

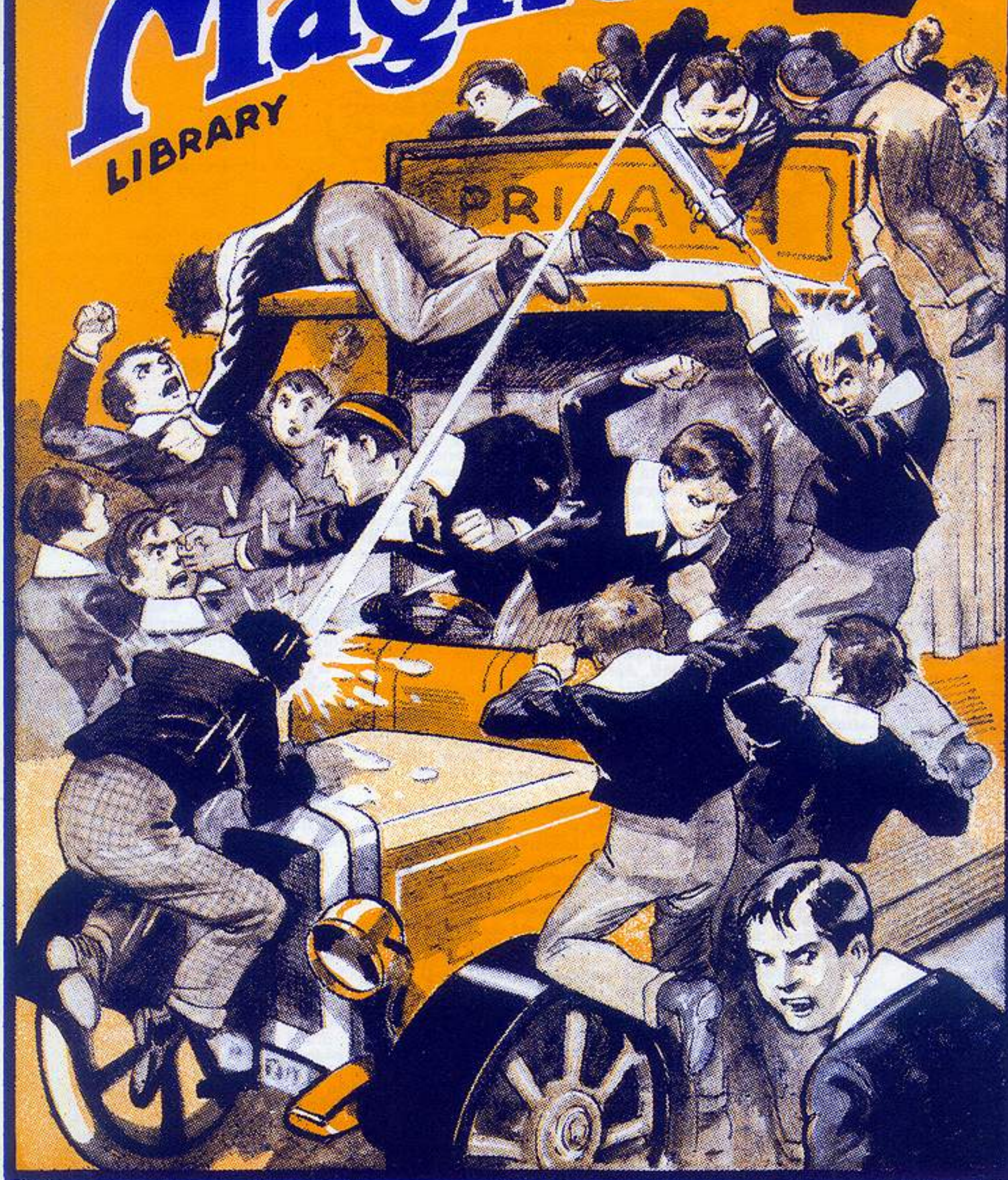
AMAZING NEW ADVENTURE SERIAL IN THIS ISSUE!
BEGIN IT TO-DAY!

No. 993. Vol. XXXI. Week Ending February 26th, 1927.

The Magnet 2^d

EVERY MONDAY.

LIBRARY



THE GREYFRIARS RAIDERS REPEL BOARDERS!

(Fisher T. Fish's motor-bus comes in handy when Harry Wharton & Co. raid Highcliffe, the rival school! Read "FISHY'S TRAVEL AGENCY"—this week's extra-long school story inside.)

THE BUSINESS MAN OF THE REMOVE! Fisher T. Fish, from New York, spends most of his time evolving wheezes for transferring the cash from his schoolfellows' pockets to his own. And his latest business stunt is a corker!



Fishy's Travel Agency!

A Magnificent New Extra-Long Story of Harry Wharton and Co., of Greyfriars, with Fisher T. Fish, the cute American junior, well to the fore.

By

FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

No Takers!

"COOKERY!" muttered William George Bunter.
"Eh?"
"Courtfield!"

"What?"

"Three o'clock, you know!"

Harry Wharton stared; Inky coughed; while Bob Cherry proceeded to cast up at the clouds above a thoughtful eye.

The chums of Greyfriars, in football rig, were adorning with their presence the House steps. It was a Junior practice-match that afternoon, and they were only waiting for Johnny Bull and Frank Nugent before getting on down to Little Side.

Then, while they stood there chatting, Bunter had issued forth; and William George was dressed to the nines. Upon his head shone loftily the shiniest of toppers; from beneath the bottoms of his carefully pressed trousers twinkled the neatest of patent-leather shoes. In one fat hand he clutched kid-gloves; and as he came out muttering to himself those cryptic remarks, he flicked one fat leg carelessly with a gold-nobbed cane.

Patiently Bob Cherry proceeded to finish his scrutiny of the skies. But there was no sign of sun overhead that afternoon. Rather the reverse; for, if anything, rain threatened. So that it could not very well be that the Owl of the Remove had been out too long in the sun. Bob shook his head sadly, and gave it up.

Fisher Tactleton Fish was coming up from the Close, and as he saw, Fishy doffed his cap suddenly and bowed low before the Owl's resplendent figure in mock veneration.

"Hail, Lucifer, son of the morning!"

"Cookery!" muttered Bunter.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 993.

"Eh?" The Transatlantic junior straightened himself, proceeding to turn upon the thoughtful Owl a very, very curious look. Then he glanced at Wharton, tapped his bony forehead significantly, and murmured: "Bats in the belfry, I calculate!"

"Courtfield!" said Bunter; and then, blinking earnestly at a little slip of paper he had pulled out: "Three o'clock!"

"Dippy!" ejaculated Bob. "Clean, stark, staring mad!"

"What—what is it, Bunter?" inquired Harry Wharton, beginning to feel really alarmed for the fat junior. "Would you like us to take you indoors before we begin the footer? I mean, perhaps you'll feel better after a little rest, you know."

At that, Bunter came to earth at last with a snort of anger.

"Take me indoors? I should say so! Why, I'm just roady to go out. Any of you chaps going out of gates on your jiggers? You can give me a step over to Courtfield. Cookery—"

"Yes, we know, old chap. We've had that bit. Cookery, Courtfield, three o'clock!"

Fisher T. Fish gave vent to a sudden thin chuckle.

"Waal," he grinned, "I reckon it's plain as the Statue of Liberty. It's just dawned on me. Cookery, Courtfield, three o'clock. It's a boss, you know! Look, that fat clam is all dolled up for the race-meeting! It's a bender, while Dr. Locke and Quelch are away, you know. Bunter the punter—waal, I swear!"

"So—so that's the little game, is it, Bunter?" ejaculated Bob grimly. "Why, you fat sweep—"

"Yah, it ain't, I tell you! Why, I didn't even know it was Courtfield races

this afternoon, you rotters! It—it's a lecture, if you want to know!"

"Lecture? Stuff!"

"Gammon!"

"The esteemed gammon is terrific!" purred the nabob.

"It is, I tell you! Not the gammon, you blessed cackling asses! I mean, it really is a lecture. That's what I mean. A lecture on cookery in Courtfield at three o'clock, you know!"

"Oh!"

"Ah!"

"I guess we all got our eye-teeth cut here, Bunter!" Fishy was grinning slowly. "I calculate that lecture stunt don't get us any!"

"And it's no use looking here for a lift to Courtfield, either, old fat man!" grinned Bob Cherry. "We're practising for the L.C.C. match this afternoon."

"Well, suppose you fellows got me a taxi, then—"

"A—a taxi?"

"Certainly! Phone up Courtfield Junction, you know; there's always a couple or more touting for hire there."

"But—but what's the big idea, Bunter?" Wharton was saying in puzzled tones. "There's nothing wrong with your cooking that I know of—excepting that you scoff the grub. In fact, cooking's the one thing you do perfectly. What's the giddy game?"

"It's the chef of a big American restaurant who's over here," Bunter explained. "He's come down from London to give a—a jaw, you know, in Courtfield, and a demonstration. Why, it's no end of an opportunity. I'll turn out you chaps some ripping spreads after this, you see if I don't. Come on, now, is it a go?"

"Is what a go?"

"The taxi, you silly asses!"

"Nothing doing, old fat man," said Harry Wharton. "Look, there's old

Coker going out of gates on his motor-bike! Go and plant yourself on him!"

Bunter blinked across the Close in the direction Bob indicated. Near the gates, by Gosling's lodge, stood a motor-cycle combination. The sidecar held an unwilling occupant George Potter; on the pillion-seat sulphurously tanned William Greene; while, straddling the bike itself and jamming desperately at the kick-start, was the great Horace Coker of the Fifth!

"Go on, Bunter," repeated Bob Cherry. "Try Coker. Neither Potter nor Greene would mind very much if you took their place, judging by their expressions."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, you wouldn't refer to Coker's old boneshaker as possessing quite the comfort of a Bunter Court limousine," went on the humorous Bob. "Still, it's your last resource, if you want to get to Courtfield without footing it all the way!"

Bunter shuddered at the sheer thought of that, and proceeded to roll determinedly down upon Coker and his motor-bike.

"Hallo, you blessed fag!" Coker greeted him uncompromisingly. "Just cut across to the tool-shed and bone a couple of small spanners, will you?"

Bunter heeded not.

"I—I say, Coker, are you going to Courtfield?" he gasped out.

"Eh?" The engine had leapt suddenly and unexpectedly to life. "It's all right now. I sha'n't want those spanners. Courtfield, did you say? Yes. Why?"

"Like to give a—a chap a lift, Coker, old man?"

"Who's the chap?" grunted Coker suspiciously.

"Me!" grunted Bunter ungrammatically.

"No jolly fear!" snorted Horace Coker at once, with great decision. "Not if I know it! Hang on, Greeney. We're off!"

"Hold on a minute, old man!" William Greene was clutching at the great Horace's arm. This was an opportunity too good to be wasted. "Look—look here, old fellow, let Bunter have my seat. I expect he wants to get to Courtfield in a hurry, or something. I don't mind for once—really I don't!"

"That's it, Greeney," said Bunter eagerly. "Good man!"

"He's more likely to get to Courtfield on a stretcher, if he trusts himself to this blessed contraption," muttered Potter from the sidecar.

"Eh? What was that, George Potter?" Coker turned upon his henchman suspiciously. "What did you say?"

"Nice day for a sail," said the cautious Potter. "Look here, old man, that pillion's no good at all for a chap of Bunter's weight. Let him take this sidecar. Always have a good hefty chap in the sidecar when you're going racing, you know, Coker—keeps the balance round corners."

"You blessed well sit where you are, George Potter, unless you're looking for thick ears," said Coker, with a snort. "Who said anything about racing? I'm as safe going round bends as anybody, I reckon. My hat! What are you getting off for, William Greene?"

"Let old Bunter take a ride for once," said Greene generously. "He's in a hurry, you know, Coker, old man—Yoooooop! Ow! You—you blessed rotter!"

"Sit where you're put, then! I can attend to Bunter. It's my bike, and I say I wouldn't have the fat tub of dripping on it at any price! There, is that plain enough? My hat! I shall begin

to think in a minute that you don't want to come!"

"We don't!" Greene muttered in a dark undertone from the pillion.

"Eh? By George! What was that you said, Greene? Say it again!"

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"Wha-a-a-at?"

"Stow the chinwag! Get on, if we're going. It's two o'clock already!"

Horace Coker breathed hard, touched various levers, and the bike began slowly to move forward.

"All right, William Greene," he hissed darkly, "I'll show you! There's only one boss in Study No. 4, and that's me. You just wait!"

Bunter was clutching at the back of the pillion with a desperate but hopeless clutch. Greene turned and eyed the Owl commiseratingly. Willingly would William Greene have changed places. But next moment Coker swept round with a thick road-guide he had snatched up from the car, and gave the Owl's detaining fingers one for themselves.

"Ow! Yoooooooooop!" roared Bunter. "Oh, you blessed rotter, Coker!"

"There! I said I wouldn't have you, and I won't! My hat! What good do you think my blessed motor-bike would be afterwards? Why, you cheeky fag!"

For Bunter had treated Coker's back tyre to a vengeful little kick. Coker saw the awful sacrilege and stopped the bike suddenly. Coker's mighty hand swept first up and then down, and next moment Bunter's resplendent silk hat was crushed about his ears.

"Ow! Gug-gug-gug-gug! Ow! Gemmeout, somebody!"

Fisher T. Fish was passing, wheeling his bicycle out of gates, and, seeing Bunter's predicament, Fish obligingly strode forward, grasped by the brim what had once been a thing of beauty, and proceeded to yank it up. In the process Bunter's fat ears suffered painfully; but he came to light again at last, though his face was red and hot and he was gasping.

"Crumbs!" he muttered in warlike tones, gazing round wildly. "Where is he? Where is the rotter? Why, I'll—"

He broke off, and shook a podgy fist wrathfully. But Horace Coker was merely a speck in the distance. Indeed, of Horace Coker himself there was no sign, only a cloud of dust far along the Friardale lane.

"Beast!" roared Bunter. "Yah!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Buying a Bus!

"**N**OW, gentlemen, what am I bid for this magnificent motor-bus? Same as used on the London streets. Come along, please!"

It was quite an excited little crowd that was gathered round the auction outside the Duck and Partridge, on the outskirts of Courtfield, and Billy Bunter wandered forward curiously.

Up till that moment the one solitary bright spot in a bad afternoon—or so it struck Bunter—had been the cookery lecture and demonstration. And that little beano had turned out tophole.

But, apart from those pleasant memories, Bunter felt spiteful—decidedly spiteful!

Coker, he reflected sulkily, as he joined the auctioneer's audience, had behaved abominably. With Potter and Greene both expressing themselves more than willing for Bunter to take over their seats, what had Coker done? Coker had hurled insult and injury!

Excepting for Fisher T. Fish, there had been no one else going out of gates in the direction of Courtfield. And Fish's ancient bike, being a thing of parts and pieces, was in no wise calculated to endure the strain of a Bunter.

So, reluctantly, at last, there had been no other recourse but to set out and foot it.

Before very long the patent-leather shoes had begun to pinch Bunter's fat feet. Lord Mauleverer, from whose wardrobe he had calmly "borrowed" them, together with the resplendent topper, the gloves, and the gold-nobbed stick, unfortunately for William George's comfort, had been fashioned by Nature in rather an elegant mould.

Then, on top of that, half-way along the lane to Friardale the long threatening rain had descended. For ten minutes it had poured down hard. Bunter, glowering and muttering, put in the time beneath some trees.

Warm and grunting, he had paused again outside the little station in Friardale, blinking in at the booking-office with a savage glare—a fat Peri barred from paradise! Excepting for twopence the Bunter coffers contained no cash even to pay for that short run to Courtfield.

And it being a pretty forlorn hope trying a railway company for "tick," realisation came to him at last that there was really nothing for it but to roll on again on foot!

He descended upon the cookery demonstration quite the aristocrat, which was as he had fatuously intended, but with the state of his feelings towards Horace Coker almost homicidal. The aristocrat happened to be distinctly and Hunnishly footsore, though that was more by reason of the aristocrat's having appropriated to himself another aristocrat's footwear, than because Horace Coker had refused him conveyance.

However, the aristocrat, being obtuse, didn't see that.

He came upon the motor-sale on the return road to Greyfriars, just outside the village, and paused awhile to rest his feet.

Two cars changed hands quickly, and were driven away—one a little two-seater and the second a grey coupe. Then the motor-bus was announced; and in the same moment Bunter spotted Coker.

Coker, as usual, had plumped himself importantly right into the middle of things. Of Potter and Greene there was no sign. Probably it was that, getting fed-up with him—not an infrequent occurrence—Coker's henchmen had slipped off when opportunity presented itself, leaving their leader to his own sweet devices.

Bunter's eyes glistened vindictively; and then he availed himself of the obscurity afforded by the shelter of a burly farmer's back.

"Now, gentlemen, come along!" said the auctioneer. "Who'll bid me a hundred for this bus?"

Apparently no one possessed the temerity to be so spendthrift with his money; and the next moment the sharp-looking auctioneer continued, after having run a speculative eye over the little crowd:

"Nobody—eh? Fifty pun, then? Forty, thirty, twenty pun for this bus, gentlemen, as used on the London streets. Look here, who'll start me with a ten-pun note?"

Again he ranged the crowd with an inquiring eye, and still there was no response.

Bunter blinked dubiously at the bus. Once, apparently, it had been painted

green; but that event had been a long, long time ago. The tyres were of the solid type, very much worn, and the radiator was rusty. Apart from those trivial dilapidations, however, it was, as the auctioneer had urged, indubitably similar to anything which ran on the London streets.

And it was going for a ten-pound note!

At least, it was there on offer for a ten-pound note. But, apparently, there was no one who was very anxious to close with that remarkable offer. The trouble, Bunter gathered, was the little question of accommodation. A double-decker bus was decidedly not the thing you could keep in a spare rabbit-hutch out in the back-garden, neither could you stow it away beneath the table.

"Well, it's real wicked to let it go at the price, but who'll give me a start at five pun, then?" queried the auctioneer after that lengthy pause. "Come on, who wants to start a bus service?"

Judging by the hearty response, no one did. It was doubtful, indeed, whether any among the little crowd of gape-mouthed rustics had ever so much as handled a steering-wheel in his life. And then, just when the auctioneer was obviously getting ready to say something really nasty about Courtfield's business perspicuity, William George Bunter got his ventriloquial organs going, and there was a sudden and startling response.

"I will!" said Horace Coker.

One or two farm-labourers near Coker shifted the pipes in their mouths to stare at him in astonishment. If the auctioneer himself was surprised at a schoolboy bidding, he was not going to show it.

"Five pun I am bid," he was saying. "Any advance on five pun? Come along now! All done? Very well! Going—going—gone!" The hammer fell with a rap. "Right, sir," said the auctioneer, with a pleasant nod to Coker. "Yours it is. Spot cash, if you don't mind."

"Eh?" ejaculated Coker, with a visible start. "What's that?"

"Spot cash, I said. It's your bus. You've bought it!"

"Draw it mild!" said Coker.

"Wha-a-a-at?"

"Don't be an ass, you know!"

Coker could feel the gaping eyes of the rustics upon him, and he felt his cheeks growing warm.

"Ass, am I?" snorted the auctioneer, beginning to push back his sleeves.

"Ass—eh? Ho, we'll see about that! Dessay you thought it a huge joke bidding up for what you never intended to buy; but let me tell you this, Mister Clever, that that bus is yours! Five pun you bid me, and five pun I want!"

There was a light burning in the auctioneer's eyes that boded ill for Coker, and which made it clear there would be no escape.

Bunter backed cautiously away out of the crowd, and took the homeward road, stifling as he went a deep, fat chuckle.

Bunter, the ventriloquist, was finding revenge remarkably sweet.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Fishy's Latest!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Oh, my giddy Aunt Jane, look!"

"Mum—my hat! What the—"

"Great—great pip!"

The practice match was over, and the Remove footballers, tired and hungry, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 993.

but flushed with happiness, had been making towards the School House. Then Bob Cherry had chanced to look across to the gates, several had followed his gaze, and then they had paused, in sudden petrified astonishment, gasping.

For, ambling in gently at the old gateway of Greyfriars, was a bus—sadly dilapidated, true, but none the less a bus, huge and double-decked.

"My hat!" chuckled Frank Nugent. "Marble Arch, Charing Cross, and Greyfriars! The blessed thing's lost its way, you fellows! Come on, we'll go and have a look!"

In an excited little band they tore off across the Close, to where, just inside the gates, the bus had come to a standstill, hesitant. There was a faint, wispy feather of steam escaping from the radiator-cap, and a rich cloud of pungent blue from the exhaust beneath, for the engine had been left running.

"Look!" cried someone, as they approached. "See who's up in front with the driver? It's Bunter!"

"Bunter? Why, so it is!"

"What's this blessed game, I wonder?" muttered Wharton. "Has the Owl taken to running personally-conducted tours of Greyfriars, or what is it?"

Then the driver—whoever he was—after scrutinising the Close closely through his big motor-goggles, released his brakes, slipped in the clutch, and the strange arrival, rumbling past Gosling's lodge, began to penetrate the Close.

As they came up with it, the juniors saw that it contained no occupants. So it could not be a sight-seeing party. There were no passengers at all—not one; only the Owl perched up in front with the driver, beaming down triumphantly upon them through his big glasses.

Once past Gosling's lodge, the bus turned, proceeding gently along beneath the elms, the juniors scattering before it to left and right.

"Well, I'm dashed!" yelled Bob Cherry, just skipping in time out of harm's way into safety. "See that, you chaps? The rotter nearly ran me down! Come on; let's go and ask the blessed driver what the thump he thinks he's doing! My hat, after it!"

"On the ball, Remove!"

But even as they set off angrily in pursuit the huge bus lumbered to a standstill. Indignantly the juniors swarmed round to the front. The driver was pulling off his goggles, and the next moment there grinned down upon them a familiar, triumphant face.

"Fuf-Fishy!" stuttered Bob Cherry.

"Wha-a-a-at?"

"Impossible!"

"Fishy—and Bunter!"

"Well, so it is! My blessed hat, what's the wheeze, Fishy?"

They were clustered all round the bus now—the footballers and a swarm of Removees and fags who had been looking on at the game—and Fisher T. Fish was bombarded with excited questions.

"Setting up in business, Fishy?"

"Whose blessed bus is it you've gone and boned?"

"Keep your peepers open, Fishy—there'll be a bobby along after it any minute!"

In the face of which, questions and chaff alike, Fisher T. Fish maintained a calm, unruffled silence. The juniors' eager questions he dismissed with a wave of the hand; and the chaff merely caused to play about his hatchet features a genial grin.

"Here's Gossy, Fishy! Now look out for squalls!"

Gosling had come doddering forth

from his little lodge in carpet slippers, furtively wiping his mouth upon an apron tied about his middle. Evidently the strange advent of the bus had interrupted Gosling rudely in the process of imbibing some alcoholic beverage.

Gosling, brought up to a standstill, wiped his eyes as one who still cannot believe the evidence of them, and ejaculated weakly:

"Well, my heye!"

Then, suddenly remembering his official position, as it were, Gosling advanced sternly to demand of its driver credentials for the intrusion.

Elbowing his determined way through the press of laughing juniors, he got round at last to the driver's seat.

"Well, my heye!" gasped Gosling again, blinking up at Fisher T. Fish. "What I says is this 'ere—what's the meaning of this 'ere, you young rip?"

"Meaning of which, where, old scout?"

"These 'ere goings-on. Which you can just take that—that autymoble contraption, wot ain't got no manner of rights 'ere, outside agen blessed quick! Go on, Master Fish, afore I reports yer!"

"I kinder reckon this flivver stops right hyer!" said Fishy calmly.

"One last chance!" roared Gosling. "Are you a-takin' of it outside agen, or ain't yer?"

"Not, sirree!" said Fishy coolly.

"Then off I goes to report yer—bust me bob if I don't!"

And with a fiery snort Gosling lumbered off across the Close, and the watching juniors saw his grimly determined figure mount the School House steps.

