

LAUGH AND GROW FAT . . . READ OUR SCHOOL YARNS, BOYS!

The

No. 995. Vol. XXXI.

Week Ending March 12th, 1927.

# Magnet 2<sup>d</sup>

EVERY  
MONDAY.

LIBRARY



**WHO PUT THE CRACKERS IN THE GRATE?**

*(A sparkling incident in the grand long complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars—insille.)*





Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his chums. Write to him when you are in trouble or need advice. A stamped and addressed envelope will ensure a speedy reply. Letters should be addressed: The Editor, THE MAGNET LIBRARY, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

#### "POOR OLD BUNTER!"

FOUR loyal Magnetites from Hertford feel rather cut up at the way Billy Bunter is treated by his fellow Removites at Greyfriars. That he gets more kicks than pence all of us will agree, and the majority of us, too, are unanimous in our verdict that he deserves them. These four chums from Hertford appreciate Billy Bunter very much; they are also lovers of fair play, and their spokesman tells me that he and his chums would like to see Bunter filling a real hero's part. It's a good idea, but it has been "done before" on more than one occasion. Still, I will pass it on to Mr. Frank Richards for consideration. Many thanks for your letter, "L. J. P.," "B. P.," "D. P.," and "R. H.," of Hertford.

#### FROM WILLESDEN!

"Back," of Willesden, tells me that he is desirous of taking up boxing as a living. His age is sixteen; he weighs nine stone, his height is 5 ft. 2½ ins., and his chest measurement is 35 ins. From these particulars, it is easy to see that "Back" is a sturdy fellow, and, other things being equal, the boxing-ring might offer him better opportunities than any other profession. Beyond that I cannot say, for his letter is brief. Now he wants to know of a club "close handy" that he could join, presumably a club where fellows forgather to don the mitts. I do not know of a club of that description in Willesden, but my correspondent could ascertain if there is such a place from the local swimming baths. Anyway, he could try there.

#### FROM LONDON!

From "P. M.," of London, comes a suggestion that the "Greyfriars Herald" should be revived in the MAGNET; that the present Dicky Nugent yarns should be made shorter, and that the old contributors like Dick Penfold, Tom Brown, Vernon-Smith, etc., should come into their "own" again. Now this matter has been put to the vote already, with the result that the majority of readers pre-

ferred a "long" Dicky Nugent story, a serial, and an extra-long Harry Wharton & Co. story—just such a programme as is shown in the copy of the MAGNET now in your hands. I'm afraid, then, "P. M.," that a change cannot be made just yet, although I appreciate the spirit in which your suggestions were made. Write me again.

#### CHAPS!

There are plenty of remedies, some good, some less so, for the chaps, cracked lips, and skin roughness which go along with this season. I sympathise with Bert Adams, who writes to tell me of his worries in this line. He lives at Bedford, where you can feel as cold as almost anywhere. After a cross-country run Bert finds his face and hands jolly painful. He ought to get an emollient from the chemist. This will be good for outward application when the skin is not broken. His tendency this way shows, however, that he needs to take more fat food. There is a salve for cracked lips, but in extreme cases a bit of court-plaster must be used. The cracked lip is one of the most painful things out, as my Bedford pal has found, for he has a great sense of humour. Whenever he laughs the pain is excessive. I counsel him to hurry up with that salve, and he might wear a label till it operates: "Don't tell me anything funny. I have a cracked lip." For the life of me I don't know what to say about his reading the Bunter yarns, for he is a keen Magnetite, and it's like asking for trouble to hope he will read the latest about the Owl. There's something to make him howl!

#### THE "SCHOOLBOYS' OWN" LIBRARY.

There are now on sale two new numbers of this famous library, containing delightful yarns written by Frank Richards and Owen Conquest respectively. Number 47 is entitled: "The Greyfriars Hustler!" and it deals with the arrival of Fisher Tarleton Fish, the amazing boy from the States. The companion volume—"The Colonial Co.!" features Jimmy Silver & Co., the Cheery Chums of Rookwood. Both of these handy-sized volumes are well worth reading. Try one, or both, of them to-day, chums!

#### Next Monday's Programme:

##### "BUNTER'S BRAIN-STORM!"

This yarn, by Frank Richards, is a peach, and for hearty laughs it would be impossible to find its equal. Mind you read it, boys!

##### "THE TRAIL OF ADVENTURE!"

Look out for another grand instalment of this rousing serial, chums; also keep your peepers open for

##### "FEARLESS TO THE RESCUE!"

That's the next "eggsiting" story by Dicky Nugent. Order your MAGNET early; saves disappointment, you know. Cheerio, chums!

YOUR EDITOR.

## TALK ABOUT GOOD STUFF!

### I wouldn't miss it for anything!

"I get round to the shop bright an' early Wednesday mornings, an' the first thing I start on is that long yarn about Pete. Gosh, that nigger's a real scream—makes me bust o' laughing at the things he does, an' you can't read about him anywhere else than in the "Boys' Realm." Once he made that lion of his wear a bowler hat—talk about a joke! He calls the lion a Peruvian mousehound—some mouser! I like those three sailor chaps pretty nearly as much as Pete—specially Dusty Rhodes and Corny. Corny isn't a sailor, though, he's a camel, and he keeps on turning up when they don't want him. Give me the "Boys' Realm" o' Wednesday's, and I don't want anything else once I get dug into the good stuff inside it. The only way they could improve it is to bring it out twice a week—I could always find an extra twopence for it!"





**THE CHAMPION JAPER!** Roger Quelch has a marked propensity for practical jokes—that's why he's been sent to Greyfriars and placed under the wing of his uncle, Henry Quelch, master of the Remove. But that doesn't cure Roger of his practical joking! On the contrary, he comes out stronger than ever, for he's—

# Fed Up with Greyfriars!



A Rollicking New Long Complete Story of the Chums of Greyfriars, introducing Mr. Quelch's amazing nephew Roger.

By **FRANK RICHARDS.**

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### A Rag in the Remove!

**B**UZZZZZ!  
All the Remove fellows started and stared.

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, jumped up from the high chair at the master's desk, as if galvanised.

There was, of course, no telephone in the Remove Form-room at Greyfriars. Yet it was a buzz exactly like that of a telephone bell that had echoed through the room.

Really, it was amazing!

Mr. Quelch looked amazed. He also looked wrathful. He grabbed the cane from his desk, and fixed his eyes upon his class, with an expression that the fabled Gorgon might have envied.

"What boy has brought a bell into the Form-room?"

Mr. Quelch's voice was not loud, but deep. Its tones were calculated to strike terror to the heart of the offender.

There was no answer from the Remove.

From Harry Wharton, the captain of the Form, down to Billy Bunter, at the bottom of the class, the juniors were silent.

Mr. Quelch paused, like Brutus, for a reply. But he did not pause long. His eyes glinted as he came nearer to his class.

"Someone has introduced a bell into the Form-room," he said. "I command that boy to stand forward."

No one stirred.

"Doubtless," continued the Remove master, "this is intended as a practical joke. The boy concerned must learn that the Form-room is no place for practical jokes. Once more, I command him to stand forward."

Once more Mr. Quelch commanded in vain.

He waited.

But the Removites sat tight. The offender, whoever he was, obviously had no intention of owning up.

Some of the fellows looked at their desks, some at one another. All of them seemed anxious not to catch the Form master's eye. Nobody desired the particular attention of Mr. Quelch at that moment.

The Remove master breathed hard.

"Some boy in this class has a bell in his pocket, or in his desk," he said. "That is clear. For the last time, I command that boy to stand out before the class."

The Remove fellows sat as if frozen to their forms.

"Very well!" said Mr. Quelch, between his closed lips. "Very well! Very well, indeed!"

His tone indicated that it was far from well. He gave the silent class a last searching look, and went back to his desk. A general search of the Form certainly should have revealed the offending bell; but it would have taken up most of the time assigned for third lesson. The juniors would not have minded that. But Mr. Quelch minded very much. He went back to his desk.

"My only hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "What silly ass is playing that silly trick? Quelch will scalp him when he knows!"

"The scalpfulness will be terrific," murmured Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"Hurree Singh!"

The name was rapped out like a bullet.

"Yes, sir," murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"You were speaking in class."

"The speakfulness was very small, and merely instantaneous, esteemed sahib."

Probably Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh meant momentary; but the English he had learned from Mook Mookerjee, the wisest moonshee at Bhanipur, was not

exactly like the language spoken at Greyfriars.

"Take a hundred lines!"

"Esteemed sir——"

"Silence!"

Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh sat down again. Mr. Quelch's expression hinted that another word might mean the cane instead of lines.

There was silence in the Form-room; the Remove fellows bending their heads sedulously over their Latin prose papers. Mr. Quelch, standing by his high desk, watched them. Mr. Quelch's eyes, often compared by his pupils to gimlets, on account of their piercing qualities, had never seemed so like gimlets as at the present moment. He had not forgotten that sudden and startling buzzing of a bell, and he was seeking to detect the culprit.

But he searched face after face in vain for signs of guilt. Certainly, some of the juniors looked rather scared; but that was only to be expected, when Mr. Quelch was in a "wax." Billy Bunter looked quite alarmed. Skinner was uneasy; there was no bell in his pocket, but there were some cigarettes there, and Skinner quite shivered at the bare idea of a search. One or two of the fellows were grinning, as if they found something amusing in the incident. One face was quite unconscious—bent seriously and thoughtfully over Latin prose: the face of Roger Quelch, the Form master's nephew.

Yet it was upon that serious and thoughtful face that Mr. Quelch's glance lingered longest.

However, as the Form settled down to work, the Remove master sat down at last in the high chair at his desk.

Buzzzzzz!

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

Buzzzzzzzz!

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 995.



The insistent, incessant buzzing of a bell, apparently an electric bell, echoed through the Form-room from end to end.

Every fellow in the Remove looked up from his paper.

"Who on earth——" ejaculated Johnny Bull.

"What the thump——"

"My only hat!"

Buzzzzzzzz!

It was going on, without ceasing. Mr. Quelch jumped off his chair, grasped his cane, and strode across to the class. The buzz ceased.

"This is intolerable!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "What member of this class has a bell in his possession?"

No answer.

"Every boy will stand up and turn out his pockets."

The Removites stood up, and began to turn out their pockets on the desks before them.

Mr. Quelch watched them with glinting eyes.

"Bunter!" he rapped out.

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped the Owl of the Remove.

"There is still something in your pocket."

"Oh, no, sir!"

"Come here, Bunter."

"Oh, lor'!"

The fat junior unwillingly "came there." One of his pockets was bulging: a circumstance that had not escaped the Remove master's gimlet eye.

"You have spoken untruthfully, Bunter."

"Oh, dear!"

"Turn out that pocket at once."

"There—there isn't a bell there, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"Turn it out instantly."

Billy Bunter reluctantly turned out the pocket. Nothing remotely resembling a bell came to light. But Mr. Quelch was treated to the view of a sticky mass composed of aniseed balls, toffee, and chocolate. Evidently Bunter had not expected to get through third lesson without a little refreshment.

"Disgusting!" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

"I—I say, sir——"

"How dare you bring sweets into the Form-room! Are you not aware, Bunter, that that is strictly forbidden?"

"Nunno, sir—I—I mean, yes, sir."

"Throw that sticky mess into the waste-paper basket at once."

"Oh, lor'!"

"Now hold out your hand."

Swish!

"Whooop!"

"Silence! Go back to your place, Bunter! Skinner, stand out before the class. You have not turned out all your pockets."

Skinner came forward cheerily. While Mr. Quelch's attention was fastened on Bunter, Harold Skinner had dropped three cigarettes to the floor and squashed them under his boot. So he came forward confidently.

"Turn out your pockets under my eyes."

"Certainly, sir," said Skinner blandly.

He drew out the lining of his pockets to demonstrate that they were empty. With the eye farthest from Mr. Quelch he winked at Snoop.

But Mr. Quelch was a much more downy bird than Skinner guessed. He gave a sniff, and then another sniff.

"The lining of your jacket pocket smells of tobacco, Skinner."

"Oh!"

"You have recently had cigarettes in your possession."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY,—No. 995.

"Oh, sir! I——"

"Bend over that desk!"

Skinner, with a face that Bob Cherry likened to that of a demon in a pantomime, bent over.

Whack! Whack!

"You may go to your place, Skinner."

Skinner limped back to his place, no longer smiling and bland.

Mr. Quelch's gimlet eye roved over the class. Every pocket had been turned out, and assortments of all sorts of articles were displayed to view; but there was no bell among them. Mr. Quelch passed among the desks, examining them. Not a desk or a shelf escaped his lynx-eyes. But there was no sign of a bell.

"Bless my soul!" murmured Mr. Quelch, as he gave up the fruitless search at last.

Really, it was perplexing.

Twice a bell had buzzed in the Form-room; and the only possible conclusion to be drawn was that some practical joker had brought it in for a "rag" during class.

Yet it was clear as day that not a single fellow in the Remove had a bell in his possession.

Mr. Quelch walked back to his desk, greatly puzzled. The juniors, with covert smiles, restarted on their Latin prose papers after the interval. Mr. Quelch sat down at his desk with knitted brows.

Buzzzzzzzz!

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### The Mystery of the Form-room!

Buzzzzzz!

