the sort. He surveyed Mr. Lickham more in sorro than in anger.

"My dear Lickham," he cried, "we are both in the same boat! I, too, am in the clutches of this skoundrel Moses!"

"My hat!"

"As you know, Lickham, I am a member of the Croakers' Club, in Muggleton, a very select and excloosivo club. The subscription is a bob a year, and my next sub fell due last week. Being hard up, I had no recourse but to borro the munny from Moses. He has been dunning me ever since, and throttening to report me to the guvverners. As I say, we are both in the same boat."

Mr. Lickham's face britened.

"Surely the two of us, sir, will prove more than a match for a raskally munny-lender? I have arranged to meet this man Moses to-morro at midday, in the Pryery Ruins."

"The dickens you have!" said the Head. "Then let us meet him together, and give the villain such a lesson as he will remember to his dying day. You bring a cane, Lickham, and I will bring my most formidable birch-rod. Are you game?"

"Rather!" said Mr. Lickham hartily.

Eggsactly what transpired in the Pryery Ruins next day nobody ever knew. But the Head and Mr. Lickham were seen coming away arm-in-arm, grinning all over their diles. And as Mr. Ikey Moses paid no further vizzits to St. Sam's, Jack Jolly & Co. concluded that it was all serene, and that there was no more need to bother their heads about the Form master's Secret.

THE END.

(Dicky Nugent has written another screamingly funny St. Sam's story for next week's MAGNET, entitled: "A Rift In The Lool!" Be sure you read it chums.)

Do You Know That?

Interesting Tit-Bits for the Footer Fan!

JOHAN RUTHERFORD, the Gillingham centre-half, who used to play for Cardiff, was signed on by that club by wireless? He was returning from a voyage abroad, and was out at sea, when Cardiff got into touch with him by wireless.

William Crilley, of Bristol Rovers, is a pigeon-fancier, and has won many prizes with his birds. The same remark applies to Bert Smith, of Tottenham Hotspur.

The Fulham football ground is right on the banks of the River Thames, and from one of the mounds an excellent view of the Boat Race can be seen.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 985.

When an England team visited Canada last summer the players wore numbers on their backs, so that the spectators could recognise them. Is it unnecessary for players in matches in this country to be recognised?

The secretary of the Football League receives about sixteen thousand letters every year, so no wonder it was found necessary to move to more commodious offices a short time ago.

"Patsy" Hendren, the Brentford footballer and Middlesex cricketer, was recently the announcer for a whole evening at 2LO, and he arranged the programme.

Chelsea have the lightest wing pair in modern football. Thain and Crawford together only weigh seventean stone, or five stone less than "Billy" Foulke used to weigh when he kept goal for Sheffield United.

In the first four games of the present season Middlesbrough got one point and scored one goal. Then Camsell was put in the side at centre-forward. Nine out of the next ten matches were won, and the side scored 35 goals.

Recently a manager of an English club went on a "secret" mission to watch a Scottish footballer. When he got there he found six other managers who were all there to watch the same player. Evidently a "secret" shared by a lot of people.

Charles Buchan thinks football would be better if a ball was not considered out of play until it touched the ground, whether it is over the line or not. But would a player be justified in jumping over the rails and kicking a high ball back into play before it dropped?



(Continued from page 13.)

"Quod?" repeated the Head of Greyfriars.

"Chokey, sir."

"C-c-chokey?"

"The stone jug, sir," the Kid further explained.

Dr. Locke blinked at him.

"I am afraid I do not quite understand," he said. "Do you mean that Mr. Huggins is detained somewhere?"

"Yes, sir," said the Kid, with a grin. "He's detained all right, the old hass. And he's going to be detained past the date of the scrap, and the Ring won't open as dated. He's always asking for it, the old 'un is. Oh, he's a fair terror when he gets going, the old 'un! Ain't I told him a 'undred times to let peelers alone!"

"Peelers?" said the Head faintly.

"It's his way, you know," said the Kid. "When he's pushed back about four he can't resist a pecceman's helmet. Always looking for trouble, the old 'un. I keep on telling him it's bad for business."

"Bless my soul!" said the Head of Greyfriars. "Do—do—do you mean that Mr. Huggins is—is—is in trouble with the authorities?"

"Seven days, sir," said the Kid cheerily. "And cheap at that; last time it was a month."

"Oh!"

"Course, a gentleman like you would 'ardly 'ave 'eard of such things," said the Kid apologetically. "'Skuse me talking about it, sir. I ain't used to such company as yourn, sir. You was going to say something, sir?"

"My dear boy," said Dr. Locke, "the other night you defended me from a gang of ruffians with a bravery that I can never forget. It is my desire to testify my gratitude in some practical manner. You saved me from heavy loss, for those ruffians would have robbed me; and, still more, you saved me from brutality, which might have had very serious results for me at my age. I must repay you somehow."

"Oh, call it off, sir!" said the Kid. "That's nothing. I don't want anything, sir."

"I understand from what you told me that night that you earn your bread by boxing," said Dr. Locke.

"That's my game, sir."

"Are you content with such a life, my boy?"

"There ain't any choice about it, sir," said the Kid. "I'm generally pretty well satisfied with what's going. I never was one to grouse. The old 'un's going to make a champion of me some day—if he don't get D.T.'s, or get landed for good in the stone jug." And the Kid chuckled.

"But have you ever thought of a different way of life—something with a prospect for the future?" asked the Head.

"Lots of times!" said the Kid. "But, bless you, sir, I'm lucky! There's ups and downs; but I get as many of the ups as the downs. The old 'un is a 'oly terror in some ways; but he's a

good sort, and he means well by a bloke. Course, he's left me in the lurch this time—and he's done it before when he's pushed too many back. I've told him more'n once that next time he was lagged I'd mizzle and leave him to it. But, arter all, what's a cove to do?"

"You have been to school?" asked Dr. Locke.

"Oh, yes, sir! Not so much as other coves, p'r'aps; but I've learned as much as a boxer wants to know."

"And you have no ambition outside your present profession?" asked the Head.

The Kid grinned.

"Lots, sir! But what's the good?"

"I may be able to help you to realise any worthy ambition, my boy," said Dr. Locke. "That is my very earnest desire. It is far from my wish to say one word against a man who has apparently been a good friend to you; but it is very painful to me to see a lad of your age in association with a man who drinks, and who spends part of his time in prison. It is indeed a very terrible state of affairs!"

"I s'pose you'd think so, sir—a gent like you," said the Kid rather wistfully. "But don't you worrit, sir; I'm all right. I ain't going the way Bobby Huggins has gone; a bloke in my line has to keep himself fit, and boozing and smoking would jolly soon push me out of the ring. What's the good of me thinking of things that I can't have? I remember once—"

The Kid broke off.

"Yes?" said the Head gently.

"We was stopping at a place called Latham, and there's a big school near, and some of the young gents came over to see the boxing," said the Kid. "I did think then how queer it was, them young gents at school, and many of them older than me—and me scrapping my way along! I took a walk round one day to look at the school—Rookwood it was called—"

"I know the place," said the Head, with a very curious look at the youthful boxer.

"And I thought to myself, wouldn't I like to change places with one of those young fellows!" said the Kid. "Good clothes and good prog and nothin' to do but lessons! My eye! Friends and relations to look arter them, and most likely a fat, easy job waiting for 'em when they're older! Things don't seem fixed quite fair and square in this 'ere world, do they, sir? But, arter all, what's the good of grouching?"

The Head was silent, still regarding him curiously.

"And I dessay I'd be out of place in the big school," grinned the Kid; "and I'm at 'ome in Huggins' Ring—when the old 'un is out of quod. Who cares?"

"You thought, then, that if you had an opportunity you would like to go to school—a big school—and improve your education, and fit yourself to take an honourable place in the world?" said Dr. Locke.

The Kid nodded.

"You still think so?" asked the headmaster.

"Course I do," said the Kid. "But what's the good? 'Sides, I should be like a duck outter water; and I dessay I'm better off where I am."

"Perhaps it could be arranged," said the Head.

"Eh?"

"It may be in my power—"

The Kid held up a knucky hand.

"Call it off, sir!" he said decidedly. "I ain't a beggar; and I ain't asking for nothing! Nobody's going to pay for me while I can earn my own keep."

Dr. Locke smiled.

"That is a very proper spirit, Dury," he said. "Nevertheless, it may be in my power to realise your ambition. It is possible, as you say, that you might not care for the life when you had once experienced it. Nothing in this world, I fear, is quite like what it seems when seen from the outside. The school might not be suitable for you—and you might not prove suitable for the school. Yet—" He paused. "You are not aware, Dury, that I am a schoolmaster?"

The Kid stared.

"You, sir?"

"I am headmaster of a public school."

"Oh, my eye!" said the Kid, in amazement. "Not the school I was speaking of, surely, sir?"

"No; I am headmaster of Greyfriars School, in Kent."

The Kid's face was a blank. Evidently he had never heard of Greyfriars School.

"You have not heard of Greyfriars?"

"No, sir."

"Then you can never have met anyone belonging to the school?"

"No, sir," said the Kid again. "Certainly the Kid had no idea that the fat fellow who he had sat down in a railway carriage some days before was a Greyfriars fellow."

"Perhaps that is all the better, if this plan that has occurred to me should be carried out," said the Head thoughtfully.

"But, sir—" stammered the Kid.

"It would be in the nature of an experiment," said Dr. Locke. "I am, as I have said, Dury, headmaster of Greyfriars School—a public school, very much like the big school you saw in Hampshire. It is in my power to place you in the school, and give you an opportunity of realising your ambition. I should be glad to do more than that, in repayment of the great service you rendered me. If you consent, you shall come to Greyfriars before the term opens, and you shall be prepared, so far as possible, to take your place in a Form with boys of your own age. For the future you will be under my protection. I shall see that you have every chance to take a respectable place in the world."

The Kid gazed at him.

"You—you ain't joking, sir?" he stammered.

"My dear boy, I should not be likely to jest upon such a matter," said the Head kindly.

"But—but—"

Dr. Locke rose.

"You must be given time to reflect," he said. "I will see you again to-morrow, Dury, and you will tell me your decision. But remove from your mind any thought that you will be under an obligation, or receiving anything to which you are not entitled. I shall see you again to-morrow, and I trust that you will have decided to take advantage of this opportunity."

"Oh, lor'!"

That was all the Game Kid could say. A few minutes later he was standing in the porch again, watching the stately figure of the Head as he departed.

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ANSWERS
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"Oh, lor'!" said the Game Kid again. "Oh, lor'! This beats it!"

Dr. Locke's face was very thoughtful as he walked away from Coddor's Place. Kind and benevolent as he was, the old gentleman was a keen judge of character, and he was satisfied with what he had observed of the Game Kid. A rough diamond—very rough, perhaps, but a genuine diamond. That was his opinion of the Game Kid; and it was a well-founded opinion. Certainly, if the boy boxer came to Greyfriars, he would be, at first, a good deal like a fish out of water; but he would shake down into his place. He was obviously quick and intelligent; he would soon be able to take his place in a junior Form with fellows of his own age.