"Well, you've done it now, Fishy, you silly ass!" said Wharton seriously. "Why couldn't you take it back where it belongs while you had the chance? It'll mean no end of a licking!"

"I guess I don't see it," retorted Fisher T. Fish calmly. "And it ain't a rag, either. Any rule against a galoot keeping a bike hyer, Wharton?"

"Eh? No, of course not. What are you getting at?"

"Nothing against a galoot's popper running in the family flivver?"

"His car, do you mean? No; a lot of the chaps' paters run down by car, and, of course, they drive right in. But—"

"But nothing!" snapped Fishy. "I reckon, then, if a galoot wants to garage his bus on the premises, there's no guy can stop him!"

"Yes; but—"

"Fish is quite right, my dear Wharton," exclaimed a mild voice; and, turning, the juniors saw behind them Alonzo Todd, the eccentric philosopher of the Remove. Lonzy, carrying an umbrella aloft, had just come in at the gates. "The difference, Wharton, is merely one of degree. As Einstein demonstrates, all things are relative, and here we have an instance."

"But this bus," broke in Wharton hotly. "It's absurd!"

"Absurdity, if I may explain, dwells in the mind of the beholder, rather than in the thing beheld—"

"Hem!"

"Cave—here's Mr. Prout!"

During Dr. Locke's and Mr. Quelch's absence, the master of the Fifth was temporarily holding the reins of authority, and now he was bearing down upon the juniors, a majestic frown seated upon his brow, and the irate Gosling dragging along a yard in his rear. The juniors fell back at once, leaving a respectful lane through the press.



Coker's mighty hand swept first up and then down, and next moment Bunter's resplendent silk hat was crushed about his ears. "Ow! Gug-gug-gug!" gasped Bunter. "Ow! Gemmeout, somebody!" And Fisher T. Fish obligingly strode forward, grasped by the brim what had once been a thing of beauty, and proceeded to yank it up. (See Chapter 1.)

When he had spotted Mr. Prout looming up ominously into view, Bunter's smirk of self-satisfaction had disappeared, and he made haste to clamber off, effacing himself behind a group of the Fifth. Fisher Tarleton Fish was left in sole command, as it were, to repel boarders.

"Boy!"

Mr. Prout, in cap-and-gown, stood at last by the bonnet of Fishy's bus, blinking up dazedly like a fish out of water, and Fishy's hatchet features momentarily slipped into a wide grin. But only for the minute; for the next moment the attack was beginning.

"Boy!" Mr. Prout thundered. "What—what—what is the meaning of this preposterous—this unheard-of intrusion into the grounds of a seat of learning? What do you mean by it, sir? Whose omnibus is this? Whence came it here? Answer me, sir!"

"It's mine, I reckon, sir," Fishy said calmly. "I bought it, I guess."

"Yours? You purchased it? Impossible, sir! Utterly preposterous!"

"If you want to know, I did a little business deal with a guy in your own Form, sir," went on Fishy coolly.

"Fishy!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"Wha-a-at!" ejaculated Mr. Prout. "A guy—that is, a pupil in my own Form? Nonsense, utter nonsense!"

"Very well, sir! I'll give you his name, I guess. It was Coker! Bunter can bear me out. He was a witness. Hallo, he's gone!"

"Coker?"

"Yep! I reckon I offered him two-ten on spec and he saw me."

"Sus-saw you, Fish?" gasped Mr. Prout.

"Yep! Made it a deal, you know. Two-ten I gave Coker for it in Friar-

dale Lane. I reckon he was glad to sell out, too!"

"But—but wherever could Coker have obtained a motor-omnibus, Fish? Ask yourself the question, boy! Where—"

"Waal, he roped it in at a motor-auction in Courtfield, I calculate, he said. He seemed all-fired upset. Reckoned the auctioneer let him in for it. Tried to tell me he never bid at all, you know. I reckon he changed his mind at the last minute, but the auctioneer guy allowed the flivver was sure knocked down to him, and in order to avoid a row with the crowd Coker had to brass up the durocks, sir?"

"I—I— Really, I do not know what to say, Fish. I will hear Coker's version. Really, that dolt of a lad is capable almost of any foolishness, I believe. I—I must get into communication with Dr. Locke, after which I will speak further to you, Fish. Meanwhile, this omnibus cannot be allowed to remain here at Greyfriars. It—it must go away, Fish!"

"But—but what's a galoot to do with it?" howled Fishy in sudden alarm.

"Really, Fish, what did you intend to do when you so ridiculously purchased it from Coker?"

"I—I— You see—" Fishy cast about desperately. For once the 'cute American junior discovered himself unexpectedly at a loss for words. When he had purchased the bus from Coker of the Fifth, Fishy had had his own very good reasons for so doing, a scheme into which he did not care to let Mr. Prout. So he temporized, saying craftily:

"It—it's purely a spec, sir—a business speculation, that is. There's lots made in flivvers, I reckon."

"Really, Fish, do you seriously contend, then, that you will be allowed to

inaugurate here at Greyfriars—a motor business—you, a schoolboy and a minor?"

"Nunno! Not exactly that, you know. I guess I've explained—it's just a spec."

Mr. Prout gave the Transatlantic business-man a suspicious, searching look, and then compressed his lips.

"Very well. I shall not, as I have said, attempt to deal with this extraordinary occurrence myself, Fish. I will speak further to you when I have heard from Dr. Locke. It is, undoubtedly, a matter only satisfactorily to be settled by his jurisdiction. Your father will probably also be communicated with, too."

"Oh!"

"For the moment the omnibus had better be driven round behind the woodshed out of sight!"

"That's exactly where it was going, I guess," grinned Fishy calmly.

"You will see to it that my orders are carried out with despatch, Fish. The presence in the Close of such a vehicle detracts from, rather than adds to, the beauty of the autumn scene."

Mr. Prout turned upon his heel and rustled off across the Close; and Gosling, who would infinitely have preferred to see the dilapidated old bus ejected peremptorily into Friar-dale Lane, had perforce to be satisfied.

"Crank her up, Bolsy, old man!" Fishy grinned, when the boarding-party had retired; and Bunter scrambled back into his seat. Bolsy swung the big handle, the engine coughed and spluttered into activity, and Fishy steered her triumphantly across the Close, and brought her in the rear of the woodshed majestically to dock.

"What's the wheeze, I wonder?" muttered Harry Wharton, as they strolled off. "Fishy's got some deep game up his sleeve."

Many were asking themselves the same question. But, whatever it was that he intended doing, Fisher T. Fish, for the moment, was keeping entirely to himself.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Ragged!

"WHAT the thump—"
"What the dickens—"
"Great Scott!"

The footballers had proceeded directly to the House, traversing the Remove passage en route for the dormitories to wash and change. Behind the footballers came ten or a dozen other Removites, who had followed them up from the Close.

Ordinarily, the fellows would have drifted up to tea as they came in from their rambles, in two's and three's. But that amazing advent of Fishy's bus had held everyone in the Close, delaying them, so that they came up to the studies in a body.

Wharton, turning into the Remove passage with the team, beheld it first, and ejaculated "What the thump!" and then the others, crowding upon his heels, saw it, too, and those other expressions of amazement were forced from their lips.

For it really was remarkable.

Right across the Remove passage, tacked boldly from side to side so that it could not fail to meet their gaze, was a banner. And upon the banner, painted neatly in big, black lettering, were the words:

"One up to Highcliffe! Who's cock of the walk now, Wharton?"

"My only hat!" exclaimed Wharton, with a deep breath. "It's a rag! Highcliffe's ragged us while we've been down on Little Side! Look into the studies, chaps, quick's the word!"

Nugent leapt forward and threw open the door of No. 1.

"Good—good gracious!" he ejaculated faintly, staring into that famous apartment.

Several juniors looked in over Nugent's shoulder, and gasped. And well might they have gasped, too, for in No. 1 there was no single stick left upon stone, so to speak.

The table was turned upside-down in the middle of the study, and upon it were dumped the fender and fire-irons, the book-case, all the pictures from the walls, the chairs, the study linoleum—every single thing that was movable had been moved!

In the fireplace reposed the clock; and self-consciously upon the mantel-shelf in a patch of soot was the kettle. And the study carpet had been jerked up by a rude hand from its rightful position before the fire, and hung around the walls like tapestry.

"M-m-m-my only hat!" gasped the skipper of the Remove again, from the doorway.

Nugent darted forward. Pinned to one of the upturned legs of the table was an envelope. Nugent had spotted it, and he ripped it down. It was addressed to H. Wharton, Captain, Remove Form, Greyfriars. Harry took it in his hands, tore open the envelope, and snatched out the contents:

"Highcliffe,

"Dear Wharton,—Seeing that the dear Mobby and Dr. Voysey, as well as your own respected Head and Form-master, have toddled along to this

Education confab, Franky and the rest of us considered it a first-rate opportunity for proving once again that Highcliffe is top bow-wow.

"You know what a strictly moral bird old Franky is, and he insisted that no actual damage be done to your quarters, and we haven't mucked up your grub. But for all that I guess it will occupy you for more than a few minutes sorting out and straightening up after this little lot.

"Honestly, though, Wharton, old scout, you don't know how beastly sorry Franky and I are at having had to do this, but we know you will realise that with so many of the powers that be away, and your own noble selves conveniently down at Footer practice, the opportunity was one that simply could not be wasted.

"Cheerily yours,
"RUPERT DE COURCY."

"Sorry!" quoted Frank Nugent, compressing his lips. "We'll make the bounders sorry!"

"Top dog!" jerked out Wharton grimly, refolding the letter and slipping it away into a pocket. "We'll see about that! Let 'em wait, that's all!"

Squiff had been inspecting the little pile of furniture heaped up like a funeral-pyre, and now he was gesticulating wildly to the captain of the Remove.

"Look here, Wharton!" Squiff was babbling. "This blessed fender ain't yours at all! It belongs to Study No. 14—my study; you know! As for the fire-irons, they look to me like Toddy's. And—and, yes, that blessed chair with the gammy front leg is Bob Cherry's! Isn't it, Bob? I'd know it anywhere!"

Bob Cherry, striding forward, was inspecting the chair grimly.

"It's quite true," he said at last. "This belongs to Study No. 13. That—that means, then, that the rotters have mixed up all our giddy goods and chattels. My only Aunt Sempronia, what a rag!"

"Suppose we go and wash and have tea?" suggested Wharton. "Then we'll all pile in on the merry job of reconstruction."

"Good wheeze. Come on!"

"Well, thank goodness they were decent enough not to spoil our tommy," Toddy began, as they moved off, when Bob Cherry cut him suddenly short.

"Listen!" Bob murmured, holding up a hand. "What's that blessed row, you chaps?"

The juniors paused, listening. They had turned from Study No. 1, tramping along in the direction of the bathrooms, when the clamorous banging assailed their ears. It proceeded from the farther end of the passage.

"Why, it's coming from somewhere near Study No. 13," said Bob in surprise, after a moment. "Here, come on!"

But it was not from Bob's study. The knocking was traced to Study No. 11, the habitation of Skinner & Co. Inside the study someone was kicking a furious rhythmic tattoo upon the door, apparently with his boots.

"My aunt!" chuckled Bob, pausing before the door. "It must be the merry Skinner & Co. They—they're locked in, you chaps!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob stooped and applied his mouth to the study keyhole.

"Hallo, there, Skinner!" he called. "Can you hear me? Can't you open the door, or what?"

Then, quickly substituting at the keyhole an ear, Bob waited for response. But all that filtered through in the way

of answer was a choking, inarticulate gurgle.

"Well, m-m-my only hat!" Bob stammered as he rose. "They must be gagged or something!"

"A form from somewhere!" came the quick, excited suggestion from Russell. "We'll bust in the lock!"

"Hold on!" called Bob. "Half a tick, you know. Our key fits Skinner's door. Get it, Inky, will you?"

Quickly Inky nodded, obtained their key from Study No. 13, the lock of Skinner's study was attacked, the door hurled open, and then in a body the excited Removites tramped in. It was an astounding sight that met their eyes.

On the study table lay cards and cigarettes and money. And round the table the three cads of the Remove—Skinner, Stott, and Snoop—sat in chairs. Not, however, of their own free will, or even comfortably, but bound and gagged!

In addition to Skinner & Co. there languished within the study in durance vile other captives—six of them. Lord Maulverer, Wun Lung, David Morgan and Oliver Kipps, and Trevor and Trelucc.

Chairs had been brought in by the ragers for Skinner's extra guests from the other studies, for without exception everyone was bound and gagged, and glaring lugubriously from his seat.

Study No. 11 had very evidently been employed by the Highcliffe ragers as an internment camp for prisoners of war.

Bob Cherry broke the silence with a chuckle.

"Well, my hat, you chaps!" he murmured. "What a cheery little card-party—I don't think!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What is it that's biting Skinner & Co., Johnny?" Wharton was murmuring to Johnny Bull. "They seem to me to be sitting in those chairs jolly uneasily, or something."

Johnny Bull looked and nodded. Skinner & Co. round the table certainly did sit uneasily. The cads were wriggling in their chairs as if in agony of body. They wriggled, that is to say, as much as fellows trussed up like mummies could reasonably be expected to wriggle. And they were doing their utmost, one and all, with weird gurgling noises to attract attention.

Johnny Bull strode forward suddenly and jerked off their gags.

"Speak, captives!" he ejaculated dramatically.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner spoke first.

"Yooooop!" Skinner burst out. "Lemme up, quick!"

"What the—" Frank Nugent began in wonderment.

"Lemme up!" roared Snoop.

"Yow-ow-ooooop!" Stott came in. "Lemme up! Ow, the rotters!"

"Here, you chaps!" jerked out Wharton, slashing away with his knife at Skinner's bonds. "For goodness' sake let them up and see what's wrong! Why—" For Skinner had bounced up from his chair as if a spring propelled him.

Stott was free, and Stott went suddenly into the air with the whoop of a Dervish. Frank Nugent severed the last of the ropes which held Snoop captive, and Sidney James Snoop went through the same startling performance.

The rescuers stared in amazement. The three cads were caressing themselves with tender, loving care. And then, all at once, the juniors tumbled to it.

"Ha, ha, ha!" they roared, and Study No. 11 rang with their laughter. Courtenay and the Caterpillar and the rest of the Highcliffe raggers evidently possessed their own strong original sense of humour.

Harold Skinner had been seated, not directly upon the seat of his chair, but instead upon a couple of short pokers laid parallel about four inches apart.

Snoop had been thoughtfully accommodated with four china egg-cups; and, as for Stott, that unhappy youth had wriggled and writhed hopelessly upon a dozen carefully distributed aniseed balls.

It had been to Stott and to Snoop like sitting in a bathing-dress upon a particularly pebbly beach, and Skinner was still caressing himself as if he had spent a month compulsorily seated upon the top rail of an iron fence.

"Ha, Ha, ha!" chortled Bob Cherry. "Oh, my blessed ribs! Torture, you know! The Highcliffe Inquisition, you chaps! What's it like, Skinny, old bean?"

"It—it's like walking about with hard-dried peas in your dashed boots—only fifty times worse!" snarled Stott vehemently.

"Nearly two blessed hours have we been penned up here!" Skinner ground out savagely. "I opened the door in response to a tap, and before we could defend ourselves the cads were upon us. We never stood an earthly!"

"What I want to know is what Wharton intends doing about it!" Snoop interjected fiercely. "A nice thing, this, when a chap isn't safe in his own dashed study! About time we had a new captain, if you ask me!"

"Well, we don't ask you, Snoop!" Wharton retorted curtly. "Keep your sneers till they're asked for! No Form captain could have foreseen this; and I might point out, too, that if you and Skinner and Stott had been down on Little Side or out of gates, instead of being stuck up here in a stuffy study frowsting over smokes, you'd have had nothing at all to complain about!"

By this time Mauly and the other captives had been released, and his languid lordship had departed for his study sofa in a state of partial collapse.

No one else but the cads had been subjected to Highcliffe's peculiar species of torture. Courtenay of the Highcliffe Fourth was as much down upon gambling and smokes as Wharton himself.

And as the rescuers left Study No. 11, the consensus of opinion among them was that the cads of the Remove had got only what they richly deserved.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Council of War!

THAT, however, was not quite the point. The fact for consideration was not so much that the cads had suffered deserved ignominy as that the entire length of the Remove passage had, metaphorically, been stood upon its head.

Not one single study was there, from one end of the passage to the other, but gave the impression of having systematically been stirred up by a cyclone. Furniture and other belongings had been changed and interchanged by the merry Highcliffe raggers with a generous and impartial hand, and, to the Remove fellows, it was impossible to look upon their ragged studies and the whole gigantic affair in any other light but that of a humiliating degradation.

Sharp after tea Wharton called a Form meeting. The first thing to meet the Removites' gaze as they entered the Rag was a notice pinned upon the opposite wall—a notice in the well-known crabbed caligraphy of Fisher Tarleton Fish:

"Notice! Notice! Notice!"

THE GREYFRIARS TRAVEL AGENCY (Inc.).

Fisher T. Fish, Esq., begs to announce that, weather permitting, the above Travel Agency will run trips to places of interest in the vicinity, specimens as under:

- Pegg - - - - 6d. return
- Wapshot - - - - 1/- "
- Circular Tour - - 2/6 "
- Fags and other children-in-arms half-price.

All applications for seats, inquiries, etc., to Fisher T. Fish, Esq., at Study No. 14, Remove Passage, Greyfriars. Mind and book early, guys!

The vehicle may be hired by parties at reduced rates. Apply Fisher T. Fish, Esq., No. 14, Remove Passage, Greyfriars. Book early, pards!

Say, roll up! This Flivver's sure the Bees' Knees, galoots!

FISHER TARLETON FISH,
President, Secretary, and General Manager, The Greyfriars Travel Agency (Inc.).

"Whew!" ejaculated the captain of the Remove, when he had read it. "So that's the game, is it?"

"Good job for Fishy Dr. Locke and the Quelchy bird is away, I reckon!"

observed Bob Cherry grimly. "It'll be short shrift for the Travel Agency once the powers that be return, I'm thinking!"

"My hat!" breathed Harold Skinner. Skinner was scanning Fishy's bill as if hypnotised by it. "My hat! Where's Fish? Oh, there you are, old man! I say, Fishy, any shares going in this concern?"

And Skinner jerked a thumb in the direction of the bill, linking arms with Fishy affably.

A glint came into the American junior's eyes, and he gently disengaged himself.

"The Travel Agency, you mean? Nope, sirree! I reckon Fisher T. runs this little bonanza right from the word 'Go!'"

"In other words, Skinner, old pippin," put in Bob Cherry, "Fishy reckons this is going to pan out a paying proposition. Had Fishy felt any qualms at all, there would have been shares on offer, don't you worry!"

"See here, old man," urged Skinner. "Let me put up a couple of quid, say. You'll need a bit for expenses, you know. Besides, I can help a bit."

But Fisher T. was adamant. Evidently the bus was looked upon as an unexploited gold-mine. Working partners were not wanted.

"Nope, sirree!" he said again firmly. "I'm seeing this little gamble through alone, I reckon. I tell you what, though. Let me sell you a ticket for my circular tour. Half-a-crown!"

"Eh?"

"The shekels, you know! Two-and-six!"

Skinner inspected Fisher's extended hand for one long moment as if that Transatlantic palm were a curiosity submitted for his observation, and then abruptly he revolved upon his heel.

Turning away to the table upon which Harry Wharton stood waiting to address them, Bob Cherry chuckled. If it could not be a partnership, apparently Harold Skinner was not keen upon encouraging trade.

The Remove skipper was rapping for attention.

"Gentlemen of the Remove—"
"Hear, hear!"
"This council of war is called, as you already know, in order to consider methods of reprisal upon Highcliffe. It is agreed that the Form cannot sit down lightly beneath this insult—"

"Rather not, Wharton!"
"We'll give 'em beans!"
"We'll snatch 'em baldheaded!"

The Remove upon that point appeared to be in complete unanimity. Harry Wharton smiled.

(Continued on next page.)



FREE Write for free illustrated lists and a specimen copy of Hobbies.

HOBBIES Ltd., Dept. 34, DEREHAM, NORFOLK.

HOBBIES for Fretwork

Only boys with a Hobbies Fretwork Outfit know the real joys of the pastime. If you buy a cheap set with inferior foreign tools, they will ruin your work and need replacing in a very short while. See that you have Hobbies—they're the best in the world.

BRITISH OUTFITS from 2/6 to 45/-

500 THINGS YOU CAN MAKE.

The 1927 Catalogue illustrates 500 things you can make, and gives you two large free designs (a Ukulele and a Clock) which alone are worth 1/6. Ask any newsagent or ironmonger—price 9d.—or send P.O. for 1/- to Hobbies Ltd.

READ HOBBIES EVERY WEEK

The No. 3 OUTFIT

A complete set of tools and a 32-page handbook of instructions for the beginner. Nothing like it 10/- at the price, anywhere. Post 3d.



Branches in London, Glasgow, Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham, Southampton, Sheffield, Brighton, & agents everywhere.

"There are two hours to call-over. My idea in hustling you fellows through tea was that we might do something at once. Go over in force, you know, and strike while the iron's hot. They won't be expecting reprisals so soon, you see. Courtenay & Co. will be fairly caught napping!"

"My hat! Good wheeze! Come on, man! Let's start now!"

"Half a tick, Russell, old bean! This is a risky undertaking. The ragers might easily become the ragged unless we proceed cautiously. We don't want to come sneaking home from Highcliffe tarred and feathered, or anything like that, you know!"

"No fear!"

"My plan at first was to enrol the Upper Fourth and the leading lights of the Third, and make a regular pitched battle of it," continued Wharton. "They'd come like a shot. But this is our bizney; and the better plan is for little us to carry it through entirely upon our own shoulders."

"Hear, hear!"

"What I suggest, then, gentlemen of the Lower Fourth, is that after arming ourselves with catapults, squirts, and suchlike implements of war, we bike over to Highcliffe, leave our jiggers against the wall with three or four chaps guarding them, and then effect an entry over the wall. It'll be quite dusk by that time. After that we sneak right round the school buildings, and in through their side-door. Regular cracksman stunt, you know."

"Hurrah!"

"What happens after that is, I admit, largely upon the knees of the gods," went on the captain of the Remove. "But, given any luck at all, I imagine there are enough of us to manage the Highcliffe Fourth, even on their own giddy battleground. Well, what do you chaps say? Is it a go?"

"My goodness, Wharton, it is a great wheeze!" exclaimed David Morgan, rubbing his hands enthusiastically. "But, look you, we are all in this, yes?"

And the Welsh junior gave an expressive glance towards Skinner & Co. who stood apart.

"Don't you worry about us, Morgan," said Skinner sullenly. "I sat on two dashed pokers all the afternoon; and you wouldn't leave me out of this for anything. Count us in!"

"Oh, jolly good man, Skinner!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, agreeably surprised. He had hardly expected the cads to play up. But if the reprisal was to be a success they would want, as Morgan had said, every man jack the Remove had. Even Bunter, for Bunter had his uses in sitting upon fellows' chests!

"I guess——"

Fishy was upon his feet, the light of big business gleaming in his eyes, and Wharton held aloft a hand for silence.

"I guess that what you galoots want above anything else on this hyer razzle is efficient transport. Nix on the bike stuff! Let the Travel Agency take a hand, see? Look hyer, Wharton, as one business man to another, I'll quote you at a bob a nob, there and back! Come on, is it a deal?"

"It is, old Transport Minister—a deal too funny for words!" Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites roared.

"Wait a minute," said Wharton slowly. The Remove skipper was thinking, a deep furrow lining his brow. "Look here, chaps," he said at last, "this strikes me as being a first-rate

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 993.

wheeze of Fishy's. Instead of carting over the bikes, let's go by Fishy's bus. What do you say?"

"Well," grinned Vernon-Smith, "it's undoubtedly the chopper for the bus immediately the Head comes back, so while it remains to us we may as well use it."