It was going on again—going strong.

The Form master sat for a few moments as if petrified, and then fairly bounded from his seat. As if that bound had somehow stopped it, the bell rang off at once, and there was silence.

"Great Scott!" murmured Frank Nugent. "The fellow who's playing that jape is asking for it, and no mistake!"

"But who——" said Wharton.

"Goodness knows!"

"The bell isn't in the class," said Bob Cherry. "It's farther off—seemed to me to come from behind Quelch's desk, not in front of it."

"Can't be a fellow hidden in the cupboard."

"All the fellows are in class."

"Well, it beats me hollow."

"The beatfulness is terrific."

Mr. Quelch was not coming towards his class now. Apparently it had struck him that the buzzing of the bell seemed to proceed from another direction.

Cane in hand, with glinting eyes, the Remove master strode towards the tall cupboard in the wall at the end of the room, where easels and blackboards were kept when not in use.

The big wall-cupboard was large enough to conceal a practical joker, or two or three, for that matter. But how a practical joker could be hidden there, at a time when all Greyfriars fellows were supposed to be in class, was rather a mystery. Still, it certainly was from that direction that the irritating buzz had seemed to proceed; and if the bell was ringing in the cupboard, it seemed assured that it could not ring without a ringer. There was quite a deadly expression on Mr. Quelch's face as he threw wide open the big, heavy door.

The Remove fellows watched him in breathless silence. No one envied the

practical joker, if Mr. Quelch indeed discovered him there.

"Come out!"

No answer from the cupboard.

"I am quite aware that someone is hidden in this cupboard!" said Mr. Quelch. "I command you to step out, you young rascal!"

Not a sound or a movement!

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips, and stepped into the big cupboard himself. Among the easels, blackboards, rolled maps, and other paraphernalia there, a junior might easily have been concealed.

The Remove master proceeded to shift the articles, peering among them with glinting eyes.

There was a strange expression on his face as he stepped forth from the cupboard at last.

His investigation had not revealed the practical joker. It had revealed only the fact that there was no one in the cupboard.

"Bless my soul!" breathed Mr. Quelch.

He came back towards his class, who watched him almost open-mouthed. They were as puzzled as their Form master, and much more entertained.

"Why are you not proceeding with your papers?" demanded Mr. Quelch. "Are you under the impression that you are permitted to slack, as soon as my back is turned for a moment?"

The Removites were instantly deep in Latin prose.

Mr. Quelch's view was that he was shocked at this slacking on the part of his class. The Remove's view was that Mr. Quelch wanted to "take it out" of them because he could not discover the practical joker.

Whichever view was well-founded, obviously it behoved the Removites to be very wary, and on their best behaviour.

They plunged into Latin prose as if they loved it.

Mr. Quelch eyed them grimly, but there really was no pretext for lines or lickings, and he had to swallow his wrath.

While the juniors laboured at Latin, the Form master paced to and fro, his brow dark and grim.

The bell was not heard again; silence reigned save for the scratching of pens.

Mr. Quelch was deeply exasperated, and greatly puzzled. He could have sworn that the buzzing of the bell had proceeded from the Form-room cupboard; yet his own investigation proved that the cupboard was empty. It was very puzzling and very disconcerting.

Such a prank in the Form-room called for the severest punishment. But the delinquent could not be punished without being discovered—it was a case of "first catch your hare." And the exasperated Form master could not catch that elusive hare.

The Latin papers were finished, and Wharton, as head boy of the Form, went along the desks collecting them, to hand in to Mr. Quelch. Mr. Quelch ceased his angry pacing, and sat down at his desk to receive the papers.

Buzzzzzzzz!

Up jumped the Remove master again. "Upon my word! This is intolerable!" he exclaimed, as the buzzing ceased. "This is beyond all bearing! The perpetrator of this foolish prank shall be taken to the headmaster for a flogging!"

Wharton laid the papers on the desk.

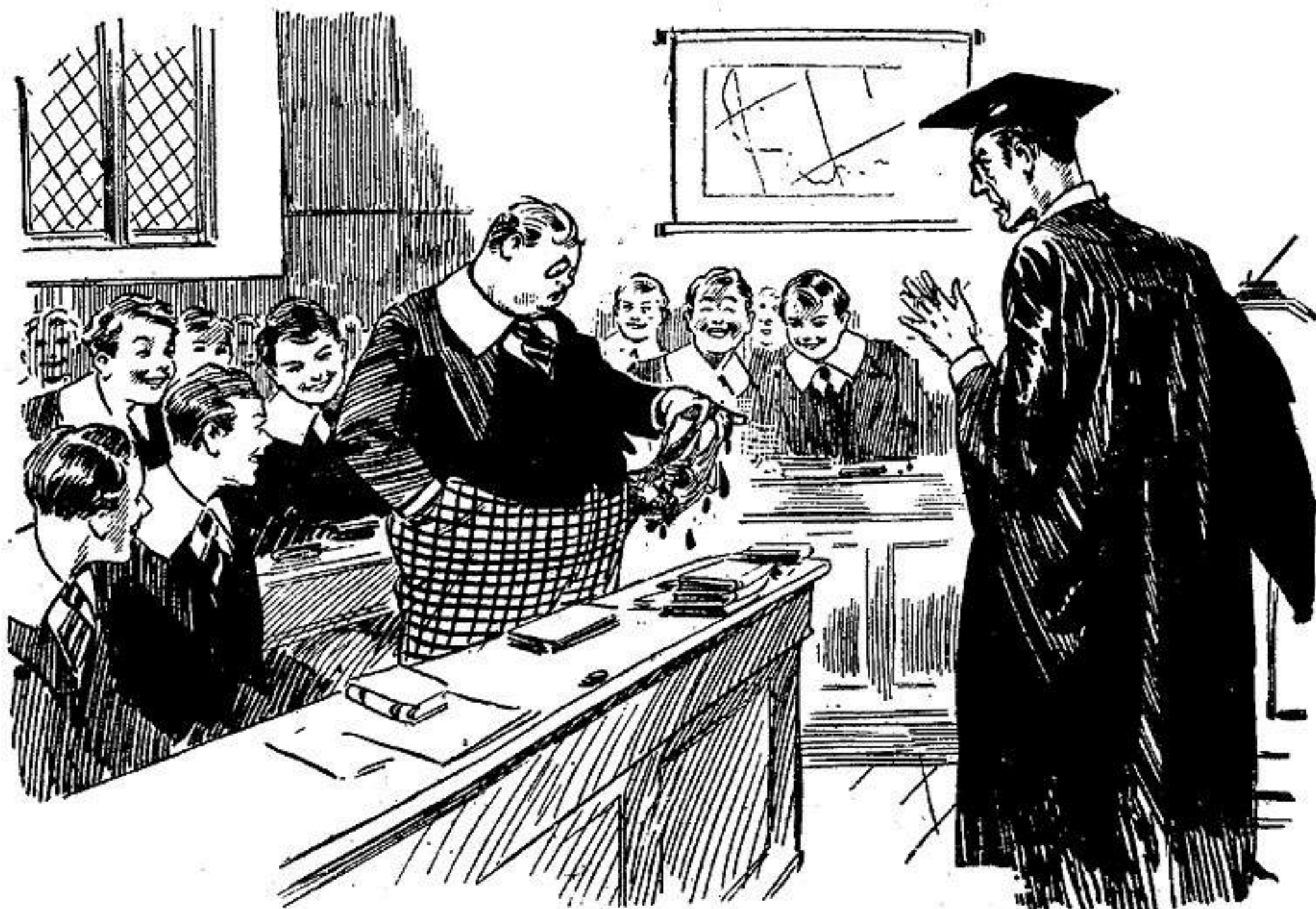
"Roger!"

The Form master's nephew stood up.

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Quelch was "uncle" in private





"Bunter!" rasped Mr. Quelch. "You have spoken untruthfully. Turn out that pocket at once." "There—there isn't a bell there, sir!" gasped Bunter. "Turn it out instantly!" The Owl of the Remove reluctantly obeyed, but instead of a bell coming to light, Mr. Quelch was treated to the view of a sticky mass composed of aniseed balls, toffee, and chocolate. (See Chapter 1.)

and "sir" in the Form-room. Roger Quelch looked at him with innocent inquiry.

"Come here."

Roger came out before the class. He seemed surprised; and the other fellows looked on in surprise also. They could not imagine why Mr. Quelch had picked on his hopeful nephew.

Mr. Quelch's gimlet-eyes seemed to bore into Roger.

Doubtless the Remove master was an affectionate uncle; indeed, he must have been, or he would never have advised his brother to send Roger to Greyfriars to be under the avuncular eye. But he did not look affectionate at this moment. He looked as if the milk of human kindness had been entirely left out of his composition.

"Roger! I trust that I do not suspect you unduly. But I am well aware that at High Coombe you have frequently been punished for playing foolish practical jokes."

"Oh, sir!"

"This propensity has caused you a great deal of trouble at your school, Roger, as your father was apprised in your reports from High Coombe. I have specially warned you that this propensity must be checked at Greyfriars."

"I remember, sir," said Roger meekly.

"Have you a bell of any kind about you?"

"No, sir."

"Turn out your pockets."

"I've done so once, sir!"

"Do so again."

"Very well, sir."

Roger Quelch turned out his pockets, under the grim supervision of his

scholastic uncle. This time Mr. Quelch examined the turned-out lining of each pocket, and the tiniest article could not possibly have escaped his inspection. But there was no bell.

"Wait!" cried Mr. Quelch.

He crossed over to Roger's desk, and examined it for a second time, with the most meticulous care.

But there was no result.

"I—I hope you are satisfied, sir," said Roger, with respectful timidity.

Mr. Quelch gave him a curt nod.

"Dismiss!"

The Remove fellows left the Form-room eagerly enough. With their Form-master in his present mood, they were anxious to give him as wide a berth as possible.

Mr. Quelch followed them out, and shut the Form-room door sharply. The mystery of the buzzing bell remained unsolved.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### The Kind Uncle!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Enjoying life?"

Bob Cherry grinned as he asked that cheery question.

He had come on Roger of the Remove in the quad after dinner; and Roger did not look as if he was enjoying life.

He had a letter in his hand, which he had been reading; and the perusal thereof did not seem to have bucked him.

He gave the cheery Bob a rueful grin.

"Rotten!" he said.

"What's rotten?" asked Bob good-naturedly. "It's a half-holiday, and for once the sun hasn't forgotten to shine, and you're at Greyfriars—what more do you want?"

"I want to be at High Coombe."

"What rot!" said Bob. "Greyfriars is ever so much better than High Coombe, old bean! Take the word of a Greyfriars man."

"It's rotten," said Roger restively.

"I'm a High Coombe man, and I want to be at my own school. I was glad to get a holiday in term time, to visit my uncle. But—"

"But there's too much uncle?" grinned Bob.

"Well, how would you like it?" asked Roger. "Nunky's a good sort, and I like him. But he wants me to swot for scholarships and things, and keep up the giddy intellectual record of the Quelch family. Nearly every dashed man in our family has been distinguished in the scholastic line, and my uncle thinks I'm a slacker because I don't want to shine in the same way. He says I've got the brains if I choose to use them."

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Perhaps you have," he remarked. "They're not much in evidence, but they may be there!"

"Oh, don't rot!" said Roger dolorously. "I'm fed up. I'm going to make the name of Quelch known in quite a different way—it's time they had a sportsman in the family. I don't care a rap about getting scholarships so long as I can get goals."

"Hear, hear!" grinned Bob.

"Tain't only that," went on Roger, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 995.



full of his grievance. "But you see my friends are all at my school—all my interests, and everything. This letter is from my football captain—he wants to know when I'm coming back, and warns me to be in time for the biggest football match of the season. I'm wanted, you see! I want to go back to High Coombe."

"Well, it's not settled that you stay at Greyfriars, is it?" asked Bob. "I understood that you were here on a visit."

"That's so; but my uncle wants me to stay on permanently in the Remove, and he has advised my father to place me here. The pater thinks no end of his advice."

"After all, Greyfriars is a jolly good place," suggested Bob. "It's over so much better than High Coombe, or Harrow, or Eton, or any other second-rate show you can mention."

"Fathead!"

"Look here—"

"I don't dislike the place," said Roger. "In fact, I like it! I like the fellows. But I want to go back to my own place."

"Well, I suppose it's natural," said Bob indulgently. "Even a change for the better isn't always pleasant."

"Ass! This is a change for the worse."

"Silly ass! It's nothing of the sort. If you want footer, and can play, we want good men in the Remove eleven. You can depend on Wharton giving you a good show if you're worth it."

"I want to play for my own school—and I tell you I'm wanted there," growled Roger.

"Well, then, why not tell your uncle so?" asked Bob.

"I've told him!"

"And what does he say?"

"The Form master equivalent for rats," said Roger, with a grin. "He thinks my opinion on that subject is mere piffle."

"Perhaps he's right."

"Oh, cheese it!"

Bob Cherry laughed.

"Well, if your pater decides to place you here, his word goes," he said. "You'll have to make the best of it."

"I jolly well sha'n't," said Roger. "There are ways and means! I daresay Uncle Quelchy will get fed up with me! He doesn't like practical jokes, for one thing."

Bob Cherry gave him a quick look.