At all events, he would spend the remainder of the school vacation at Greyfriars, under the Head's eye, before the school reassembled for the new term, and Dr. Locke would be able to judge further. The thing was, as the headmaster had said, in the nature of an experiment; but Dr. Locke saw no reason why the experiment should not turn out to be successful.

And the next day, when the Head saw the Kid again, and received his answer in the affirmative, the matter was settled. Huggins' Ring—when the old 'un came out of the stone jug—was to know the Game Kid no more.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The First Day of Term!

"HERE we are, here we are, here we are again!" Bob Cherry's voice was raised in song.

Bob's voice was not, perhaps, particularly tuneful; but it was powerful, and there could have been few persons in or about Courtfield Junction who did not hear it.

It was the first day of the new term at Greyfriars; and Greyfriars fellows were gathering from north, south, east, and west.

The express at Courtfield had landed a large cargo, and fellows were crowding for the local train. In the midst of the swarm the Famous Five met

once more, with cordial and exuberant greetings. Five cheery juniors linked arms, and shoved a cheery way along, heedless of objections and objurgations. Harry Wharton & Co. were in great spirits, and they made the fact known to all whom it might concern, and to all whom it might not concern.

"I say, you fellows—"
"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Bunter!"

"Fat as ever!" said Johnny Bull.
"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Turn round, Bunter!" said Bob.
"Eh! What am I to turn round for?" demanded the Owl of the Remove.

"I'm going to kick you! I was going to give you another kick when we saw you off in the hols, but you got into the train too quick. Turn round!"

"Beast!"
Billy Bunter backed away into the crowd, and the Famous Five chortled cheerily.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Skinner! No more smokes now the holidays are over, Skinner."

Skinner of the Remove grunted.
"So you're back this term, Skinner?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Eh! Why shouldn't I be back?" growled Skinner.

"I mean, you're not sacked?"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Skinner.
"I say, I heard that you fellows wedged into Coker's place for Christmas. What sort of hols did you get with that silly ass? How on earth did you get a Fifth Form man to ask you home? Or did you go without being asked? Let my hat alone, Bob Cherry, you silly ruffian!"

Skinner went plunging among innumerable feet after his hat.

The Famous Five continued on their cheery way towards the platform for the local train.

"Here's jolly old Coker!" grinned Nugent.

Coker of the Fifth loomed up, with Potter and Greene. Bob Cherry waved his hand to the great man.

Horace Coker responded with a frown.

More and more it had been borne in upon Coker's mind that he had sacrificed his dignity—a very important consideration with Coker of the Fifth—by asking Lower Fourth fellows home for the hols. It really weighed a good deal on Horace Coker's mind. Suppose the cheeky young sweeps took advantage of it—suppose they told all Greyfriars that Coker had asked them home—suppose they put on airs of friendly familiarity with Coker—suppose they came up to him in the quad and called him "old chap!" These suppositions were very painful to Coker of the Fifth.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here we are again, Coker!" roared Bob Cherry.

Coker knitted his brows, and Potter and Greene shrugged their shoulders.

"Your fag friends, Coker," said Potter sarcastically.

"How jolly!" jeered Greene.
Coker crimsoned.

"I had a special reason for asking those fags home!" he snapped. "They did me a service. As for being friends of mine, that's all rot, and you know it, Potter."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Enjoying life, Coker!" boomed Bob Cherry.

"Cut off!"
"Eh?"

"I don't want any of your dashed familiarity," said Coker.

"Oh, my hat!" Bob Cherry winked

at his comrades. "You don't want us to be friendly, Coker?"

"Certainly not!"

"You'd rather have it quite otherwise, what?"

"Of course."

"Right-ho! Let him have it otherwise, you fellows."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five made a sudden rush. Potter went staggering to the right, Greene to the left. Horace Coker came down on the platform with a crash and a roar.

"Yaroooh!"

"Sit on him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You young scoundrels!" roared Coker, as the Famous Five sat on him.

"Oh, my hat! Gerroff! Rescue!"

Potter and Greene came to the rescue. But a dozen Remove fellows rolled up at the same time—Vernon-Smith, and Redwing, and Peter Todd, and Penfold, and Tom Brown, and Russell, and Ogilvy, and many more. They came up with a rush and a roar of laughter, and Potter and Greene were swept away like chaff before the wind.

Horace Coker remained where he was. Horace was a hefty fellow; but he could not carry the weight of five sturdy Removites. He sprawled on his back, gasping and spluttering, with the chums of the Remove sitting on him and smiling.

"Gerroff!" roared Coker. "I'll smash you! I'll pulverise you! I'll spifficate you! Yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows," said Bob Cherry, settling down comfortably on Horace Coker's neck. "This person—"

"Gerroff!"

"This person is cheeky! We took this person up in the vac, and it has got into his head. We want to make him understand that now we're back at Greyfriars he mustn't be familiar."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gerroff! I—I—I'll—" spluttered Coker.

"We're going to make him understand that he's got to keep his distance, and not brag about the school that he knows us," continued Bob.

"Hear, hear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's not much good talking to Coker; he hasn't much in the way of brains. But even Coker can understand actions. Rag him!"

"Yaroooh!"

"Give him beans!"

"Oh crumbs! Oh crikey! Yoooop!"

The next few minutes were like a fearful dream to Coker. He was ragged, and rolled, and hustled, and bumped; his hat was squashed over his head, and his collar and tie jerked off and stuffed down the back of his neck. Coker had feared that the chums of the Remove would be too friendly. His fears were turning out to be quite unfounded. Their proceedings could not have been mistaken by the most obtuse person for friendly proceedings.

Horace Coker struggled and roared, but he struggled and roared in vain. The Famous Five handled him with ease, while a swarm of Removites stood round in a ring, roaring with laughter.

"Now, then, what's all this?" Wingate of the Sixth came shoving through the laughing crowd. "You young rascals!"

"All serene, Wingate," said Harry Wharton.

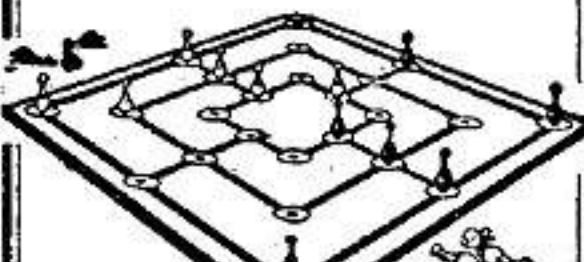
"Stop that at once!"

"You see, Coker asked for it,

"Everybody's Playing It!"

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"I don't want any of your dashed familiarity," said Coker. "Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, with a wink at his chums. "You don't want us to be friendly, Coker?" "Certainly not!" "Right-ho!" The Famous Five made a sudden rush. Potter went staggering to the right, Greene to the left, and Horace Coker came down to the platform with a crash and a roar!
(See Chapter 9.)

Wingate," said Bob Cherry. "He's putting on familiar airs, because we took him up in the vac."

"What?" ejaculated the captain of Greyfriars.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We're only making it clear to him that he's not to pretend to know us now we're back at Greyfriars," explained Bob.

Wingate burst into a laugh.

"Chuck it, you young sweeps! Get off to the train!"

And the hapless Coker was released, and the Famous Five marched off with a swarm of Removites. Coker sat up and spluttered.

"Groooogh! Hooogh! I'll smash 'em!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker of the Fifth staggered to his feet. The chums of the Remove were gone—the train was going. Coker looked round for Potter and Greene. But those two youths had gone for the train; they did not want Coker's company, in Coker's present dilapidated and dishevelled state. Horace Coker limped away to a waiting-room to put himself to rights. He was relieved on the subject of his fag acquaintances; they had made it clear that they were not going to claim him as a friend. They had made it painfully clear. Still, Coker of the Fifth did not seem satisfied, somehow. He did not seem at all pleased, in fact.

But the Famous Five were feeling pleased and satisfied, as they crowded into the local train and buzzed away to Friardale. And really that was all that mattered.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The New Removite!

"A NY new kids this term?"
"None in the Remove, I think," said Harry Wharton.
"It's queer!" said Ogilvy of the Remove.

"Jolly queer!" said Russell. "Somebody's been in our study."

Greyfriars was already settling down. In the Remove quarters, fellows had sorted themselves out and taken possession of their studies. Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent had bagged Study No. 1—their old study; Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull and Hurreo Singh were distributed along the passage as before. Russell and Ogilvy, who had shared Study No. 3 last term, had bagged Study No. 3 again—cheerfully helping out Billy Bunter, who had declared that he had decided on a change of study this term. Bunter had apparently decided on Study No. 3 in preference to Study No. 7; but he became undecided again, so to speak, when Ogilvy and Russell came in. Bunter was helped along to Study No. 7 unceremoniously, and left roaring in his old quarters. Now Ogilvy and Russell, on their way back, had come on the captain of the Remove in the passage and asked him whether there were any new kids.

"Sure there's no new chaps?" asked Ogilvy.

"Well, I haven't seen any or heard of any," answered Wharton. "There may be some, of course, all the same."

"Just squint into our study," said Russell.

Wharton glanced into Study No. 3. The study had an air as if it had been

occupied, and had not the newly swept and garnished look of the other Remove rooms.

There were the remains of a fire in the grate; in the armchair lay a book, open and face downwards; the open door of the study cupboard revealed several articles on the shelves, among them a pair of boxing-gloves and a punch-ball. There was a bag in the corner of the room, with the initials "R.D." painted on the leather. On the table was a little pile of school books.

Wharton glanced round in surprise.

"Not your things?" he asked.

"No; we haven't unpacked yet," said Ogilvy. "Bunter has been in here, and we chucked him out; but he hasn't unpacked anything. I'd like to know whom those things belong to."

"It's rather weird," remarked Russell. "If a new fellow's coming into the Remove, he can't have been given a study yet, and he can't have got his things unpacked. I suppose a new man hasn't come along before the first day of term."

"Unusual, anyhow," said Harry.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the row?" asked Bob Cherry cheerily, joining the three at the doorway.

"Looks as if some new kid has come early and camped in Ogilvy's study," said Harry.

"My hat! New kid got here before us?"

"Well, it looks like it, and his initials must be 'R.D.," said Wharton. "The full name may be in some of those books, you fellows."

"Good egg! I'll look," said Russell.

He opened a Virgil, which lay on top

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of the pile of school books on the study table. Then he whistled, and held up the title-page for the other juniors to see. Across the title-page was written, in a rather large, round hand, "Richard Dury."

"That's the merchant, then," said Harry. "Richard Dury. Never heard the name before?"

"Never."

"Must be a new kid."

"And they're landing him in our study!" grunted Ogilvy. "Might have planted him on you fellows."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"You're welcome to him, Oggy. I dare say he will be quite a nice chap; anyhow, you're welcome to him."

"But where the thump is he, and why the thump did he come before the beginning of term?" asked Russell. "You can see that he's been using the room—that fire's been burning to-day."

"Queer!" said Bob.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, buzz off, Bunter!"

"I say, what about a study supper?" persisted the Owl of the Remove. "We always have a study supper first night of term. Shall we have it in your study, Wharton, or in mine?"