"Right-ho, then! Well, here's what we'll do, providing Fishy's agreeable. Half a dozen chaps can slip down now and board up the lower windows. There's plenty of planks in the woodshed. There's also a roll of wire-netting; and the front where Fishy sits can be covered in. Then Fishy runs us over to Highcliffe, pulling up beneath their wall, and we make our entry as originally intended. After that, Fishy waits in the lane with the bus for a certain time—twenty minutes, say—and then he drives straight in to the Highcliffe quad, pulling up facing the gates and with the back up against the School House steps."

"My hat!" exclaimed Peter Todd enthusiastically. "See the wheeze, you chaps! After doing our deadly work, all that remains is to take the Tube home, so to speak."

"And on the other hand," Wharton went on, "in the event of our plans miscarrying, we're provided with a means of exit absolutely at our back. I confess now that how we were going to regain our bikes in case of a hue-and-cry was worrying me a bit. By Jove, you fellows, Fishy's scheme is much the best. Can't you picture us all legging it for dear life across the quad with a regular hornets' nest stirred up behind us! Once we reached the bikes we'd have been all right, but——"

"But Highcliffe might have reached us first!" put in Dick Rake, with a grin.

"That's it, old scout. And besides, with this wheeze of Fishy's we don't have to split our numbers to leave chaps with the bikes. Fishy can look after his bus single-handed easily. The chicken-wire protects him from attack, and once we are all on board again the fellows on top repel boarders with squirts and catapults. My only hat, it's the wheeze of the term. What do you say, Fishy?"

"One moment, Wharton!" interjected Vernon-Smith. "What is Highcliffe likely to say when Fishy rolls calmly into their quad with his merry old stink-box? He can't exactly explain he's called with the groceries, you know!"

"Ha, ha! No! Well, we sha'n't keep him waiting at the front for many minutes. It'll be dark, you know. After driving right in, he simply turns her round, leaves his engine running, and then squats up in his seat like a giddy deaf mute. There, how's that seem now, Fishy?"

"Waal, I reckon it's a cinch," said Fishy, with shining eyes. "I sorter calculate I don't kinder enthuse over boarding up my bus with planks, but I reckon we'll let that pass. Go ahead."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"Smithy, you take some chaps down to the woodshed straight away, then, and get on with the boarding up. Make a blessed armoured car of it, you know. Peter Todd has a squirt, there's another couple in our study that were used in the last raid on Temple, Dabney's crowd. Gossy has three more which the gardeners use. We'll just hunt up some ropes and things, and then we'll join you, Smithy. Come on, Remove! The jaw is now officially concluded; the time for action ripe! Back up, everybody!"

"Hurrah, down with Highcliffe!"

"On the ball, Remove!"

Smithy, marshalling what he humorously termed his "fatigue-party," and

arming them with nails and hammers and saws, had already departed hotfoot for the woodshed.

The remainder of the Form, at Wharton's heels, poured out of the Rag excitedly, Fishy grinning genially and rubbing his hands. As secretary, president, and general manager, Fishy was beginning to calculate what the entire Remove at one "bob a nob" was likely to bring in to the Travel Agency's coffers. It would be a lot, and Fishy's brain almost boggled at the thought of it. For a beginning, this was something like a deal!

In the gathering dusk Wharton slipped away across the Close to negotiate with Gosling for the extra squirts. It was a dubious expression that crossed Gosling's face when he heard what the Remove captain wanted; but Wharton dispelled it immediately by the time-honoured method of pressing into the horny palm a couple of shillings. Gosling winked knowingly then, laying a wise forefinger alongside his nose, and produced the squirts.

Behind the woodshed the fatigue-party was just stepping back to survey its handiwork. Under Vernon-Smith's directions the windows had all very carefully been boarded over, and the front where Fishy was to sit looked like nothing so much as a chicken-run.

"Here's the squirts from No. 1, Harry!" panted Nugent, running up at that moment.

"Take 'em up on top," directed Wharton. "These as well. The squirts will be our principal defensive armament. My hat, I've an idea! See that tub, Bob?"

Under the eaves of the woodshed stood a big hogshead which collected rain-water from the guttering. Bob looked, and saw that except for an inch of water covering the bottom it was empty.

"Think we could get it up on top?" said Wharton.

Bob Cherry cast a glance at the water-butt and another at the top-deck of Fishy's bus.

"Why not? Four of us could manage it up the steps, I reckon—two shoving beneath and two heaving above. Come on, ye cripples, let's try!"

Johnny Bull and Squiff and the hefty Bolsover rushed forward, and within a couple of minutes the water-butt reposed upon the upper deck of the bus.

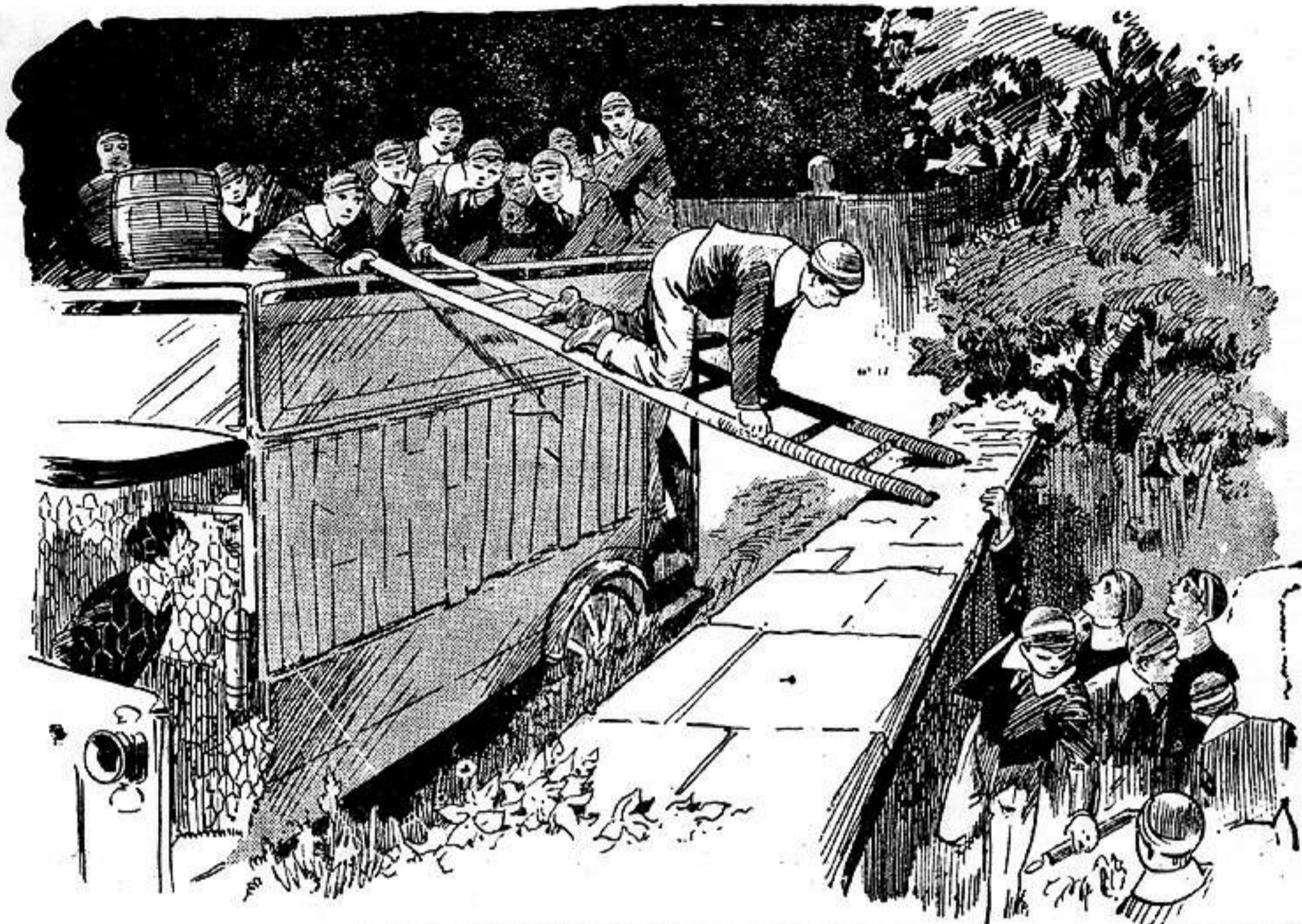
"Now what?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Now get buckets, form a chain of fellows across to that tap, and half fill the butt with water. No more than half, mind! It's to charge our squirts from, of course—we don't want the juice slopping over through the roof and soaking our own giddy henchmen, you know! There's a ladder inside the shed, Squiff. Yank it out, will you, and get it up on top. Lay it down between the seats; you'll see what it's for later. Help Squiff, Toddy. Enough petrol in the tank, Fishy?"

"Eh?" ejaculated Fishy. "I—I guess I never thought of that, you know!"

"I guess I did, though, Wharton!" chuckled Vernon-Smith, imitating Fishy's nasal drawl. "I reckon it's three-quarters full, pard. The gear-box is O.K., but I had to fill the radiator, and to make sure I've twisted up all the grease-cups. By the way, Fishy," went on the Bounder. "What about your driving-licence, y'know. Think it don't matter?"

"Oh, Jerusalem crickets!" groaned the hapless Fishy. "I—I say, I reckon I never thought of that, either! What—what's a galoot to do, Smithy?"



One by one the Greyfriars juniors crawled along the ladder and dropped within the grounds of Highcliffe, carrying their loaded squirts with them. (See Chapter 6.)

"Well, they supply 'em in Courtfield, I believe. Too late now, of course."

"Oh, hellup! Hyer—look hyer, Wharton, I—I'll risk it! I've said it's a deal, and a deal I guess it is. A galoot don't want to let down the Form at this stage. Come on, all aboard!"

Smithy glanced at him in some surprise. But, had they but known, it was not so much that Fishy loathed breaking a contract, or even feared letting down his Form, as that Fishy hated the prospect of losing shekels. Both the foregoing things Fishy would have done cheerfully. But thirty-eight Removites at a "bob a nob," he had just reckoned out, was thirty-eight bob.

And that thought moving across his mind brought in its train another, and Fishy jumped.

"Hyer, you galoots!" he ejaculated grimly. "Fares, please! A bob a nob, I reckon!"

"See here, Fishy," began Wharton irritably. "Time's getting on. Surely to goodness you can trust us till we get back again!"

"Fares, please!" reiterated Fishy firmly. "I reckon I can trust your crowd, Wharton, but I wouldn't trust that fat clam, Bunter, and Skinner & Co. a dozen yards. Come on, Bunter—shekel up, you fat gazebo!"

"Oh! Really, Fishy," began Bunter plaintively. "I haven't got a blessed red cent, you know. But I'm expecting a postal-order, though—"

Skinner pitched at Fishy's hatchet features a florin and a shilling.

"There, you dashed dollar-grinder!" growled Skinner. "Take your blessed money, and let's hear an end of it!"

"And here's a bob for Bunter," snapped Harry Wharton. "The rest of us pay when we get back. Now get a move on!"

Everybody was on board by now, fifteen or so fellows on top, but the majority inside. Fishy gave a calm glance round to make quite sure that the coast was clear. Not a single soul appeared in sight anywhere. The evening had a chill nip to it, and the rest of Greyfriars was thankfully hugging its study fires.

"Good, I reckon!"

The Transatlantic junior clambered into the driving seat drawing down after him the small-mesh chicken fencing. If Highcliffe chanced to have missiles to hurl, Fishy had no intention of providing himself as target!

Silently the brakes were released, the clutch let in, and the bus began to creep forward slowly over the ground. Along under the old elms in the dusk, and out through the gates, and then Fishy changed up, and switched on his headlights.

The adventure was begun!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Something Like a Jape!

"HIST!" Highcliffe School lay quiet and unsuspecting, the pile of buildings a sombre black mass against the sky. Across the dark Close came the twinkle of yellow lights from study windows.

Wharton, up on top of the bus with his chums, had just felt Fishy below

them in the driver's seat changing down into his lowest gear, and the Remove captain had known then that Fishy was only waiting the signal.

Away over the side, the furthest flung of Highcliffe's walls had just sneaked past them in the dusk. For a little while then, they had crawled along silently, past a thick belt of trees that came down to the road, and when they had emerged there was only that dark Close between them and the lighted windows of the rival school.

Infinite caution was the thing now, for masters might be strolling on the far side of that wall who would hear. So that Wharton had leaned far out over the first rail, calling softly down to Fisher Tarleton Fish:

"Hist!"

"Yep?" There was a sound of cautious braking, and then the bus drew to a standstill under the shadow of Highcliffe's wall, and Fishy poked out his head: "Yep; what's up, Wharton?"

"Quiet, Fishy!" Wharton was breathing down to him. "This spot will do us. Can't you dim those blessed headlights?"

"I guess I ain't mastered all the mechanism, but I'll try."

There followed the sharp sound of switches being clicked over at a hazard; and then a quick double click, and the dazzling headlights paled to the merest glimmer of light.

"That'll do us, Fishy. Now to work, you chaps!"

The ladder had lain on the floor, up the middle of the bus between the seats,

and the juniors proceeded to raise it. Fishy, in accordance with instructions, had drawn up as closely to Highcliffe's wall as he could get. The only thing necessary now was to lower the ladder out over the side, so that one end rested upon the Highcliffe wall and the other end against the top rail of the bus.

"The gulf is bridged!" chuckled Smithy, when they were done.

"It works a treat!" exclaimed Wharton, with a deep breath. "Pass down word for the fellows inside to come up silently. My hat, this is something like a jape!"

Throwing a leg over the side, Wharton felt cautiously in the dark for a rung of the ladder, and then he proceeded to crawl along it. One by one the avengers followed him, squirts and ropes being handed down. When at last they all stood within the grounds of Highcliffe, Fishy scrambled up on top and drew back the ladder again. They saw him behind them, waving down a cheerful hand. And then they plunged into the dusk, flitting across the dark and shadowy Close from tree to tree, until finally they came up with the school buildings.

Hugging the deep shadows of the wall, the Greyfriars juniors crept nearer and nearer their objective, the side door, Wharton and Bob Cherry leading the way. Once a shadowy figure was observed—a master passing the quad; but that was all. It was not surprising, for the chill evening which had caused Greyfriars to hug its study fires also effectively kept indoors the Highcliffe fellows.

The little-used side door by which they made entry led first past the deserted Form-rooms, and Wharton paused in the passage to glance back over his troops.

Immediately upon his heels were the "fighting-men" of the Form—Bob Cherry, Peter Todd, and Russell and Linley, Redwing, Johnny Bull, the Bounder, and Squiff; and behind these doughty warriors, Brown and Bulstrode and Frank Nugent.

And even then there remained a dozen and more good men and true, foemen all, though necessarily distinct from the recognised "warriors"—among them Inky, Delarey, Ogilvy, Dick

Rake, Sir Jimmy Vivian, Lord Mauleverer, and the redoubtable Bolsover. The "squaw-men" were bringing up the rear—Bunter, Alonzo Todd, Wun Lung, Skinner & Co., and Napoleon Dupont.

Next to these, between them and the warriors, were the remainder—what Wharton mentally catalogued as his "doubtfuls"—Trevor and Treluce and Hazeldene, Dutton, Hillary, and Kipps.

Not one, though, of them all but was armed to the teeth. Bunter bore along for some fell purpose a tin of thick treacle. At least, he bore along a sticky tin. It had left Greyfriars safely enough, but, somehow, during the journey in William George's loving care, the level of the contents had gradually been reduced, until now the treacle stood at low tide—very low tide! And a treacly sneer about Bunter's mouth, and a fat, treacly grin upon his features, testified to the going of it.

They were quite ready, all of them, the majority throbbing with barely suppressed excitement, for this was adventure. Wharton gave the word then to Bob Cherry, and with the minimum of noise it was passed back down the line, and then in silence, Wharton and Cherry leading the way grimly, they set off.

Highcliffe's Fourth inhabited a passage similar to the Remove's own quarters at Greyfriars, though with not so many studies to it. Leaving the deserted Form-rooms behind them, the Remove had only to traverse a couple of dark staircases and then they stood right in it.

Courtenay and the Caterpillar, as prime movers in the Greyfriars ragging, had been selected to enjoy—or otherwise—the honour of the avengers' first attentions. Wharton and half a dozen more were approaching Courtenay's apartment on tiptoe with that purpose in view, when just in front of them a study door opened suddenly and an elegant youth came out. It was Vavasour. The raiders had not time to conceal themselves. Indeed, there was nowhere to hide. And, following one startled blink, Vavasour dodged back again into the room, and they heard the door slammed desperately behind him.

But before there was time to lock the door, Wharton was upon it, and, hurling it open, he strode in with half a dozen Greyfriars men at his heels. The air in the study hung blue and heavy with cigarette-smoke. Vavasour was just inside making desperate efforts at holding the door.

Round the table were Ponsonby & Co.—Ponsonby himself, Monson and Merton, Drury and Gadsby. Wharton recognised it instantly as a gathering of the Highcliffe "nutty brigade."

Cecil Ponsonby had leapt to his feet in alarm. Smokes were being thrust away, and Drury was pushing a pack of cards into the table-drawer out of sight.

"What's this mean, Vavasour?" Pon was grinding out. Then the Remove poured in, and Pon saw for himself. "Whew—Greyfriars cads! Courtenay! Caterpillar! Rescue, Highcliffe!"

Cecil Ponsonby's voice trailed away into an inarticulate gurgle. The Bounder had leapt forward, sending chairs flying and the table rocking, and he was upon the startled Ponsonby with the spring of a tiger, clapping over Ponsonby's mouth a heavy and determined hand.

"Come in—quick!" Wharton was hissing to his followers. "Four or five of you's enough!"

There were Wharton and Bob Cherry and the Bounder already in the study.

Smithy was dealing with the dandy of Highcliffe; Wharton had clapped a hand across the mouth of Vavasour, and down on the carpet Bob Cherry was struggling with Merton and Drury. Squiff rushed in hurriedly at Wharton's cry, and Peter Todd and Linley.

Russell hastily closed the door on them, and proceeded to stand on guard outside. But it was too late. The noise of that terrific combat had travelled. All up and down the passage doors were being opened and inquiring heads poked out. Russell ground his teeth helplessly. It was a regular hornets' nest they had stirred up.

Then it was that Inky showed his mettle. Quick as thought, the nabob sprang forward, gathering up Bulstrode and Redwing, and Hillary, screamed a hasty word to Russell and another to Nugent, and leapt into the Caterpillar's study.

Russell and Nugent jumped to action, catching on at once. Unless all was to be lost, Highcliffe's vital guns, so to speak, must be silenced. De Courcy and Courtenay—that apartment Inky was attending to. Yates and Smithson and Benson—Russell collected Penfold and Johnny Bull and Ogilvy and leapt urgently to the attack. Nugent had gone off with Desmond and Rake somewhere up the passago. Bolsover had descended upon another study at the head of Skinner & Co. Delarey was leading Trevor and Treluce. Tom Brown had joined forces with Monty Newland. Elsewhere, Morgan and Wib and Kipps were busy. Manly and Smith minor were piling in like Trojans.

And that really was all there ever was to it. Taken in their studies, the Highcliffe fellows were distinctly at a disadvantage. In a few minutes it was all over, and they sat bound to their chairs, two and three in a study.

The door of Pon's den opened then, and Wharton and Bob emerged. Both were breathless and dishevelled; Bob was pulling his tie straight. Pon and his merry nuts had fought like wildcats; Cecil Ponsonby was of the order which never hesitates about using its feet, and before finally the leader of the Highcliffe cads was induced to surrender, Wharton had captured several nasty kicks.

Then—not gently—Pon had been jammed into a chair, and gagged with his own elegant silk scarf. And, one by one, the rest of the nutty brigade were similarly accommodated.

Perfect peace reigned again along the length of the Highcliffe Fourth passage as Wharton and Bob strolled away from Pon's study.

When they threw open Courtenay's door, and walked in, the Caterpillar was sitting bound on the floor, saying: "Mummmmm!" through a duster which formed an efficient gag. Next to him, trussed securely, was Wilkins of the Fourth, who had rushed to the assistance of his captain at an ill-chosen moment.

As for Courtenay, that unfortunate reposed, elegantly in the coal-scuttle, like Diogenes in his tub—but with this exception. That upon the manly chest of the Fourth's skipper, bearing him down, there reposed William George Bunter, no inconsiderable weight!

"Well, how do you like it done, Highcliffe?" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Who's top dog now, Courtenay?"

"Mummmmmmmmm!"

"Who's cock of the walk, Caterpillar?"

"The esteemed cock of the walkfulness is not at the moment terrific!" purred Inky.

LARRY SEMON'S GREAT



FREE GIFT

SUPERB CIGARETTE-CARD PISTOL

Larry plays a big part in KINEMA COMIC every week. This week he is giving every reader a tip-top pistol that shoots cigarette-cards with deadly accuracy and lightning speed. Larry wants YOU to have one of these pistols. Make sure you get it. Remember, he is giving these novelties only with THIS week's

THE KINEMA COMIC 2

Out on Wed., Feb. 23rd Make sure of a copy

"Neither is the esteemed top dogfulness, if you ask me!" grinned Redwing.

"Ha, ha! Rather not, Redwing!"

Bob Cherry was unloading on to the table from his pockets some tiny tins, together with brushes. Wharton glanced down at them.

"Paint, Bob?" he inquired blankly: "What, the—"

Bob Cherry chuckled and indicated Courtenay, the Caterpillar, and Wilkins; and then the Remove captain caught on.

"Get up, Bunter, old thing," Bob murmured. "Let the captive rise and take in air. Bulstrode, could I trouble you to yank the merry Caterpillar up? Sit him down nicely. That's it!"

There were six or seven tins of paint and as many different colours. Hillary opened the yellow ochre for a start. Bob dipped his brush into it, and proceeded to advance upon the apprehensive Caterpillar.

"Mummmmm!" gurgled the Caterpillar again, this time with a series of desperate wriggles; and Bulstrode and Redwing, who held him secure, grinned one to the other serene grins.

Splash!

"Ow!"

If Mr. Quelch had ever noticed burning in the humble breast of Bob Cherry the passion for Art, he had never communicated that information to his Form. But now Bob was exhibiting towards colour schemes a positive genius, an aptitude that would have done credit to a firm of house decorators.

The splash was a generous dab of purple upon the end of Caterpillar's nose. The next strokes turned his eyebrows into two red crescents. Then there was sketched in upon Caterpillar's forehead an artistic skull, with sinister black crossbones upon each cheek to match. Further down the victim's features Bob, unfortunately, could not go, because of the gag.

But it was more than ample, the work he did put in above the gag. It satisfied his newlyfound sense of the decorative; it went far towards satisfying the Remove fellows' smarting sense of defeat; and the victim himself, when at last Bob was through, was not merely satisfied but surfeited, too.

Then the Caterpillar was put upon one side to dry, and Courtenay and Wilkins were then treated similarly—painted and decorated to match the Caterpillar.

The picture that the Highcliffe juniors presented when finally Bob was finished and the ragers stopped back to survey his handiwork was one worthy of the Royal Academy.

"Ha, ha, ha!" they roared. They really could not help it. It was just too funny for words; and the study rang again with their laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ugugugugugugug!" said both the Highcliffe leaders in unison.

"Oh, dear!" said Bob Cherry, wiping his eyes. "Let's go and look at Ponsonby & Co. again!" He gathered together his artist's materials. "Perhaps a touch of red upon his noble features would improve the merry Pon's complexion—who knows?"

But when they trooped back into Pon's apartment it was to find the nuts already ragged. Peter Todd had whiled away the time by tipping lamp-oil over the brilliantined polls of Pon and his nutty friends. The smell of the paraffin was definitely not nice; Pon was positively shuddering. Toddy had rubbed it in well and truly, and then he had combed back again nicely for them the nuts' hair. If there was one thing more than another that the nuts could

not endure, it was to have their vanity injured.

Vernon-Smith came strolling in from the passage.

"Come outside a moment; you chaps," he said.

They followed him out.