"My hat! Is that the game? It was you—"

"Keep it dark," said Roger hastily. "The last hasn't been heard of that giddy mysterious, bell yet."

"How on earth did you do it?"

"Easy as falling off a form. But—"

"I say, you fellows," Billy Bunter rolled up. "Your uncle wants you, young Quelch."

"Oh, bother!"

"What a giddy affectionate nephew!" grinned Bunter. "I say, it's not a licking. Old Quelchy was looking quite good-tempered—for him."

"Br-r-r-r!"

Roger walked away to the House, evidently not pleased or gratified by the prospect of an interview with his uncle. It was with the kindest of intentions that Mr. Quelch lectured his nephew, and impressed upon him the necessity for hard work in class and at prep, and selected the various prizes for which Roger was to work if he remained at Greyfriars. But the only effect of Mr. Quelch's heart-to-heart talks was to make Roger determined that he would not remain at Greyfriars.

and that somehow, by hook or by crook, he would get back to his old school.

But it was not a lecture this time. Mr. Quelch's face was quite benignant as his nephew came uneasily into the study.

"Bunter says you sent for me, uncle."

"Yes, Roger. You may sit down, my boy."

Roger sat down.

"I am afraid, Roger, that I did you a little injustice this morning," said Mr. Quelch graciously.

"Oh, uncle!"

"I was extremely annoyed, and I could not help remembering that your master at High Coombe had complained of your propensity for practical joking in season and out of season."

Roger coloured a little.

"I regret it!" said Mr. Quelch.

Roger's colour deepened. His uncle's kindness made him feel as if he were deceiving Mr. Quelch. Yet it was impossible to own up to the trick in the Form-room. If Mr. Quelch had occasion to cane his nephew, he did not let him off lightly on account of his relationship. Rather he laid it on a little more severely on that account.

"Now, in order that you may become better acquainted with some of your Form-fellows, under agreeable conditions, I have decided to ask several boys of my Form to tea this afternoon, Roger. You will take tea here with them, and it shall be—what do you call it—quite a spread! I think, spread is the word," said Mr. Quelch smiling.

"You're very good, uncle," said Roger uncomfortably.

"Not at all, my boy! I desire you to be happy at Greyfriars, and I shall certainly do my best to make you so."

"But—but I'm not staying at Greyfriars—"

"That is practically settled, Roger."

"The pater—"

"Your father has left the decision to me."

"Oh!"

"If I am satisfied with you as a member of my Form, you stay," said Mr. Quelch.

"I—I'm afraid I'm rather a trouble to you, sir—"

"To some extent, that is the case, Roger. But as your uncle, I am prepared to take what trouble is necessary."

"I—I'd rather not give you a lot of trouble on my account, sir," murmured the hapless High Coombe junior.

"Quite so; but I am prepared to do everything in my power to help you to earn distinction as a scholar, Roger. I am prepared to give you extra tuition for an hour every day."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I expect to see you become a credit to the school, and to our family, Roger. You have at present something of a disinclination to hard and steady work. That we shall overcome."

"Oh! But—"

"As soon as it is finally settled that you remain at Greyfriars, I shall enter your name for the Craven prize examination."

"Oh, dear!"

"It will mean hard work, Roger—quite hard work. You will receive every encouragement from me."

Roger had no doubt about that. He suppressed a groan.

"But let that pass, for the moment," said Mr. Quelch. "About our little party this afternoon. What boys would you like to meet?"

Roger considered. He knew that his uncle meant to be kind and gracious, and he did not want to be ungrateful. But he knew—what Mr. Quelch, with

all his extensive knowledge, did not know—that tea under the eyes of a "beak" was rather an awful function. In fact, any junior would have preferred a dinner of herbs in his own quarters, to a stalled ox in a Form master's study. But it was quite impossible to explain all that to Mr. Quelch. His intention was to be kind; and a Form master's kindness was like an invitation from Royalty; not to be refused.

"Wharton and Nugent, sir, as they're my study-mates," said Roger, at last.

"Any others, my boy?"

Apparently the Remove master was going to do the thing in style. He was taking a lot of trouble over this rather troublesome nephew.

"Cherry, and Bull, and Hurree Singh, sir. I've made friends with them."

"I am glad to hear that, Roger, as they are all boys of whom I have a high opinion," said Mr. Quelch. "Please convey my invitation to them, and tell them that tea will be at five o'clock."

"Yes, uncle!"

"There will be quite a good—hem—spread," said Mr. Quelch, with frosty geniality. "I shall telephone to the stores in Courtfield for a supply of—of good things."

Roger was impressed. There were good things to be had at the school shop, kept by Mrs. Mimble, the gardener's wife. But better things, of course, were to be had from Chunkley's Stores, in Courtfield. Undoubtedly, Mr. Quelch was doing this thing in style.

"That is all, Roger," said the Remove master.

"Thank you, uncle!"

"Not at all, my boy!"

Roger Quelch left his uncle's study, not looking so happy as might have been expected in the circumstances.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

### Nothing for Bunter!

"WHAT about a rag on Highcliffe?"

That was Bob Cherry's suggestion.

The Famous Five were discussing what was to be done with the half-holiday. There was no football that afternoon; the Remove were engaged to play the Third, but a match of that calibre was left to the lesser lights of the Remove football club. It was a game that did not require the mighty men of the Form.

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"Better leave Highcliffe alone," he said. "Quelchy got his rag out over the row between his nephew and Pousonby last week. Better give Highcliffe a rest for a bit."

"What about a rag on the Fourth?"

"Oh, Temple, Dabney & Co. ain't worth ragging," said Johnny Bull.

"We haven't had a shindy with the Fifth for some time!" remarked Bob Cherry. "What about ragging Coker of the Fifth?"

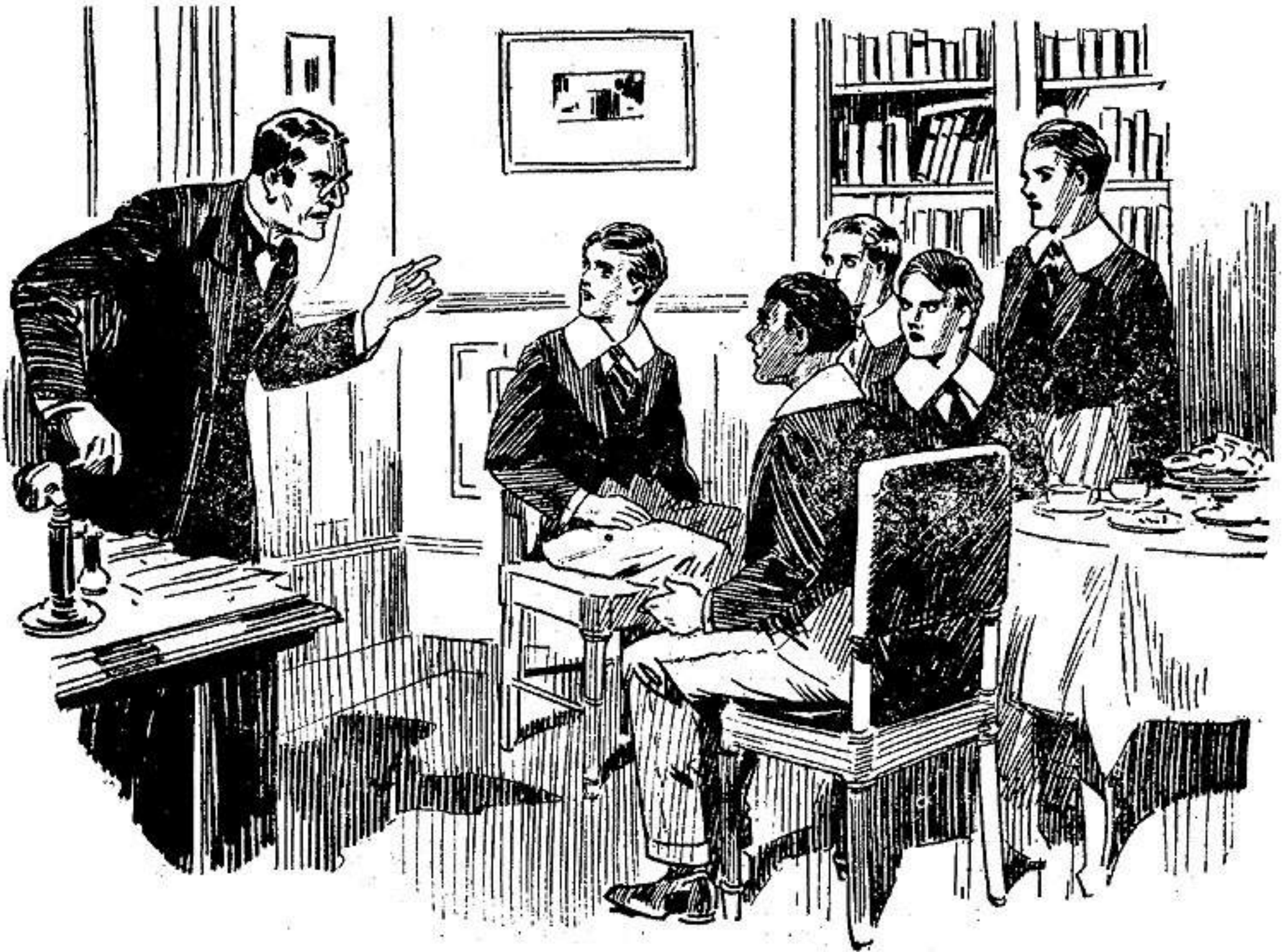
The juniors grinned.

Evidently, Bob desired some strenuous occupation for the afternoon. Bob's thoughts generally ran on strenuous lines.

"Blow Coker of the Fifth," said Nugent. "Let's go for a trot on the cliffs."

"Might butt in at Cliff House to tea," said Bob, with a nod. "I daresay Marjorie will like to see us."





**BUZZZZZ!** Mr. Quelch jumped up, and the expression on his face became terrific. "That was not the telephone!" he exclaimed. "It is a trick! Upon my word! Are these your manners when you are asked to tea with your Form master? Which of you boys has brought a bell into this study?" Harry Wharton & Co. sat silent and dismayed. (See Chapter 5.)

"That's rather a good idea," agreed Wharton.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Oh roll away, Bunter."

Billy Bunter did not roll away; he rolled into No. 1 Study.

"I say, you fellows, if you're going to Cliff House to tea, I don't mind coming."

"Marjorie might mind," suggested Nugent.

"Oh, really, you know——"

"Buzz off, Bunter."

"Young Quelch is looking for you chaps," said Bunter, blinking at the Famous Five through his big spectacles. "He asked me if I'd seen you, and I told him to look in the library."

"You fat ass! We haven't been anywhere near the library."

"That's why I told him to look for you there," answered Bunter cheerfully. "Pulling his leg, you know—he's a silly ass——"

"Is he?" said a voice in the doorway of No. 1. Billy Bunter jumped as a hand was laid on the back of his collar, and spun him round.

"Oh! Is that you, young Quelch?" he gasped. "Leggo! Ow!"

"So I'm a silly ass, what?"

"Nunno! Not at all! Only a j-j-joke!" stuttered Bunter. "Leave off shaking me, you beast! If you make my glasses fall off—ow!—you'll have to pay for them if they get bib-bib-bib-broken—yow!"

Roger Quelch gave the Owl of the Remove a final shake, and sat him down on a chair. Then he turned to the Famous Five.

"I've been looking for you fellows," he said. "That fat idiot sent me rooting about the library for you. You're all asked to tea this afternoon!"

"Thanks, no end," said Bob. "But we're going out, and sha'n't be back till lock-up."

"Thanks all the same," said Wharton.

Roger grinned.

"Please yourselves, of course," he said. "But the invitation is from your Form master."

"Oh!" said the Famous Five, all together.

"It's going to be no end of a spread," said Roger. "My uncle is phoning to the stores at Courtfield for the stuff. Lots of it."

"Your jolly old uncle has good ideas sometimes, kid," said Bob Cherry, laughing. "We'll come—especially as we can't very well do anything else."

"The comefulness is the proper caper when the askfulness proceeds from an esteemed and ridiculous Form master," remarked Hurreo Singh. "Moreoverfully——"

"Good word!" said Roger. "Say that again!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Moreoverfully," said the nabob calmly, "the funfulness is short with our excellent selves, and we are not certainly sure of discovering the beauteous Marjorie at home if we call in at Cliff House buttfully. Therefore, if I may make a suggestive remark——"

"Oh crumbs!" said Roger.

"If I may make a suggestive remark. I should suggest accepting the generous

and ridiculous invitation of the sublime Quelch."

"Greyfriars beats High Coombe in one thing," said Roger Quelch. "There's nobody at High Coombe who can talk English like that."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My esteemed fathhead, I speak English as instructed by Mook Mookerjee, the wisest and most ludicrous moonshee at Bhanipur."

"I don't know what a moonshee is, but I admit that he must be some moonshee if he taught you that giddy English," said Roger. "I wonder my uncle doesn't operate for it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's settled; we're coming to tea, young Quelch," said Bob, laughing. "What's the hour of the execution?"

"Five o'clock."

"Rely on us, then," said Harry Wharton. "We'll go down and watch the football for a bit, you chaps, and encourage the kids."

"Hear, hear!"