"Oh, in yours," said the captain of the Remove sarcastically; "and you can stand it!"

"Certainly, old chap! I'll stand it with pleasure," said Bunter. "Ask any fellows you like—all are welcome."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Did the Marquis Bunter de Bunter hand you a big tip for the new term?" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"I'm expecting a postal-order—"

"Great pip!"

"It's bound to be here, waiting for me," explained Bunter. "A rather decent remittance, you know, from one of my titled relations."

"And the first-night supper depends on that?" grinned Bob.

"Oh, certainly!"

"Then we'd better see what we can get in Hall, or we shall go to the dorm rather hungry."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! Of course, it's barely possible that my postal-order hasn't come," admitted Bunter. "In that case, it will be here by the first post in the morning, so you can lend me—"

"I don't think."

"You can lend me the quid, Wharton—"

"Bow-wow!"

"And take the postal-order when it comes," said Bunter. "It will come to the same thing, won't it?"

"Not quite!" chuckled Wharton.

"Oh, really, old chap—"

"Supper in my study," said Harry. "You can roll in, old barrel, if you behave yourself and don't talk too much."

"If you put it like that, Wharton, I shall certainly decline to come," said Bunter, with dignity.

"Well, I do put it just exactly like that!" said the captain of the Remove.

"He, he, he!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What are you going off like a jumping cracker for, Bunter?" demanded Bob.

"He, he, he! I can take a joke," said Bunter. "I'll come, Harry, old chap. Rely on me. I wouldn't turn you down at a first-night supper."

"Don't mind me," answered Wharton.

"Turn me down if you like."

"Wharton!" It was Wingate's voice,

as the captain of Greyfriars came up from the Remove staircase. "Where's Wharton?"

"Adsam!" said Harry, with a smile.

"You're wanted—you and Ogilvy and Russell," said the Sixth-Former. "Mr. Quelch's study."

"Oh, my hat! What's the trouble already?" asked Bob.

Wingate laughed.

"No trouble, you young ass. Though I've no doubt you'll be on plenty of trouble before the term's three days old. I think Mr. Quelch wants to speak to Wharton about a new kid in the Remove."

"Oh, all right," said Harry.

Wingate went down the Remove staircase. Harry Wharton and Ogilvy and Russell exchanged glances.

"That's Dury, I suppose," said Ogilvy. "Quelch going to introduce us, I suppose? What rot!"

"I say, you fellows, is there a new kid in the Remove?" asked Bunter, his eyes opening behind his big spectacles. New fellows were always Bunter's game. His celebrated postal-order stood a better chance of being cashed with new fellows who had not heard of it before.

"Yes. Chance for you, Bunter," said Russell. "Actually a fellow in the Form to whom you don't owe any money—yet."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!"

"Better go and see what Quelch wants," remarked Harry Wharton; and he went down, followed by Russell and Ogilvy. The Remove fellows had already been interviewed by their Form master—in bulk, as it were. Now, apparently, Mr. Quelch wanted a few words with the captain of the Form and the two fellows who, it seemed, were to be Richard Dury's study-mates for the new term.

The three Removites could not help wondering a little as they went to Mr. Quelch's study. The new fellow, Dury, had evidently arrived at Greyfriars before the school opened for the new term, which was unusual, and the Remove master wanted to speak to them specially about him, which was also unusual. They wondered who Richard Dury was, and what he was like.

Wharton tapped at the Form master's door.

"Come in!" said Mr. Quelch's deep voice.

The trio of Removites entered.

Mr. Quelch was seated at his writing-table; near him, by the fire, a junior was standing. Evidently this was the new Remove fellow, Richard Dury, and the juniors glanced at him curiously. He was not a handsome lad, but his rather rugged face was cheerful and good-tempered, and they could not help noticing how remarkably developed he was physically. He looked, as Russell described it afterwards, as strong as a horse. He had very keen, dark eyes, which scanned the Removites questioningly as they came into the Form master's room.

"Ah! Wharton, Ogilvy, Russell," said Mr. Quelch, "I have sent for you as I wish to introduce to you a new junior who will be in the Lower Fourth. Dury, this is Wharton, the captain of your Form; these boys are Russell and Ogilvy, your future study-mates. My boys, this is Richard Dury."

Richard Dury made a step towards the three juniors, with a cheery grin on his rugged face. They shook hands with him.

"Glad to see you, Dury!" said Wharton politely. "I hope we shall be friends."

"I 'ope so, covey," said the new fellow cheerily, and the Remove fellows fairly jumped.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Remarkable New Boy!

MR. QUELCH coughed. Harry Wharton and his two companions looked at the new junior.

They could not help feeling amazed. A fellow who addressed them as "coveys," and dropped his h's, was somewhat new in their experience.

They had wondered what the new fellow, Richard Dury, was like. They had not imagined that he was like this.

The Remove master coughed again. There was a faint pink spot in either of Mr. Quelch's cheeks. He was not a gentleman accustomed to revealing his thoughts or his feelings. But it was plain that he was a little disconcerted by his peculiar new pupil.

"Dury will be in the Remove, Wharton," he said.

"Yes, sir," said Harry.

"He will share your study, Ogilvy and Russell."

"Oh! Yes, sir," stammered Ogilvy.

"I trust that you will be friends," said Mr. Quelch.

"I—I hope so, sir," murmured Russell.

"Why not, sir?" said Richard Dury amiably. "I'm a bloke as anybody could get on with. These coveys will find me all right."

"Dury, you will oblige me by avoiding the use of such words as—as bloke, and—and covey, so far as possible," said Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir. I forgot, sir," said Richard Dury, a little abashed.

"Very well, Dury. You may go to your study now."

"Suttingly, sir."

Richard Dury left Mr. Quelch's room and closed the door after him. Harry Wharton and Ogilvy and Russell stood in a surprised row before the Form master's table, waiting. Evidently the Remove master wished to speak to them about Dury whilst not in the new fellow's presence.

"My boys," said Mr. Quelch gravely, "this lad, Dury, is joining the Remove this term, and—" He paused. "You will have observed already that, in some respects, he is somewhat dissimilar to the average Greyfriars boy."

"Hem! Yes, sir; a little," murmured Wharton.

"He is an excellent lad in many respects, and the Head has recommended him to me very specially," said Mr. Quelch. "He showed, on a certain occasion, very great courage and devotion, qualities which I am sure the boys of my Form can appreciate."

"Certainly, sir."

"He has not, of course, been accustomed to a school like Greyfriars," went on Mr. Quelch. "It is possible that he may have certain difficulties to encounter here—undeserved difficulties. You, Wharton, are head boy of the Form, and I confidently look to you to do anything in your power to smooth the difficulties in Dury's way."

"I will do my best, sir," said Wharton wonderingly.

"You, Ogilvy and Russell, will see most of Dury, as he will share your study," said Mr. Quelch. "I have observed your characters, as I think I have observed the characters of most of the boys in my Form, and I think I may be assured that you will feel no prejudices of a—a snobbish nature



Dury was sitting with his back to the door, and Billy Bunter did not observe him. "I haven't seen the new kid Dury yet," said Bunter. "But from what I hear he's a regular corker. Some sort of a rank outsider that the Head has dug up from somewhere. He, he, he! He drops his h's and talks like a bargee, you know!" "Shut up, Bunter!" said Wharton hastily, as a red flush spread over the new boy's face. (See Chapter 12.)

towards a lad who has not hitherto had your own advantages."

"Oh! Quite so, sir," said Ogilvy.

"I trust that you will make this boy welcome, in spite of certain—hem!—little peculiarities of speech and—manner, and make him feel at ease among us," said Mr. Quelch.

"Rely on us, sir," said Russell.

"That is all, my boys, and I thank you!" added Mr. Quelch graciously.

The three juniors left the study. Mr. Quelch shook his head a little when they were gone. The Head had asked him to do his best for the new fellow, and Mr. Quelch had promised to do his best. But he could not help feeling exceedingly doubtful about the success of the Head's experiment in placing the Game Kid of Huggins' Ring in the Lower Fourth Form at Greyfriars. However, the experiment was to be tried, and Mr. Quelch, having done all he could to ensure its success, dismissed the matter from his mind. He had plenty of other matters to attend to on the opening day of the new term.

In the corridor, Harry Wharton and his companions looked at one another rather queerly.

"Well, this is a go!" said Russell.

"Where on earth did they dig him up?"

"Goodness knows," said Harry, with a slight smile.

"The way he talks—" murmured Russell.

"Well, he will learn a bit different in the Remove. He looked a decent sort of a kid."

"Oh, I daresay he's all right," said Ogilvy. "Blessed if I can understand it, but I suppose the Head knows what he's about. But it's jolly queer. The kid will get a lot of chipping in the Remove."

"He will have to stand that, I suppose," said Harry. "If he's got grit, he will be able to stand it."

"Ragging, too, very likely," said Russell.

Wharton shook his head.

"Not while I'm around," he said, very decidedly. "Now I come to think of it, I daresay that's why Quelch spoke to me about him. The kid's a bit of a queer merchant, but he's not going to be put through any rags."

The three juniors went up to the Remove passage.

"You fellows come to supper, and bring the new merchant along with you," said Wharton. "Quelch told us to make him feel at home, and I suppose that's as good as any other way."

"Well, we'll bring him along to supper," said Ogilvy dubiously. "But I'm jolly well going to see a bit more what he's like before I get too chummy with the chap."

Wharton smiled, and went into Study No. 1, where preparations were going on for the first-night supper. Ogilvy and Russell went along to Study No. 3, where they found Richard Dury.

They eyed him rather queerly as they came into the room. Richard Dury gave them a good-tempered grin.

"You blokes belong to this 'ere room?" he asked.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Russell. "Yes—us blokes belong to this 'ere room, just as you say, Dury."

Dury eyed him a little suspiciously. "You making game of me?" he asked.

"Hem!" "Where do you come from, Dury?" asked Ogilvy.

"Oh, nowhere in pertickler," answered Dury. "Wot does that matter? You'll find me alright. I haven't had much schooling."

"Not really?" asked Russell, with a grin.

"'Cause why, I never had the chance," said Dury. "I'm going to make up for lost time 'ere, so the 'Ead says. I say, the 'Ead is a sportsman, ain't he?"

"He's a good old sort."

"A real gent, and no mistake," said Dury enthusiastically. "I ain't a gent myself."

"No?" gasped Ogilvy.

"Not a bit of it," said Dury cheerfully, "but I know a gent when I see one. And the 'Ead's the real goods, he is. 'You try 'ard to get on 'ere,' he says to me. And you can bet I'm going to try 'ard, just to please him!"

"Well, that's all right," said the puzzled Ogilvy. "I wish you luck, kid. You seem a queer sort of merchant, and no mistake; but I daresay we shall pull all right in this study. Wharton's asked us to supper in No. 1: Coming?"

"I fancy I could peck a bit," said Dury.

"Oh, my hat! Come on, then, old scout."

Russell and Ogilvy led the new fellow from Study No. 3, with smiling came into the room. Richard Dury rather as a joke, not quite knowing how else to take him.