"The dear Alonzo and myself have been ragging the dormitories," Smithy explained, with a chuckle. "I didn't want the nuts to hear! We've made apple-pie beds of every blessed bed in the Fourth dorm."

"You—and Lonzy? Alonzo Todd, Smithy?"

The Bounder nodded coolly.

"Lonzy, under my tuition, quickly developed into a most capable ragger of beds, old dear! Anyway, the merry Fourth will think so to-night!"

"Well, my only hat! Hallo, look out!"

Piet Delarey was approaching the little group hurriedly along the passage.

"Wharton!" exclaimed Delarey urgently. "We'd best get clear of this, I think. In the general scrimmage Smithson got clear away. The alarm seems to have been given, and the Upper Fourth and Fifth have just sneaked off in the dark across the Close. There's something on against us, I reckon!"

"Did they go towards the gates?" inquired Vernon-Smith swiftly.

"Yes, yes. They seemed to, now you mention it. Nugent and I were watching from a window. Of course, the quad's quite dark now. I say, do you think they're going to ambush us, Smithy?"

The Bounder was silent. Then, after a moment's thought, he turned to the Remove skipper.

"See here, Wharton," he said quickly. "There's no time to be lost, I fancy. I'll explain things presently. But you get right back to the Caterpillar's den. Take along half a dozen of our fellows, and march him and Courtenay downstairs at once, and dump 'em aboard our bus."

"But, Smithy, what—"

"I think I'm right, Wharton. We'll know pretty soon, anyway. Leave this to me. Vav & Co. and the rest of the Form can follow their own devices now, I think. The fellows must get away from here as sharp as we know how. Sound the retreat, will you? I'm bringing Ponsonby along myself."

The Remove skipper produced a Scout whistle, and blew two shrill blasts.

Pheep, pheep!

From out of the Highcliffe studies poured the ragers. The ragging had, in any case, been nearly complete. Wharton made off immediately in the direction of the Caterpillar's apartment, taking along with him Bob and the others.

"I say, what's up, Smithy?" ejaculated Dick Rake. "Reinforcements approaching on our flank, or something?"

"Tumble out!" ordered the Bounder. "Get back along to the bus. Sharp's the word! Here, take Pon along with you. Dump him up on top."

"Oh, all right. Come on, chaps. Retreat!"

"Retreat! Come on, fall back on the bus!"

The word was passed up the passage;

and Fishy was waiting for them at the bottom of the steps, with the engine running, all ready to be away. The Famous Five had got the struggling Highcliffe leaders down to the bus without encountering opposition in the shape of rescuers.

Wharton was up on top, piercing the darkness of the quad with anxious eyes for signs of the Fifth Form.

"How many fellows up there, Wharton?" Smithy called to him, with one foot on the step. "Don't want to leave anybody behind!"

"Fourteen!" came Wharton's response, after a moment. "Excluding the giddy captives, that is."

"How many inside, Squiff?"

"Half a tick. Counting Bunter as only one, there's twenty-three, Smithy."

"Thirty-seven all told, and myself, then. That's it, Right away, Fishy! All serene!"

Fishy nodded, and pushed in the clutch. The bus lumbered off into the darkness of the Close like some leviathan leaving dock.

"I say, what is it we're doing with the merry prisoners, Smithy?" Harry Wharton called down the steps. "Using them as mascots, or something?"

But Vernon-Smith made no response. The Bounder was riding along on the step, peering out anxiously ahead of them, maintaining his hold by the brass rod.

Suddenly that which he had suspected and feared from the first came to pass. Their pace slackened, then alongside the porter's lodge they stopped dead. On the instant there were around them dozens of Highcliffians, and then there came Fishy's plaintive cry:

"Wharton!"

Up on top Harry Wharton pushed his way between the seats to the front.

"Yes, yes! What is it, man? Why have we stopped? Get a move on her, for goodness' sake, Fishy!"

"I guess—"

"Oh, stow it, man, do! Can't you see these chaps are powerless to touch us so long as we're moving? We could keep off an army with these squirts of ours. Go on, man!"

"Oh, Jerusalem crickets, you slab-sided jay!" howled Fishy. "It ain't that at all. It's the goldarned gates they've closed against us. We can't get out again!"

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Narrow Escape!

"CLOSED!"

That was the fix, totally unforeseen by any of them save the Bounder.

It was incredible.

But sure enough, however, ahead of them as they stared in perplexity, bathed now in the full white glare of the headlights, were the gates, shut fast across their path. And all round their bus, like a horde of Redskins swooping down upon the Overland Mail, were Highcliffians. The tables were turned with a vengeance!

Smithy got up from the step, and then he and Peter Todd were hurriedly at work making safe the entrance with the stout wooden bench they had carted along with them from the wood-shed for that purpose. After that, they seized brooms and squirts, and stood grimly by behind the barricade to repel boarders.

The besieging crowd of Highcliffians, growing bigger and bigger every minute, was beginning to attain alarming proportions, and dim, shadowy figures

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 995.

ANSWERS
Every Saturday — PRICE 2:

litting across the Close in two's and three's from the dark mass of the school buildings testined to the method.

Peering down over the top rail, Wharton had recognised the original crowd as being composed mainly of Fifth-Formers, together with a goodly sprinkling of the Third. But now other and better-known figures were upon the scene, revealed in the white, penetrating glare of Fishy's headlights, and the Remove captain jumped, rubbing his eyes.

The Fourth!

"Vavasour & Co.!" he muttered to himself wonderingly. "Why, we left the merry nuts all tied up only five minutes ago. And a score of others, too. There's Yates and Benson and—"

"And also the gentle Smithson who escaped us, and whom, if I mistake not, we have to thank for bringing about this little reception!"

It was Vernon-Smith at his elbow.

"Oh, hallo! So you think that Smithson's at the bottom of this business, then, Smithy?"

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders. "Plain enough, Wharton, I reckon. After dodging our men in the passage he must have beaten up the Fifth, getting them to stop us here. Then, while we moved across the Close, he doubled back and cut everybody loose again."

"There seems no other explanation," said Wharton slowly. "Anyway, it's a nice mess to be in. I say, Smithy, what the dickens are we going to do? I was just trying to puzzle it out. This is an eventuality that entered into no one's calculations."

"I wouldn't call it a mess yet!" exclaimed the Bounder cheerfully. "It would have been a Number One sized mess, I'll admit; only you forgot one thing."

"What's that, then?"

"That we happen to hold three important hostages, old bean!"

Courtenay and the Caterpillar and Ponsonby were roped back to back upon the floor. Wharton glanced down at them, and a comprehending light dawned suddenly in his eyes.

"By Jove Smithy, I see it all now!" he exclaimed, with a deep breath. "Oh, you deep bounder! Hostages, of course! Why, we've only to play our cards right and—"

"And we're as safe as little apples!" finished the Bounder for him. "Now, see here, Wharton, you're skipper, but this is what I suggest. Down below Peter Todd and Ogilvy are holding the fort with brooms. Whenever a Highcliffian attempts to board us, one of them deals him a hefty shove in the chest, while our second line of defence, which is the gentle Skinner plus a squirt, projects over his features a stream of cold water."

There floated along from up in front a humorous chuckle. It was Bob Cherry. Bob and Nugent, armed with a squirt upiece, were covering Fishy. A Highcliffian had approached too near to the bonnet for safety, and Bob and Frank discharged simultaneously. Then, while they fell back upon the tub to refill, another two stepped forward with fresh squirts to take their places.

But the attack grew in strength a moment later. Under the leadership of Smithson the Highcliffians made a valiant charge.

"Go for 'em!"

"Up, Highcliffe!"

"Rescue!"

And the Greyfriars Remove replied in their own strain.

"Repel boarders!"

"Who's top dog?"

"Greyfriars! Up, Remove!"

"Hurrah!"

In a few seconds a wild and whirling scrap was in progress. The Highcliffians swarmed over the bus like an army of ants. But as soon as one or another found foot or hand-hold he was pushed off.

Really there was no staying on the bus when the defenders got to work with their squirts and brooms. And the attack came to an abrupt conclusion within five minutes, the honours, of course, resting with the Greyfriars Remove.

"It's all serene, so far, Smithy," said the Remove skipper, when the Highcliffians had drawn off. "But, sooner or later, they'll make a more determined rush, and then these squirts of ours are likely to be about as effective as peashooters, I think."

"Oh, I don't know," said the Bounder. "Personally, I think we're pretty well impregnable, what with one thing and another. Question to my mind is, is Smithson sufficiently a leader to get the Fourth together and organise that second charge? Frankly, old bean, I don't think that he is."

"Well, your opinion will soon be put to the test," said Wharton grimly. "They are getting ready for it now, I fancy. Over by the lodge there, look!"

The Bounder followed his forefinger, and nodded cheerfully. By the porter's lodge could be descried a big press of Highcliffians. Although out of the direct beam of Fishy's headlights, there was sufficient reflected light to show them as members of the Fourth.

From the top of the bus one among them stood out particularly prominently, head and shoulders over the rest of the crowd. It was Smithson, standing upon a box. Smithson, obviously haranguing them, waved at intervals a wild hand to indicate their bus, and gesticulated excitedly. Then there would follow an excited murmur and little bursts of applause.

"They're getting up steam, Smithy," Wharton muttered with a worried frown. "Smithson's trying to urge them on to attack us again."

"Who cares!" returned the Bounder lightly. "Come on, Bolsover, old man, the merry captives come on in this next scene. Jerk them up!"

Ponsonby and Courtenay and the Caterpillar were hauled to an upright position and stood upon their feet. Vernon-Smith was groping in his pocket. He produced a little silver pocket-torch and switched it on.

"The second attack is due to begin at any moment, I fancy," remarked Wharton from his position against the rail, and Vernon-Smith gave an easy nod.

"We'd better have the captives farther forward, Bolsover," he directed, "so that my torch lights up their handsome features. Yes, that's it."

The hostages were placed in a bunch up against the rail. Then the Bounder's powerful torch played upon their faces like a limelight, so that those below, who were advancing now, could not help but recognise.

Peter Todd and Ogilvy, standing grim and determined down below with their brooms at the ready, saw with astonishment the attack waver suddenly and then break.

Highcliffe had espied the hostages lining the rail, and Highcliffe did not quite know what to make of it.

There was a queer little lull and silence. The Fifth Form now merely stood around with its hands in its pockets, looking on amusedly. With

the Fourth free again to fight its own battles, the business was none of theirs. The contingent from the Third, having an engagement for prep in the form-room, had reluctantly been compelled to scuttle from the scene.

"I say, up there! You Greyfriars bounders, I mean!"

Smithson's tones held a little note of uneasiness, and the Bounder grinned composedly. Until this, Smithson had evidently not been aware that his leaders languished in captivity. As a matter of fact, upon this point of their absence Smithson had found himself pondering not a little, but such a solution as that they had actually been borne away captive had never for one moment entered his mind. It was a revelation that gave Smithson food for anxious thought.

"Hallo, you Highcliffe merchants! How do you like it done? I say, want to chin-wag, or something?"

"You—you—you—" But Smithson discovered himself hopelessly inarticulate, and Yates stepped into the breach.

"I say, what the merry thump's the idea, you know?" demanded that junior warmly. "This pinching our blessed men, we mean. What the dickens do you think you're going to do to 'em, eh?"

Wharton nudged Smithy for him to reply. It had been entirely the Bounder's scheme, this, and the Bounder could be depended upon utterly to see it through.

"Reckon that depends entirely upon you merchants down there," was Smithy's cool response, and Wharton nodded.

"Why, whatever do you mean, you crass asses? We've fairly got you on toast."

"Well, here's what we mean in a nutshell. Are you opening those blessed gates or not?"

"Not, old thing," responded Yates promptly.

"Tell you what we are doing for you," hissed Smithson suddenly. "We're painting your blessed noses blue and your chivvies red, and we're roping the bunch of you one behind the other in a long procession, and then one of our chaps is driving your old stinkbox over to Greyfriars with the string of you trailing along behind! There, how's that seem?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Bounder chuckled to himself as that laugh rang out from the bus top. It did not look as if Smithson's vehement threat was being taken very seriously.

"Look here, Highcliffe," began the Bounder then in business-like tones, "the position is this. We have the whip-hand of you. We can do with these three merry hostages up here exactly as we please, and you're powerless to raise a finger to help them. The bus, as she stands, is practically impregnable, putting rescue right out of the question. True, we may not be able to get out of gates just at the moment; but then, on the other hand, neither can you get at us. The position is a deadlock, if you like to put it that way. So unless you want us here in your blessed quad till we take root, you'd better get the gates open again, sharp, when the merry hostages will immediately be delivered up unharmed. Well, what do you think of it? Is it a go?"

"No!" howled Smithson. "Never!"

And he sprang forward, but Benson clutched at his arm and held him back by main force.

"I believe we're pulling it off," murmured the Bounder coolly; and the



The picture that the Highcliffe Fourth-Formers presented when finally Bob Cherry was finished was one worthy of the Royal Academy. "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Greyfriars juniors. (See Chapter 6.)

Remove captain, looking down upon the scene below, after a brief moment nodded his agreement.

For Benson still retained Smithson's right arm in a tight clutch, and Benson was muttering frantically into Smithson's right ear. What Benson was urging cannot be known, but Yates was doing for him a similar thing on the left.

And then there marched up determinedly Vavasour, at the head of his little body of nuts, and it seemed evident from his gestures that Vavasour was presenting on behalf of Cecil Ponsonby a pretty strong petition for release.

But Smithson, gripped resolutely and muttered at though he was by his more cautious henchmen, was observed from the bus top still to return only a dogged shake of the head.

It was but infrequently that Smithson found himself filling a position of authority, and, as a matter of fact, Smithson was rather enjoying the experience. Smithson felt quite sure in his own mind that, given time, Courtenay and the Caterpillar and Pon could all be rescued. But Yates and Benson did not share that conviction. And, besides, inside a very few minutes prep would be clamouring for attention with a voice they could not ignore.

As for the nuts, those youths knew of old only too well just what the supercilious Pon would be like if pretty soon he were not released from what to him could only be a gallingly ignominious position. A chap would not be able to live with him. So there went up from the elegant Vav and his fellow nuts another frantic burst of eloquence.

Benson was picturing not so much the hopelessness of an attempt at rescue as the utter ignominy their leaders, Courtenay and the Caterpillar, were in; and presently he and Yates began to get Smithson to see their point of view. Smithson was entirely for mortal combat, and he abandoned his scheme of assault and battery with very great reluctance.

But at last he gave to his henchman a doubtful nod, and then they released his arms, and he stepped forward and wagged a white handkerchief.

"Hallo, Greyfriars!" he called up.

"Hallo, Highcliffe?"

"I say, flag of truce. Keep that blessed squirt away, you know!"

Wharton leaned out over the rail.

"All right. Come to your senses after all, then?"

"After discussion, and in order to avoid a scene, we have agreed to fall in with your proposals," said Smithson icily.

"Hem! Right-ho, then! You get along and open up the golden gates, and the merry hostages shall be deposited at your feet immediately we get outside. That suit you, old bean?"

"It is what we ourselves intended proposing," returned Smithson frigidly.

"I say, keep smiling, you know! You properly put it across our studies this afternoon, and all we've done is to return the giddy compliment. Honours even, old man!"

Fishy had kept his engine running, and immediately the gates were opened to him he passed through, with the crestfallen Highcliffians preserving a chilly silence.

Outside in the lane the hostages were handed over, and then they kissed hands in sweet farewell to the scowling Smithson.

Fishy gave a glance to his watch as they moved off again, an idle, careless enough glance, but one, when he had noted the time, that caused him to sit up suddenly with a jump. For to call over it wanted only a bare seven minutes!

"Gee whiz!" muttered Fishy then to himself. "Guess this is where the old flivver shows her paces. Yep, and then some, I reckon!"

At any time the lane they travelled was not much given to road-traffic; and now at night, save for Fishy's bus bowling along between the dark hedges, it was quite deserted.

Presently Fishy began to accelerate. For yards ahead of the bus the powerful headlights flooded the road with light, so that it was safe enough driving. Not, however, that Fisher T. Fish could ever be called the soul of caution, excepting perhaps upon matters connected with finance.

They were nearing the school when, some way ahead up the lane, a figure stepped out into the road from the cover of the shadows—a portly figure in blue, none other than P.-c. Tozer. And although Fishy might not at that moment have been actually breaking the speed limit, there is no manner of doubt that he was bending it about more than was good.

So that when, with all the solemn majesty of the law, P.-c. Tozer upraised

(Continued on page 17.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 995.

"THE FIGHT FOR THE KAPTINCY!"

(Continued from previous page.)

by ballot for the candied-date you prefer. I am not supposed to interfere in these matters, and I have no desire to influence your choice in any way; but listen to me! Any boy who fails to vote for Tweedy in this election will receive a severe birching!"

The Head paused, in order to let his words sink in.

"There is no comparison between the two candied-dates," he went on. "Burleigh is a blockhead—a stupid, slow-witted boy, of feeble intellect, who ought never to have been kaptin of St. Sam's at all!"

At this there was a loud murmur of "Shame!" For old Burleigh was a grate favoritt with the St. Sam's fellows. He was beloved by seniors and juniors alike. As for the faggs, they would cheerfully have gone to the stake for him.

The Head ignored the demonstration. "As for Cuthbert Tweedy," he went on, "he is a lad of grate jeenius, who will make an ideal kaptin in every way."

"Here, here!" cried Cuthbert, jumping on to a form. "And let me tell you this, you fellows! Every fellow who votes for me can have a pair of Oxford baggs made for him, free of charge, by my pater!"

"Why, that's bribery!" shouted Burleigh, angrily.

"Not at all!" said the Head. "It is a very jenuerous and magnaminus offer. I trusted that all boys whose trowsis are beginning to wear thin will register their votes for Tweedy to-morro evening."

"Catch me!" growled Jack Jolly of the Fourth. "I'm backing up old Burleigh through thick and thin!"

"Same hear!" cried a score of voices. The Fourth were solid for Burleigh, and if they had been offered a whole wardrobe of trowsis their loyalty would not have wavered.

The Head then dismissed the school, and the St. Sam's fellows poured out into the quad, wildly eggstated at the prospect of the coming election.

Within a few minuits fiery election speeches were being made, and wild and whirling scraps were in progress.

"Burleigh's our man!" cried Jack Jolly above the uproar. "He ought never to have been chucked out of the kaptincy!"

"Never mind," said Merry. "We'll jolly soon get him back again!"

"Yes, rather!"

And Lirrick of the Fourth, who was a bit of a poet on his grandmother's side, chanted the following verse:

"I know a big fellow named Burleigh,
Whose hare is delitefully curleigh,
He's hansom and tall,
And the best of them all,
So mind that you vote for him erleigh!"

Burleigh's supporters were so pleased with that little ditty that they chanted it everywhere. Jack Jolly & Co. stationed themselves under the Head's study window and roared it lustily.

The Head, who was busy writing an election speech, glanced up with a frown. He didn't like the way the wind was blowing. In spite of his remarks in Big Hall, in support of Tweedy, Burleigh seemed to be as grate a popular idle as ever.

"The cheeky young rascals!" muttered the Head. "I can clearly see that Lirrick of the Fourth has been busy. But I will show them that there is more than one poet at St. Sam's!"

So saying, the Head stepped to the window and hurled back the following verse in reply:

"I know a young fellow named Tweedy,
The friend of the poor and the needy.
You'll find him, as skipper,
An absolute ripper,
So give him your vote, and be speedy!"

Howls of derision greeted the Head's resital.

"Yah!"

"Bah!"

"Down with the weedy Tweedy!"

"Up with the burly Burleigh!"

The Head shook his fist at the seething throng in the quadrangle.

"Chuckitt! Stoppitt!" he roared.

"How dare you kick up such a hullabaloo in these hallowed presinks? If any boy dares to vote for Burleigh to-morro, he will be birched black and blew!"

"I guess the Head will need a good many birch-rods, then!" chuckled Jack Jolly. "Every man jack of us is going to vote for old Burleigh!"

"Yes, rather!"

The juniors were on fire with eggstement, and when they caught site of Burleigh, coming down the School House steps, they rushed towards him and fairly swept him off his feet.

"Sholder-high, you fellows!" cried Jack Jolly.

And Burleigh was hoisted on to the sholders of his admirers, and born in triumff through the quad, to the strains of "Freeze a jolly good fellow!"

"Freeze him by all means!" growled the Head in eggasperation. "Take him away, and shut him up in a refrijjerater!"

And he shut his study window with a slam, and went on with the election speech he was preparing for Tweedy.

All that evening St. Sam's was a hot-bed of eggstement and enthusiasm. Seldom had those hysterical walls witnessed such wild seens.

Burleigh's supporters seemed to be everywhere, making fiery speeches, and punching the noses of anybody who dared to say a good word for Tweedy.

Not that the tailor's son had many supporters. His followers were limitted to one or two fellows whose trowsis were showing signs of wear and tear, and who welcomed the chance of getting a new pair for nicks.

So grate was Burleigh's popularity that he was obliged to shut himself up in his study, to escape the frenzid embraces of the mob. And Tweedy was obliged to shut himself up also, but for different rezons!

It was the eve of the grate election!

What would the morro bring fourth? Would Burleigh be returned at the top of the pole, or would the Head, by cunning and crafty means, succeed in wangling the kaptincy for Tweedy?

The answer to that question is, as a famus Prime Minnister once said:

"Weight and sea!"

THE END.

(Look out for another of these screamingly funny stories by Dicky Nugent in next week's MAGNET, entitled: "BACKING UP BURLEIGH!" It's a real side-splitter, chums!)

DO YOU KNOW THAT—?

DA. BAILIE, a young goalkeeper of West Ham, had a curious introduction to the game.

The club recently built a new stand, and Bailie was one of the workmen engaged upon it. Of course, the workmen had an occasional turn on the field during the lunch hour, and Bailie's prowess as a goalkeeper was noted. He was then signed on.

During the course of his career Percy Barton, the Birmingham and English International half-back, has had no fewer than twenty-two injuries to his head. His friends chaffingly tell him that he should use his feet more.

The biggest curiosity of this season's Cup-ties is that Rhyl Athletic beat the first team of Wrexham in a Cup-tie, but

lost to Wrexham Reserves in a League match.

Notts Forest claim the unique distinction of having played "English" Cup-ties in England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Nowadays, of course, the Cup competition is confined to clubs of England and Wales.

The bonus for Cup-ties is the same as for League games—two pounds per man for a win, and one pound per man for a draw, but this is changed at the semi-final stage, when the winners get four pounds a man as bonus, and in the final tie the winners get eight pounds per man.

In the first half of the present season only three centre-forwards of First Division clubs played in every match for their side.

It is a curious fact that although full-backs are not expected to score goals in the ordinary way, there are in first-class football more full-backs called up to take penalty kicks than players of any other

department. Quite a number of the most successful penalty kick artists are full-backs.

The worst day, from the weather point of view, for Cup-ties, was provided for the First Round of 1913, when the conditions were so bad that eight of the games were not started at all, and eight others had to be abandoned before the finish.

The players of the West Bromwich Albion team do not shake hands with the man who scores a goal for them. The practice is forbidden by the directors.

Arthur Chandler, the Leicester centre-forward, had his birthday on a recent Saturday, and he celebrated the occasion by scoring five goals. He gave himself a real birthday treat.

When the first England v. Scotland amateur International match was played in 1872, England played one full-back, one half-back, and eight forwards. Scotland played two full-backs, two half-backs, and six forwards.



(Continued from page 13.)

against him a portly hand, there came into Fishy's eyes a sudden gleam, and instead of drawing up to a standstill, he merely gripped his wheel the tighter and held upon his way.

And P.-c. Tozer, setting a value upon life and limb, had perforce hurriedly to do a hop, skip, and jump to safety.

Mercifully, it may be, what Tozer turned and howled after the red tail-light was wholly lost in the noise and roar of the engine. In another moment P.-c. Tozer was yards behind, and swallowed up entirely in the black of the night. And then, a quick, tree-lined bend in the lane still farther separating the chuckling Fishy and the irate Tozer, the unfortunate constable could not even stand and trace the course the white blaze of the headlights mapped out as they illuminated road and hedge.