"Come along, young Quelch!"

Roger shook his head.

"I'm going to help get ready for the spread," he answered.

"Right-ho! Ta-ta!"

And the Famous Five went down the Remove staircase; while Roger Quelch, as he was about to leave Study No. 1, found his arm grabbed by Billy Bunter.

Bunter, apparently having already forgotten his shaking, bestowed his most amiable and ingratiating grin on the Form master's nephew.

"I say, kid, I'll come," he said. "I



don't mind your uncle's gargoyle face, you know, or his bad manners. I'll come."

"Will you?" said Roger grimly.

"Yes, old chap. With pleasure."

"The pleasure would be all on your side, old fat bean," said Roger. "Besides, my uncle hasn't phoned to the stores to send their whole stock of eatables, so there wouldn't be enough for you."

"Oh, really, you beast——"

"Cut it out, old fat man!"

"Look here, you rotter——"

"Bow-wow!"

Roger Quelch walked out of the study, whistling. Billy Bunter blinked after him with a blink that almost cracked his spectacles, so ferocious was it.

"Beast!" roared Bunter.

Roger chuckled and went down the stairs. The opinion of William George Bunter did not appear to disturb his equanimity in the least.

Bunter rolled into Study No. 7, where he found Peter Todd busy with a variety of ponderous volumes. Peter was engaged upon what he was pleased to call his "legal" studies.

"I say, Peter——" began the Owl of the Remove.

"Shurrup!"

"Old Quelchy is standing a spread for young Quelchy, and they've asked a lot of cads and left me out!"

"Might have asked you, if they're asking cads!" assented Peter. "They must know you're one, if they know you at all."

"Why, you cheeky beast——"

"Shut up! I'm busy."

"I say, Peter, the stuff is coming from Chunkley's Stores, in Courtfield. Mrs. Mible's stuff ain't good enough."

"Quelchy knows something!" grinned Peter Todd. "I've noticed that some of Mrs. Mible's tarts are warranted to kill at forty rods, and her pork-pies have an ancient and fish-like smell."

"I say, Quelchy's gone out for his usual trot," said Bunter. "I saw him. The stuff will be put into his study, as he's having the fellows to tea there. A clever chap like you could nip in——"

"Eh?"

"And bag it—some of it," said Bunter. "Catch on? Like his check to leave us out, you know. Well, let's bag some of the tuck."

"Splendid idea!"

"Good!" said Bunter, his round eyes glistening behind his big spectacles. "Easy as falling off a form, old chap."

Peter Todd looked at him thoughtfully.

"Let's have it clear," he said. "One of us sneaks into Quelchy's study and bags the grub, and the other helps him scoff it afterwards."

"That's it!" said Bunter eagerly.

"Done!" said Peter cheerily.

"Good man! You'll do it?"

"Oh, no!" said Peter. "You'll do it. You bag the grub, and I'll help you scoff it afterwards. See?"

"Nunno! I—I—I meant——"

Peter Todd chuckled.

"I know what you meant, old fat man; and I've told you what I mean. If you want a catspaw, old tulip, you'll have to look farther than this study."

"Look here, Peter Todd, if you funk it——"

"I've told you twice to shut up!" said Peter Todd.

"Funk!" hooted Bunter.

Whiz!

One of Peter's large legal volumes travelled swiftly across the study, and smote William George Bunter on his ample and well-filled waistcoat. There

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was a roar from the Owl of the Remove as he crumpled up.

"Have another?" asked Peter affably.

"Yurooooo!"

"Stop that row, Bunter, when I'm busy."

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Will you shut up?" roared Peter.

"How's a fellow to study when you're kicking up that fearful row, Bunter?"

"Yooooooooooooooooop!"

Whiz!

A second volume dropped on Bunter. It elicited a fiendish yell from the Owl of the Remove.

"There's still another," said Peter Todd. "If you want the lot——"

Billy Bunter did not want the lot. He squirmed out of Study No. 7 and fled.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### Tea with Mr. Quelch!

**M**R. QUELCH stood with a benign if somewhat frosty smile upon his usually severe countenance.

He was in a good humour—in a hospitable humour—and he desired to set his youthful guests at their ease.

The Form master's study was, for once, a land flowing in milk and honey.

The good things had been delivered from Chunkley's Stores. The supply was large, and it was good. There were both quantity and quality. Mr. Quelch had not spared expense in the matter. In his own way, he had a kind heart. He wanted his nephew to be happy and satisfied at Greyfriars, and he wanted to see him on good terms with the best fellows in the Remove; and he wanted to win the junior's liking and confidence. A spread in the study was really an excellent method of securing all those objects. Undoubtedly it was kind of Mr. Quelch.

He had come in from his walk in a good temper, and found the study tenanted only by Roger, who had set the table and made general preparations for the feed. Mr. Quelch nodded approval. It was but seldom that he had fellows to tea with him, though he sometimes did; and six was an unusually large party. Mr. Quelch desired that little party to be a success, and to see general good-humour and satisfaction

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reigning. He desired his guests to forget that he was their Form master, and only to look upon him as a friend and a genial host. It is barely possible that, had the juniors ventured to treat him only as a friend and a host, the Form master would have peeped out again very quickly. Certainly they were not likely to take the risk. A junior who "tea'd" with his Form master was well aware that it was necessary to be circumspect. The function was a good deal like a bold performer taking tea in a lion's cage.

Harry Wharton & Co. arrived quite early, adorned with spotless collars, neat ties, well-brushed hair, and amiable smiles.

Every member of the Famous Five looked as if butter would not melt in his mouth.

No one, looking at them, would have guessed that, only ten minutes ago, they had been shoving Cecil Reginald Temple's head into a coal-locker, and had left the captain of the Fourth coaly and raging for gore.

Mr. Quelch welcomed them benignantly, and if his benignity was a little frosty, he did not intend it to be so. Roger, standing a little behind his uncle as the Remove master welcomed his guests, winked at them—rather disconcertingly. It was a moment when it would have been shocking bad form to laugh; but Roger's wink, just behind his unconscious uncle, was almost too much for the gravity of the five. Perhaps something in their faces struck Mr. Quelch, for he turned a quick eye upon his nephew; but Roger's face was serious when his uncle looked at it, in fact solemn.

"Pray be seated!" said Mr. Quelch.

The guests seated themselves.

There was a slightly chilly atmosphere in the study, which Mr. Quelch endeavoured to dispel by genial conversation. The juniors, unable to forget that he was their Form master, and wielded the power of the cane, answered his remarks in monosyllables. But as the tea and the cake and the other good things circulated, the ice was broken, and the party became more at their ease, and the talk was general and cheery.

Mr. Quelch had tact. He had talked himself to break the ice; but his object was to make his guests talk, and he succeeded at last.

Matters were going on well.

The juniors forgot, to some extent, that they were, so to speak, "tea-ing" in the lion's cage. They were at their ease, and talked cheerily, and asked Mr. Quelch to pass the things, just as if he had been another fellow like themselves, and not a majestic Form master.

But suddenly there came an interruption—a sudden and unexpected interruption.

Buzzzzzzzz!

"Dear me!" said Mr. Quelch. "The telephone! Pray excuse me for a few moments, my dear boys."

Mr. Quelch rose and crossed to the telephone.

The juniors exchanged startled glances.

The buzz had been very like that of a telephone-bell; but the Form master's guests were fairly certain that it had not proceeded from Mr. Quelch's instrument. It did not occur to Mr. Quelch, for the moment, that the practical joker of the Form-room was now repeating his little jest in the Form master's study. But it occurred at once to Harry Wharton & Co.

They looked expressively at Roger.

But if Roger was the guilty party, it



was difficult to say how he had worked it. Certainly there was no bell to be seen in his hands, both of which were visible—one empty, the other dealing with cake.

Mr. Quelch picked up the receiver.

"Number, please?" came through on the wires.

"What? The bell rang!" said Mr. Quelch into the transmitter.

"Sorry you've been troubled."

"Pish!"

Mr. Quelch replaced the receiver, and returned to his seat at the table. The thread of general conversation was resumed.

Five minutes later there was another ring.

Buzzzzz!

Mr. Quelch rose again, and crossed to the telephone, and took up the receiver. Once more a feminine voice from the exchange inquired what number was wanted.

"I have not rung up!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "My bell rang!"

"Sorry you've been troubled!"

"That is all very well," said the Remove master crossly. "But this is the second time I have been disturbed for nothing. I must really beg you to be more careful!"

Mr. Quelch waited for a reply to that. No reply came, but he heard a sweet, feminine voice, apparently in reply to a question from another young lady:

"Only that cross old gentleman at the school."

Mr. Quelch breathed hard, and put up the receiver.

He sat down again at the table, in a state of annoyance, but trying hard to suppress his feelings, and become benignant again. It was not the fault of his schoolboy guests if the exchange persisted in ringing him up for nothing. But Harry Wharton & Co. found it hard to feel at their ease. They were sure now that the bell that had rung was not the telephone-bell, though it sounded like it. The practical joker was at work, and they were assured that the practical joker was the Form master's nephew. It was a very uncomfortable situation, and they began to wish that tea was over—good as the spread was.

Buzzzzzzz!

It was the bell again. Mr. Quelch suppressed an exclamation, and went to the telephone.

"Number, please?"

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "This is really intolerable! I have now been rung up three times for nothing! Madam, I really must request you to be more careful!"

"You have not been rung up, sir!"

"I suppose I can believe my ears!" snapped the Remove master.

"I am sure that your bell did not ring, sir!" came from the exchange. "Perhaps you heard some other bell."

"Nonsense!"

"Really, sir—"

"Rubbish! If the bell rings again for nothing I shall complain to the supervisor."

The sound of a sniff was audible on the telephone, and Mr. Quelch jammed the receiver back on the hooks with a jam that made the instrument rock.

His colour was heightened as he sat down again at the table. Constant mistakes like this at the telephone-exchange were disconcerting and irritating, especially when he was entertaining members of his Form, and desired to be equable and amiable.

Buzzzzzzzzz!

"Bless my soul!"

Mr. Quelch jumped up again. But this time he did not stride across to the

telephone. What had long since dawned on his guests had now dawned on the Remove master. The buzz did not proceed from the telephone-bell!

The expression on Mr. Quelch's face became terrific.

His guests sat almost frozen.

"That was not the telephone!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

His guests were silent.

"Probably it was not the telephone on the previous occasions? It is a trick! Upon my word! The same wretched, foolish trick that was played in the Form-room this morning! Are these your manners when you are asked to tea with your Form master?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"We—wo——" stammered Bob Cherry.

"Esteemed sir——"

"Which of you boys has brought a bell into this study?"

No answer.

"I am shocked—disgusted—pained! Evidently you have made me, your Form master, the victim of a practical joke!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, his face red with wrath. "I could scarcely have believed that you, at least, Wharton, my head boy, would be a party to this!"

Wharton crimsoned.

"I don't know anything about it, sir!"

"I demand to know which of you boys has a bell in his possession!" fumed Mr. Quelch.

Dead silence.

"Very well." Mr. Quelch's tone was grim and bitter. "You are my guests here, and I cannot therefore command you to turn out your pockets. I will only say that I am pained and disgusted. You had better go."

The Remove fellows agreed with Mr. Quelch on that point. Tea was not over, and it was good; but in the circumstances they were glad to go. The tension in the study was really growing painful.

The Famous Five and Roger Quelch left the study in silence, and the door closed on them.

In the passage, Roger grinned.

Bob Cherry, without a word of explanation, suddenly grasped Roger by the collar, and jammed his head against the wall.

Bang!

"Whoop!" roared Roger.

Bang!

"Oh, my hat! Leggo! I——"

Bang!

And the Famous Five walked away, Roger following them more slowly, rubbing his damaged head.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### Bad for Bunter!

**B**ILLY BUNTER grinned. Bunter was in Masters' passage, when the Form master's guests left the study and departed.

A few minutes later Mr. Quelch came out, with a very ruffled brow, and strode away towards Masters' room.

He shut the study door after him, but not before Billy Bunter had had a glimpse of the tea-table, still well spread.

Mr. Quelch, without noticing the fat junior, strode away and disappeared; and Bunter grinned gleefully.

Something evidently had happened to interrupt the tea-party in the Form master's study; what it was Bunter did not know, and did not care. He had

been left out of the tea-party, but a spread had an irresistible attraction for him, and he had haunted the neighbourhood of the study, like a fat Peri at the gate of Paradise. Now an unexpected chance had come. The guests were gone, Mr. Quelch was gone, the study was vacant, and good things galore still adorned the tea-table.

Bunter blinked cautiously up and down the passage, and then fairly bolted into the Form master's study.

He shut the door after him, and jumped to the tea-table.

In a moment a cake was in his grasp; in another moment that cake was being disposed of as fast as Bunter's jaws could masticate—and they could masticate very fast. Bunter's jaws had had a lot of practice in that line.

The fat junior beamed happily over the table.

He had been left out of the spread; but he had come in at the finish. The only danger was that Mr. Quelch might return and find him there. That had to be risked. Bunter was not of the stuff of which heroes are made, but he was prepared to take risks for a feed. Even if he was found there, and caned for his impudence, he would have suffered in a good cause—he would have had the spread.

Bunter's fat jaws worked with astonishing rapidity.