"Hallo, there's that ass Coker!" said Russell.

Coker, of the Fifth, was coming up the Remove staircase. He reached the door of Study No. 1 almost as Ogilvy & Co. reached it. Coker, of the Fifth, had a grim frown on his brow, and a cane under his arm. It was obvious, at a glance, that Coker of the Fifth was on the war-path. Apparently, the incident at Courtfield Junction troubled Coker.

He made a gesture to the juniors in the passage.

"You keep clear!" he snapped. "I've come up here to see Wharton and his gang. You keep clear."

Coker of the Fifth had chosen his time with unusual caution; as most of the Removites were downstairs in Hall. There was no prep on the first night of term. For once, the Remove passage was not like a hornet's nest when the great man of the Fifth butted into it.

"You cheeky ass——" began Russell.

"Shut up!"

"Look here——" said Ogilvy.

"Shut up!"

Coker kicked open the door of Study No. 1.

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent were there; the rest of the Co. had not yet arrived.

"Now, you young sweeps——" roared Coker.

"Back up!" exclaimed Wharton, as the great man of the Fifth rushed into the study.

"Come on!" shouted Russell.

"Lend a hand, you new kid."

"What-ho!" said Dury.

He grinned as he joined in the rush at Coker. Who Coker was, and what the trouble was, Richard Dury had not the faintest idea. But he knew that that big, hefty fellow was going for his new friends, fellows belonging to the Form he belonged to, and that one of his study-mates called on him to lend a hand. That was enough for him; the Game Kid was more than ready to lend a hand—and a very surprising hand!

"Why—what—what—who—what——" stuttered Coker of the Fifth, as his collar was grabbed in a grasp of steel.

Crash!

Coker, of the Fifth, went sprawling on the floor of Study No. 1, dropped there by a single swing of a junior's arm—a junior head and shoulders shorter than the big Fifth-Former, but evidently possessed of an amazing strength.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Nugent, staring.

"My only hat!"

Coker gasped for breath, and struggled into a sitting position. But he could get no further, for the grasp on his collar was like that of a vice. Coker, of the Fifth, was no weakling; indeed, he was remarkably hefty. But he was quite useless in the grasp of the Game Kid of Huggins' Ring.

"Why, what—what—what——" stuttered Coker, wondering whether this was some amazing dream.

The Game Kid grinned.

"Wot'll I do with him, you coveys?" he asked. "Like to see him chucked out?"

"Oh, crumbs!" said Russell, staring blankly at the new junior. "The kid can handle Coker—Coker of the Fifth! Is this some blessed Sandow they've sent to Greyfriars?"

"Leggo!" roared Coker, struggling frantically.

"Oh, you be quiet!" said the Game Kid; and with another swing of his sinewy arm, he stretched Coker on the floor again, and tapped his head on the boards.

Bang!

"Yaroooh!" roared Coker.

"Great Christopher Columbus!" gasped Wharton.

"Leggo! I'll smash you!" bawled Coker. "I'll—I'll—I'll—— Yaroooh! Yooop! Whooo!"

Bang!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll sling him out, what?" asked the Kid.

"Oh, do!" gasped Wharton.

"Ere goes!"

Coker, of the Fifth, to his utter amazement, found himself going through the doorway of Study No. 1 into the passage. He resisted frantically, but he went, because the iron grasp on his collar was not to be denied. With his arms wildly waving, and his heels scraping the floor, Coker was whisked out of Study No. 1 into the Remove passage, helplessly. The Remove fellows stared on in blank amazement.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. Bob had arrived with Johnny Bull and Hurree Janset Ram Singh, in time to see Horace Coker make his remarkable exit.

"What the thump——" ejaculated Johnny Bull.

"The thumpfulness is terrific!" exclaimed the amazed nabob. "The esteemed Coker's bitfulness is more than the chewfulness."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker, of the Fifth, wondering dazedly whether he was on his head or his heels, was whisked along to the Remove staircase. There the Kid rolled him down.

Bump, bump!

The Kid shook a warning forefinger at Coker from the landing.

"You 'ook it!" he said.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Coker.

"You go 'ome!" said the Kid.

"Oh! Ow! Oh, my hat!"

From the lower landing Coker of the Fifth glared breathlessly up at the grinning Kid on the Remove landing. Unless he was dreaming, Coker of the Fifth couldn't understand it at all. But he understood that he had been handled like a baby by this amazing junior; and he understood that he had had enough, and did not want any more. On that point, at least, Horace Coker's mind was quite clear. And Coker picked himself up and tramped dizzily down the lower stairs, still like a fellow in a dream; and the Game Kid chuckled and walked cheerily back to Study No. 1.



THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

An Unexpected Recognition!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. eyed the new junior curiously as he came back to Study No. 1. To say that they were astonished would be to put it mildly. They had already noted that Dick Dury was something unusual in the way of new boys, and it dawned upon them that he was more-remarkable than they had imagined. Wharton smiled involuntarily at the recollection that he had resolved to protect Dury from any ragging in the Remove. Dury, obviously, was a fellow who was not likely to be in need of protection. The ease with which he had handled a big, hefty fellow like Coker of the Fifth showed that he would be very easily able to take care of himself so far as the Lower Fourth was concerned.

"He's gone," said the Kid cheerily.

"We heard him go," said Bob Cherry, with a grin. "I say, young shaver, you don't happen to be jolly old Hercules in disguise, do you?"

"Eh—what? Who's 'Ercules?" asked Dury.

"Oh, don't be funny!" said Bob, with a stare. "Are you trying to pull my leg?"

"No, I ain't," said the Kid. "And I

ain't never 'eard of the bloke you mention, and I'm sure I don't know him, neither."

Bob looked at the new junior, and looked at Wharton, naturally, rather puzzled.

"Is this a giddy jest?" he asked.

"Dury's a bit out of the usual run of new kids," said Harry, with a smile. "I think he's quite serious."

"Course I am," said the Kid, perplexed. "I tell you I don't know any bloke named 'Ercules, and never did."

"Well, you'd hardly know him, you know," chuckled Ogilvy. "He happens to be a johnny who led a mythological existence some thousands of years ago. He was the champion strong man in his time."

"Oh, was he?" said the Kid. "Well, I've never 'eard of him."

"But I don't catch on," said the puzzled Bob. "You could hardly do any Latin at all without coming across the name, at least."

"I ain't done any Latin till a week ago," explained the Kid.

"Oh!" said Bob.

He was utterly puzzled. Bob remembered his own entrance exam on coming to Greyfriars, and he remembered that, though most fellows found it easy enough, he had not found it easy. If the Kid had done Latin for only a week he could not have tackled the entrance exam at all. Yet here he was, apparently a member of the Lower Fourth.

"Supper's ready," said Nugent.

And the juniors sat down round the table in Study No. 1. It was quite a handsome supper, and one item in the menu was fish and chips. Harry Wharton & Co. were a little surprised, though they tried not to show it, when Richard Dury proceeded to transfer his provender to his mouth by means of a well-laden knife-blade.

They tried not to look at him, and tried not to smile at one another. But Dury caught something in the atmosphere, as it were, and he coloured and put down the knife.

"There I goes ag'in!" he said. "I 'ope you blokes don't mind. Bliinkin' old 'abits, you know."

"Not at all!" murmured Wharton politely.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Bunter, turned up like a bad penny, as usual," said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

William George Bunter rolled into the study. He was a little late for supper, that unusual circumstance being accounted for by the fact that Hazel-dene of the Remove had brought back a Christmas pudding in his box. Hazel had not yet unpacked his box; Bunter had.

"I say, you fellows, I hear there's a new kid in the Form," said Bunter, as he rolled in.

"Go hon!" said Bob, with a grin.

Dury was sitting with his back to the door, and Bunter did not observe him, for the moment, among the crowd of fellows in Study No. 1.

"I haven't seen him yet," went on Bunter, grinning. "But from what I hear he's a regular corkor. I hear that he's been here a week in the vac—some sort of a rank outsider that the Head has dug up from somewhere. His name's Dury, and he drops his h's and talks like a bargee. He, he, he!"

"Shut up, Bunter!" said Wharton hastily, as a red flush spread over the face of Richard Dury.

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

(Continued on page 28.)

THE STRONG MAN OF WOLF POINT! The "gunmen" at Wolf Point have had things all their own way for some time past; sheriffs, in their opinion, are easy meat! But there's nothing easy about Ferrers Locke, as certain individuals who go out to "get" him discover to their cost!

The MYSTERY of FLYING V RANCH!



A Powerful and Dramatic Story of Wild West and Detective Adventure, featuring Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake.

Monty Earl Pays the Price!

"GO on!" said Ferrers Locke coldly.

"You're a Britisher," continued Earl; "and you've got grit! That was showed clear enough to-night. Well, I've gotta proposition to put to you. Keep your eyes shut to what goes on around here, and you and me'll get on fine! Make trouble like what you did to-night with Klauster and you die sudden! I'm having things just as I like 'em around here! What say? Will you run with me?"

"Earl," inquired the detective quietly, "what do you know of the Wolf?"

"Why?" he asked softly. "Did Klauster say I was the Wolf?"

Ferrers Locke threw back his head and laughed aloud.

"You?" he said bitingly. "You? A great stupid, hulk of sheer bluff like you? Get this, Earl! The Wolf is a man with a brain! A man with intelligence! Not a back-alley, faro-joint, Chicago crook like you! Steady; I've got you covered! You've talked big to-night, Earl, and I'm calling your bluff! I brought in Klauster because he shot a Flying V hand! Klauster's itching to say something mighty interesting about you, and I'm holding you till he says it! But I'll tell you one thing which he will not say, unless he's the biggest liar in Texas, and that is that you are the Wolf! You're small fry, Earl!"

"Yuh've sed it, sheriff!" drawled a voice from the passage doorway, behind Ferrers Locke. Both men wheeled round. The door was shut save for about an inch, but through the aperture protruded the long, metallic blue barrel of a revolver.

"Keep quite still, sheriff!" went on the drawing voice. "An' thet skunk Earl I'm shootin' at th' very fust bat of a eyelid! Yuh called him small fry, sheriff, an' yuh shore called him plumb right! But he's aimin' to get his blamed hold-up's saddled on me! He held th' mail up last time, not me!

That's his on'y crime, so far, in this byar district, but he's plannin' others! Yep, squirm, Earl, yuh hog! I'm wise to yuh, yuh fat pack-rat! Aimin' to pull hold-ups an' shootin's, and holler it's th' Wolf! He gits th' blame an' yuh gits th' swag! Don't move, either of yuh! My guns is shore liable to go off!"

The monotonous, level drawl ceased for a moment, then continued with cold, deliberate calm.

"Earl, I'm gonno kill yuh! Yuh shore reckoned th' shadder of th' Wolf w'ud hide yuh hold-ups! Waal, it's th' shadder of death for yuh, Monty Earl!"

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

FERRERS LOCKE, the famous Baker Street detective, and his clever young assistant, **JACK DRAKE**, take up quarters in Texas to investigate the mysterious raids made upon the cattle ranches in the neighbourhood of Wolf Point. A card bearing a wolf's head, with bared fangs, left at the scene of each outrage, is the only clue the detective has to work on. He has hardly been at Wolf Point five minutes, however, before an attempt is made on his life.