Fishy, when that astute youth slowed down and turned in safety at the old gateway of Greyfriars, was fairly patting himself upon the back for his perspicacity.

The lower windows of the bus were boarded over, and the interior purposely in darkness, so that Tozer could not possibly have glimpsed the occupants.

Fisher T. Fish ran his bus calmly along beneath the elms, and brought her complacently to rest in the secluded spot behind the woodshed. When he called "Adsum" to his name at call-over, he was still thinking over the matter.

But so far as he could judge there seemed nothing, absolutely nothing, that could possibly have given him away.

However, on the morrow, just to make sure, on the pretext of smartening the bus up he would enlist the services of one or two fellows and give her a smart coat of red.

And that disguise, Fishy decided, should put the matter definitely beyond all doubt.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Shocks for Fishy!

"I SAY, Wharton! Hold on a jiffy!" It was morning-break at Greyfriars two days later, and, with the idea of keeping in the pink of condition for their match with the L.C.C. boys, the Famous Five had been about to put in a sharp sprint round the quad.

Then, that thin nasal drawl falling upon their ears, they had very reluctantly turned, and upon Fisher Tarleton Fish were fastened simultaneously five separate and distinct glares.

"Some blessed rot!" growled Johnny Bull. "Need we wait, Harry?"

"Oh, better see what he wants!" said the Remove captain good-humouredly. "We can spare him a minute."

Bob Cherry grinned. In his capacity as skipper, Wharton fulfilled the exacting role of guide, philosopher, and friend very, very seriously. But this time Bob had a shrewd idea that, in

approaching Wharton, there was something other than advice sought.

"Jerusalem crickets, you galoots training for the Olympic Games, or something?" panted Fishy as he came up with the Co. "Gee! I guess I ain't the elephant's nightshirt at foot-racing!"

"Well, now you have landed here, what is it?" inquired Wharton politely. "We're in a hurry, you know."

"Waal, look hyer," Fishy began crisply, "I reckon I've got a little gilt-edged business proposition to set before you guys!"

"Oh!" "Hyer, don't walk away, you all-fired mugwumps!" yelled the Remove business man in sudden alarm. "I reckon this hyer's the real gilt-edged berries. Now, open up your listeners to this just one second, Wharton. Nothing wrong with the Travel Agency's catering when we went to Higheliffe a couple of nights back. I opine—eh?"

"Why, no!" Wharton assented wonderingly. "Except for the matter of the gates, which no one could help, everything went off top-hole. But—"

"Of course it did! Not a doggone hitch in the transport arrangements anywhere—eh? Everything worked like clockwork, I reckon, right from the word go."

"Fishy, old chap," exclaimed Bob Cherry dramatically, "it was nothing less than a miracle of transport; but—"

"I guess Wharton's my antelope, Cherry!"

"Of course it was O.K., Fishy. It went off splendidly. We're all very much obliged to you. But—"

"Then," put forward Fisher T. Fish deliberately, "what about engaging the Travel Agency to run you galoots up to London?"

"London!"

"Phew!"

"Well, you see, it's like this, old chap," began the Remove captain laconically. "We were travelling by train, as usual—I mean, it's an important fixture. As it's all for the London hospitals, the gate will run into thousands. We dare not run the risk of delay, you see."

"Delay?" snorted the Travel Agency disdainfully. "Delay? Aw, shucks! Cut it out! There was no doggone delay on the Higheliffe stunt, was there? And I sure calculate there'll be no reason for any all-fired hitch-up tomorrow. Nope, sirree! See hyer, Wharton, we sure got this day off, the hull bunch of us. There's my flivver'll take the hull doggone Remove easy! Look hyer, you galoots, jaw it over among you. I reckon I can ship a busful at ten bob a nob cash down. We'll mosey off directly after brekker, and make a reg'lar day of it. Hay, what d'you say? You talk it over and let me know!"

Wharton gave a dubious nod, and the Transatlantic business man sheered off in the direction of the School House steps, probably with the intention of making the utmost of the break between classes to propound that scintillating scheme elsewhere to others of the Remove.

The second post being late, Harold Skinner had journeyed anxiously down to the gates in order to ascertain whether Blogg was yet in sight along the Friardale lane. A little commission Hawke of the Cross Keys had executed on the four o'clock race at Courtfield having gone down miserably, Skinner was looking forward with mingled feelings to receiving by any post, in the bookie's illiterate scrawl, a peremptory demand to "brass up."

William Blogg was nowhere in sight, neither near at hand nor in the distance along the lane. But another Courtfield notability happened to be, and this was none other than P.-c. Tozer. With the genial idea in view of pulling Tozer's ancient leg, Skinner engaged him as he passed the gates in pleasant conversation.

But very soon as they spoke Skinner found himself drawing a deep, deep breath. And when at last he detached himself from the old gateway, and P.-c. Tozer was striding once more upon his measured way, the eyes of the cad of the Remove were gleaming with excitement.

It was in the Remove passage that he ran Fisher T. Fish to earth, and Fishy was rubbing together genial hands in a manner suggestive of good business done.

"Come inside a minute, Fishy," said Harold Skinner with a curious grin; and he led the way into Study No. 11.

"Waal!" snapped the Remove business man at once, when they were safe inside Skinner's study. "Say, what are you gaping at me like that for, you gold-darned catfish?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled Skinner composedly.

"Look hyer, Skinner—"

"I've just been talking to your friend Tozer," murmured Skinner pointedly.

"Gosh! What?"

Fishy had gripped him suddenly by the arm.

"Tozer! Say, what—what do you know about Tozer, Skinner, you pesky spy?" the American junior was hissing in alarm.

"Steady! Tozer let out a thing or two. You'd better be careful, old dollar-grinder, that's all I want to say. None of my bizney, of course; but I thought you'd like a warning. Tozer was here outside the gates."

"He can't suspect me, I guess," muttered Fishy uneasily. "He can't know. There's no proof. Why, as a matter of fact, blow me if I believe I was hogging it over the speed limit at all! It was pretty near the mark, I reckon, because we'd have been late for call-over, you see; but I guess it weren't over the top good an' proper once!"

Skinner stared momentarily in astonishment, and then he gave vent to a cool chuckle and winked.

"Well, my only hat!" he murmured easily. "If that don't take the cake! Jove, you're a deep one, Fishy, and no dashed mistake, either. Ha, ha, ha! I reckon you know well enough what Tozer wanted, old bean!"

"Eh? Of course I know. I've just told you, I guess. Look hyer, Skinner, don't let on to the other galoots about this busting the speed limit. I—I calculate you'll make it kinder bad for trade."

Harold Skinner was staring at Fisher T. Fish once again in sheer, blank amazement.

"See here, Fishy," he said bluntly, "I don't follow this. I don't know what you're talking about. If you're trying to pull the wool over my peepers, then drop it! Tozer never said a single word about breaking any potty speed limit. I reckon you know what he wanted all right. I'm not green, you know," concluded Skinner disdainfully.

"Waal, I swow! Of all the— Look hyer, sirree, if it wasn't about the other night when we ragged Higheliffe, then what, in the name of George Washington, was he hyer for?"

"Whew! Want me to put it into words? About the bus. About it having been pinched—"

"Pup-pinned!" roared Fishy frenziedly.

"Yes; it's stolen property. Pinned from a repair-shop in London," said Skinner. "Oh, come off it, do! I reckon you knew well enough, or had your suspicions. If Coker bought it at a motor-auction: in Courtnaid, as he says, then it must have been a dud auction, run by crooks. Anyway, as it's in your possession now, I reckon you're liable for it."

"Lul-liable!" stammered Fishy, dazedly. "Oh, Jee-rusalem crickets! I—I say, Skinner, what—what's a galoot to do now, d'you reckon?"

The bus would have to be given up. If, as Skinner had asserted, it was stolen property, then indubitably there was nothing else for it. Not sold again at a whacking profit, as Fisher T. Fish had intended, but just tamely given up. Fishy groaned in anguish. It would mean a loss, a big loss.

"Look hyer, Skinner," he muttered. "promise to keep this dark for me till after to-morrow, there's a good chap. I'll swear I knew nothing of this. You see, I'm pretty well fixed up to ship Wharton and his crowd up to London. I say, is ten bob any good?"

If only he could retain possession over the Saturday it had occurred to Fishy that the loss would be more than balanced by what he made on the run to London.

Skinner, till that moment, had not thought of raising a loan on the strength of his information. But as he noted the sudden light of cupidity leap in Fishy's eyes he seized eagerly at the chance.

"Make it a quid," he said craftily. "You'll more than make it up again on this London stunt. I—I've trouble with a bookie."

Fishy hesitated, rubbing his long nose doubtfully. Then he groped in a pocket, produced his wallet, and extracted a crisp note.

"Hyer you are! I guess I can rely on you, Skinner? Not a word to a soul, eh?"

"Not a word, Fishy!" said Skinner. "You can rely on me."

Bell for third lesson went at that moment, and they made haste to depart, Skinner stowing away the note as he went.

Barely had they vanished from the study when the table-cloth was raised cautiously by unseen hands, and then from beneath the table approached a fat, bespectacled face.

"Good!" muttered Bunter, finding the coast clear, and he drew himself out laboriously from his hiding-place and set off at a trot down the passage in the direction of the Form-room. And behind his big glasses Bunter's cunning little eyes were glinting with an avaricious gleam.

From a window Bunter had watched Skinner going down to the gates. Snoop and Stott he knew to have departed for the Cloisters. So No. 11 had been made the object of a hasty grub-hunt. Then had come Skinner's voice unexpectedly in the passage and a quick dive beneath the study table, where Bunter had overheard all.

"My blessed hat!" he muttered to himself. "So that's the game, is it? if Fishy's shelling out quid notes for keeping information dark I reckon I come in on this. After all, why not? But for me there'd have been no blessed bus for Fishy at all, and consequently no profits. Why, I'm positively entitled to a dib in the shekels—a sort of sleeping partner, that's what I am!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 993.

Which was cool, even for William George.

After dinner, and before afternoon school began, Wharton came up to Fishy in the Remove passage.

"I've put it to the fellows, Fishy. So long as there is going to be no delay we've decided to trust ourselves to your bus. There'll be about thirty of us going. Start sharp after brekker. That do you, Fishy?"

"I reckon so," said Fishy.

So long, then, as he could hold on to that bus for more than one day his loss was as good as made up. On the Saturday night it would have had to go, in any case. For Fishy was not fool enough to conceal from himself what Dr. Locke's verdict was likely to be.

Just before afternoon school a fag trotted up to Fishy, announcing that his presence was desired in Mr. Prout's study. If Mr. Prout, carrying out his threat, had got into communication with Dr. Locke, the reply was about due. What—what if he should be ordered to get rid of it immediately?

At all that awful prospect opened up Fishy groaned. It would be a command he dare not ignore.

But as it turned out, Fishy need not have worried. For Mr. Prout held in his hands a communication that had been returned by the Dead Letter Office.

"Ah, Fish!" he began, when the American junior stood before him. "With reference to the matter on which we spoke a day or so back. A letter despatched to the address Dr. Locke left with me has been returned, marked 'Not Known.' I cannot understand it. However, as the particular section of the conference in which your headmaster and Mr. Quelch were interested closed last night, there is no doubt but that they will be back here at Greyfriars at any time now. Probably even at this moment they are on their way. In the circumstances, therefore, we can do nothing but leave the matter still in abeyance. Ah, that is all, Fish. You may go!"

Fishy went, with his brain in a whirl. This was another new development, this startling intimation that Dr. Locke might be back at any moment. On top of something else that had occurred immediately after morning school, it struck the Transatlantic business man very forcibly that the Fates were coming it rather a bit too thick to be pleasant.

For during third lesson that morning Bunter had made up his fat mind, and the moment they were all dismissed he had delivered to Fishy his ultimatum.

The fat junior had had to be hastily promised a free trip to London; and already, in two short hours, he had extracted a generous little "snack," as well as the "loan" of five bob.

"The fat, blackmailing gazebo!" Fishy muttered furiously.

It was exasperating, and even dangerous. But there it was. Somehow the Paul Pry of Greyfriars had come to learn all about Tozer and the stolen bus; and somehow his blurring tongue had got to be kept quiet.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

London Bound!

IF Fishy had secretly hoped that at the last the call of the bed would ring more insistent in Bunter's fat ears than the call of a day in London, then Fishy was sadly mistaken.

Saturday morning dawned bright and clear. The Remove was early astir. And, treating Fishy to a fat wink,

Bunter pushed back the bedclothes and rolled out with the best of them.

When Fishy's bus-party had trooped downstairs, only eight fellows were left still between the sheets—Skinner & Co.; Dupont and Dutton; Alonzo Todd and Wun Lung; and Lord Mauleverer.

Thirty of the Remove there were going, and the previous evening Fishy had been at some pains collecting ten-bobs. Eventually completely successful, fifteen pounds had been placed ostensibly in Fishy's private ledger to the credit of the Travel Agency (Inc.), but actually in Fishy's pocket to the credit of Fisher T. Fish.

Against this, however, there was offset the sum of ten shillings on account of the free seat granted to William George Bunter, Esquire; thirty shillings on account of sundry "loans" and sundry "snacks" to the same fat Removite; and the pound he had advanced Skinner—three pounds in all, bringing down the takings to a matter of twelve pounds.

After breakfast, Wharton went along and mentioned as a matter of form to Mr. Prout, that the majority of them would not be partaking of dinner. Mr. Prout had known beforehand that the team would have a good following; of course; but the Removite captain deemed it not judicious to disclose their mode of travel.

Fishy had gone down to his bus to fill up with petrol, and he was thus engaged when round the corner of the woodshed there glimmered a large pair of spectacles, ornamenting a fat face, upon which reposed a fatuous smirk.

"I say, Fishy, old man—"

"Oh, Jehosophat! You fat gazebo—you again! Hook it, sharp!"

The Owl did not hook it. Instead, he advanced confidently round the shed.

"Oh, really, Fishy, you'd better mind what you're saying to me. He, he, he! I say, of course, I shall want to spread myself a bit in London—"

"Nothing to stop you, I guess!" interrupted Fishy grimly.

"Hem! Unfortunately, just at the moment, I happen to be broke, you see. Suppose you—you lend me a couple of quid, say?"

"A—a cuo—couple of quid?" gasped Fishy. "Sure you wouldn't like to make it a fiver?" he added sarcastically.

"Well, a couple will be enough for a beginning," said Bunter generously. "If—if I run short I'll let you know. Come on, then, hand over—what are you waiting for?"

Fishy had set down a can of petrol, and if Fishy's look could have shrivelled, Bunter would have withered on the spot.

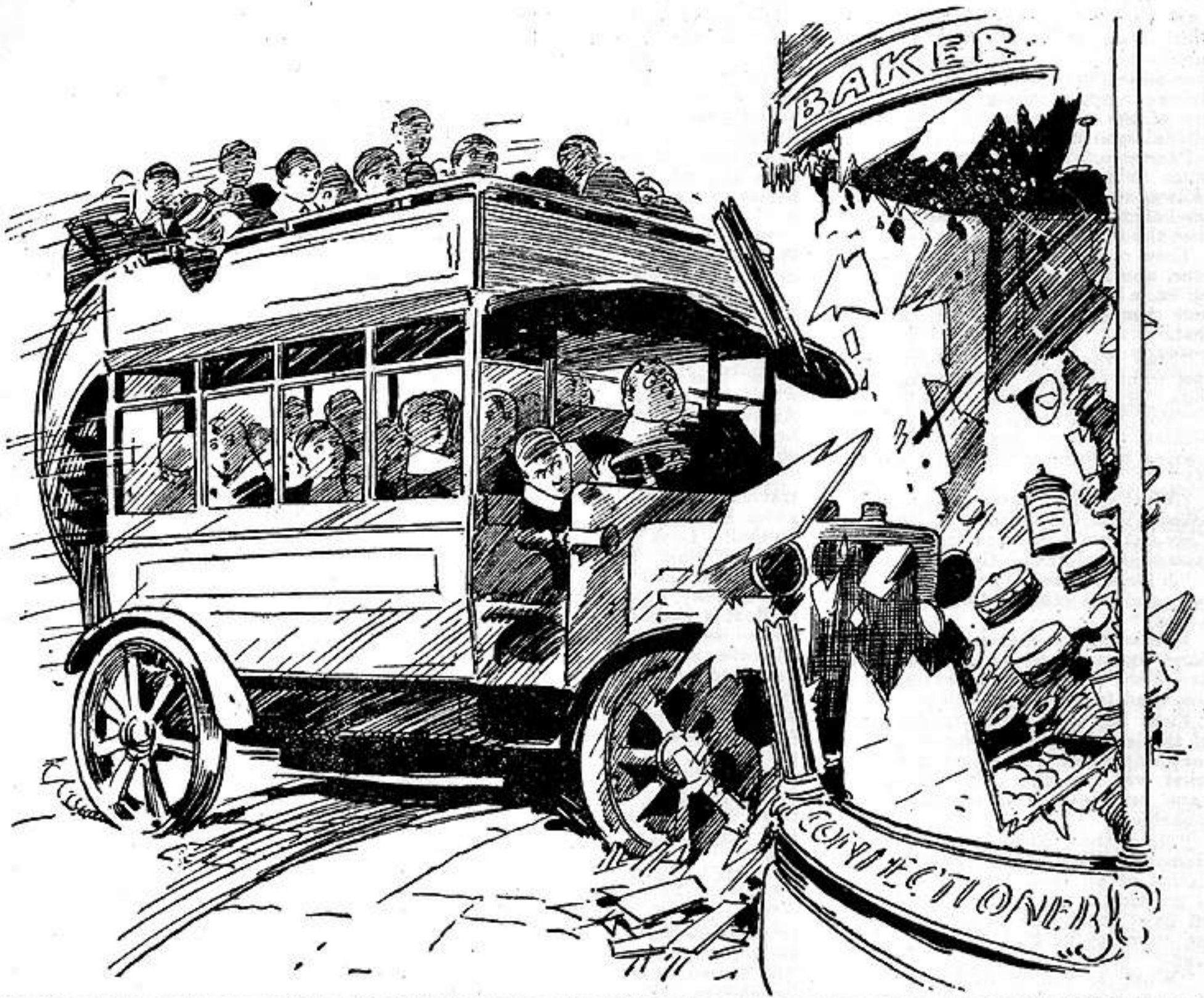
"You—you dashed fat shylock!" he hissed suddenly. "Not another red cent. You've stung me for thirty bob already, I guess!"

"Oh, really, Fishy," Bunter protested. "You know that's merely a little temporary loan, as between friend and friend. But if that's the attitude you're going to adopt, I think I ought to see my pal, Wharton—"

And the Owl of the Remove turned on his heel and rolled away.

"Hyer!" hissed Fish. "Come back, Bunter, you fat—Bunter, old man!"

William George Bunter had vanished round the corner of the woodshed, and was already rolling off in the direction of the School House steps, with his fat nose uptilted in a lofty and superior attitude. And there, coming across the quad towards the woodshed at the head of the Remove team and its sturdy supporters, was the Remove captain himself.



There was a mad swerve and a lurch, and then the bus mounted the pavement. Crash! The front of the bus smashed clean into the shop front of the pastrycook's, and there rattled down a tinkling cascade of broken glass. "Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "You've done it now, Fishy, and no mistake!" (See Chapter 10.)

It was not likely, at that early hour, that Bunter would have quered his own pitch by letting anything fall to Wharton. Such a course would have been too much like cutting off his nose to spite his own fat face. But Wharton and the rest were getting nearer and nearer each moment, and if Fishy paused at all to consider the matter in that light then he dismissed it instantly as being much too precious to risk.

So that the next moment, the Owl felt himself suddenly grabbed unceremoniously from behind by one fat shoulder, spun dizzily round, and dragged incontinently once more into that seclusion afforded by the rear of the Greyfriars woodshed.

"Now," Fishy hissed grimly, jamming him up against the hard wall. "Where do you think you're going to, you fat clam?"

"Yoooop!" roared Bunter. "Loggo, you beast! Look here, I'm jolly well going to speak to Wharton, so there! Lemme go!"

Fishy gritted his teeth. "See hyer, Bunter, old man," he whispered, making an effort to speak calmly. "I—I guess I'll spring five hob. Now shut up, like a good chap!"

Bunter's fingers closed instantly over the two half-crowns.

"Oh, very well, if you're going to be mingy!" he sniffed. "I ain't sure that I ought to keep your beastly shady

secrets. It—it's troubling my conscience, I mean. I think I'll ask Wharton's advice, even now. After all, it is a chap's duty to tell his Form captain—"

The footsteps of the Remove fellows could be heard approaching.

"Look hyer, old chap," blurted Fish. "When we get to London, I—I'll see what I can do for you, I reckon!"

"Promise?" said Bunter hurriedly, not noticing in his eagerness the exceedingly dubious bargain he had driven.

"I reckon I've said so, haven't I?" grunted Fishy huffily. "Now keep your pesky head shut!"

What Fishy was determined to "do" for Bunter once the bus had set down its passengers was nothing less than to escort the fat junior to the busiest part of the City, and there lose him.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" chuckled Bob Cherry, advancing round the corner. "What's the merry plot, old conspirators?"

"Nix! I reckon we're just filling up," explained Fishy calmly. "Bunter's lending a fin, I guess."

Bob Cherry drew a deep breath.

"Well, my only blessed hat!" he ejaculated. "I say, old fat man performing some manual labour, you chaps. Ye gods, gaze and marvel! I say, can we pile in, Fishy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yep, get right aboard. We're just ready. Bunter's coming up in front with me, I reckon—ain't you, Bunter?"

"You bet I am!" ejaculated Bunter with great decision.

Until that last promised loan was extracted, William George Bunter had no intention of allowing Fisher Tarleton Fish out of his sight. Fishy, on the other hand, did not want Bunter, with his prattling tongue and incessant chatter, inside among the other fellows, where, long before their destination was reached, it was more than likely he would incautiously have blabbed away the whole game. But each was so busy congratulating himself upon his own personal astuteness, that neither tumbled to the other's reasons.

Also, Fishy had another reason for wanting Bunter up in front, isolated from the rest. It was a scheme that had come into his head only during the last few minutes, a deep scheme which alone appeared to promise the one complete solution to his troubles.

They got away from Greyfriars beautifully. Then, putting the first part of the plan into action, Fishy deliberately set the bus to an irritating crawl, a speed that neither threats nor entreaties would quicken. By the time they were through Wapshot it was twenty minutes past nine.

Of the fact—that alarming probability Fishy could not dismiss from his mind—that their bus, as a stolen one, was quite likely to be taken up by the police anywhere along the road, not one of the passengers but was in total blissful ignorance.

Presently, with Wapshot half a dozen miles behind them, and not another railway-station along the solitary road for half a dozen more, it came to Fishy that the time was ripe.

They came upon a deserted country lane, and Fishy turned down it, pulling up to a sudden standstill by its side, and then he slipped down from his seat.

"Stay where you are, Bunt. I—I just want to speak a minute to the fellows. Hyer, eat these sandwiches!"

"You bet I stay here!" exclaimed Bunter. "You ain't blessed well leaving me behind here—not if I know it!"

"What's the game now, Fishy?" asked Wharton from the top deck. "My hat, we'll lam you for this blessed cross-country crawl. Get a move on!"

"I kinder guess I want you, Wharton; and the others. Come down hyer a tick!"

Wonderingly, the juniors clattered down the staircase, and on to the road, and Fishy's inside fares scrambled out, too, glad to stretch their legs.

Fishy led them across to the far side of the lane. Fishy had his own reasons for not wanting Bunter to overhear what was coming. But he need not have worried. Bunter was steadily munching.

"Now, then, Fishy," rapped out the Remove captain, "we'll have an explanation of all this, I reckon! Here it is practically ten, and there's the kick-off fixed for eleven-thirty sharp. Why, we ought to be half way to London, man!"

"What do you mean by it, Fishy?" a dozen grim voices demanded.