The six guests and Mr. Quelch, all together, had not cleared the board at such a rate as Bunter on his own. Where the Owl of the Remove put it all was a mystery. But he put it somewhere, only pausing for a moment to unfasten his lowest waistcoat button, and a few minutes later pausing for another moment to unfasten the second button.

Happy and shiny and sticky, Bunter went on, forgetful of time and space and everything else, in the enjoyment of that gorgeous feed.

He was in the seventh heaven.

But he was suddenly brought back to earth by the sound of a footstep outside the study door.

Bunter stopped, with a jam-tart half-way to his mouth.

Mr. Quelch was returning.

What Mr. Quelch had intended to do with the stack of good things left over from the unfinished spread Bunter did not know; but he knew that the Form master certainly had not intended Bunter to butt into his study and guzzle them. Bunter quaked.

A hand was on the door-handle when Bunter, in dire terror, plunged out of sight under the table.

It was a large table, and afforded the Owl of the Remove good cover, so long as anyone did not actually stoop and look beneath it.

The door opened; and Bunter, crouching in terror, had a view of Mr. Quelch's whisking gown.

Trotter, the House page, followed Mr. Quelch in.

"You may clear this table, Trotter," said Mr. Quelch.

"Yessir!"

"Take the things to the House-dame, and request her to make use of them."

"Yessir."

Bunter crouched in silence.

He hoped fervently that Mr. Quelch would not observe the enormous reduction that had taken place in the things that were to be sent to the house-keeper for disposal. He hoped, too, that the Form master would only remain as long as Trotter, who was already packing the goods on a tray. If Mr. Quelch had come to stay, Bunter's position was really unnerving. He suppressed his



breathing as much as he could, and tried to keep still; but it was difficult to keep quite still in a cramped position under a table.

Buzzzzzzzz!

The sudden metallic buzzing of a bell awoke the echoes of the study.

Mr. Quelch jumped.

Bunter, under the table, supposed that it was the telephone-bell that had rung. Mr. Quelch, who was standing near the telephone, was quite aware that it was not.

"Bless my soul! What—what—"

Buzzzzz.

"The telephone, sir," said Trotter.

"It was not the telephone—it is not the telephone!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "Is it you Trotter, who are playing this foolish and disrespectful trick?"

"Me, sir!" gasped Trotter.

Buzzzzzzzz!

The buzzing of the bell was continuous. It did not cease for a single moment.

Trotter stared round the study in perplexity. He could see now that it was not the telephone-bell that was ringing. But where the sound came from was a mystery.

"Someone is concealed in the study!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

Bunter quaked.

Buzzzzz.

The raucous ringing never ceased. It was the first time that it had sounded so continuously; and the incessant sound was a guide to Mr. Quelch. He succeeded in "placing" it at last; he followed it home, as it were, and stooped over the fender, where it seemed loudest. His eyes almost bulged from his majestic head as he discerned a tiny electric bell, concealed in the ornamental steel scroll of the fender.

"Goodness gracious!"

Mr. Quelch fairly grabbed up the bell.

It still rang, in his hand, as he grabbed it up. It continued to ring, with the Form master staring at it like a man in a dream.

"Oh, my eye!" gasped Trotter.

Mr. Quelch's grim jaw set hard.

From the bell ran an insulated wire, disappearing under the hearthrug, which was a large rug, and filled the space between the fender and the table. Mr. Quelch jerked the rug aside, and revealed the wire running under the table. Obviously, it was connected up with a dry battery hidden there; Mr. Quelch could see that it was an electric bell.

"Upon my word!"

Mr. Quelch stooped, and glared under the table.

"Oh, lor'!"

"Come forth!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Owl!"

The dismayed Owl of the Remove rolled from under the table. The buzz of the bell, which had continued till that moment, ceased as if by magic.

Trotter, with a loaded tray, left the study, giving Bunter a compassionate glance as he went. Anyone might have felt compassion for the hapless Owl at that moment. The expression on Mr. Quelch's face could only be compared to that of a famished tiger in sight of his prey.

"Bunter! It was you!" roared Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, no, sir! I—I wasn't there—"

"What?"

"I—I mean—" stuttered the hapless Owl.

"You were hidden under my table! You have been playing this—this iniquitous trick on your Form master."

"Nunno, sir! I—I—"

"You played the same wretched

prank in the Form-room this morning!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, lor'! No, sir! Not at all, sir! I—I—I—"

"How dare you deny it, Bunter, when at this very moment I find you concealed under my table, causing the bell to ring—"

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I never made it ring. I—I thought it was the telephone bell, sir. I—I wondered why you didn't go to the phone, sir—I did really!"

"Wretched boy! How dare you tell me such untruths!"

Bunter's fat knees knocked together. For once he was telling the truth; he knew nothing whatever of the hidden electric bell, and had not the faintest idea what had started it ringing. But his reputation as an Ananias was against him, as well as the suspicious circumstances in which he had been discovered.

"I shall take you to your headmaster, Bunter! This matter is too serious for a mere caning."

"Oh, crikey!"

"You will be severely flogged!" hooted Mr. Quelch.

"Owl! I—I say, sir—"

"Enough! Follow me!"

"But—but I never did it, sir!" shrieked Bunter. "I swear I never did, sir. I never knew anything about that bell, sir. Oh, dear!"

Mr. Quelch paused. Bunter's word was about as reliable as that of Baron Munchausen. But for once the Remove master was impressed by his terrified earnestness. For once there was the ring of truth in his voice.

"If that is the case, Bunter, what were you doing in my study, hidden under the table?"

"I—I dodged there, sir!" groaned the Owl of the Remove. "I—I heard you coming, sir, and—and dodged—"

"What were you doing in my study at all?"

"I—I—I—"

Mr. Quelch, scanning the scared face of the Owl of the Remove, detected there smears of jam and crumbs of cake. It dawned upon him what Bunter had been in the study for.

"Wretched boy! You came in here to help yourself to the eatables that were left on the table?"

"Owl! I—I was hungry, sir—"

"Nonsense!"

"I—I thought you—you wouldn't mind, sir—"

"You thought nothing of the kind, Bunter."

"Oh dear!"

Silence!

Mr. Quelch pulled the study table aside, and proceeded to follow up the clue of the insulated wire. A tiny dry battery was discovered, fastened to a leg of the table, out of sight unless carefully looked for. It was connected up with a flat press-button. When that button was pressed, of course the bell in the fender was bound to ring. And the button, under the table, was in reach of the foot of any one of the juniors who had "tea'd" with Mr. Quelch. It was clear now why the bell had rung when Bunter was under the table. The Owl of the Remove had sat on the button!

Mr. Quelch's brow grew more and more thunderous as he thus elucidated the mystery.

"Bunter! Did you place this contrivance here?"

"Oh dear! No, sir! I never knew it was there!" gasped Bunter, who had

watched the Form master's investigation with staring, astonished eyes.

"I believe you, Bunter—"

"Oh, thank you, sir!" stuttered Bunter.

"Someone else was guilty of this disrespectful prank. But you will be punished for entering my study without permission and concealing yourself, Bunter."

"Oh, really, sir—"

"Hold out your hand, Bunter."

Swish!

"Yaroooh!"

"The other hand!"

Swish!

"Yooooooooooooop!"

"You may go!"

Bunter was only too glad to go.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### The Culprit!

**M**R. QUELCH stood in his study, with the electric bell in his hand, and a thunderous frown on his brow.

He knew now what had happened; and he was able to deduce from it how the trick had been played in the Form-room that morning.

His wrath was deep.

This contrivance—this iniquitous contrivance—had been fixed up in his study by some member of the tea-party; and the bell had rung whenever the practical joker had stretched out his foot under the table and pressed the button with his boot.

Such a jape was absolutely unheard-of; it was almost beyond belief that any fellow should venture to play such a trick on a Form master—especially such a Form master as Henry Quelch.

The look on Mr. Quelch's speaking countenance indicated that the japer was likely to hear more about it.

He laid down the iniquitous contrivance at last, and left the study. With a grim brow, he strode away to the Remove Form-room.

There he proceeded to make another examination.

He recalled that the offending bell had rung in the Form-room that morning, whenever he had sat down on the high chair at his desk. So he knew where to begin his research.

The Form-room had been locked up since classes. So he had no doubt of discovering another iniquitous contrivance there.

It did not take him long.

There was a "sorbo" cushion on the high chair at the Form master's desk, and when Mr. Quelch lifted that cushion he revealed a flat press-button, similar to the one found in his study.

From that button an insulated wire ran, cunningly twisted out of sight under the chair.

The wire disappeared through a crack between two planks of the polished floor, widened in one spot by the judicious use of a penknife.

That wire, evidently, connected the press-button with a bell and a battery, concealed at a distance.

Mr. Quelch, with gleaming eyes, pursued his investigations.

In the floor of the big wall-cupboard was a short section of board, which on examination showed signs of having been recently prised up.

Mr. Quelch needed to discover no more.

The iniquitous joker had evidently been at work in the Form-room during morning break. Beneath the floor of the Form-room was a space five or six





Noticing the wire, Mr. Quelch stooped and glared under the table. "Upon my word! Bunter!" he gasped. "Oh, lor'!" "Come forth!" thundered the Remove master. "Ow!" The dismayed Owl of the Remove rolled from under the table, and the buzz of the bell, which had continued till that moment, ceased as if by magic. (See Chapter 6.)

feet deep. By removing the loose board in the cupboard floor the japer had been able to introduce himself into that space. The rest was easy—and the bell and the dry battery were evidently hidden under the loose board.

Mr. Quelch breathed hard and deep. But for the discovery in his study, he would never have suspected all this; and doubtless, when lessons began the following day there would have been a recurrence of the ringing of the mysterious bell during classes.

Who had done this?

What disrespectful, iniquitous, abandoned young rascal had ventured to pull the august leg of his Form master in this manner?

Mr. Quelch had a suspicion. He knew that Johnny Bull of the Remove dabbled in electrical experiments, and that he had a lot of electrical paraphernalia in his study. These wires, and bells, and dry batteries, and the rest, had doubtless come from Johnny Bull's stock. And Bull had been a member of Mr. Quelch's tea-party.

But the Remove master, though deeply incensed, was not hasty. As his pupils sometimes said, he was a beast, but a just beast.

There was to be no doubt of the guilt of the culprit before punishment was administered. But when the guilt was clear, the punishment was to be something like a record in punishments.

Mr. Quelch left the Form-room with compressed lips and a glitter in his gimlet eyes.

He came on Loder of the Sixth in the passage, and called to him:

"Loder!"

"Yes, sir?" said the prefect, coming up.

"Will you be kind enough to assemble the Remove in their Form-room?"

"Certainly, sir."

The look on Mr. Quelch's face showed that the Remove were not to be assembled for any agreeable purpose. The bully of the Sixth set about his task of rounding them up quite cheerfully. The more the Remove were licked the better it was all round, in the opinion of Gerald Loder of the Sixth Form.

Mr. Quelch waited in the Form-room for the juniors to arrive.

They came in, in ones and twos and threes, all of them looking surprised at this unexpected summons.

Some of them looked indignant, too; it was a half-holiday, and they were entitled to consider themselves clear of Form masters and all their works for the rest of the day.

However, there was no question of disregarding the order of authority, and the Remove gathered in the Form-room with wondering faces.

In a short time all the Lower Fourth were assembled, with the exception of three or four fellows who happened to be out of gates. Those did not matter, however, as all the members of Mr. Quelch's tea-party were present.

"Boys," said Mr. Quelch, "doubtless you are surprised at being called together on a half-holiday. The matter is important. A disrespectful trick has been played on your Form master. I have discovered that an electric bell

was fixed up in the Form-room this morning, with the object, no doubt, of interrupting lessons and wasting time. A similar trick was played in my study this afternoon. It is my intention to discover the author of that trick."

The juniors were silent.

"Bull!" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

"Oh! Yes, sir?" said Johnny Bull, startled.

"I think that these articles are probably your property." Mr. Quelch indicated a little heap on his desk. "You have such things in your study, I believe?"

"I've a lot, sir—but if those things are mine, I never brought them here," said Johnny, looking rather scared. "Anybody could lift them from my study—if he wanted to."

"You were not a party to this trick, Bull?"

"No, sir."

"Do you know anything of it, Bull?"

"Nunno, sir!"

"Have you any suspicion as to who may have taken these articles from your study and used them for this disrespectful purpose?"

Johnny Bull did not answer.

"I command you to speak, Bull! You have such a suspicion?"

"I—I might have an idea, sir," stammered Johnny. "I knew nothing about it, sir; but—but—"

"But you know now?"

"I don't know, sir. I might guess."

"Give me the name!"

Johnny Bull's lips closed obstinately.



He was not likely to give any fellow away to the beaks.

Mr. Quelch's eyes glinted.

"My boys, this is a serious matter," he said. "What has been done is outrageous—absolutely outrageous! I quite understand your objection to causing trouble for a schoolfellow. In this case, such an objection must be over-ruled. If the delinquent is not discovered, the whole Form will be punished!"

Grim silence.

"The matter will not be allowed to rest until the delinquent is discovered. Until the discovery is made, the whole Form will be detained for all holidays!"

"Oh!"

"If any boy present can give me the desired information, it is his duty to do so. He need have no fear in doing his duty—he will be under my protection."