MAT DUKE, the sheriff, sees the situation, but in so doing is himself fatally shot by a person unknown. Following a second attempt on the detective's life, Drake rushes in with the news that the Wolf is raiding the Flying V outfit. Locke and the other ranchers hasten to the scene only to find the Wolf has fled, leaving many casualties.

At the instigation of **SILAS CAISTER** and two other wealthy ranchers, he is asked to take on the job of Sheriff of Wolf Point. This he does under the assumed name of **HENDERSON**. Before very long, however, his attention is brought to the fact that a shooting affray has taken place at the Silver Dollar Saloon, a gambling den run by **MONTY EARL**, and that an attempt has been made upon the life of **KID**, one of the Flying V hands. Hurrying to the scene, the detective ascertains the facts and arrests **KILLER KLAUSTER**, whom he imprisons. Fearing certain information might leak out, Earl visits the gaol with a proposition to put before the new sheriff.

"I'm the strongest man around these parts, sheriff," he says meaningfully, "and I've gotta pull what no other fellow's got. What do you say to running with me and clearing up a fortune?"
(Now read on.)

"I've gunmen outside, curse you!" screamed Earl.

"Nope! Not now, Monty Earl!" went on the toneless voice. "They're shore swingin' pretty on th' end of a rope hitched to yore s'loon signpost! I gotta pack runs wi' me, Earl, same as yuh was aimin' to hev run wi' you! I'm gonna shoot now, Monty Earl! Then I plugs real clever Mister Ferrers Henderson Locke!"

Whilst the unseen man had been talking Ferrers Locke had slowly tilted his revolver barrel upwards. He knew that he had not the slightest chance of wheeling in his chair sufficiently to enable him to fire through the door. But he had worked out a plan of action, and steadily his finger closed on the trigger. At the same instant the man in the doorway fired.

The noise in the room was deafening as the two guns exploded simultaneously. Monty Earl pitched forward in his chair and crashed to the floor. The oil lamp, at which Ferrers Locke had fired, heeled over and went out, plunging the room into pitch darkness. The detective dashed to one side, and the darkness was cut by wicked tongues of blood-red flame as the man fired five shots in rapid succession towards Ferrers Locke's empty chair.

Then, as the detective sprang forward, the door banged shut. There came a dull thud, then silence. Ferrers Locke hurled himself at the door, but it refused to open.

Ferrers Locke knew that there was not a second to lose, and, crossing the floor, he wrenched open the door leading to the platform outside and doubled round to the rear of the building. There was nothing to be seen, but, as he listened intently, there came to his ears the drumming of galloping hoofs gradually receding in the distance.

"As slick a getaway as I've known!" he murmured, then retraced his footsteps to the office. He obtained a spare lamp
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from one of the rear rooms and, lighting it, placed it on the table.

Monty Earl was lying very still on the floor, his fat, heavy body half hidden under the table. Ferrers Locke pulled the table to one side and turned the man over. He was stone dead.

The detective's next step was to visit the gaol. Pulling back the little shutter in the iron door, he switched on his electric torch. Killer Klauster was striding up and down the cell. As the light fell on him he snarled:

"By cripes, this ain't a monkey-show! Kim on; getta feller outa hyar, pronto!"

"Sorry to disappoint you, Klauster!" replied Ferrers Locke. "But it's not a rescue yet!"

Klauster swore fervently.

"What's thet blamed shootin', then?" he demanded. "Who'n blazes he's bin gunnin' if 'tain't a rescue?"

"No friend of yours, Klauster!" replied the detective, and he closed the sliding panel.

He turned to find Jack hurrying towards him down the passage.

"What on earth has happened, guv'nor?" cried the boy. "Who killed Monty Earl?"

"The Wolf!" came the reply.

Leading the way to the room where lay the body of Earl, the detective told Jack the whole story.

"But how did he get here, guv'nor?"

"I shall examine the premises carefully as soon as it is daylight," replied Ferrers Locke. "Nothing must be touched! Nothing at all! How is Kid?"

"He's not so bad. Spud pulled out for the Flying V with him!"

Jack Drake paused, then said slowly:

"Have you any idea, guv'nor, as to the identity of the Wolf? I mean, you have said very little to me about it during these last few days, but somehow I've got the impression that you are not as completely puzzled as I am!"

Ferrers Locke was silent for a moment, then, laying his hand on Jack's shoulder, he said earnestly:

"Jack, I have a theory! But it is a theory so wild, fantastic, and horrible that sometimes I almost doubt myself. I can say nothing further now. A theory is one thing, but proof is another. I have not been idle this past week, and I am convinced that the lair of the Wolf is not in Wolf Point! To-morrow, therefore, we ride for the Flying V, which we will make our temporary headquarters. The Wolf lurks somewhere out there on the open ranges, and it is there we will find him!"

Panzales!

SCARCELY had Ferrers Locke finished speaking when there came the sound of voices from outside.

Next moment the door was thrown open and a swarthy-looking fellow, with more than a hint of Mexican blood in his veins, clumped into the room.

The detective recognised the fellow as Juan Panzales, secretary and manager to Monty Earl. At his heels trooped half a dozen of the toughest element of Wolf Point.

Panzales started at sight of Earl's body, then wheeled on Ferrers Locke.

"What do you want?" said the detective coldly.

"That is what I want!" snapped Panzales, indicating Earl's body. "Did you do that, Englishman?"

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"I am answering no questions of yours, Panzales," replied the detective evenly. "State your business, and get out!"

Panzales' dark eyes flashed passionately.

"That is my business, Englishman!" he snarled. "The ranchers, fools that they are, made you sheriff of Wolf Point. And what have you done? Earl is dead, and to-night Slim and Jem have been hanged! To me it looks like you kill Earl yourself! I ask you why. I ask you why you allow two men to be hanged in the main street of Wolf Point. I ask you why you have not brought the law here as you said you would. If you cannot answer to our satisfaction, Englishman, then we take you out of here right now!"

"Ah! A lynching-party!" drawled Ferrers Locke.

"Yes, you have said it. It is a lynching-party! Tell me. Why you kill Earl?"

"Panzales" said the detective coldly, "get out! Take your lynching-party with you, else I'll let you cool your heels till morning in the gaol!"

"You talk like that! Fool that you are!" hissed the Mexican. "Do you not know that your life is not worth that?"

He snapped his fingers viciously.

Ferrers Locke knew that it was hopeless to go for his gun. The men, everyone of them except the leader, had trooped into the room with their guns in their hands. Even could the detective draw successfully, the odds were impossible at such close quarters.

"I have only one thing to say to you, Panzales," he went on steadily. "If every saloon of Earl's is not shut down by midday to-morrow, I'll run you out of Wolf Point at the end of a gun! Get that! Also, if I find one of Earl's gunmen or hangers-on in Wolf Point after that time, I will gaol him! That goes. Now get out!"

Panzales' breath whistled in through his clenched teeth, and to Ferrers Locke he looked like a hungry snake.

"Dog!" he snarled. "You but make me laugh!"

"Do I?" said the detective mildly. "Laugh at that, then!"

He had been bracing himself whilst he spoke and, without warning, he hurled himself forward. He clutched the Mexican by the front of the shirt, and his right fist crashed into the unshaven chin. The pain in Ferrers Locke's shoulder was terrific; but, hugging the man to him, he retreated to the table.

Before the six toughs could recover from their surprise, Jack stepped quickly forward and jabbed his gun into Panzales' ribs.

"I'll fire at the first hostile move!" he warned.

"Put up your guns!" screamed Panzales. "These dogs are mad!"

"Mad!" roared a voice from the doorway. "Not so mad as you, you murdering dog!"

With one accord the lynching-party wheeled round, to see the tall, gaunt form of Caister looming the doorway. Pushing them aside with his great hands, the rancher strode to where Ferrers Locke stood holding the Mexican. At his heels came Alf, the foreman of the Caister ranch.

"What's the howdo, sheriff?" he drawled.

"Oh, Panzales has had rather an upsetting night, so he's come to vent his displeasure on me," replied Ferrers Locke dryly.

"Aw, is thasso, the great stiff!" drawled Caister; then his eye fell on

the body of Earl. "Gosh snakes sheriff!" he snapped. "Who'n blazes did that?"

"We'll talk later," replied Ferrers Locke. Turning to Panzales, he said icily: "Remember what I've said. If you and your gang are not out of Wolf Point by to-morrow midday, I'll come for you with a gun! That goes!"

"Yep. Sure it goes!" drawled Caister. "And I'm aiming to come with you, sheriff. I don't figger I knows what the sassying is all about to-night, but I knows this, greaser, you ain't a healthy specimen, and you turns my stomach! Sheriff says, get out! Then blamed well get out, or, by gosh, you'll fill a nice lil' hole in the ground! Get that?"

Panzales backed away, snarling. Ferrers Locke had drawn his gun, as had Caister and Alf.

"Come on!" taunted the rancher. "There's seven of you. If so be you likes to fight it out here and now with your guns, us is sure willing to accommodate you. No? Aw, waa, get out!"

The lynching-party had no desire to fight it out in that little room when opposed to three determined men and one determined boy. They put up their guns and shuffled towards the door.

"Don't try no pop shot, Panzales," warned Caister, "or I'll drag you behind a cayuse with a rope!"

Panzales swore unintelligibly, and the next moment he was swallowed up in the darkness outside.

"Now, sheriff," drawled Caister, "us'll talk!"

Links in the Chain!

BRIEFLY the detective told Caister the events of the night, and the big rancher listened in silence.

"Guess you've had a hot time, sheriff," he said, when Ferrers Locke had finished. "What you aiming to do with Klauster?"

"I'm riding out to the Flying V as soon after daylight as possible," replied Ferrers Locke. "I'll take him along with me. If Kid's pulling through all right, I'll let Klauster go, provided he keeps clear of Wolf Point in future. I'm after bigger game than him, and now that Earl's dead, these gunmen have lost their boss, and won't be difficult to handle."

Caister nodded, and drawled:

"Guess you're right, sheriff. So Earl pulled that last hold-up, hey, and the Wolf was wise to him?"

"Looks like it," grunted Ferrers Locke. Then added calmly: "I'll have the Wolf within a week."

"Gee!" breathed Caister. "You mean that, sheriff?"

"Yes."

"That's great!" chuckled Caister heartily. "Say, you gotta clue?"

"I'm answering no questions," smiled the detective. "But if I don't get him within a week I'll give him best!"

"That's fine!" said Caister. "Guess I won't ask no questions, Mr. Henderson."

"I want you to quite understand," went on Ferrers Locke quietly, "that I'm telling you this in no boasting spirit. I merely want you to know that I am not being idle."

"I get you," replied Caister. "Say, I most forgot what I comed in for. I've shot a feller!"

"Yes, I know. Spud told me something about it."