"Waal, I guess I'm sick of this stunt!" muttered Fishy, with well simulated sulkiness. "I'm through. We'll call it off. I reckon I'll hand you galoots back the durocks!"

"You'll c-call it off?"

"Yep, sirree. I ain't used to traffic-driving, and I ain't prepared to risk the bus through London, I guess."

"It's a pity you didn't think of that before!" jerked out Wharton contemptuously. "What the dickens are we going to do? We're stranded. There's not a railway-station for six miles either way."

"That so?" Fishy's eyes held a sudden glint. "I reckon you'd best take over the bus, then—lock, stock, and barrel. One of your chaps can drive it."

"You know that's impossible!" said Wharton grimly. "There's no one has a licence to drive but you."

On the day after the Highcliffe rag Fishy had secured a licence in Court-field.

Fishy was going round distributing silver and ten-bob notes, until the whole of the fares had been returned. As Wharton's words fell upon his ears he shrugged his thin shoulders indifferently.

"Waal, look hyer," he said, "I contracted to run you to London, and I guess I don't want to mess up your football. Look hyer, I reckon I'll meet you half way. I'll sell out."

"Sus-sell out!"

Originally, it had been Fishy's idea to float a little company in the Lower School to operate the bus; and before the other resolve to play a lone hand by inaugurating the Travel Agency had come to his mind, he had hectographed a bunch of shares. These he now proceeded to draw from an inner pocket.

"That's the wheeze. I'll sell right out, I reckon. Then, if you like, I'll carry on and finish the run, and whatever happens will be on your own heads."

"Well, my giddy hat!"

"Of all the thumping nerve!"

"Shurrup a minute! Five, ten, twenty—there's thirty shares hyer. I reckon the price is ten bob a share. The Travel Agency is now in voluntary liquidation. Waal, how many can I put you down for, Wharton?"

The Remove captain drew a deep, deep breath.

"By Jove, you chaps!" he muttered thickly. "I see it all now! This is a plant. Fishy's prepared to risk the bus as our property, but not as his own. Just wait till we get you back to Greyfriars, Fishy, you rotter!"

"Yes, you wait, my pippin!" "The plantfulness is terrific!" purred Hurree Singh. "The esteemed ragfulness will also be great!"

But ultimately the Removites had to buy. Wharton was white with anger, and the juniors were furious; but if they wanted to get to Stamford Bridge they knew there was nothing else for it. Fishy for the time being had the whip hand, but they promised him all kinds of dark things once Greyfriars was reached again.

In a few moments the entire block of shares was disposed of. Fishy definitely refused the responsibility of the wheel before he was rid of the lot.

When he clambered up again beside Bunter his eyes were gleaming. The bus was now owned jointly by twenty-four of the Remove, and was no longer his property at all. Which meant for one thing that Bunter now possessed no pull at all.

"Now, for goodness' sake, get a move on!" shouted Bob Cherry angrily.

Fishy nodded briskly, released his brakes, slipped in the clutch, and then backed out of the little lane, and out again on to the main road. And presently they were bowling along merrily in the direction of London and Stamford Bridge, Fishy really doing his best at making up for lost time.

He was quite happy now, for the way he looked at it his position was not one quarter so bad.

If he were signalled to stop now, and there was no doubt in Fishy's mind that pretty soon he would be, he could pull up, not in the unenviable position of owning stolen property, but as being merely the driver of it.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Ruotions!

CRA-A-A-A-SH!
"Oh, Jerusalem crickets, hang on!"

"Ow-wow-yooooooop! You careless rotter! I'm covered with glass! Yow! I—I'm jolly well punctured all over!"

"Crikey!" muttered Bob Cherry faintly, in tones of awe and wonder. "Fishy hasn't half done it this time, and no mistake! Just look, man!"

But the Remove captain was already gazing down over the side of the bus, regarding the scene of wreckage below them with a rueful countenance.

Ten miles or so from London the countryside had begun to change, grass-land and market-gardens and tiny, thatched cottages gradually giving way to bricks-and-mortar.

Fishy dismissed these rural things pityingly, indulgently. To the Transatlantic junior, any landscape minus towering skyscrapers was definitely not fit to rank with real scenery at all.

They rumbled their way through a sleepy old market-town, with Fishy passing upon it to Bunter some particularly contemptuous verdict. Then from the lee of a hostelry wall the whole while Fishy's bus had been within his sight along the road, a blue-uniformed figure was marking their progress interestedly.

Fishy spotted that ominous figure ahead, and, with growing apprehension and guilty mind, watched him forsake the shelter of the wall and take up a careful position upon the kerbstone, where he stood waiting.

Then, when Fishy was almost level with him, the police-constable proceeded

TOPPING SCHOOLBOY ADVENTURE YARN!



A Splendid Yarn of Schoolboy Fun and Adventure at St. Frank's College.

By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS,

Author of

"The Ghost of Bannington Grange," "The Boy Who Vanished," etc., etc.

THE MONSTER LIBRARY

No. 16.

Now on Sale.

Price One Shilling.

OTHER POPULAR VOLUMES!

6. Expelled!
7. 'Nath African Skies.
8. St. Frank's in London.
9. The Boy From the Bush.
10. The Spendthrift of St. Frank's.
11. The Barraging-out at St. Frank's.
12. The Mystery Master.
13. The Voyage of the Wanderer.
14. The Ghost of Bannington Grange.
15. The Boy Who Vanished!

These can be had from any newsagent for 1s. each, or post free 1s. 2d. from the Amalgamated Press (1922), Ltd. Back Number Dept., Bear Alley, Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

to step out to the middle of the road, raising his hand.

Panic-stricken, Fishy did the first desperate thing which came to his head. Instead of pulling up to a standstill, as he was being bidden, he held on his way, and precisely at the moment when he was nearly upon the constable he gave the wheel a sudden twist.

There was a mad swerve and a lurch, like the roll of a ship in a choppy sea. The off-side wheels mounted the kerbstone. For a dozen mad yards Fishy held the bus upon that course. The law was eluded and behind them, and Fishy looked like getting away with it beautifully, when that shop window took a hand in the proceedings.

It was for the window very unfortunate—very unfortunate indeed. For, in his panic, Fishy somehow contrived to steer clean into it. Next moment, as they hit, there rattled down a tinkling cascade of broken glass; and then as they went on and put paid to the shop front there was that other, more ominous sound:

Cra-a-a-ash!

Fortunately, Fishy had had the presence of mind to stop his engine dead and to clap on his brakes. Otherwise, as the fellows swarmed excitedly out of the bus and on to the pavement, instead of a wrecked pastrycook's window confronting them, the work of demolition might easily have been much more complete.

"Well," gasped Bob Cherry again, with a deep breath, "you've jolly well done it this time, Fishy! My hat, what a giddy mess!"

"He, he, he!" sniggered Bunter, recovering his nerve.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors on the pavement.

For really, once you were over the first shock, there was a distinctly humorous aspect. The bus having somehow slewed round at right-angles to the road, the big headlamps stared unwinkingly into the interior of the shop like two big bulging eyes, with a ludicrous expression in them of blank astonished inquiry.

Fishy was staring inquiringly, too, positively open-mouthed and goggle-eyed, like one who is only just waking and beginning to grasp how it had all happened.

"Waal, dashed if I can see anything to cackle at!" he grunted finally, rousing up with an effort. "This little lot kinder looks like running somebody into a tidy dollar or two, I calculate!"

"Yes!" ejaculated Peter Todd, looking suddenly grim. "Don't forget, you fellows, that since we set out this morning the bus has changed hands!"

"Meaning?" said Squiff. "Meaning just what, O man of law?"

"That it is we, as owners, who are liable for the damage, and not Fishy! My hat, what ever is it going to run us into?"

"Well, here comes the proprietor," said Squiff; "we'll pretty soon know, anyway."

There had been a girl serving behind the counter, and she had called the proprietor, who evidently had been somewhere in the back regions baking, for now he was advancing towards them, hastily wiping floury hands in his apron. The policeman had also come upon the scene, producing in anticipation pocket-book and a stub of pencil, and round about there was gathering the beginnings of a crowd.

"Well, young gentlemen, this here is a pretty fine how-d'you-do!" the pastrycook began truculently, with a grim look round. "Who do you think's going to pay for this little lot—eh?"

"We shall, of course!" exclaimed Wharton, stepping forward to take the miserable Fishy's part. "It was an accident, of course—a skid on the greasy road, I fancy. But, look here, we're rather in a hurry—we've an important footer match to play. I'll leave my name and address, and when you've had things put right send along the bill, and we'll have a whip round and settle it. I promise personally that you sha'n't lose a single penny over this."

"Very well!" said the tradesman, considerably mollified by the Remove captain's frank and straightforward acceptance of the situation. "Just step inside a minute, will you? Rummy thing, you know, my boy happened to be gazing out of the bakehouse window, and saw it all. Reckon it was trying to pull up quickly that did it; on these new-fangled tarmac roads the wheels don't grip."

The constable strode across to where Fishy still sat aghast in the driver's seat, and Fishy groaned in anticipation. Now it was coming!

"Nasty skid that was!" the Law observed unexpectedly and gloomily.

"Skid?" it was on the tip of Fishy's tongue to ejaculate. But he stopped himself just in time. Skid—that was what the baker galoot had said! And Wharton, too. Well, if they all thought it was nothing more, then let them! Fishy was not likely to disillusion anybody.

"Yep!" he agreed quickly. "You said it, I reckon!"

"Can you back out, if I start her up, do you think?"

"I guess so. There's nothing busted, I reckon."

The constable nodded, bent, and grasped the handle, gave it a couple of hefty swings, and the warm engine coughed into spluttering activity. Fishy reversed, and backed out again on to the road.

Nothing yet about the subject uppermost in Fishy's mind. He wondered whether it would come next. But no.

"Think you can manage all right?" inquired the constable anxiously. "Wouldn't like to slip across home with me, and sit down and have a cup of tea with the wife? It's only over the road. You'd be welcome!"

"No, thanks!" muttered Fishy. "I—I reckon it's durned good of you, but I feel all O.K., thanks!"

In pulling up the bus on the greasy road the Law evidently felt itself partially responsible for the smash—was doing its level best to put things right. That Fishy had been attempting to dodge, to escape, there was not the slightest suspicion. It was just a skid—certainly a bad skid—but nothing more than that.

That being the position, then, why had there been the attempt to pull him up at all? Fishy wondered. But the next moment, as the constable went on, the position was suddenly made clear, and Fishy could have kicked himself.

"London, maybe?"

"That's right!" assented Fishy.

"Thought so. Here's what I wanted you for, then. Half a mile farther on take the left fork. It's a new by-pass road purposely for heavy traffic. Saves you a matter of four miles, it does. You'd have found the old road closed against you—see?"

"I—I guess I see!" gasped Fisher T. Fish.

Wharton came out the next moment, the fellows clambered on board, and then they were off again for Stamford Bridge, with a wave of the hand for the friendly constable, and the stolen bus still free.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Desperate Battle!

PHEE-EE-EEP!

The L.C.C. boys' skipper was a sturdy, freckled youth named Clewes, and from the beginning Clewes found himself taken affectionately to the bosom of the crowd in consequence as "Sexton Blake."

Clewes won the toss, elected to kick with the wind, and then next moment, as the whistle shrilled out, the great game was in progress.

After Fishy's misunderstanding with the shop-window, all sail had hastily had to be clapped on, so to speak, and the Greyfriars' party had arrived at Stamford Bridge with only ten minutes to spare. As the gate-money was entirely for the London hospitals, and a big crowd was expected, in consequence, the Chelsea directors had willingly consented to the use of their ground.

While Fishy went off with Bunter to garage the bus, the Remove eleven proceeded hurriedly in the direction of the players' quarters to change, and their followers from the Remove sought the turnstiles. They were fortunate in securing front seats.

"By Jove!" ejaculated Ogilvy, glancing round the ground. "I say, there's a tidy crowd here!"

Rake sat next to him, and Rake nodded.

"If we could be sure of a crowd this size, it wouldn't be at all a bad wheeze running a footer match at Greyfriars to pay for that blessed window!" he murmured, with a slow grin.

The pastrycook had estimated that the damage to his shop-front could not possibly be repaired under fifty pounds, and probably it might cost even more than that.

Fifty pounds! Mere mention of it was sufficient to bring a serious expression to the face of the most thoughtless and carefree. For—which was what Rake really meant—fifty pounds was a sum that was going to take some finding.

There, however, it stood; it was useless crying over spilt milk. And in the dressing-rooms, while they changed, Wharton was busy urging upon his team the necessity of dismissing the matter completely from their minds.

Every minute for the next hour the whole of their attention would have to be upon the work in hand. For, concerning that representative eleven from the L.C.C. elementary schools, news had filtered through to Greyfriars—news which whispered of a wonderful reputation.

And in the first minute it was abundantly evident that the L.C.C. team knew its game.

Clewes' inside man was a fair-haired youth named Travers. Clewes secured the ball neatly from the kick-off, tapped it along to Travers, and then all at once the L.C.C. forwards were racing down the field, feinting and dodging, passing and repassing, in a style worthy of professionals.

It was done so neatly, so quickly, that no one in the crowd quite understood how it all happened. One moment the referee's whistle had shrilled out, and in the next Greyfriars' doughty half-back line was left helplessly behind like fags, while, ball at his feet, Clewes was pelting along as if nothing on earth could ever stop him. Brown, at back, rushed desperately in to engage his man, but Clewes slipped round him with an adroitness that left the New Zealander gasping in amazement.

Then, with only Bulstrode before him

to beat, the L.C.C. centre-forward essayed a shot, long and low.

Zipp!

The fellows in the stand doubted whether Bulstrode even saw it. If Bulstrode did, then he was beaten all the way. Of getting down to it in time there was never an earthly chance, and next moment from all round the densely packed ground there rose from thousands of schoolboy throats the jubilant, joyous cry:

"Goal!"

Goal it was, and that, too, within two minutes of the start.

"My only blessed Aunt Boadicea!" groaned Bob Cherry. "One down! This is a lively beginning, and no mistake!"

Wharton himself said nothing, knowing full well that the team needed no word. Whatever had been amiss—whether it was that the fellows had unconsciously allowed to rise up in their minds the grim spectre of that huge bill that presently would have to be met; or whether their thoughts had strayed to schemes of dark revenge upon the author of all their troubles, Fisher Tarleton Fish—whatever disturbing thing it might have been would, when the two teams lined up again, resolutely be put upon one side.

Subsequent events proved his judgment correct. Play resumed briskly, the London lads determinedly trying all they knew to press their initial advantage still further.

But now, gradually, they were discovering themselves up against very much sterner material; indeed, it was every bit as if a totally different team had taken the field.

That early goal against Greyfriars had produced of itself an effect that to the Londoners was almost magical.

Presently the ball was hustled upfield again in the direction of the Greyfriars citadel, and then Travers, the L.C.C. inside-left, essayed a solo attack after the manner of his leader's example.

But this time Johnny Bull, at right-back, was ready; Travers had not quite the adroit elusiveness of his captain, with the result that Johnny Bull quickly robbed him of possession. Then Johnny sent the leather soaring away downfield, and Squiff, in the forward line, gained possession.

Squiff tapped the ball out to Vernon-Smith on the wing, and at once the fleet Bounder was away with it into enemy territory, past the opposing winger, and clean through the half-backs. Next moment the remainder of Greyfriars' forwards were up with him.

Lucky it was, too, for the Bounder had almost lost possession to Noble, the L.C.C. left-back, and only narrowly managed in the very nick of time to clear and centre. Wharton came rushing up, and, taking the ball beautifully in his stride, the Greyfriars captain dashed on with it.

There went up then on all hands a sobbing, appealing roar. The L.C.C.'s supporters saw what was happening, and their hearts were heavy in them.

"Mac! Mac!" rose the cry. "Oh, look out, man!"

And McManus, the goalie, was in need of warning.

For Wharton, tricking him across to one side of the goal, instead of shooting had flashed the ball instantly across to Inky.

An old trick, it was, but one that had stood the Greyfriars Remove in good stead many a time, and now once again it came off.

Inky rushed up, fastening upon the whizzing leather with the spring of a

tiger, and then next instant it flashed again from his foot, straight and true towards an open goal.

Just too late did it dawn upon McManus how neatly he had been bluffed. He came rushing out and shaped to save, but the move was ineffectual, and then next moment, when he was seen to be gazing ruefully at the back of the net, there rose up another frantic shout:

"Goal!"

As that yell went up with a will on every side of them, the faces of the Greyfriars fellows in the stand flushed with pleasure. They were real sportsmen, the spectators from the L.C.C. elementary schools, who, even though it might be notched against themselves, could cheer a good goal.

"Oh, stout man, Inky!" chortled Bob Cherry joyfully, clapping Inky upon the shoulder. "One all! Play up, ye cripples, we're coming on!"

The dusky nabob grinned breathlessly with a flash of white teeth, and shook his head.

"Say not so, my ridiculous chum!" he demurred. "The esteemed passfulness was tophole, and the absurd goal really belongfully the worthy Wharton's."

From the kick-off again both teams went to it hammer-and-tongs, each eager to increase their one goal. The L.C.C. lads were as full of tricks as monkeys, and for five desperate minutes after Greyfriars' equaliser the Remove was literally penned up in its own half, with every man of them on the defensive to save the citadel.

Then Mark Linley, the Lancashire lad, at half-back, seeing an opportunity, put the leather across to Squiff. Squiff got clear away with it, though he was stopped before getting far, but play had been transferred once more to mid-field, and Bulstrode in his goal breathed again.

The game was thirty minutes each way, and just before half-time, when the referee was giving little tentative glances to his watch, the L.C.C. forwards succeeded in another breakthrough.

Clewes it was again who led the attack, and for all the notice the Londoners took of it, the Greyfriars half-back line might have been girls playing ring-a-ring-a-roses.

As well might the line have been non-existent. The London lads swept through with a dazzling rush that was irresistible, passing and repassing. Resistance was well-nigh futile. Bull rushed in to stem the tide, and Brown, both to be swept unceremoniously aside.

There was only Bulstrode to beat then. Bulstrode, acting with the quickness of despair, dashed out and threw himself headlong upon the ball.

He rose from amongst the wildly kicking feet, gasping. From the stand he looked like a swimmer coming up after a dive. But in his hands when he broke surface Bulstrode held the leather, and he was shaping to boot it downfield.

Then, in the whirling conflict, somehow Bulstrode miskicked. Instead of soaring safely to midfield, the ball dropped feebly not six yards off. Johnny Bull was racing for it, but Travers, the L.C.C. inside-left, got there first and secured possession.

Travers' pause before slamming it across to Baxter at inside-right was but momentary; and then Baxter had returned it to Clewes, and Clewes was bearing down upon goal!

What happened next Bulstrode never really saw. Before he was able to get back to defend the leather had whizzed

in from Clewes' hefty foot like the shell from a gun, and was reposing in the net.

There was another roar then:

"Goal!"

And following hard upon it shrilled the whistle for half-time.

Greyfriars was a goal in arrears!

During that first half the L.C.C. boys had received from the wind a good deal of help. And when the rival teams ran out to line up again after the interval, it was to find the wind changed completely round, still blowing against Greyfriars.

"Well, my only hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry in great astonishment. "I say, how did you come to know what the wind would be doing, you awful bounders? Inside information, or something?"

Clewes vouchsafed no reply, only grinning happily. With the score standing at 2-1, and a breeze still behind his back, Clewes could well afford that grin.

With the resumption, it seemed as though Greyfriars hit a streak of bad luck. For, on top of that unfortunate veering round of the wind, within the first five minutes Johnny Bull was kicked accidentally upon the ankle, and had to retire, thus leaving Greyfriars with only one back.

Excepting that solitary incident, which occurred during a fierce attack upon goal, nothing very sensational at all was accomplished in the first fifteen minutes by either team. But Greyfriars, though with but ten men, was now indubitably the better side. The London lads had made the mistake of expending too much of their energy upon that gruelling first half.

But, for all that, the Greyfriars forwards still could not find their shooting-boots; and every time the L.C.C. attacked the absence of Johnny Bull proved a sore loss. Bulstrode alone among the whole Remove could have withstood that fierce bombardment of shots that rained in upon him from all angles.

Then, with ten minutes to go, the fickle breeze again suddenly changed direction completely. And with that changing of the wind rose the spirits of the Greyfriars men. Ten minutes to go—ten short minutes in which to wipe out defeat.

It was Nugent who broke through first, with a splendid opportunity which Mark Linley dropped down right at his toes. Then he made a quick, confident pass across to Squiff. Squiff took it along as far as he was able, and then switched out to Vernon-Smith.

They swept on upfield, and right through, with a rush that was undeniable, a forward movement against which nothing could stand. The whole line was working together in combination, with the halves following up nicely behind.

Squiff had the ball again, and a few yards from goal he paused, swinging it suddenly and unexpectedly across to Frank Nugent. Nugent collected it up in his stride, and the shot Nugent fired in was truly terrific.

Whizzzzzz!

It touched the tips of McManus' outstretched fingers, and then the rigging was seen to be quivering spasmodically, and next moment, a rueful expression upon his countenance, McManus was bending to recover the ball from the back of the net.

Two goals each and just four minutes to go!

The crowd nearly went crazy.

"Goal!" they roared again.

"Hurrah!"



With the front wheels of the motor van not two yards from him Fisher T. Fish scooped up the child and sprang for safety. The nearside mudguard caught him as he leapt, however, and flung him headlong to the pavement. He landed there in a queer, muddled heap, right at the feet of Dr. Locke! (See Chapter 12.)

"Played, sir!"

"Come along, Sexton Blake!"

"Two all," said Wharton as they sprinted breathlessly back to the centre. "Good man, Franky! Can we do it, do you think, you chaps?"

"Do it?" ejaculated the Bounder blankly. "Rather! That's what we've come here for, I thought!"

And "do it" Greyfriars did, and that within one minute of time. It was another brilliant combination movement downfield, with the halves behind feeding. And it was Harry Wharton who brought it off for them, with a truly terrific shot which left the L.C.C. custodian blinking in dismay.

Phee-ce-eeep!

The final whistle and the roaring acclamation of the crowd burst out simultaneously.

Then it was over, and, with 3-2, Greyfriars had won!

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Hero!

"I SAY, you know, you never told me!"

No reply.

"You might have let a chap into it!"

Still no reply.

"Why, until old Nugent let on just now I never knew a blessed word!" finished William George Bunter indignantly—his third desperate attempt to induce a hearing.

It was a smart little restaurant up in the West End, to which the Remove had proceeded for luncheon.

Fisher Tarleton Fish, locating an

obscure table in a corner, had seated himself away from the rest of the fellows; and then Bunter had rolled affably after him, drawing up a chair for himself, and plumping down his fat person.

The thin, hatchet features of Fisher T. Fish had been hidden, bowed in his hands; but now, as Bunter spoke again in a raised voice, he looked up slowly.

"Eh?"

"I was saying, old chap, that you might have mentioned it!"

"Don't 'old chap' me!" grunted Fishy crossly. "And what might I have mentioned, you fat elam?"

Bunter looked injured.

"Oh, really, Fishy!" he protested. "About the bus, I mean. You've gone and sold it to the fellows! I've only just heard, from Nugent."

"Waal, and what about that?"

"I—I was just wondering. Suppose they knew what we two know, eh, old chap? He, he, he! About it being pinched—"

"Shut up, you fat—"

Bunter grinned knowingly.

The astute American business man looked far from happy. Fishy was sitting with his elbows on the tablecloth and his chin propped up moodily, gazing into vacancy with gloomy eyes.

After the match Fishy had demurred about going into the City at all, urging instead a quick return to Greyfriars. But several of the fellows had turned upon him with rather curious expressions, and so, in order to lull suspicion, there had been no alternative but to crank up and fall in hastily with the plans of the majority.

That, however, was not the half of it—not yet the worst. Immediately after

lunch, now that they themselves owned the means of transit, the Remove were unanimously decided upon making an afternoon of it, touring the sights.