The Removites were grimly silent. Certainly a sneak would need the protection of the Form master after giving away a fellow to punishment. The matter was so serious, from Mr. Quelch's point of view, that it overrode all considerations of sneaking. But on that point the Remove fellows did not agree with their Form master.

"I am waiting!" said Mr. Quelch harshly.

Roger Quelch made a movement.

"If you please, sir——"

"Well?"

"If—if you really think it is a fellow's duty to give information, sir——" said Roger timidly.

"Undoubtedly!"

"Then, sir, I—I can tell you who it was."

"Sneak!" roared Bolsover major, heedless of his Form master's presence. And there was a loud and prolonged hiss from the Removites.

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Sneak! Sneak!"

"Silence! The next boy who speaks will be caned! Roger, I command you to speak if you know the identity of the rascally boy who has thus flouted the authority of his Form master!"

Roger coloured and hesitated.

"I—I—I'm rather afraid, sir——" he stammered.

"You have nothing whatever to be afraid of. I repeat that you will be under my protection."

"Yes, sir; but—but you won't be angry if I tell you, sir?" faltered Roger.

"I? Certainly not!"

"Sneak!" howled Vernon-Smith.

"Vernon-Smith, take two hundred lines! Roger, I command you to speak at once, and you may accept my assurance that you will be perfectly safe in doing so."

"And—and I shall not be punished, sir, if I tell you who it was?" stammered Roger.

"Certainly not! Are you a fool, boy? I command you to give the name of that miserable trickster if it is known to you!"

"Very well, sir," said Roger meekly.

"You know the name?"

"Yes, sir."

"What is it?"

"Roger Quelch, sir!"

"What? What? What? It—it was——"

"Me, sir!" said Roger meekly.

For a moment a pin might have been heard to drop in the Remove room. Mr. Quelch gazed dumbfounded at his nephew. Then from all the Remove came an irresistible roar:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

### Held to His Word!

"HA, ha, ha!"

The Remove roared. They could not help it. That unexpected announcement by Roger of the Remove took them by storm. And the expression upon Mr. Quelch's face was worth, as Bob Cherry said afterwards, a guinea a box. The Form master stood rooted to the floor, utterly dumbfounded.

"Silence!" he spluttered at last. "Silence! This is not a laughing matter! The whole Form will take a hundred lines! Silence!"

Silence was restored at length. Roger Quelch stood with a quiet and serious face, meekly regarding his uncle. On Mr. Quelch's brow the thunder gathered and grew.

"You?" he ejaculated.

"Yes, sir."

"You played this disrespectful trick on your Form master—your uncle?" spluttered Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir."

"Stand out before the class!"

Roger Quelch submissively walked out. His uncle's eyes were fixed on him with a look reminiscent of the basilisk of old.

"So you did this, Roger?"

"Yes, sir."

"You admit it?"

"You—you asked me, sir."

"Very well," said Mr. Quelch. "Very well, indeed! I shall not cane you for this, Roger——"

"Thank you, sir."

"I shall take you to Dr. Locke, and request him to administer a public flogging. I shall request him to administer a flogging of the greatest severity."

"But—you promised, sir——" said Roger respectfully.

"What? What?"

"You promised me your protection, sir."

"My—my protection!" stammered Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir," said Roger respectfully, but firmly. "You promised that I should not be punished if I gave you the name, sir."

Mr. Quelch gazed at his nephew.

All sorts and conditions of boys had passed through Mr. Quelch's hands, in his career as a Form master at Greyfriars. But this junior from High Coombe was something rather new to him.

The Remove fellows looked on breathlessly.

They marvelled at Roger Quelch's nerve; but, at the same time, they considered that Mr. Quelch was fairly caught. He had undoubtedly given his word that Roger should not be molested or punished if he gave the name of the offender. Roger had given the name of the offender. It only remained for Mr. Quelch to keep his word.

The silence was long, and it became quite painful. The Remove master seemed at a loss for words.

"How dare you?" he exclaimed, at last.

"Oh, sir!" murmured Roger.

"When I promised you my protection, boy, it was in the belief that the culprit was some other boy, whose name you knew. You are perfectly aware of that."

"I know, sir. But you promised all the same."

"Boy!"

"I am sure, sir, that you would not break your word, when I gave you the name because you promised," said Roger, with respectful meekness.

Mr. Quelch seemed on the point of choking.

"Do you believe, for one moment, that I shall allow you to trick your Form master in this impudent manner?" he snapped.

"Yes, sir."

"Why, I—I—you—you——" Words again failed Mr. Quelch.

He gripped his cane with an almost convulsive grip. The junior from High Coombe was as near as he could possibly be, to receiving the thrashing of his life.

But Mr. Quelch restrained his righteous wrath.

He had been tricked, there was no doubt about that; but he had given his word; there was no doubt about that, either.

Slowly, but surely, he released his grip on the cane. The expression on his face was extraordinary, as he laid the instrument of punishment upon his desk.

"You—you may go!" he gasped, at last.

"Thank you, sir," said Roger demurely.

"Dismiss!" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

The Removites crowded out of the Form-room. They did not dare to laugh, in the presence of the Form master, who seemed on the verge of an attack of apoplexy. They suppressed their feelings till they were out in the quad. Then they let themselves go, and roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry thumped Roger on the back.

"You cheeky ass! Blessed if I ever saw such cheek! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Poor old Quelch!" gasped Wharton. "I really thought he was going to have a fit."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And the cheeky ass got away with it!" gurgled Johnny Bull. "Quelch had to let him off! It was gorgeous."

"Top-hole!" chuckled Peter Todd.

"The top-holefulness was——"

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

Roger Quelch grinned. Pulling a Form master's leg was a game much in favour in the Lower School—but it was a risky game, especially where the Remove master was concerned. Roger had pulled the Remove master's leg to an unheard-of extent, and he had "got away with it," as Johnny Bull expressed it. Whether High Coombe excelled Greyfriars in any respect or not, it was clear that for sheer, unadulterated "neck," the fellow from High Coombe was ahead of the Greyfriars fellows.

"Your jolly old uncle will be down on you after this, young Quelch," said Bolsover major, with a chuckle.

"I wonder!" murmured Roger.

"He won't be jolly keen on having you at Greyfriars!" chuckled Bolsover.

"Dear me! What a blow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The roar of laughter from the Remove fellows, penetrated to Mr. Quelch's study, whither the Form master had retired in a state of wrath and chagrin. Mr. Quelch had heard it, and knew the cause, and his thunderous brow grew more and more thunderous. Undoubtedly, he was an affectionate and dutiful uncle, and he had desired to keep his hopeful nephew under his eye at Greyfriars, for his hopeful nephew's benefit. But Mr. Quelch was beginning to revise his opinion now. He was beginning to doubt very much whether, after all, it would not be better for Roger's visit to Greyfriars to be merely a visit, and for that too-humorous young gentleman to



be packed off back to High Coombe. Which, as a matter of fact, was exactly the frame of mind which the Form master's nephew desired his affectionate uncle to reach.

### THE NINTH CHAPTER.

#### Locked Out!

**H**ARRY WHARTON & Co. sympathised with Roger of the Remove very considerably, during the next few days.

Roger was in disgrace.

There was nothing surprising in that; for Roger's proceedings could not be expected to please the mildest Form master or the most affectionate uncle. But it was unpleasant for Roger.

In a way, he wanted his uncle to be "fed-up" with him—to the extent, at least, of letting him go back to his own school. He wanted that very much. But he did not want his Uncle Henry to be sore and angry.

That, however, could not be helped.

Mr. Quelch could not understand, or did not care to understand, that his nephew's heart was with his old associations and interests and friends, at his own school. Winning scholastic distinctions under his uncle's eye was a matter of much more importance.

Only Roger could not see it, and was never likely to see it. He was grateful for his uncle's affection, but he wished from the bottom of his heart that his uncle would not be so dutiful.

No doubt, Mr. Quelch was, to some extent, fed up with his nephew. But he was not yet fed-up to the point of sending him away. He did not seem so affectionate as before. But he was just as dutiful—in fact, more so. And so the High Coombe fellow's last state was worse than his first.

Mr. Quelch gave him the cold shoulder and the marble eye. In the Form-room, and out of the Form-room, he made no distinction whatever between his nephew, and any other junior who had incurred his wrath.

But, as a dutiful uncle, he continued to do his duty, firmly and rigorously; in fact, more rigorously than ever.

Roger was booked for an extra hour a day of "extra toot," and his name had been put down for the Craven prize. That looked as if it was settled that he was to stay at Greyfriars.

The Craven prize meant hard work at Latin. Roger was passable in Latin; but he was nowhere near the form that was required for the Craven examination. Swotting, therefore, was the order of the day.

Roger declined to "swot."

Mr. Quelch paid his nephew the compliment of believing that he had the brains to walk off with the Craven prize, and many others, if he chose. So, as Roger's progress was slow, his sense of justice made him severe.

Some of the Remove fellows, on hearing that their Form master's nephew was coming to Greyfriars, had expected that he would turn out a sneak and a "smug," a "master's favourite," and so on.

Even Skinner had to admit that there was nothing in it. Mr. Quelch's cane in these days had more exercise on Roger Quelch than any other fellow.

Roger was in disgrace, and his failure to justify his uncle's faith in his scholastic powers kept him in disgrace.

Whether Mr. Quelch was fed-up with Roger or not, there was no doubt that Roger was fed-up with Mr. Quelch.

On that point there was no doubt, no possible, probable shadow of doubt, no possible doubt whatever.

Another letter arrived from High Coombe, urgently demanding when Roger Quelch would return. His football captain wanted him. And Roger was able to send only a doubtful and dolorous reply.

"You're booked for Greyfriars, old bean," Harry Wharton said at prep one evening in Study No. 1 in the Remove. "Better make up your mind to it."

Roger shook his head.

"After all, you can't do better," said Nugent, with a smile.

"Rats!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"It's jolly kind of your uncle really, young Quelch," he said. "Some uncles would have kicked you out for the cheeky trick you played on him with Johnny's electrical gadgets!"

"I know! I thought Uncle Quelch would," groaned Roger. "I pulled his leg, and made him look an ass before

Coombe." said Roger. "I'm going to chance it, anyhow."

Roger Quelch was giving that subject a great deal of thought.

But luck did not favour him.

One afternoon, when he turned up in his uncle's study for "extra toot" after tea, Mr. Quelch made the discovery that the leaves of the books required for the Latin tuition were stuck together with glue.

The Remove master did not inquire who had done it.


He simply picked up his cane and ordered his nephew to bend over, and Roger was the unhappy recipient of "six"—the hardest six that had ever been laid on at Greyfriars.

Then Mr. Quelch sorted out fresh books, and kept Roger two hours instead of one on the study.

The hapless High Coombe junior was

## INTO THE UNKNOWN!

# BEYOND the SILVER GLACIER!



ARTHUR S. HARDY AT HIS BEST!

Somewhere in the limitless, unexplored tracts of the African jungle are Adam Byrne's father and sister—held captive by a race of unknown people. To search for them is an almost hopeless task, for sudden death lurks at every twist in the jungle trail. Yet Adam and his chum, Harry, brave the risk, young as they are. Join in with them, chums, for they start in this week's bumper issue of

## The GEM Library.

ON SALE  
WEDNESDAY.

all the Form. I should have thought that would have worked the oracle. But it didn't!"

"You ought to be grateful to him for forgiving you," said Frank Nugent, laughing.

"So I am. But I'm fed-up!" grunted Roger. "I wish he wouldn't be so jolly forgiving. Some fellows have wicked uncles, according to the story books. It's not fair for me to be landed with such a jolly good uncle!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Still, while there's life there's hope," said Roger more cheerily. "Uncle Henry Samuel detests practical joking in every shape and form. As soon as it dawns upon him that I am an incorrigible practical joker he may think it best to get shut of me."

"Ware beaks!" said Wharton. "The next time you mayn't get off so cheaply!"

"The next time I may get off to High

limping when he left, feeling quite down and out.

The next day, when Roger came for extra toot, he had been doing some more thinking. On this occasion he was very good, and his stern uncle relaxed a little, and even gave him a word of commendation when he had finished. Roger stood by the door listening modestly to that word of commendation, what time his right hand, groping behind him, was removing the key from the lock. When he left he had the key concealed in his cuff.

He closed the study door, slipped the key in the lock, turned it, withdrew it again, and put it in his pocket.

Then he strolled away, feeling comforted.

Half an hour later a good many fellows were surprised by the sound of loud knocking in Masters' passage.

(Continued on page 17.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 995.



## "THE HEAD'S JOY-RIDE!"

(Continued from previous page.)

passenger, but was piled high with luggage. The Head stood staring at this eggstraordinary spectacle as if mesmerised. And then the youthful driver caught sight of him, and beckoned to him.

"Hi, grandad!"

The Head jumped.

"Come and give me a hand here, will you? I'll give you a bob for your trouble," added the youth persuasively.

The Head jumped again—at the offer. In his prezzant desprit plight, a shilling might be very useful to help him on his way.

"Just hold these coops steady while I tie 'em together," said the freckled youth.

"Oh, certainly!" mermered the Head.

He did as requested, and the boy driver nodded approvingly.

"That's right, grandad! Make yourself useful," he panted as he struggled with the rope.