"It was self defence. The coyote pulled a gun on me. Guess there's more'n a dozen witnesses saw it, including Jake Peters and Jonas Hiram, what



Without warning, Ferrers Locke hurled himself forward. He clutched the Mexican by the front of the shirt, and his right fist crashed into the unshaven chin. (See page 24.)

was at my ranch at the time. But say, you're looking 'bout all in. You turn in, sheriff, for a bit."

The detective shook his head.

"No. I've got plenty to keep me busy for an hour or two. You staying in Wolf Point, or are you pulling out now?"

"Guess I'll stay and ride out with you to-morrow," replied Caister. "I wanta see these s'loons closed. There may be a bit of trouble, and two more guns—Alf's and mine—is sure gonna help a bit."

"Thanks," replied Ferrers Locke. "It's decent of you to offer."

"Mr. Henderson," said Caister fervently, "I guess anything Jake Peters and Cal and me can do to help get th' law back to Wolf Point and the ranges don't need no thanks. Us is plumb ready to come a-runnin' when we're wanted. By heck, I ain't forgetting how you've stood up to-night! To bring in that skunk Klauster was grit, I'll tell th' world!"

Caister and Alf took their departure a few minutes later, and, crossing to the window, Ferrers Locke pulled up the blind. The first grey tint of dawn was in the sky.

"You'd better turn in for an hour, Jack," he remarked. "I'm going to have a look round."

The detective made his way to the rear of the buildings. Standing a few yards from the back of the gaol was a tumbledown piece of fencing which had long fallen into disuse. As Ferrers Locke approached it he nodded thoughtfully. The turf was broken and

trampled where a horse, which had been tethered to one of the uprights, had stamped impatiently.

Making a detour so as to avoid the hoof-marks, the detective carefully examined the fencing. Adhering to a jagged part of the broken top rail were a few bay-coloured hairs, where the horse had rubbed himself. Ferrers Locke carefully extracted them and placed them in a piece of paper, which he slipped into his wallet.

Then, for half an hour, he scrutinised the hoof-prints closely. Apart from being a trifle large the prints were very uniform. There was not the slightest sign of a badly-set nail in the shoe, or of a worn plate, such as might have aided identification. The animal had, obviously, been shod but recently, and then by a master hand.

Quitting the fencing, Locke found that admittance to the building had been gained by the simple expedient of slipping back the catch of an old-fashioned, roughly-constructed window of a room which served as a sort of kitchen, scullery, and box-room combined.

The detective carefully tested for finger-prints, but, as he suspected, there were none. The murderer of Earl had obviously used gloves. Locke then walked slowly up the passage towards the main room, where the shooting had occurred. Pushing open the door slightly he looked inside. Yes, it had been so easy, that shooting of Monty Earl. But the murderer must have known his way about. Entering the room, Locke busied himself for a quarter of an hour or so in extracting four

bullets from the woodwork. These also he carefully stowed away in his wallet. Then he walked to the window and stood looking out on the silent, deserted, dust-strewn street, his eyes cold and hard.

"I'll get you!" he murmured. "You hound!"

Then abruptly he turned and made his way towards his own room.

Panzales Makes Trouble I

CASTING himself, fully clothed, on his camp bed, Ferrers Locke lay with his hands behind his head, and pondered on the mission which had brought him to Wolf Point. He was weary, utterly weary with the reaction of the events of the night. But Jack must have sleep, and they could not both afford to sleep in that turbulent township.

He would have Earl buried that morning, close the saloons and gambling dens, and then ride out to the cool, clean air of the open ranges. The open ranges and—the Wolf!

Then suddenly his thoughts were interrupted by someone knocking at the door of the outer office. It was a quiet, insistent knocking, and continued unbrokenly the while he moved from his room to the door. Throwing it open, he found himself face to face with Caister and the little lawyer, Jonas Hiram.

Both men looked grim, and without a word, Caister stepped into the room, the lawyer close at his heels.

"Mr. Henderson," he said quickly, "there's gonna be trouble!"

Ferrers Locke looked at him inquiringly, and the big rancher continued:

"Ol' Smithers, what owns th' liv'ry stables, come a-runnin' to Jonas here, secin' as how Jonas lives close to the stables. He tipped him th' wink like th' decent ol' hombre he is. Panzales is stirring up trouble. He's comin' here. He ain't aimin' to come alone, neither. Most long about fifty coyotes yapping for your blood's comin' with him. They're after me as well, and Jonas. All fellers what represent th' law's li'ble to get lynched. Jonas knowed I was in town, so he streaked along and passed on the good news. I've sent Alf and Smithers with lead hosses for help. Th' Flying V boys an' Jake's an' Cal's an' mine's cain't get here 'fore late artemnoon. Get it? Us is shore up against it! What 'munition you got?"

"Six boxes!"

"Six boxes! Most see us out, maybe. There's you, your lad, Jonas and me. Four on us to hold this buildin' till artemnoon. Yep. It's gonna be a near thing!"

"There's Klauster," said Ferrers Locke. "He'll earn his pardon by pulling a gun for us."

"Yep. Sure idea, that!" assented Caister. "Panzales will sure be here most any time now. Say, us'll get barricades up."

"Look here, Caister," said the detective quietly. "I'm sheriff here. This act of Panzales' has been brought about by my ordering him out of the town. There's no need for you or Jonas to be in it at all. I do, most certainly, appreciate your coming here to warn me, but your duty ends there. You've time to clear and come back here at the head of a posse. I'll hang out till then, if possible."

Caister looked at him searchingly.

"Mister Henderson," he replied, "I ain't the quittin' kind. Say, what would every rancher think of me if I cleared, hey? Reckon my name would stink! I'm seeing this right through! But, by gosh, what blamed stuff are you Britishers made of that you can say, calm as you please, 'Mister Caister, you can go'? By heck, reckon any other fellers would be on'y too glad to have a few extra guns around the place!"

Ferrers Locke smiled, but there was little mirth in his eyes.

"I'll be only too pleased to have you, Caister," he replied, "but I meant to point out that it was my quarrel, and that anyone who stands in with me does so of his own accord."

"That's a Britisher all over!" complained Caister lugubriously. "Reckons to play a lone hand when th' decks is so stacked against him that he ain't got a dawg's chance!"

"It's a good principle!" snapped the little lawyer. "A very good principle indeed! But come, let us get the window and doors barricaded. I really must admit I am exceptionally eager to fire a gun once more."

Caister looked at him with a humorous twinkle in his eye.

"Mister Henderson," he drawled, "would you think now that lil' Jonas here was once a real bad two-gunner? Waal, he was. Ev'ry sheriff in Arizona was after him once. Gee! Then he hopped over the border and settled

down to 'nother form of robbery, but inside the law this time. He set up as a lawyer, an' takes it outa us ranchers in fees and bills an' sichlike things."

"You're a fool, Caister!" piped the little lawyer. "I may have used a gun once, but I have put all that behind me now. It happened many years ago. But I really must say my palm is itching to hold a gun once more. It would give me great pleasure to shoot that fellow Panzales! He is an unmitigated scoundrel!"

"You'll have your chance, don't



JACK DRAKE.

blamed well worry!" grunted Caister. "Here's your lad, sheriff. Let's get busy!"

Jack appeared in the doorway, and quickly Ferrers Locke explained to him what was happening. Then, whilst Caister, Jonas and Jack set about barricading the doors and windows, the detective made his way to the jail and swung open the heavy iron door.

Killer Klauster jumped to his feet from the truckle-bed on which he had been sitting.

"Waal?" he snarled, a trifle defiantly.

"Come with me!"

Klauster mistook the coldness in the detective's tones. He shrank back against the wall.

"Yore gonna hang me!" he shouted. "Kid's cashed in! That's it! Yore gonna hang me! Gosh snakes, sheriff, give a feller a trial! He drewed fust. I tell yuh! He drewed fust!"

"I'm not going to hang you," replied Ferrers Locke quietly, contempt in his eyes. "Come with me!"

Shufflingly, fearfully, Klauster quitted the jail and walked hesitatingly towards the outer office. He started at sight of Caister and the lawyer, then a look of interest crept into his eyes as he saw how they were engaged.

"Panzales is coming here with a crowd at his heels," explained the detective. "How you shape with us will probably influence our treatment of you later. Can you use a gun with your left hand?"

"Yes," assented Klauster. Then, squinting at Caister, he added: "Kinder reckon as how I'm in real good comp'ny for once!"

"Don't get funny, Klauster!" warned Caister gruffly. "You ain't got much of a laff comin', far as I can see!"

Klauster scowled and turned to Locke. "Say, what's th' trouble, anyways? If Panzales is comin' hyar a-shootin', as I figger he is, where's Earl?"

"Earl is dead!" snapped the detective. He did not add that Earl's body lay in the next room. "Panzales is coming here because I have ordered him and his gunmen out of Wolf Point."

"Yep, and he's bringin' the whole blamed town with him!" cut in Caister. "They're rotten! They ain't got th' grit to stand up alone! They gotta hunt in packs like blamed wolves! Yessir, like wolves!"

"I ain't no pal of Panzales!" snarled Klauster. "Th' skunk often tried ter put me in wrong wi' Earl! Gimme a gun, an' I'll show yuh!"

Caister was on the point of speaking, when Ferrers Locke silenced him with a gesture. The party listened in tense silence. From the street came a muffled tramp of many feet and the subdued murmur of many voices.

Panzales was coming.

Killer Klauster Makes Good!

"WE give Sheriff Henderson two minutes to come out!" came the voice of Panzales from the other side of the door.

"Go to blazes, you greaser!" shouted Caister. "He's not coming out to be shot down like a dog by your coyotes!"

"Wait a minute!" murmured Ferrers Locke. He pulled aside the table with which Caister had barricaded the door, and, turning the handle, stepped outside.

"Come back, man!" said Jonas hoarsely.

But Ferrers Locke took no notice. His gun was in his left hand, and he stared at Panzales steadily.

"You wanting me?" he drawled.

Panzales had not expected the detective to comply with his demand, and, with an expression of surprise and dismay, he realised that both Caister and Jonas had him covered from inside the office.

"Drop yore gun!" said Caister harshly.

Panzales hesitated.

"You wanting me?" repeated Ferrers Locke coldly.

"Drop yore gun, greaser, or, by heck, I'll drop you in yore tracks!" snapped Caister.

Panzales did not lack pluck. The sudden opening of the door had, however, taken him completely by surprise, and he knew that even if he did shoot Ferrers Locke a bullet from Caister would follow before he could move to safety.

Behind him, watching the scene in tense silence, were grouped a mob of gunmen and hangers-on.

"We want Henderson!" he said, speaking jerkily. "This is no affair of yours, Caister!"

"You lie, greaser! You were aimin' to come after me!"

Never for the fraction of a second had the detective's eyes left those of Panzales. He was standing so that both Caister and Jonas could keep the Mexican covered.

"You shoot me, Caister, and your sheriff dies! My men are ready," said the latter slowly.

"Yep, I knows that! Drop your gun, by heck, and walk backwards!"

Panzales dropped his gun and moved steadily backwards, a step at a time. Then, before he was out of the line of fire, Ferrers Locke stepped forward and held up his hand.