Fishy had been allowed no say in the matter at all, and, sitting at his solitary table in a moral blue funk, he tried to puzzle out for himself some way of escape.

It could only be, as he now realised, because he had painted up the bus, and painted it a new colour, that the blow had not already fallen.

Sooner or later, somewhere or other in the City, they were bound to be spotted. Each police-constable he had seen along the road from Stamford Bridge Fishy had approached in a condition bordering upon terror. And now, with this project, with this absurd running round London—why, detection was inevitable. It was asking for it.

Whichever way he looked at the matter there was no alternative. That cunning move by which he had "planted" the bus on the Form had recoiled now upon his own head. He had sold out to the Remove, and now the word of the Remove was law, and there would be no shirking it for him, unless—

There did exist an avenue of escape, he realised—just one way out. The solitary alternative was no less than to approach Wharton and the fellows, confessing his miserable duplicity.

And that course Fishy rejected on the instant, without consideration.

"Well, what are we having, old chap?" Bunter's plaintive voice broke in again upon his thoughts insistently. Evidently the Owl was hungry. "There's turtle soup, roast beef, and—"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 993.

and a lot of silly rot, all written in blessed French, or something. I say, suppose I tell 'em to trot out the tarts, old fellow—what?"

"You fat gormandiser!"

"Well, I like that! I'm jolly peckish, I can tell you! If this is the way you treat me I shall go straight away across and grub at Wharton's table. So there!"

"Nothing to stay you, I reckon!"

Across Bunter's face there flitted for one second a black scowl.

"All right!" he muttered pointedly.

"I wonder what Wharton'd say if a conscientious chap happened to give him the tip about the bus we've been riding about in all day having been pinched? Anyway, I'll find out."

Bunter threaded his way among the tables until the watching Fishy saw him pause before that at which the Remove captain and his chums sat. The Remove captain laid down his knife and fork.

"Oh, Jerusalem crickets!" groaned the business man of the Remove then, in anguish of spirit. "Oh, the fat black-mailer! I—I reckon he got my dander up. Gee, I gubss I'll make potato-shavings of him over this. Oh, crumbs!"

That last exclamation was called forth by the fact that the Remove captain had risen, and was starting to pick his way across.

At Wharton's heels came Bob Cherry and the Bounder, and behind them, trotting along in their wake, a satisfied smirk adorning his fat face, was Bunter—having lighted the touch-paper, bent, so to speak, upon seeing the fireworks.

"I imagine you can guess our business well enough," Wharton jerked out curtly, without preliminary. "This bus—the bus we've all been using—is stolen property. My hat, you've been at the bottom of some pretty dubious schemes, Fishy, but I'd never have believed this shady game of you. Knowing the bus full well to have been stolen, you got rid of it this morning to your own Form-fellows. What's your intention in the matter?" he finished grimly, giving the Transatlantic business man a look of utter contempt.

Into Fishy's eyes came a hunted, furtive expression.

"I—I guess I——" he stuttered helplessly.

But Wharton had stepped disgustedly away, and was signalling to the rest of the Co. Inky, and Johnny Bull, and Frank Nugent had had a table to themselves. In a few quiet, incisive sentences Wharton put the position before them.

"Well, my hat!" snorted Johnny Bull, when the Remove captain was finished. "Why, the whole Form might have been run in!"

There was a short, hurried conference, and then Wharton stepped forward again, confronting the miserable Fishy.

"Come on!" he rapped out. "We've decided what's to be done. You're going straight round to the garage, cranking up at once, and then you're driving direct to the nearest police-station. Never mind about lunch. My hat, I couldn't touch another mouthful until the police are notified about this fool business!"

Wharton, Cherry, and the Bounder turned to deal with Fishy. Bob Cherry grasped an arm, Vernon-Smith took the other, and with Wharton bringing up the rear, Fishy was marched to the entrance, and out of the restaurant, an astonished commissionaire holding open the brass-bound swing-doors.

Fishy and his escort stepped out on to the pavement first, while Wharton paused a moment to inquire of the com-

missionaire the whereabouts of the police-station.

Then, hurrying out after them, Wharton beheld a strange and astonishing thing.

It seemed, suddenly, that Fisher Tarleton Fish became endowed with superhuman strength. Bob Cherry, a veritable tower of strength, was shouldered desperately aside by the weedy Fishy like a fag in the Second. Smithy went spinning from a charge in the opposite direction, and then Fishy was free. Leaping off the pavement, the American junior sprang out with a cry into the crowded road.

It came to Wharton, just for the moment, that Fishy was escaping—fleeing the consequences of his foolishness. Then, glancing out into the busy London thoroughfare, Wharton saw.

From the opposite pavement had darted a child, a little girl of about six years. The first part she had somehow traversed safely enough, but then, out in the middle, with streams of traffic flowing by on either side, a plunging horse in a brewer's dray had caused

Next Monday's Programme :

"ROGER OF THE REMOVE!"

By Frank Richards.

This story deals with the arrival at Greyfriars of Mr. Quelch's nephew Roger—and Roger is a real coughdrop. Don't miss this yarn whatever you do.

"THE TRAIL OF ADVENTURE!"

By Lionel Day.

Look out, too, for a long instalment of this fine new serial, chums, also the next literary effusion from the pen of the youthful Dicky Nugent, entitled:

"BACKING UP BURLEIGH!"

A strong programme, boys, you will agree. Make certain of your MAGNET by ordering it in advance. Cheerio, till next week.

YOUR EDITOR.

her suddenly to take fright, and she had paused out there as if turned to stone, terror-stricken.

Next moment, covering her eyes with her hands in an agony of fear, she had turned and was running back again to regain the pavement, never for one moment aware of her danger. But Fishy had seen—Fisher Tarleton Fish alone of all the passers-by was rushing to the child's rescue, for bearing straight down upon the youngster was a huge, plunging motor-van.

With the front wheels of the motor-van not two yards from him, Fisher T. Fish scooped up the child and sprang for safety. The nearside mudguard caught him, though, even as he leapt, pitched him from his feet, and flung him headlong to the pavement, where he landed in a queer, muddled heap on one shoulder, and right at the feet of a dignified figure.

The shoulder gave an excruciating twist as he moved, and Fishy gasped with the pain of it, but before he fell back again he looked up into the face of the gentleman, who now held the little girl tight in his arms.

It was none other than Dr. Locke!

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

All Serene!

"D R. LOCKE!"

And behind Dr. Locke, white-faced and horror-stricken, Mr. Quelch and another gentleman—Dr. Voysey, the headmaster of Highcliffe.

Fisher T. Fish whispered the name in a voice low with pain, attempting once more to gain his feet. But, even as Fishy moved, the stabbing pain in his shoulder grew so intense again that despite himself he cried aloud with the sheer agony of it, and then next moment he fainted clean away.

"Quick, Quelch, we must obtain help at once!" gasped Dr. Locke. "Telephone for a doctor!"

"All right, sir! Leave Fishy to us."

Wharton and Bob Cherry and the Bounder had come dashing up from across the road. Taking in at one glance what had happened, the startled juniors picked up Fishy, bearing him quickly back between them to the restaurant, while a policeman, who appeared as if from nowhere, held back the traffic for them.

Fishy was taken gently to a quiet private room, and while they waited there for the doctor the commissionaire busied about, taking rapid charge.

It transpired he had served for six years with the Red Cross, and that Fishy could not possibly have been temporarily in more expert hands everyone quickly recognised.

For very soon Fishy was sitting up again, though dazedly, of course, and with that throbbing pain from his injured shoulder still intense. But until the doctor's arrival they could do nothing more; so Wharton, seizing the opportunity, respectfully drew Dr. Locke aside, asking quietly if he might speak with him alone.

A momentary expression of surprise appeared on the Head's face, but next moment he spoke kindly.

"Most certainly, my boy, if you wish it. Come, let us go this way."

It was to a vacant table in the restaurant that Wharton found himself shepherded, and there, plunging straightway into his subject, the Remove captain proceeded to put Dr. Locke into full possession of all the facts connected with the stolen bus, as he knew them, suppressing only that episode of the wrecked shop window, and one or two other small details which might perhaps have done Fishy harm.

"B-bless my soul!" ejaculated Dr. Locke weakly, when Wharton was nearly finished. "Good—goodness gracious me!"

Perturbation expressed itself in every line of his face, and then just for one moment his lips compressed, so that Wharton, watching his brow anxiously, feared a gathering of the thunder-clouds.

Dr. Locke wiped his glasses. Slowly he leaned forward.

"Wharton——" And then he paused. "Really, I hardly know what to say to you. We were aware—Mr. Quelch and I, that is—that you had this omnibus. When the accident occurred, it may be well to state, we were even then upon our way to demand an explanation."

"You—you were coming—here? You knew about it all the time, sir?"

"Not all the time. Following the conference, we were spending two or three days here in town at Dr. Voysey's invitation. Dr. Voysey has a house here, and the dear child Fish so bravely rescued is his little niece. We had naturally been to Stamford Bridge this

(Continued on page 28.)

A DOG IN A THOUSAND! Without Squall young Jack Horner would have fallen an easy prey to Black Michael and his gang of ruffians. But Squall hasn't a strain of the wolf in him for nothing!

THE TRAIL OF ADVENTURE!



By
LIONEL DAY.

Squall Comes Out Strong!

THE light from an electric torch lit up the entrance to the cave. Jack, rising, still holding Squall by the collar, drew further back into the recesses of the cave. He found he could stand up now, and that even when he stretched out his hand he could not touch the roof above his head.

"Now, then, you dratted kid, come out of that!" a voice shouted. "It'll only be the worse for you if you don't. You've given Black Michael enough trouble to-night already, and unless you want him to skin you alive, you'd better throw in your hand."

Jack could feel Squall straining at his collar. He whispered to the dog to lie down, and instantly the animal crouched at his feet.

Now that beam of light appeared in the entrance itself. Somebody was coming in, crawling on his hands and knees. The beam of light lit up the roof of the cave, and then, as the man crawled to a spot where he could rise to his knees, it fell upon Jack Horner's face.

A stream of foul oaths fell from the man's lips. He glared at Jack like some wild animal. In the shadow the boy had a vision of a ferocious criminal face that he was certain he had never seen before.

"You come along and take what's coming to you, you dratted kid. Don't stand there when I speak to you, but get a move on, or I'll tan the hide off you."

Jack never moved. The man came nearer. As if desirous of keeping the boy in view, in case he might disappear, he never allowed the light from his torch to wander from Jack's face. But that illumination never touched the living mass of fur that lay crouched on the dried bracken, nor found those eyes that watched the man's every movement.

Nearer and nearer drew the man. Now he could stand erect. Jack saw that in his left hand he carried a heavy stick. Even as he noticed this the man raised his arm. Jack pressed himself

closer against the wall, and in doing so released his hold of Squall's collar.

Without a sound, the great dog rose to his feet. Crouching back against his master's body, he gathered himself for a leap. And now for the first time the man realised that the boy was not alone; and even as he made that discovery Squall leapt.

High into the air he leapt, almost perpendicularly. His four paws struck the man's body, and at the same moment his jaws, guided by some instinct that had come down to him from the days of the wolf-pack, gripped at the man's throat. There was a smothered cry and the thud of the man falling on the dried bracken; the clatter of the electric torch as it dropped from his limp hand.

Jack made a soft, clacking noise with his tongue against the roof of his mouth. Obediently Squall turned and came cringing back to his side. From outside came the sound of the second man's voice:

"Ain't you got the dratted kid, Curly?"

It flashed through Jack's mind that

WHO'S WHO IN THE STORY.

JACK HORNER, a stocky youngster of fourteen, orphaned by the Great War, is given into the care of his uncle,

GEORGE PARKER, known locally as "Mean-as-Mud Parker," who treats the lad so brutally that Jack resolves to run away from Dave's Farm. Together with his faithful wolf-dog, Squall, Jack flies from the house.

BLACK MICHAEL, a mysterious individual, visits George Parker and offers him the sum of four hundred pounds if he will deliver Jack into his hands. In the course of bargaining it transpires that Jack is heir to a title and estates which will automatically go to Black Michael should Jack Horner die, and the scoundrelly Black Michael means to inherit the title and property. Knowing nothing of these things, Jack is trudging across the Cumberland mountains when he espies a number of men who appear to be tracking him. This is made clear a few moments later, and Jack, in desperation, seeks refuge in a cave. His pursuers, agents of Black Michael, reach the cave and, terrified, Jack hears one of them exclaim delightedly:

"Look here, Curly! This is where the kid's hidden himself!"

(Now read on.)

that man outside the cave could prevent his escape, even with Squall to help him. So narrow was the entrance that anyone crawling down it—human being or animal—could be stunned by the person waiting outside. The man could keep him there a prisoner until the others came up. But if he could be lured into the cave—

Jack leaned forward, and, picking up the torch switched off its light. Then he took a deep breath and made a great and heroic attempt to imitate the voice of Curly.

It was not a great success, for Jack's voice was only just beginning to crack, and the strange accent was quite beyond him. But the muffled sound of the cave helped him, concealing from the other the trick that was being played.

"Give a hand 'ere, will you?" he exclaimed.

There was a grunt of irritation, followed by the sound of somebody's body slipping across the rocky floor of the entrance.

"Hang you, Curly! Why can't you turn on that blamed light so as a bloke can see what he's doing? I've just banged my blessed head against the roof."

Jack held his breath. He couldn't see what was happening, but he could judge by his sense of hearing the man's approach. The sound of his fingers, slipping on the rocky walls, told him just what he wanted to know. Then suddenly from the darkness came an exclamation of amazement. The man's foot had struck the prostrate figure of his comrade.

"Lumme, Curly, who's this bloke, and where's the blamed kid?"

"The kid's here!" Jack exclaimed, in his ordinary, rather squeaky voice; and as he spoke he switched on the electric light.

It lit up the amazed and astonished face of a tall, burly man, who wore a handkerchief tied round his neck.

"Seize him, Squall!"

Almost as Jack uttered the words the wolf dog made his leap.

There was a cry of terror—a moment's struggle, and then a crash and a

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 993

gurgling sob of pain. Jack stumbled forward. By the light of the torch he could see the figures of the two men lying on the ground. Blood was flowing from their necks, and for a moment a horror seized upon the boy that they were dead; but their groans and their muttered curses reassured him on this point. It was time to be going.

Calling Squall after him, he dropped on his hands and knees and crept out of the cave. The moon had sunk low, and all was darkness there. He listened. Save for the murmur of the mountain stream everything was very still. A curious sense of triumph filled his heart. He had faced two of his pursuers and escaped from them. He would escape from the others. Down there at the end of the ravine was the road he was seeking.

"Come on, Squall!" he whispered.

But now he had come to the most difficult part of his journey. Had he kept to the heathery slope above the ravine he could have covered the distance in less than an hour; but in that boulder strewn bed, in the almost impenetrable blackness, progress was extremely difficult. He was always stumbling over the rocks or slipping into the water. At last he found that the easiest way of getting along was to hold Squall's collar and allow the dog to lead him, for he seemed to find no inconvenience from the darkness.

That nightmare scramble seemed to last an eternity. He was so sore, bruised, and weary, that he thought once more of lying down and resting, when the sight of the road, only a hundred yards away, met his gaze. He had won through at last. Escaping from the bed of the ravine, he crossed a level stretch of coarse grass and gained the edge of the road.

There was a ditch there, and though he was confident that he had eluded his pursuers, he took the precaution of hiding himself in it. With his head just above the bank, he scanned the road for the sight of any motor-car, intending to beg a lift.

Ten minutes went by. He felt himself growing drowsy. He leaned more heavily on the bank. And then all desire for sleep was banished from his mind. Suddenly, quite close to him, he heard voices—a man's voice—a harsh, bitter voice but none the less cultured.

"He must be somewhere round here. We can't have missed him. Where are Curly and Ben?"

Jack crouched down in the ditch. Somehow that voice had the power to make his flesh creep and to chill the blood in his veins. He remembered the name Curly had used—Black Michael. Could this be Black Michael, and, if so, why was he pursuing him like this?

"Curly and Ben went down that there blessed ravine, gov'nor. We followed 'em, but we ain't seen anything of 'em. The kid was along there, too, 'cos you could see the marks of his boots on the grass."

There was silence for a moment, and then that cold, terrifying voice spoke again.

"Scatter along the road and see if you can find him. I'll stay here. Give me the call if you see him."

The boy heard footsteps retreating along the road. Then again all was stillness. He raised his head cautiously and looked out. He saw a tall, shadowy

figure standing with folded arms some thirty yards away. He glimpsed a long, white, thin face, that in the darkness was almost like a mask. And then his attention was attracted by something else.

A car was coming along the road. He could hear the noise of its wheels by putting his ear to the ground. Now its headlights appeared in the distance. Jack saw that watching figure draw back into the cover of a bush. The car was drawing nearer. It was a big lorry, he saw, travelling at about fifteen miles an hour. If only he could reach it and swing himself in at the back! But there was that watching figure behind the bush!

Jack pulled himself together. The risk must be taken. He crept out of the ditch and lay face downwards on the grass at the edge of the road, Squall crouched comfortingly by his side. The lorry drew nearer. He could see now, with a feeling of intense satisfaction that it was not closed at the back—that the tailboard had been lowered. He raised himself cautiously on his hands and knees. As the cumbersome vehicle drew level with him he leapt forward, snatched at the tailboard, was carried off his feet for a moment, and then, with a last effort of his expiring strength, managed to pull himself aboard.

Out of the night came a shout, followed by a shrill whistle. That dark shadow had slipped from behind the cover of the bush. Black Michael was dashing after the retreating lorry. And then suddenly Jack saw him halt.

Standing there in the middle of the road, his white fangs glistening, was the wolf dog barring his way, holding the road so that his master might escape.

Old Bill!

At the sight of Squall standing there with bristling ruff and bared fangs, holding the road, Jack forgot all his personal terrors. He had fled from his uncle's house because Squall had been marked for execution. To save the dog he loved so dearly from the hangman's rope he had cut himself adrift from the only home he really remembered. And now the lorry, at its steady pace of fifteen miles an hour, was carrying him away from Squall.

He glanced over his shoulder. The lorry was piled high with barrels, which acted as a complete screen between himself and the driver. His presence on the vehicle was, so far, undetected. But if he shouted or made a noise he might be discovered, and the chances were that the driver would stop the lorry and eject him.

But he couldn't leave Squall behind. He must run the risk of being discovered. Putting his fingers to his lips, he gave one shrill whistle.

The wolf dog, at that very moment in the act of springing, twisted round, and, with neck stretched out, began to race after the lorry. At the same moment Jack became aware of two men who had sprung from the side of the road, evidently bent upon boarding the lorry. The red tail light lit up for a moment their evil, crime-stained faces. He shrank back among the casks and barrels. One of the men, running at the top of his speed, had succeeded in grasping the edge of the tailboard. Now he had lifted his feet from the road, and was in the act of swinging himself up to

the boy's side when a long, furry body launched itself through the air and dropped softly on the floor of the lorry.

Squall had arrived, and in an instant he seemed to detect the danger that threatened his master. Twisting round, he made one snap at the man who was scrambling on board.

The sudden swing of the lorry, as it took a bend in the road, made the animal miss his mark, but the effect of his attempt was quite sufficient. The man released his hold of the tailboard and let himself drop back into the dust of the road. For a moment Jack could hear the voice of Black Michael, cursing and shrieking, goading his followers on. Other men sprang out of the darkness and tried to seize the tailboard, to draw back instantly at the sight of those white fangs and those red eyes. Then the road sloped steeply; the lorry gathered speed; a minute more and Black Michael and his gang had been left far behind.

Jack drew in a breath, and, putting out one hand, pulled Squall towards him. They had escaped! After that long, wearisome flight across the hills he had gained his objective. He was on a motor travelling southwards, away from Dane's Farm and the cruelty of his uncle and aunt.

"Good old Squall!" he whispered. "Lie down, there's a good dog! We're safe now."

Squall dropped down by his side, licking the boy's hand, regarding him with an expression which seemed to say: "If there's anything else you'd like me to do let me know, won't you?" Jack curled himself up by the dog's side, and, putting his lips to the animal's ear, began to whisper to him.

"I don't understand it at all, Squall! I expected uncle to follow me, and perhaps some of the hands from the farms around, but these people who tried hard to catch us, they don't come from this part of the world, and I can't think why they wanted us. That man, Black Michael! It's a beast of a name, isn't it? And the chaps with him—I've never seen such people before. Horrible brutes, they look!"

But even his intense curiosity with regard to Black Michael and his gang was not proof against his utter weariness. He yawned.

"Oh, Squall, I'm so tired, and so hungry!" he whispered. "I must sleep."

There was a sort of little bay in the serried ranks of those casks which composed the lorry's cargo. Into this Jack crept and laid himself down, using his bundle as a pillow. Squall stretched himself over his master's legs, and with that living blanket to partly cover him Jack felt very warm and snug.

"Good-night, Squall!" he said drowsily. "I wonder where we shall be when we wake up."

He was asleep almost in an instant. He was awakened by a violent jerk and the sudden stopping of the lorry. He started up, rubbing his eyes. The first thing he noticed was that it was broad daylight, and that the sun had climbed a considerable way up the heavens. It must be already after seven, he decided. But where were they?

It must have been about one when he had boarded the lorry, and it was now between seven and eight. They must have covered something over a hundred miles—unless, of course, the lorry had travelled faster with the coming of the dawn. He tried to recall fragments

of his geography to decide just whereabouts they might be. Assuming they had travelled south, it would be somewhere in the Midlands.

But the sudden movement of the lorry again made him abandon these attempts of turning what he had learnt at school to practical use. They were passing through some gates, and, peering out, he could see a vast yard, piled high with goods.

Clearly, they had reached the end of their journey. It was time to be going. Jack would like to have spoken to the driver had not the thought flashed into his mind that the man might subsequently come into touch with his uncle. No clues must be left behind for Mean-as-Mud Parker to follow.

Touching Squall's head, Jack crept from his hiding-place, and, very stiff and sore, dropped to the ground. The next moment, with Squall following him like a shadow, he had slipped behind a great pile of cargo, where he lay hidden. Then he heard the driver call out:

"Anybody alongside for the Northern Cement Company?"

There was silence for a moment, and then the loudest voice Jack had ever heard answered him.

"Garn! Anybody alongside! Why, I ought to have been under way this five hours. Wotcher been doing with that little lot that you've been so long on the road?"

Standing up and peering over the edge of a crate, Jack saw a figure rise, as if from some subterranean region. It was the figure of a man, with a big, sun-burnt moon face, set off by ginger whiskers and a pointed beard. He was wearing a blue jersey, and even as Jack watched him he seemed to grow taller and taller.

"Hallo! So it's old Bill, is it?" the driver shouted cheerily. "Sorry to have kept you, Bill, but I've done the better part of two hundred miles during the night. Shall I back her alongside?"

"You don't think I'm going to carry the blooming stuff from there, do you? What you take me for—a district messenger boy?"

He certainly looked as unlike a district messenger boy as anybody could look. Now that Jack could see him at his full height he appeared to be nearly six feet three, and of a bulk and breadth in proportion.

"Little bit peev'd this morning, ain't you, Bill?" the lorry driver exclaimed.

"Well, what would you feel like if one of them bloomin' butty's sneaked past yer in the night? If only you had been in time with your cargo I'd have kept ahead of him all the way down to Brentford and spoiled his nasty, oily-smellin' game for him."

What were they talking about, Jack wondered? What on earth was a "butty," and why did this moon-faced, ginger-whiskered giant have such an objection to it? He was so curious that he almost forgot how hungry he was.

The driver manoeuvred the lorry across the yard and then backed it out of view. Jack felt he must know what was going on. Scrambling over the boxes and crates, he at last reached a point where he could see what he wanted to see. He halted, open-mouthed. There, stretching along his immediate front, was a long, cool, blue channel of water, and immediately below him, floating on the bosom of that channel, was a boat, that looked as if it had come out of a circus, so covered was it with green and gold paint, that glistened in the sunlight.