"Where are you going, my boy?" inquired the Head.

"To school," was the reply.

"Good grashus! And you are taking this menagery with you?"

"Of course! I never go anywhere without my pets. My personal belongings are in the bathchair behind. I'm using it as a trailer. Good idea, don't you think, grandad?"

"C-c-capital!" stuttered the Head.

"My pater told me I could borrow one of his cars," went on the youth, still struggling with the rope. "But I couldn't get all my stuff inside, so there was only one thing for it. I had the car dismantled and the body removed, so as to give me plenty of room. Another good idea, what?"

"But—but surely your father would object to your taking such liberties with his car?" gasped the Head.

The freckled youth shrugged his shoulders.

"The pater can object till he's blue in the face, for all I care!" he said. "I had to get my pets and my luggage to

the school somehow; and that was the only way."

"Which school are you going to, by the way?" asked the Head, a sudden dreadful suspicion crossing his mind.

"Eh? To St. Sam's."

"What?"

"I don't suppose you've heard of it, grandad. It's only a fifth-rate school. The old fogey of a headmaster—old Birchmall—was coming to fetch me to-day; but I didn't wait for him. I slipped off before the old buffer turned up. I'll bet he's in a fearful wax by now—tearing his hair, and nashing his teeth, and all the rest of it. Serve him right, the interfering old codger!"

The Head let go of the coops, and drew himself up stiffly. Ooze and slime were dripping from his garments.

"Boy!" he thundered sternly. "It may serprize you to know that I am the 'interfering old codger' you refer to! I am the headmaster of St. Sam's! And you, I now perseeve, are Frank Fearless."

"Right on the wicket!" said Frank, quite unabashed.

"You have consulted me to my face!" roared the Head. "You have been grossly dispertinent—"

"Yes, I know, and I'm sorry," said Frank Fearless. "Here, take another bob, and say no more about it!"

The Head—who had already pocketed the first shilling—made a jesture of refusal.

"Fearless! You are attempting to bribe your headmaster! This is skandalus!"

Frank Fearless discreetly changed the conversation.

"This beestly rope isn't long enuff," he said. "And the coops simply must be tied together, bekawse they bump about so much when they're loose. What shall I do, grandad—I mean, Doctor Birchmall?"

"I am a Headmaster—not a solver of riddles," said the Head stiffly.

"Oh, I know!" cried Frank Fearless, with a sudden brain-wave. "There's a longer peace of rope in the trailer, holding my luggage together. I'll use that."

"And then your luggage, with nothing to hold it together, will be thrown out of the trailer," said the Head.

"Not so," said Frank, "bekawse you're going to sit on it—see, and keep it in position!"

The Head blinked at Frank Fearless in amazement.

"Bless my sole!" he gasped. "Are you suggesting that I should ride in that absurd bath-chair-trailer, and at the same time, act as a weight to keep your luggage from being ejected?"

"Eggsactly!" was the cool reply. "I take it, sir, you are wanting a lift to St. Sam's?"

"True," said the Head. "But think of my diggnity! I have never been towed along in a bath-chair in my life!"

Frank Fearless larfed. He had a plezzant, harty larf, that was good to hear.

"It's either that, or Shanks' ponies," he said. "And I guess you're fed-up with footing it."

The Head was certainly fed-up. He had come about five miles on his jerney, risking his life and lim at every twist and turn of the road; and he felt he could not face the remaining fifteen miles.

True, a ride in a bathchair-trailer, already piled up with luggage, could not be undertaken without considerable loss of diggnity. But the Head's diggnity had already suffered from immersion in slimy ditches, and from hiding in hedges to avoid row-doggs; so it might as well suffer some more.

"Very well," said the Head, at last. "I will ride in the trailer. But I caution you, Fearless, to drive slowly. I have a weak hart. Any sudden shock—any severer jolt to the sitem—might terminate my career!"

Frank Fearless grinned. He reflected that the Head was likely to suffer a good many shocks and jolts by the time they got to St. Sam's.

Having taken the rope which secured his luggage, and fastened the two coops together with it, Frank announsed that they were ready to start.

Very gingerly, the Head clambered into the trailer, and flung his long legs astride the luggage. There was a portnantoe underneeth, and a cupple of suit-cases on top; and it was astride the topmost suit-case that the Head was perched. He looked so ridiculus, squatting there in his muddy garments, that Frank Fearless nearly busted himself with larfing.

"Now we're off, sir!" he cried.

He had started up the engine; and now he clambered on to the soap-box which served as the driver's seat, and the bodyless car left forward like a live thing.

Frank Fearless was one of those drivers that perlice-traps were invented for. He beleaved in wizzing along at a jolly speed of between forty and fifty. He could never understand why people bought cars, if they were content to crawl along at a moddest thirty.

So Frank fairly made the fur fly; and the Head, clinging wildly to his perch, shouted vainly to the youthful driver to slow down. He was wide-eyed with terror; he felt as if he was passing through some awful nightmare. The trailer in which he sat played all sorts of strange tricks. First it would rush up to the back of the car at lightning speed, and a collision seemed certain; then, while the Head shut his eyes and waited for the crash, the trailer would suddenly shoot back again to the end of its rope.

As he clung to his perch, quaking with fear and dread, the Head had a vision of several startled bunnies, blinking at him from between the bars of their hutch. And the goat, which was facing him, was nodding its head viggerusly, as if to say: "By Jove, Doctor, what a joy-ride we're having!"

THE END.

(Now save a laugh for next week's rollicking fine yarn: "Fearless To The Rescue!" It is undoubtedly the funnicst yarn Dicky Nugent has written.)

### "HERE WE ARE, THEN!"

#### THIS MONTH'S BEST BOOKS!

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SCHOOLBOYS'  
OWN  
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47. *The GREYFRIARS HUSTLER!* by FRANK RICHARDS

48. *THE COLONIAL CO.* by OWEN CONQUEST

THE  
BOYS'  
FRIEND  
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85. *The FOOTBALL SLAVES* by ROBERT MURRAY

86. *CHAMPION OF THE CLOUDS* by JOHN HUNTER

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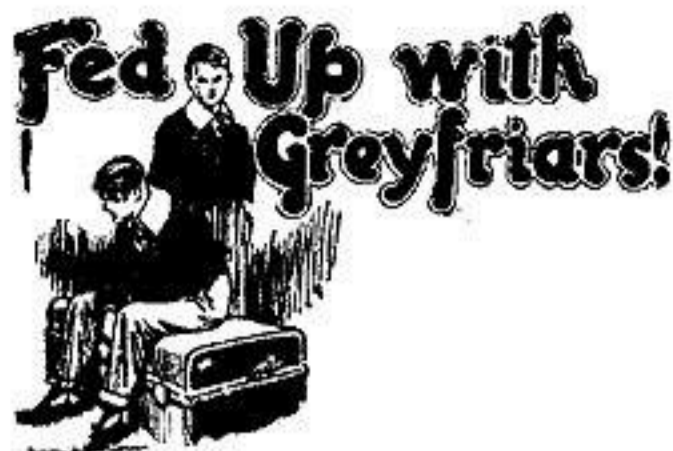
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(Continued from page 13.)

Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, came out of his study in a very irritable frame of mind. Mr. Prout did not like being disturbed by unaccountable noises when he was taking his ease after the labours of the day were over.

To his surprise, the Fifth Form master discovered that the loud and incessant knocking proceeded from Mr. Quelch's room.

He rolled along ponderously to the Remove master's door and tapped.

"My dear Quelch—" He turned the handle of the door, but it did not open. Evidently it was locked.

"Is that you, Mr. Prout?" came Mr. Quelch's voice through the door in tones of suppressed fury.

"It is I, sir! May I inquire," said Mr. Prout in tones of the deepest sarcasm, "why you have locked yourself in your study, and why you are knocking on your own door, Mr. Quelch?"

"I have not locked myself in the study, Mr. Prout!" yapped the Remove master savagely.

"The door appears to be locked."

"It is locked—on the outside."

"Really, Mr. Quelch—"

"Will you be kindly enough to turn back the key, Mr. Prout?"

"There is no key visible, Mr. Quelch," said the master of the Fifth, blinking at the door. "Certainly there is no key on the outside of the lock."

"The young rascal!"

"What?"

"The impertinent young scoundrel!"

"My dear Quelch—"

"I have been locked in my study!" hooted the Remove master. "I am a prisoner here, Mr. Prout!"

"Goodness gracious!" said the Fifth Form master. "This—this—this is unheard-of!"

"Will you oblige me by finding my nephew, Mr. Prout? I have no doubt that the key is in his possession."

"Bless my soul! Am I to understand, Mr. Quelch, that you suspect your own nephew of playing such an extraordinary prank?"

"Precisely!"

"If I may advise you, my dear Quelch, I should certainly recommend you to send such a boy away from Greyfriars!"

"I am not in need of advice at the present moment, Mr. Prout," said the Remove master acidly.

"Indeed, Mr. Quelch!"

"Indeed, Mr. Prout!"

"In view of your very singular reception of my observations, Mr. Quelch, I decline to have anything to do with the matter," said Mr. Prout, with a great deal of dignity. And he retired into his own study, leaving the Remove master to hammer on the door—un-

headed further by the offended master of the Fifth.

Mr. Quelch, setting his lips, knocked and knocked—in fact, banged on the door. The passage rang with it. A number of the Greyfriars fellows gathered at the end of the passage.

"I say, you fellows, Quelch's locked in his study!" squeaked Billy Bunter.

"He, he, he!"

Bang, bang, bang!

Wingate of the Sixth hurried along to Mr. Quelch's study and tapped.

"Is anything wrong, sir?" he called out.

"I am locked in my study," said Mr. Quelch in a choking voice. "Pray find my nephew and obtain the key from him, Wingate!"

"Your nephew, sir?" said the astonished captain of Greyfriars. "Surely he has not—"

"Kindly do not waste time in talk, Wingate. Find Roger Quelch at once and obtain the key of my door!"

"Oh! Certainly, sir!"

Wingate hurried away. Quite a crowd had gathered at the end of Masters' passage now, and all of them were grinning. Wingate glanced over them, but the Form master's nephew was not in the crowd.

"Does anyone know where young Quelch is?" he asked.

Nobody seemed to know.

"Look for him, the lot of you!" rapped out Wingate. "He seems to have locked his uncle in his study and taken away the key."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a general search for Roger at once. But he was not to be found. (Continued overleaf.)



"Roger!" fumed Mr. Quelch. "I command you to give me the name of the miserable trickster, if it is known to you." "And—and I shall not be punished, sir, if I tell you who it was?" stammered Roger. "Certainly not!" "Very well, sir!" said Roger meekly. "What is the name, then?" "Roger Quelch, sir!" "What—what?" gasped the Remove master. "It—it was—" "Me, sir!" said Roger meekly. (See Chapter 7.)



Obviously he was intentionally keeping out of sight.

Wingate returned to the Remove master's study in a quarter of an hour, with the news that he had been unable to find Roger Quelch.

"He must be found!" gasped the Remove master. "Call the other prefects to your assistance, Wingate, and find him at once!"

"I will do my best, sir."

"Find the young rascal immediately!" roared Mr. Quelch.

"Hem! Certainly, sir!"

The search went merrily on, even the Sixth Form prefects grinning as they hunted for Roger Quelch.

Masters' passage was deserted.

Mr. Quelch, waiting with what patience he could muster to be released, sat at his table and went through Latin papers.

The door of Mr. Capper's study opened softly. It was not the Fourth Form master who came out. Mr. Capper was out of gates that day. It was Roger Quelch who emerged. No one had thought of looking for him in a master's study.

Roger gave a cautious glance up and down the passage. There was no one in sight now. He tiptoed softly along to his uncle's door, inserted the key noiselessly in the lock, and turned it back without a sound. Then he put the key under the mat outside the door, and tiptoed away.

Mr. Quelch's door was unlocked now. But the Remove master, in the study, was quite unaware of the fact. In the fixed belief that he was still a prisoner in the study, Mr. Quelch waited for release, fuming and ferocious; his wrath intensifying with every moment that passed.

## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### Absurd!

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

It was Bob Cherry who discovered the long-sought junior. Two or three dozen fellows were looking for him; and Bob Cherry came across him at last. Roger of the Remove was in a box-room, and only the suspicion that Roger was deliberately keeping out of sight led Bob to "draw" the box-rooms.

Roger looked round innocently. He was seated on a trunk, with a newspaper in his hands, opened at a page where there was a Cross Word puzzle. Apparently Roger had retired to that secluded spot to elucidate Cross Words; oblivious of the fact that it was cold in the box-room.

"Busy?" grinned Bob.

"Yes, a little," said Roger. "Am I wanted?"

"I should jolly well imagine so," chuckled Bob Cherry. "You've been hunted up and down Greyfriars for an hour or more."

"Somebody wants me bad?" smiled Roger. "I'm glad to see that I'm getting so popular."

"Oh, come off!" said Bob. "You're booked for a rumpus, young Quelch. Your uncle is simply raging in his study."

"Is he? Why?"

"He's locked in."

"Dear me!"

"And you've got the key?"

Roger Quelch raised his eyebrows.

"What an idea!"

"Haven't you?" demanded Bob.

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"My dear man, I'm willing to eat all the keys that you can find about me," said Roger amiably.