"Listen, you men!" he said. "If there is one shot fired by you or your leader, then a dozen of you will hang! I mean it! I gave Panzales and his men till midday to clear out of Wolf Point! If he is here after that time, and is still alive, then he'll hang whether you start trouble or whether you don't!"

With that he stepped back, and the next moment Caister slammed the door in the faces of the mob.

"You took a mighty big risk there, sheriff!" drawled the rancher.

"No! I reckoned they would not fire whilst you still had Panzales covered," replied the detective.

"Yep, you figgered that, but you might easy have figgered wrong! Gosh! The dogs have started!"

There came a crashing roar from outside, and a volley of bullets ripped through the door.

"Get that barricade up!" snapped Ferrers Locke. "Jack, you and Jonas protect the rear premises. It's open ground, so they can't get near without your seeing them! Klauster, use this gun!"

Jack and Jonas slipped from the room. Ferrers Locke, Caister, and Klauster took up their positions at the window which gave on to the street. The mob had taken cover in the wooden buildings opposite, and were firing from the windows and doors.

Steadily, but nursing their ammunition, the detective and Caister returned the fire. More than once the detective glanced at Klauster curiously. The gunman was firing whenever opportunity offered, and now and again he

would give a satisfied grunt as a bullet found a billet in one of the attackers.

The mob were concentrating their fire on the window, and, slipping from the room, Ferrers Locke returned with an axe. He hacked a hole about nine inches square out of the wall near the floor on the far side of the door. Then, lying full length, he opened fire from this new quarter.

"That's th' idea!" grunted Caister and followed suit, cutting a hole a few feet away from Ferrers Locke.

Klauster remained by the window, firing steadily.

Not one of the three had escaped scatheless. The detective was bleeding on the face where a flying splinter had cut a jagged wound. Caister's gun arm was bleeding, and Klauster continually dabbed at his right ear with a dirty, blood-stained handkerchief.

"Been hit, Klauster?" inquired Ferrers Locke, during a lull in the firing.

"Yep; bit o' ear missin'!" grunted Klauster.

"You got me plumb guessin', Klauster!" cut in Caister. "Seems like you don't like them hombres outside!"

Klauster looked at him through angry eyes.

"They went back on me; leastways, Earl did!" he snarled. "I'm lookin' fer a square deal here! Get me?"

"You'll get a square deal!" interposed the detective evenly.

"I'm hopin' so! First time I been on th' side o' th' law!" snapped Klauster. "I'll maybe's quit gunnin' an' take up punchin' if this wipes me clean!"

Caister laughed rumblingly, but Ferrers Locke silenced with a look. Klauster flushed and turned away. The next moment his gun banged viciously, and he cried:

"Them hombres is quittin'! Makin' for th' rear!"

The detective looked out and saw a dozen of the attackers crossing the street about a hundred yards away. The angle was too acute to bring a gun to bear upon them. Then from the building opposite the firing recommenced with redoubled fury.

"That's to draw us!" remarked Caister. "Best lemme give them fellers in the rear a hand!"

"Right!" agreed Locke, and the rancher quitted the room, his hot gun in his hand.

Another hour dragged by with intermittent firing, then suddenly Klauster reeled over with a little sob.

"They've—got—me—sheriff!" gasped the gunman. "I'm—done!"

Ferrers Locke tore open the man's shirt. A little bluish hole was visible just above the heart.

"'Tain't no—good—sheriff!" whispered Klauster, his thin, bloodless lips twisted into a faint smile. "Guess there—ain't—no—punchin' fer—me! Dyin' as—I lived, sheriff! Dyin' by—th' gun!"

He was silent for a moment, and Ferrers Locke looked down into the fast-glazing eyes, knowing that the end was near. Klauster struggled upwards till he was almost in a sitting posture, leaning heavily against the detective's arm.

"You're a man, Henderson! Th' on'y feller what beat me to th' draw! Guess if I'd lived I'd hev gone straight! Th' straight game draws men, t'other game draws skunks! Reckon I've larned thet too late!"

Hesitatingly, gropingly, he thrust out a shaking hand. He was almost beyond speech, but Ferrers Locke recognised the pleading look in the eyes. Firmly he grasped the dying man's hand and murmured:

"Klauster, I'm real sorry!"

Klauster nodded slowly, heavily, as though he understood. His lips moved almost inaudibly.

"It's best—this away! But I comed clean at—th' end!"

His head sagged forward and he became limp. Killer Klauster was dead.

(Will Panzales and his ruffians carry out their threat, or will Ferrers Locke and his companions prove too strong for them? See next week's instalment, chums.)

POSHER P. POSH!

He's the freak of a boy who figures in the "Popular's" grand new school serial, entitled "The Freak of St. Freda's!" And he's a jewel of a lad, take it from me. If you like a good laugh—and who doesn't?—you'll get all you want from this amazing story. It's a regular side-splitter. Magnetites on the look out for something to read when they've finished their copy of the MAGNET would do well to invest twopence in this week's "Popular." It's on sale Tuesday—you can't mistake its distinctive blue and red cover. And the contents—well, they are as the title of the paper—"Popular." Get a copy this week and see for yourselves.—EDITOR.

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"THE GAME KID!"*(Continued from page 22.)*

"Dry up, you fat duffer!" said Russell.

"Have you seen him?" asked Bunter, blinking at the supper-party through his big spectacles. "Skinner's seen him, and he says he's the limit—the very outside edge. Skinner says he can't understand the Head letting such a hooligan into the school. He's thinking of writing to his people about it. He, he, he!"

Dury rose to his feet.

"Talking about me?" he demanded.

"Oh, my hat!"

Bunter jumped.

"Don't mind Bunter, Dury," said Wharton. "He's a born fool, and not responsible for his actions, let alone his words."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"A bloke might be civil!" grunted the kid, with a very grim look at the Owl of the Remove.

His expression changed as he scanned Bunter. Back into the Game Kid's memory came the incident in the train. He remembered Bunter at once, though he had not known his name before. William George Bunter was not a fellow easily forgotten. His circumference alone made him remarkable.

"My eye!" ejaculated the Kid blankly.

Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles.

"My hat!" he ejaculated.

It was evident that the recognition was mutual. Bunter knew the youthful companion of the "old 'un" again. He stared blankly at Dury.

"You!" he gasped.

The Kid knitted his brows. Dr. Locke had cautioned him that it was wiser to say nothing at Greyfriars about his former life; the Game Kid had ceased to exist, as it were, when Richard Dury entered the Lower Fourth Form. Certainly, the Kid had never dreamed of meeting at Greyfriars anyone who knew

him; his way in life had lain very far from that of any Greyfriars fellow. But that chance meeting in the train, that unlucky encounter with Bunter on the way to Wharton Lodge, had done the mischief. Bunter knew him, and he was staring at the Game Kid in utter amazement.

"You!" he repeated blankly.

"Me!" growled the Kid.

"Oh, great Scott!"

"What's the matter with you, you fat duffer?" asked Harry Wharton. "You've never met Dury before, have you?"

"Dury?" stuttered Bunter.

"This is Dury, the new chap in the Remove."

"Oh crumbs!"

Bunter fairly gasped.

"So his name's Dury!" he stuttered.

"He wasn't called by his name, then, when I saw him last?"

"What do you mean, you fat duffer?"

Bunter chuckled.

"That prize-fighter—"

"That what?" shouted all the juniors together.

"Prize-fighter!" howled Bunter.

"Think I don't know him again? He's a prize-fighter, and the last time I saw him he was with a boozy old pugilist in a train, who called him the Kid. He was cheeky to me. He had the neck to lay his low hands on me! I'm jolly well not going to stand this! If that hooligan is let into Greyfriars, I shall jolly well write to my father to take me away!"

The Game Kid stood motionless, as if rooted to the floor. He had understood, quite as well as the Head, that it was advisable to say nothing at Greyfriars of his earlier life, of his old days in Huggins' Ring. But it was all out now. All the school would know it now—all Greyfriars would know that Dury of the Remove was the Game Kid, of the boxing-ring.

Billy Bunter raised a fat hand and pointed a fat and denunciatory forefinger at the Kid.

"Get out!" he ordered.

"What?"

"Get out of this study! Don't you shove yourself in here among gentlemen!" said Bunter witheringly. "I wonder at your nerve! Get out!"

Darker and darker grew the Game Kid's rugged brow. His eyes glinted, his square jaw was thrust out, and his fists clenched.

"You fat blighter!" said the Kid, in a low, growling voice. "If I was to 'it you, you'd want a coffin next! By hokey—"

Harry Wharton rose from the table and crossed over to Bunter with a grim face. He grasped the Owl of the Remove by the collar.

"You fat rotter!" said the captain of the Remove, in measured tones. "What the thump do you mean by talking to a guest in this study in that style? Get out!"

"Look here, Wharton—"

"Outside!"

"I tell you he's a prize-fighting rotter!" howled Bunter. "I tell you—Yaroooooh!"

There was a heavy bump in the Remove passage. The door of Study No. 1 closed on William George Bunter.

"Sit down, Dury," said Wharton. "Never mind that fat bounder—precious few like him at Greyfriars, believe me."

The supper-party went on in Study No. 1; what time Billy Bunter, shrill with indignation, was telling every fellow who would listen to him the amazing news that Dury, the new fellow in the Remove, was a prize-fighter, and before bed-time almost all Greyfriars knew the secret of the Game Kid.

THE END.

(It is not a pleasant start for the new boy, Dury, but as the "Game Kid" he has been accustomed to taking hard knocks with a smile. Mind you follow his career at Greyfriars, chums. Next week's yarn—"The Bruiser Of The Remove!"—is a topper!)

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An Amusing Story of St. Sam's, introducing Jack Jolly & Co.

GOOT-AFTERNOON, young stentlemen!"

Jack Jolly & Co., the heroes of the Fourth, were loafing in the school gateway when that oily voice addressed them.

"They turned, to find themselves confronted by a stout, greasy-looking man, in a black frockcoat and a bowler hat. He lifted the latter, revealing a head as bald as a billiard ball, and he bowed to the juniors with grating courtesy.

"Good-afternoon," he repeated, with unshun. "I am Mr. Hey Moses, of Muggleton. Doubtless you have heard of me? I am a financial eggspert."

"That means a dashed mummy-lender!" said Jack Jolly scornfully. "People of your sort, Mr. Moses, are not wanted at St. Sam's. Hop it!"

Mr. Moses made a deprecating gesture.

"Really, my dear young squire—"

"Buzz off!" snapped Merry. "Mummy-lenders aren't supposed to have any transashuns with minns, and you know it!"

Mr. Moses smiled—an evil, sinister smile.

"My pizzness is not with a minner," he said. "It is with a master."

"Gammion!" said Bright incredulously. "Masters at public schools don't have dealings with people of your stamp. Get out, before we throw you out!"

The mummy-lender's sleek, oily manner changed on the instant. He became truculent.

"You will not dare to lay a hand on me, you cheeky young cubs—" he began.

"Don't we, by jove!" said Jack Jolly. "Chuck him out, kids!"