Now he understood why Bill had seemed to grow so strangely. In answer

to the driver's call he had been ascending slowly the plank that stretched from the deck of the boat to the high bank above. He was now standing on the tow-path of the canal with the lorry backed close to the edge.

"Mother!" he bawled. "Lend us a hand here, will you?"

From a little cabin in the stern of the boat a tall, rosy-faced woman, with a red handkerchief tied about her head, appeared.

"Ain't you going to have your breakfast first, Bill?"

"Business before pleasure, missus, as the 'angman said in reply to the same observation on the morning when he was going to turn a bloke off. We'll get this lot stowed away in no time, old girl!"

The woman ascended the plank, while the man jumped on board and began to remove the hatches from the hold. This done, he descended into the hold, and the task of transferring the cargo from the lorry to the monkey-boat began. It was interrupted by occasional inquiries from below.

"What do you make that, my lad?"

trying to add up the figures he had obtained from the lorry driver.

"Mother, I can't get this here straight," he exclaimed, scratching his head. "It's these dratted pounds that do me. How many do you think go to a quarter? I've gone and lost that bit of paper where I had it written down!"

"Love us, Bill! How do I know?" his wife exclaimed. "Why don't you ask the lock-keeper?"

"What? And have him making a song about it all up and down the canal as old Bill Bowker dunno how to add!"

"Won't you have your breakfast first, Bill? Maybe 'twould come to you then."

Bill shook his head gloomily.

"Eggs and bacon would be like dust and ashes in my mouth, mother, if I can't get the hang of this right. Drat it all! There's fourteen pound go to a stone—I remember that—but blow me if I can remember how many pounds go to a quarter!"

Jack could no longer contain himself.

"If you please, sir, it's twenty-eight pounds!" he piped.

A GOOD TIP TO CURE THE "PIP!"

FATHER: "Well, son, you're looking jolly bucked with life these days."

SON: "I am bucked, dad. A chap at school put me on to the 'Gem'—the best turn he could have done me—and I've never felt down in the mouth since."

FATHER: "The 'Gem'—Hum! I must say, though, you are looking heaps brighter. Let me have a look at this 'Gem' you're talking about."

SON (reluctantly handing over his favourite paper): "Don't be long with it, dad."

FATHER: "I won't be long, my lad." (He crosses to the armchair and begins to read. Two hours later young Tommy pokes his head cautiously round the door. Father is still reading.)

SON: "D-dad—"

FATHER: "Ha, ha, ha! This is a real boys' paper, Tommy. It makes me feel young again." (Feels in his pocket for a couple of pennies). "I simply must finish this ripping school story, and I know you are dying to get on with it. Run round to the paper-shop and get another copy, then we shall both be satisfied."

SON (jubilantly): "Hurrah! I knew you'd like it, dad."

FATHER (as Tommy is about to dash off): "And tell the newsagent to save a copy for me every Wednesday!"



THE GEM LIBRARY

Of Long Complete School Stories featuring Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's appears
EVERY WEDNESDAY - PRICE 2d.

"One, ten, seventeen hundredweight, two quarters, and twenty-one pounds!"

"Right for you, my lad! Don't you try and play any tricks up on old Bill!"

From time to time Bill continued to check the cargo by the same method. Twenty minutes later the lorry was empty, and the driver handed a slip of paper to Bill, who had ascended from the hold. Bill regarded it solemnly, nodded very wisely, and then scribbled his name on it with great labour. A few minutes more and the lorry driver had departed.

Jack noticed that a curious change came over Bill as soon as he was alone with his wife. His face grew worried and perplexed. The air of cheerful confidence vanished. He groaned wearily. Then, taking a big flat board from somewhere, he placed it against the side of the hold and began to make marks on it with chalk, copying something from a bit of paper he held in his hand. His wife watched him anxiously, and Jack's curiosity was now so great that he pressed closer. Presently Bill's occupation became clear to him. He was

Bill and his wife turned as if they had been shot and stared, blinking, at Jack.

"Gosh, it's a boy, and a little dawg with him, and he thinks as he can teach old Bill arithmetic! As if me, as has been the skipper of the Emerald all these years, don't know as twenty-six pounds go to a quarter?"

The woman broke through her husband's attempts to preserve his reputation for knowing arithmetic.

"Stow it, Bill! You don't know, and I don't know, and it ain't no use pretending, anyway, to this 'ere lad."

She regarded Jack with a pleasant, maternal smile.

"Why, laddie, what a state you're in! Where do you come from? And what's your name?"

"Jack Horner," he answered. "And maybe you're hungry, lad, aren't you? Well, now's your chance to earn a bite of breakfast."

(Has Jack found a friend at last? Be sure you read next week's thrilling instalment of this great adventure serial, chums!)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 963.

FISHY'S TRAVEL AGENCY!

(Continued from page 24)

morning in order to watch you boys play, and then, after the match your Form master and I attempted to get into touch with you. However, owing to the quite remarkable crowd, we were only just in time to witness disappearing from view the rear of what we learned with surprise from one of the L.C.C. boys was your omnibus."

"Oh!"

"The boy we spoke to, one of the players, happening to have overheard you arranging amongst yourselves to take lunch here, at this restaurant, was thus very fortunately able to acquaint Mr. Quelch and myself with the fact, and so as rapidly as possible we followed on, with what results you know."

"I must confess, too, Wharton, that though at first I felt very grave and serious doubts, after listening to your story, I do not think now that any blame attaches to you personally as head boy."

"Oh, thank you, sir!"

"I prefer to regard the whole matter, the Head went on judicially, pressing together the tips of his fingers, as simply a high-spirited escapade, and nothing more. In view of Fishy's brave action I am not inclined to mete out punishment to any of you. Now I must go and consult with your Form master as to what is best to be done."

"One moment, sir, please," said Wharton. "I didn't quite finish."

And then, in rapid, clear sentences, Wharton explained to the Head how, with the object of having the stolen bus returned to its rightful owner, they had been starting off for the district police-station.

Upon that, Dr. Locke nodded thoughtfully several times, as if to himself, and then, turning to the Remove captain, he spoke again.

"This plan you have just outlined, Wharton is, I feel sure, the best of any—indeed, in all the circumstances, the only course we could honourably pursue."

He rose gravely to his feet.

"Come," he exclaimed, "I do not think we need bother Mr. Quelch over this, after all. I will accompany you to the police, and between the two of us we may straighten this extraordinary tangle, and perhaps at the same time be able to smooth things over with the law for Fishy."

"Oh, if you would, sir!" exclaimed Wharton, with shining eyes.

At the police-station Wharton's statement was taken down by a startled sergeant, and when the Remove captain had signed it, Dr. Locke added to it his own signature.

That done, the sergeant looked up, regarding Wharton with a slow smile.

"You're in luck's way, young gentleman, if I may say so—you and your friends as well!"

"In luck's way," repeated the captain, puzzled. "How?"

"For information leading to the recovery of this bus there is a reward of seventy-five pounds. There, how does that strike you?"

"M-m-my hat! Seventy-five pounds! But—"

"You think the bus wasn't worth so much—eh?—Don't you make any mistake about that! The woodwork and so on might have wanted a good coat of paint, and I believe the old bus has seen some service, but the engine and mechanical components are stated in our Yard report to be in first-rate condition—worth two or three hundred, easy! You'll hear from the owner about that

reward in a day or two. Good-day, gentlemen!"

In due course the cheque for seventy-five pounds arrived at Greyfriars, together with a warm letter of thanks—an event which created a sensation in the Lower School for days.

The bill for damages to the shop-front arrived almost simultaneously with it. The account was for fifty-five pounds, which left the Remove with twenty pounds in hand.

By general consent, the sum of ten pounds was appropriated to be used in providing a magnificent spread for the whole Form. Bunter cooked, and, evidently having profited by his cookery lecture in Courtfield, Bunter really excelled himself.

The celebration spread was staged in the Rag, and the Rag was filled to overflowing. It happened to be Fishy's day out of sunny, too, and the Transatlantic junior was unanimously accorded a place of honour.

Whatever wrong they had suffered at his hands was quite wiped out in the eyes of the Remove by that magnificent deed of bravery.

It was left to Wharton to sum up the general feeling of them all in his toast:

"Gentlemen," he said, raising a foaming glass of ginger-pop, "to the continual supremacy of our noble selves over Highcliffe, to Remove football, and to the founder of this feast—Fishy's Travel Agency!"

THE END.

(Now look out for next week's topping yarn of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled: "ROGER OF THE REMOVE!" Roger is the nephew of Mr. Quelch, and his arrival at Greyfriars causes a great sensation. Make sure you read this topping yarn, chums; you'll enjoy every line of it!)

2-NOW AND THE BIKE IS YOURS

I supply the finest Coventry built cycles ON 14 DAYS' APPROVAL, PACKED FREE AND CARRIAGE PAID, on receipt of a small deposit. Lowest cash prices, or easy payment terms. Write for Free Bargain Lists NOW.

O'Brien THE WORLD'S LARGEST CYCLE DEALER NO. 18 COVENTRY.

A LOW MONTHLY INSTALMENT TO SUIT YOUR POCKET

200 DIFFERENT STAMPS FREE!

A marvellous offer which speaks for itself! 200 all different Stamps, including War, Armistice, Colonials, and Beautiful Pictorial Stamps. SEND NO MONEY—JUST A POSTCARD requesting our Approvals and further Free Packet List.

LISBURN & TOWNSEND, LONDON ROAD, LIVERPOOL.

HEIGHT INCREASED 5/- Complete IN 30 DAYS. Course.

No Appliances. No Drugs. No Dieting. The Melvin Strong System NEVER FAILS. Full particulars and Testimonials, stamp—Melvin Strong, Ltd. (Dept. S.), 10, Ludgate Hill, London, Eng.

BLUSHING SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS, SHYNESS, TIMIDITY,

Simple 7-day Permanent Home Cure for either sex. No Auto suggestion, drill, etc. Write at once, mention "M.G." and get full particulars quite FREE privately.

U.J.D., 12, All Saints Road, ST. ANNES-ON-SEA.

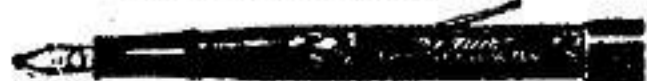
SECRET SERVICE Pocket DISGUISE OUTFIT

for Actors, Detectives, and others. 3/- each, post free. Overseas 5d. extra.—Dept. XX, MILTON, 24, Station Parade, Norbury, London, S.W.16.

CUT THIS OUT

"MAGNET" PEN COUPON. VALUE 3d

Send 5 of these coupons with only 2/9 (and 2d. stamp) direct to the FLEET PEN CO., 119, Fleet Street, E.C.4. By return you will receive a handsome lever self-filling FLEET FOUNTAIN PEN with solid gold nib (fine, medium, or broad), usually 10/6. Fleet price 4/-, or with 5 coupons only 2/9.



JOIN THE ROYAL NAVY AND SEE THE WORLD.

Boys are wanted for the Seaman Class (from which selections are made for the Wireless Telegraphy and Signalling Branches). Age 15½ to 16½ years.

MEN also are required for

SEAMEN (Special Service) - - - Age 18 to 25
STOKERS - - - - - Age 18 to 25
ROYAL MARINE FORCES - - - Age 17 to 23

GOOD PAY - - - - - ALL FOUND EXCELLENT CHANCES FOR PROMOTION

Apply by letter to the Recruiting Staff Officer, R.N. and R.M.; 5, Suffolk Street, Birmingham; 121, Victoria Street, Bristol; 13, Crown Terrace, Downhill, Glasgow; 30, Canning Place, Liverpool; 55, Whitehall, London, S.W.1; 289, Deanagate, Manchester; 116, Rye Hill, Newcastle-on-Tyne; or 6, Washington Terrace, Queen's Park, Southampton.

300 STAMPS FOR 6d. (Abroad 1/-), including Airpost, Triangular, Old India, Nigeria, New South Wales, Gold Coast, etc.—W. A. WHITE, Engine Lane, LYE, Stourbridge.

STOP STAMMERING! Cure yourself as I did. Particulars Free.—FRANK B. HUGHES, 7, SOUTHAMPTON ROW, LONDON, W.3.

HAVE YOU A RED NOSE? Send a stamp to pay postage, and you will learn how to rid yourself of such a terrible affliction free of charge. Enclose stamp. Address in confidence: T. J. TEMPLE, Specialist, "Palace House," 128, Shaftesbury Avenue, LONDON, W.1.

FREE TO THOSE REQUESTING APPROVAL SHEETS— 50 all different Stamps, Metal Watermark Detector with instructions, and a Vest Pocket Folder for Duplicates.—E. WILKINSON, Provincial Buildings, COLWYN BAY.

All applications for Advertisement Space in this publication should be addressed to the Advertisement-Manager, UNION JACK SERIES, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4



"DOWN WITH THE WEEDY TWEEDY" and "UP WITH THE BURLY BURLEIGH!"

These cries are common at St. Sam's on election day, in spite of the fact that Dr. Birchmell, the Head, sides with the weedy Tweedy and does his best to chuck the burly Burleigh out of the kaptiny!



The Fight for Incey!

The Kaptiny!

DICKY NUGENT



A Tickle Tail of Jack Jolly & Co., the Merry Mirth Makers of St. Sam's.



DOCTOR BIRCHEMELL, a majestic figure in gown and mortar-board, came slinking along the Sixth Form passage.

The headmaster of St. Sam's carried a large paper bag, which was filled with a gruesome concoction of feathers and soot and flower and treckle. The Head had been at grave pains to prepare that concoction, and he was justly proud of his handywork.

Pawing outside the study which belonged to Burleigh of the Sixth, the Head stooped down, and peeped furtively through the keyhole.

"He, ha! The coast is clear!" he chuckled. "I will now proceed to fix up the booby-trap for Burleigh's benefit."

So saying, the Head slipped into Burleigh's study, leaving the door slightly ajar. Then, standing on a chair, he carefully poised the large paper bag on the top of the door; so that when the unsuspecting Burleigh came along, he would receive a shower-bath of feathers and soot and flower and treckle, with some red ink added to make it nice and lock-wid.

Having done this, the Head stepped back and awaited developments.

Presently there was a sound of athletic footmarks in the passage. The kaptein of St. Sam's was coming along with his manly stride.

"Now!" murmured the Head, his heart thumping against his bony ribs.

Wishing a merry tune, Burleigh strode up to the door of his study. He kicked it open, and entered; and the next minute he wondered what had hit him.

"Swish! Swish!"

The paper bag descended from above, and burst open on Burleigh's head. The treckle and fetters stuck to his hair, giving him the appearance of a Red Indian chief. The soot ran down his face, giving him the appearance of a nigger minstrel. The flower also ran down his face, giving him the appearance of a snow-man. And the red ink died his cheeks a vivid scarlet.

Burleigh looked as black as thunder.

"Who—why—what—what—!" he spluttered, gouging soot and flower and treckle from his eyes.

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

When he had cleared his vision, Burleigh looked in astonishment at the Head, who was nearly in hysterics.

"Sir!" cried the Kaptein of St. Sam's, "Fire MACEY LIBRARY—No. 993.

in agreement.

"Am I to understand that you, of all people, are the party-rattor of this outrage?"

"Right on the wicket!" said the Head.

"You—you fixed up this booby-trap for my benefit?" stammered Burleigh.

"Eggsactly!"

"In that case," said Burleigh, indignantly, "I think you ought to be jolly well ashamed of yourself! Fancy a headmaster playing such a low-down trick on the kaptein of the school. It's almost unheard of!"

"Yes—er—almost!" agreed the Head.

"I say, Burleigh! Your face is a sight for gods and men and little fishes! Let me take you by the hand, and lead you to a mirror, so that you can see what you look like!"

Burleigh clenched his big fists.

"If you weren't my headmaster," he said, in measured tones, "I'd sling you across the table and give you a round duzzen with my asphalt! As it is, I will now proceed to tell you, in simple, homely language, eggsactly what I think of you and your monkey-trix!"

And then Burleigh let himself go. He could be a perfect whale for spouting, when he liked; and he lashed the Head with his tongue as the Head had never been lashed before. He called him all sorts of names; and he hurled epithets at him at such a rate that the Head had to keep on ducking to avoid injury.

As a rule, Burleigh was a placid and meek-tempered fellow; but he could be fearfully nasty and sarcastic when he chose; and in his fierce attack on the Head, he used every adjective he could think of.

Now, this was eggsactly what the Head wanted. He had wilfully provoked old Burleigh into doing this, because he was looking for an eggscuse to chuck Burleigh out of the kaptiny. He even went so far as to encourage Burleigh to chuck him, by making grimaces at the angry kaptein, and poking his tongue out at him.

"Have you quite finished abusing me, Burleigh?" he asked, at length.

Burleigh nodded breathlessly.

"Well, it's my turn now!" said the Head, showing his teeth in that menacing way that the St. Sam's fellows knew so well. "Since you have seen fit to insult your headmaster to his face, I have no alternative but to depose you from the kaptiny!"

Burleigh's lip curled scornfully.

"Oh, yes, I dare!" retorted the Head. "Consider yourself sacked, Burleigh! And if you dare to argue the case with me, I shall sack you from the school into the bargain!"

Burleigh turned pale beneath his soot and flower and red ink.

"I suppose I must nuckle under to your commands," he muttered. "But I should like to know what your little game is! I have always given satisfaction as skipper of this school. By my own efforts, I have lifted St. Sam's into the front rank of our public schools. When I was first made kaptein, the place was little better than a reformatory. Why should you suddenly turn on me like this, and sack me?"

"Because you have been grossly dis-pertinent!" said the Head.

"My hat! You didn't suppose I was going to fall on your neck and embrace you, after you played that rotten trick on me?"

The Head shrugged his shoulders.

"What you describe as a rotten trick, Burleigh, was merely a tactical joke on my part," he said. "But I'm not going to deem my dignity by agreeing with you. You are hereby deposed from the kaptiny, and my decree will be made public this evening."

Burleigh pondered for a minute or two.

"Who are you going to make kaptein in my place?" he asked.

"Cuthbert Tweedy," said the Head promptly.

"That little whippet-snapper!" cried Burleigh, contemptibly. "He is no more fit to be kaptein of St. Sam's than a Fossil, the

porter! I can't think what you see in the kid. He has only been here a week, yet in that short time you have promoted him from the Fourth Form to the Sixth. And now you want to make him skipper of St. Sam's! It would almost seem that the kid had some hold over you—that you were in his power."

A gasp of anger spread over the troth than his face. Burleigh was nearer the troth than he dreamt.

"Anyway," Burleigh went on, "you can't appoint Tweedy kaptein of St. Sam's without an election. It would be flying in the face of tradition. From time immemorial, the St. Sam's fellows have elected their own kaptein; and any member of the Sixth has the right to stand for election."

"That is so," agreed the Head, reluctantly. "I suppose there will have to be an election. I will announce to the school that you have been kompelled to resign your duties through ill-health—nothing but the troth, you old seamp!"

Burleigh. "The troth is that you provoked me into telling you eggsactly what I thought of you, and then turned on me and sacked me from the kaptiny. Of course, I shall stand for re-election. The school traditions allow me to do so."

"Butter the beastly horrid traditions!" growled the Head. "They are always cropping up to thwart me in my designs. I can't stop you from standing for reelection; but I warn you that you will be fighting a losing battle against Tweedy. The

boys will vote for him to a man!"

Burleigh

"I know the boys better than you," he said. "During my kaptiny, I have won their hearts by my just and manly rule; and I have become so popular as to be a public idol. Do you imagine, then, that the fellows will be such fools as to elect a newcomer to the kaptiny—a cheeky little puppy in Oxford bags, who has risen to the Sixth Form by unfair influence with the Headmaster?"

"Shush! Shush!" said the Head, hastily. "Before you say what you think, Burleigh, you should be careful to think what you say. Your words give me grave pain. If you suggest that there is any collusion between me and Tweedy—that I am filly of corruption in this matter—"

"Your conscience will tell you whether there is any troth in my suggestion," answered Burleigh, with a shrug. "I'm going to get a bath now, and I hope you won't play any more of these tactical jokes, as you call them."

So saying, Burleigh strode out of the study, leaving the Head stroking his long white beard in deep cogitation.

"Dear me!" murmured the Head. "Things are not panning out quite so smoothly as I could wish. It is not such a simple matter, after all, to knock down one kaptein and set up another. The time-honored traditions of this school must be observed, and I must order an election. Tweedy and Burleigh will be rival candidates, and I shall have to support Tweedy by every means in my power, and see that he wins the election. Otherwise—" and again a gasp of anger crept over the Head's face—"I shall have to reckon with Tweedy's father! And I can eggscuse no merriness from that merseony man. I owe him the munny for a pair of trowis; and while that debt is hanging over my head I shall be pecked with his percy-cutions—unless I foolfill my solemn pledge to see that his son Cuthbert is elected Kaptein of St. Sam's!"

That was how the matter stood. Small wonder, then, that the Head's face was creased and wrinkled with care, as he walked slowly away to his own study.

"Well, I dare!" retorted the Head. "Consider yourself sacked, Burleigh! And if you dare to argue the case with me, I shall sack you from the school into the bargain!"

Burleigh turned pale beneath his soot and flower and red ink.

"I suppose I must nuckle under to your commands," he muttered. "But I should like to know what your little game is! I have always given satisfaction as skipper of this school. By my own efforts, I have lifted St. Sam's into the front rank of our public schools. When I was first made kaptein, the place was little better than a reformatory. Why should you suddenly turn on me like this, and sack me?"

"Because you have been grossly dis-pertinent!" said the Head.

"My hat! You didn't suppose I was going to fall on your neck and embrace you, after you played that rotten trick on me?"

The Head shrugged his shoulders.

"What you describe as a rotten trick, Burleigh, was merely a tactical joke on my part," he said. "But I'm not going to deem my dignity by agreeing with you. You are hereby deposed from the kaptiny, and my decree will be made public this evening."

Burleigh pondered for a minute or two.

"Who are you going to make kaptein in my place?" he asked.

"Cuthbert Tweedy," said the Head promptly.

"That little whippet-snapper!" cried Burleigh, contemptibly. "He is no more fit to be kaptein of St. Sam's than a Fossil, the



straight to the point. "What about my son? Is he kaptein of St. Sam's yet?"

"Not yet," faltered the Head. "But he soon will be. He has got one foot in the kaptiny already."

"One foot!" snorted Mr. Tweedy. "I want him to get both feet in it, and both hands, and his body and sole into the bargain! What's the meaning of all this delay—hey? Why haven't you carried out my wishes?"

"I have not been idle, Mr. Tweedy. My efforts on behalf of your son have been untiring. I had him promoted from the Fourth Form into the Fifth, and from the Fifth into the Sixth. And I have now paved the way for him to become kaptein of the school. Before this can be done, however, an election is necessary. There are such things as school traditions, and I cannot do anything which is contrary to them. The boys must elect their own kaptein, and I cannot interfere. But I will see that your son is elected. You'd better!"

"You'd better!" said Mr. Tweedy grimly. "I will give you two more days, and if Cuthbert isn't kaptein of the school by then, you will have from me a letter?"

"Does that mean that you will write me a letter?" asked the Head innocently.

"It does not, sir! It means that I shall lay your own birch-rod about your shoulders! It means, also, that I shall see you in the county court for an unpaid debt. There is a little matter of a pair of trowis—"

"Don't!" pleaded the Head. "I am sick and tired of hearing about those trowis. They have caused me a sixpence's worth of sleepless nights—"

"And they will cost you a good many more, unless you buck up and carry out your promises!" said Mr. Tweedy. "I am a man of my word, Doctor Birchmell, and if Cuthbert isn't kaptein of St. Sam's within the specified time, you will know what to expect!"

So saying, the stalwart tailor gave the Head's nose a painful tweak, and took his departure.

That evening, in Big Hall, the Head dropped a bombshell on St. Sam's by announcing that Burleigh of the Sixth had been chucked out of the kaptiny, and was to seek reelection, with Tweedy as a rival candidate.

"The election will take place to-morrow," said the Head. "You will vote