And the juniors hurried themselves with one accord upon Mr. Hey Moses. His bowler hat went careering through the gateway, and Mr. Moses seemed likely to follow it. But a sudden interruption saved him.

"My boys," cried a stern voice, "how dare you commit assault and battery on this gentleman? Unhand him at once!"

It was the voice of Mr. Lickham, the master of the Fourth. And Jack Jolly & Co. released Mr. Hey Moses as if he had suddenly become red-hot. Then they stood blinking sheepishly at their Form master.

"Do—do you know what this man is, sir?" stammered Jack Jolly.

"I do," Jolly, answered Mr. Lickham tartly. "He is a mummy-lender—quite an honorable profession. I should be a mummy-lender myself, if I had enuff capital to start off with. You boys will each take a hundred lines for molesting Mr. Moses!"

"Oh crumps!"

Mr. Lickham turned to the mummy-lender.

"Do you require an ordinance of me, Mr. Moses?" he muttered in low tones, while a sticky pallor spread over his features.

"I do," said the mummy-lender grimly. "It is madness—madness for you to come up to the school!" he said. "If I should get the bullet!"

"I counted on that," said Mr. Moses craftily. "It will be more than your job's worth to be seen in my company; so you'd better pay up, mine friend, if you want to feel safe!"

Mr. Lickham shot a nervous glance over his shoulder. Jack Jolly & Co. had gone into the building, and there wasn't a sole in site.

"How much do I owe you, Mr. Moses?" asked the distracted Form master.

"Six shillings!" was the prompt reply. "Good heavens! As much as that?"

Mr. Moses nodded.

"Five days ago, Mr. Lickham, you borrowed a bob from me. The interest I charge on that lone is a shilling, and I want the munnish."

And Mr. Moses held out a fat, greasy hand.

"To-morrow," pleaded Mr. Lickham—"to-morrow I will pay off the lone to the uttermost farthing!"

"To-morrow never comes," said the mummy-lender. "You may die in your



"Chuck him out, kids!" cried Jack Jolly. With one accord the juniors hurried themselves upon Mr. Hey Moses.

bed to-nite, or commit suicide; in which case I shall be six shillings out of pocket. I must have the munnish here and now!"

Mr. Lickham rung his hands helplessly. He licked his dry lips, and the inspiration stood out in beads on his forehead. His agitation and distress ought to have melted the hardest heart—even the hart of Faxe of old. But it had no effect upon the callus, cold-blooded Shylock.

"How can you eggspert me to hand over six shillings, Mr. Moses? Form masters are not in the habit of walking about with such colossal sums on their persons. To-morrow morning I will go to my bank and withdraw six shillings from my overdraught. I promise you that. I can do no more."

Mr. Moses stroked his unshaven chin as if in reflection.

"Very well, Mr. Lickham," he said, after a pause. "I will meet you by the ruined Fryery to-morrow, directly after mourning lessons. Then, if the munnish is not forthcoming, I shall go to Dr. Birchmell and show you up. You will be publicly hogged and eggspelled, like another master who fell into my clutches some time ago."

Mr. Lickham shuddered. He knew that he could eggspert no money from the Head, if the matter was brought to his notice. In many respects Dr. Birchmell was a kind and tolerant headmaster. He had no objection, for instance, to a master betting, for he sometimes had a little flutter himself. Masters could brake bounds as often as they liked, and they were given plenty of latitude. But there were two things which the Head was terribly down upon. No master was permitted to indulge in strong liquors, and no master was allowed to get in to debt, either with tradespeople or mummy-lenders.

"To-morrow, at twelve o'clock, at the Fryery Ruins!" said Mr. Moses. "I shall be there!"

So saying, he retrieved his bowler hat from the roadway, perched it on his bald pate, and, without another word or look at the cowering, cringing form of the Form master, the mummy-lender waddled away.

Mr. Lickham stood rooted to the ground for some minutes, repped in a painful reverry.

He must raise six shillings by to-morrow or he was a ruined man! Already the sword of Thingummyjig was dangling over his defenceless head. The mummy must be raised somehow, or he was doomed!

How could he raise it? Had the sum at steak been a trifling one, he could have borrowed it from one of the other masters. But six shillings! Why, it was untold wealth to a Form master at St. Sam's!

Still, he must leave no stone unturned, no stone unturned, if he hoped to avert the dire calamity what was hanging over his head. He would approach his fellow-masters, and if they failed him—

Cold shivers ran down Mr. Lickham's spine. He tottered away in search of Mr. Justiss, the master of the Fifth.

Mr. Justiss was playing leap-frog behind the chapelle, with Burleigh of the Sixth and several more prefects. Mr. Lickham called to him, and drew him aside.

"Sorry to trouble you, Justiss, but

could you possibly lend me six bob, to set me out of a hole?"

Mr. Justiss stared. Lickham! Six bob! Why, you might as well ask me for six guids! He put his hands in his trouser-pocket and pulled out a handful of coppers. "I can let you have six-pence-halfpenny, if that will be of any use to you."

Mr. Lickham shook his head.

"I've got to raise six bob, by hook or by crook," he said. "I am in the clutches of a mummy-lender."

"My nat?"

"Do you think Herr Guggenheimer will be able to accommodate me?" asked Mr. Lickham.

"I'm jolly sure he wouldn't! He's just bought a new mouth-organ, and it's left him without a bean."

"What about Monsieur Froggy?"

"He's in the same boat as yourself," said Mr. Justiss. "He went over to Cally last week-end, and lost all his munny at ruel-et."

"Is there nobody—nobody to whom I can turn in my hour of need?" he asked pleadingly.

"I'm afraid there isn't," said Mr. Justiss, looking real sorry. "But I'll tell you what you could do. Why not borrow six bob from another mummy-lender in order to pay this one?"

"And thus get into the clutches of two of the prebush skoundrels," said Mr. Lickham. "Not likely!"

Mr. Justiss shrugged his shoulders.

"Then I have nothing more to suggest," he said. "Excuse me!"

And the master of the Fifth took a leap over Burleigh's bent back.

Mr. Lickham turned slowly away with despair in his heart. It was hopeless to attempt to raise the munny from any of the masters. He felt like a man standing on the brink of a precipice, with only the slightest push needed to send him hurtling headlong to his doom. He was in the toils. The meshes of the mummy-lender's net were about him. It was the spider and the fly business over again, with Mr. Moses as the spider and Mr. Lickham as the fly.

And as he tottered away to his study the unhappy master bitterly recalled the time-orned saying:

"In the midst of life we are in debt!"

II.

RASHI Bang! Wallopi!

Mr. Lickham tramped two and fro in his study. His hands were tightly clenched; his brows were corrugated like the roof of a shed. He

was a prey to black and bitter thoughts, and despair gnawed at his vitals. It was the hour for evening prep. Pens were scratching bizilly in the junior studies, heads were boughed over ponderous tomes, and Jack Jolly & Co. were imbibing at the fount of nollidge.

Mr. Lickham sighed as he listened to the scratching of the pens all over the House. He would have given the world to be a happy, care-free schoolboy again. What did it know of mummy-lenders and their dark and sinister ways?

"A lass! A lack!" sighed the unhappy master. "Shakespeare's words were only too true when he wrote:

"When troubles come, they come, not in single spies, But by the giddy cartload!"

All Mr. Lickham's efforts to raise the wind had failed utterly. None of his colleagues on the staff had such a grignick sum as six shillings to lend. They were sorry for Mr. Lickham—deeply and truly sorry for him; but they said that if he was such a silly juggins as to get into the clutches of a Shylock, it was his own funeral, and they wouldn't jolly well help him, not even if they had the munny. A lass! how black is man's ingratitude!

"I am a doomed man!" groaned Mr. Lickham. "To-morrow, at midday, Mr. Moses will be awaiting me at the Fryery ruins. If I fail to give him satisfaction he will go straight to the Head, and then my number will be up with a vengeance! I shall be publicly flogged—how my pupils will gloat when they see their Form master hoysted on to the porter's shoulders—and then I shall be kicked out in disgrace!"

Like a hunted animal at bay, Mr. Lickham gazed wildly round the study. "I can't face it! I can't—I can't!" he cried. "Oh dear! Is there no way out of this horrible more-ess?"

"Pinch the munny!" whispered the tempter in his ear.

Mr. Lickham stopped short in his stride.

"What! Me pinch munny?" he cried agast. "Me, who is the sole of honner, and who has always worn the white flour of a blameless life? Never, never!"

"Fool!" hissed the voice of the tempter. "You are in a 'trible mess, and I've shown you an easy way out."

"But not—that!" panted Mr. Lickham. "I have always kept my hands from sticking and peeing—I mean, picking and stealing—eggsept once, when I took another man's umbrella in a moment of abstraction. I got such a jolly good hiding on that occasion that my prinssples prevent me from repeating an act of theft!"

"I'll tell you where there's some munny, Lickham!" whispered the tempter persuasively. "Although Mr. Justiss told you he had only sixpence-halfpenny, he has a secret hoarde, hidden down in the crypt."

"I could not stoop so low!" said Mr. Lickham.

"Afraid it might give you back-ache?" sneered the tempter.

Mr. Lickham spun round with a snarl.

Arm-in-arm, and grinning all over their faces, the Head and Mr. Lickham strode victoriously out of the Fryery ruins.

"Tempter, begone!" he cried, letting fly a sawdige kick at his waist-paper basket.

And then he resumed his restless pacing to and fro.

"There is only one way out!" he cried at length. "Mr. Moses put the idea into my head when he spoke of sweet-side. I dare not face the doom which awaits me on the morrow! I will put an end to my miserable eggstence, and sever the knot of life and all its tribbles!"

Having made up his mind, Mr. Lickham set himself wondering which was the most plezant and least painful way of committing Harry Carry, as they call it in Jappon. Should he apply a machet to his gown and set himself alight? Should he take poison, or drown himself in the school fontaine? Or should he take a walk along any main road, and perish nobly, as so many pedestrians had done, under the wheels of a road-hog's car?

After long and deep reflection, Mr. Lickham decided that the school fontaine would provide the easiest way out. It would be rather chilly, but he would soon find himself in a place where the temperature was warmer. And anyway, a suicide must be prepared to suffer a certain amount of inconvenience.

Mr. Lickham sat down at his desk and wrote two letters. One he addressed to the Head, the other to the local coroner. Having sealed the letters, he tucked them into his breast-pocket—and then, with the firm step of a man who never goes back on his purpuss, he slunk out into the quadrangle.

It was a dark and stormy night. The wind blew in a buffeting blast, lashing the waters of the fontaine into foam. The brimming bowl of the fontaine was seething like a witch's caldron.

Mr. Lickham shuddered. His knees knocked together, and his face gleamed garstly in the starlight. But he did not

Mr. Lickham discovered Mr. Justiss playing leap-frog behind the chapelle, with the Sixth and several more prefects. Mr. Lickham called to him, and drew him aside.



Arm-in-arm, and grinning all over their faces, the Head and Mr. Lickham strode victoriously out of the Fryery ruins.

Mr. Lickham discovered Mr. Justiss playing leap-frog behind the chapelle, with some of the prefects.