"Well," said Bob Cherry, puzzled, "come on, anyhow. You're wanted; and Wingate's hunting for you high and low. Quelch thinks that it was you who locked him in."

"Poor little me!"

Roger rose from the box, tucked the newspaper under his arm, and followed Bob down the stairs. There was a shout as he came into view on the lower staircase.

"Here he is!"

Wingate of the Sixth hurried up, with a frowning brow. The head prefect of Greyfriars did not relish having his valuable time wasted in a hunt for a mere junior of the Lower Fourth.

"You young rascal! What have you been doing?"

"Cross Words," said Roger meekly.

"Eh?"

"No harm in doing Cross Words, is there?" asked Roger, with an air of mild surprise.

"Where have you been?"

"In the box-room. It was quiet, and I could do Cross Words there without being interrupted," answered Roger innocently.

Wingate gave him a searching glance.

Roger Quelch's face was innocent and amiable. Really, he did not look like a fellow who had played a jape of unparalleled audacity upon a Form master of Greyfriars.

"You've got the key of your uncle's study?" snapped Wingate.

"Oh, no!"

"He thinks you have, at any rate."

"Quite a mistake," said Roger blandly. "I haven't any keys that don't belong to me, Wingate. Would you like me to turn out my pockets?"

"Come with me," said the captain of Greyfriars gruffly. "Mr. Quelch thinks that you locked him in his study. Come along."

"Very well."

Roger followed the prefect to masters' passage, and a crowd of fellows followed Roger. All of them were curious to see the outcome of the affair. Wingate tapped on the Form master's door.

"Mr. Quelch!"

The crowd in the passage heard the Remove master rise from his table and come to his door.

"Have you found the boy, Wingate?" asked Mr. Quelch, in almost suffocated tones. The Remove master's wrath, like wine, had improved with keeping. He was by this time in a frame of mind that the most ferocious of Huns might have envied.

"Yes, sir," said Wingate. "He is here. He says that he hasn't the key of your study."

"Roger!" boomed Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, uncle."

"Unlock my door at once, you impertinent young rascal!"

"Oh, uncle!"

"Do you hear me, Roger?"

It would have been difficult not to hear Mr. Quelch. Most of Greyfriars could hear him.

"I—I'm awfully sorry, uncle," said Roger. "I haven't any key about me that would fit your door, uncle."

"How dare you say so?"

"Are you really locked in, uncle?"

"You are perfectly well aware that I am locked in!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "You locked the door when you left the study and took away the key. I am absolutely convinced of that."

Roger smiled deprecatingly.

"Look here, you born idiot, if you have the key, unlock the door before you make matters worse," said Wingate testily.

"But I haven't the key. Are you sure that the door really is locked?" asked Roger. "It seems to me that any fellow must have been awfully cheeky to lock in a Form master. Have you tried the door?"

"I suppose Mr. Quelch tried it before he began to hammer," said Wingate, with a stare. "Still, I'll try it."

Wingate turned the handle of the door and pushed.

It opened at his touch.

"Oh, great gad!" ejaculated Wingate.

There was a chortle from the crowd of juniors. The door had not been locked.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"Quelch only thought the door was locked—and it wasn't!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The opening of the study door disclosed Mr. Quelch, his face pink with wrath. His eyes fairly glittered at his meek nephew.

"You young rascal——"

"Excuse me, sir," said Wingate. "The door was not locked."

"What? What?"

"It opened when I turned the handle, sir."

"Nonsense!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"Really, sir, I ought to know, as I opened the door," said Wingate, rather sharply. "It was not locked. I took it for granted that it was locked, as you said so, and did not think of trying it before. But it certainly was not locked, and all these fellows are witnesses that it opened as soon as I turned the handle."

"That's so, sir," said Coker of the Fifth, who had joined the crowd in masters' passage. "It wasn't locked."

"Nonsense!"

"It wasn't, really, sir," said Harry Wharton. "Wingate has used no key to open it. He hasn't a key."

Mr. Quelch's pink face deepened to crimson. He stared at the lock—there was no key in the outside of it. Evidently Wingate had opened it without a key; consequently it could not have been locked. Every face in the passage wore a grin. The general impression was that Mr. Quelch had made a ridiculous mistake; that the door had jammed somehow when he tried to open it, and that he had jumped to the conclusion that it was locked—when nothing of the kind was the case.

The Remove master, indeed, was driven to the same conclusion.

His face grew redder and redder.

"Bless my soul!" he exclaimed at last.

"This is—is very extraordinary! The door did not open when I tried to leave the study. I certainly believed that it was locked on the outside."

"Well, it wasn't, sir, or it wouldn't have opened when I turned the handle!" said Wingate tartly.

"I—I—I suppose not."

There was a chuckle along the passage, and Mr. Quelch bit his lip hard. He realised that he was looking ridiculous.

"But—but the key is—is gone!" he stammered. "The door did not open when I pulled it, Wingate; and I noticed that the key was missing, and so—so I naturally concluded——"

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"I suppose the key must have fallen out, sir," said Wingate, taking pity on the Form master's confusion. "I dare say it's lying about the floor somewhere."

"It—it is possible," stammered Mr. Quelch.

"Anyhow, the door wasn't locked," said Coker of the Fifth. "You fancied it was, sir, and it wasn't all the time."

"That will do, Coker!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

Never had the Remove master felt so ridiculous in his life. So far as he could see, he had jumped to a hasty conclusion that he was locked in, and had raised Cain in his study, in consequence; when all the time—as he supposed—he could have left the study at any moment.

"I—I'm sorry I—I have given you all this trouble for nothing, Wingate!" he stammered.

"Oh, don't mention it, sir!" said Wingate politely.

Mr. Quelch closed his door on the grinning crowd. Wingate smiled as he walked away, and the juniors chuckled. Roger Quelch winked into space as he walked away to the Rag with the Removites. The vials of Mr. Quelch's wrath had not, after all, been poured out upon his head. Indeed, the Remove master really owed him an apology for his unjust suspicion.

In the Rag there was loud laughter—that apartment being out of hearing of Mr. Quelch.

"Poor old Quelchy!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "His face was worth a guinea a box! Did you fellows ever see a man look such an ass?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, Quelchy must be going off his rocker!" said Billy Bunter. "Fancy a man banging on his door to be let out, when he could have walked out any minute if he had liked."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Jolly odd that he thought the door was locked, though, if it wasn't!" said Vernon-Smith. "He can't have been drinking, I suppose?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Removites, quite entertained by that suggestion.

"I say, you fellows, if he wasn't squiffy, he must have been potty," said Billy Bunter.

"You've had a jolly narrow escape, young Quelchy," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "I thought you were booked for a flogging!"

Roger grinned.

"It was touch and go," he remarked. "Still, as the door wasn't locked, my dear uncle had to see that I was—hem!—quite innocent!"

"The innocence was not terrific!" said Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "My esteemed opinion is that the door was locked at first, and was unlocked afterwards."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Is that it, young Quelch?" roared Bob Cherry.

"I wonder!" said Roger.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Anyhow, keep your esteemed opinion to your esteemed self, old man," said Roger. "My uncle wouldn't be safe at close quarters if he knew. By the time it dawns on him I hope he will think it is too late to rake the matter up again."

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

Probably suspicion of the real facts dawned upon Mr. Quelch's mind at last. Someone—unknown—retrieved the key from the mat and replaced it in the lock while Mr. Quelch was in the masters' room that evening. Mr. Quelch found it there when he returned to his study later.

Mr. Quelch thought a great deal on the subject. He was keenly sensitive to

ridicule, and he knew that he had been made to look ridiculous.

That evening he sat down to write a letter:

"My dear Brother,—Upon reflection, it appears to me that, taking all things into consideration, it would be better for Roger to return to High Coombe."

Mr. Quelch stopped at that point, and paused for a long time. Finally, he threw the unfinished letter into the fire.

He was giving Roger the benefit of the doubt; though there was not much doubt in his mind.

And there was no doubt at all that he was growing "fed-up" with Roger of the Remove.

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Rough on Roger!

"BEND over that desk!"

"Oh dear!"

Roger was in trouble again.

It was a few days after the episode of the locked study—an episode which had not improved the Remove master's opinion of his nephew or softened his heart towards that erring youth.

It was Wednesday, a half-holiday, and that afternoon Roger was booked to play football for the Remove. Roger was very keen on Soccer, and, in the circumstances, it behoved him to be careful. But his genius for practical joking had been too much for him; and he was "for it" again.

Roger had been called on to construe.

Mr. Quelch was very severe on Roger's construe. He had a fixed belief that Roger could easily have become head of the class if he had liked. He took it as a personal affront that Roger did not like. So there was no mercy for Roger when his "con" was very far from being up to the mark. Even Billy Bunter could have construed, "quidquid id est, timeo Danaos et dona ferentis" without a fault. Roger turned it into, "I fear the Greeks when they offer us quids!"

There was a moment's silence when Roger made that remarkable new rendering of Virgil, and then there was a howl of laughter from the Remove. Mr. Quelch did not laugh. He did not even smile. He picked up his cane, and directed Roger to bend over.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Wow, wow, wow!"

"You need not construe further," said Mr. Quelch, with a glare, as Roger limped back to his form. "Apparently it is your opinion that the Form-room is the proper place for absurd jests. — I shall try to instruct you otherwise."

"Ow!"

"You will be detained this afternoon, and will translate Virgil from two o'clock until five!"

"Oh!"

"We will now proceed," said Mr. Quelch, with a glare at his grinning class.

And the Remove ceased to grin, and proceeded

Roger sat crushed.

Detention for a half-holiday was bad enough, but in this instance it meant missing the footer match the first time his name was down to play for the Remove. He was paying dearly for his little joke.

His usually cheery face was quite gloomy when the Remove came out of their Form-room after classes that morning.

"That means a change in the team," Harry Wharton remarked. "I shall have to leave you out, after all, young Quelch, as you've got yourself detained."

"It's rotten!" groaned Roger.

"Well, you asked for it," said Bob Cherry. "Did you expect your jolly old uncle to be pleased at your con?"

Roger grinned faintly.

"Nunno. Not exactly. But—"

"Mustn't be too funny in the Form-room," said Bob, "especially with Quelchy. He hasn't a sense of humour, old scout."

That afternoon, when the Remove footballers went down to Little Side, Roger had the pleasure—or otherwise—of going into the Form-room, and settling down there with Latin for his solitary companion.

Mr. Quelch gave him a look-in.

"I am going out, Roger," he said coldly. "I warn you that if you leave the Form-room before five o'clock you will be flogged."

"Oh, uncle!"

"I shall expect you to have translated, correctly, a considerable part of the second book of Virgil when I return."

"Yes, uncle."

"If you waste your time, you have severe punishment to expect."

"Thank you, uncle."

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips. Really he should have been pleased at being thanked by a nephew whom he was correcting for his own good. But he did not seem pleased.

"I warn you, Roger, that you are fast forfeiting my good opinion," he said acidly.

"Oh, uncle!"

"Unless you change very considerably, and endeavour to regain my esteem, I shall have to consider very seriously whether I can, after all, allow you to become a Greyfriars boy."

"Oh!"

"Bear that in mind, Roger."

"I—I will, uncle."

Mr. Quelch left the Form-room, leaving Roger to the joys of Virgil.

Those joys soon palled upon him.

He could hear the echo of shouting from the distant football-field, where Harry Wharton & Co. were playing a visiting team from Redclyffe. Roger wanted to be playing football at High Coombe; but the next best thing to that was playing football at Greyfriars. He did not want to improve his knowledge of the classics by translating Virgil all through a spring afternoon. He did not want that in the very least.

He left his desk, and roamed restlessly about the Form-room. He was thinking—but he was not thinking of the great works of P. Vergilius Maro.

A gleam came into his eyes at last, and he went quietly to the door of the Form-room.

The House was almost deserted on that fine half-holiday, and there was no one to observe Roger. The fine spring weather had tempted out Mr. Quelch, to take a long country walk with Mr. Capper, the Fourth Form master.

Roger trotted away quietly. It was probable that Mr. Quelch would not return much before five o'clock, when he was to release his nephew from detention. Roger had plenty of time to carry out the scheme that had hatched in his fertile brain—whatever it was. He trotted quietly away from the Remove-room.

"Ho, he, he!"

A fat chuckle greeted Roger as he came into the Remove passage. Billy Bunter was loafing there, in a saddened mood. Bunter's postal-order, long expected, had not yet arrived, and Bunter was hard up, and nobody in the Remove had been willing to relieve his hard-upness even by the inconsiderable loan



of a "bob." But the Owl of the Remove chuckled as he spotted Roger Quelch.

"Hooked it?" he asked. "I say, you'll get an awful licking if Quelch finds out that you've broken detention."

"Bow-wow!" said Roger cheerfully.

He went into Study No. 1, which he shared with Wharton and Nugent. Both Wharton and Nugent were at football now, and the study, like most of the Remove rooms that afternoon, was deserted. Roger kept his play-box there, and he shut the study door and opened the box.

"I say, young Quelch——"

Bunter opened the door and blinked in.

"You fat ass! Get out!" snapped Roger.

Bunter's eyes were fixed, through his big spectacles, on a cardboard packet that Roger had taken from the play-box.

The lid was off, and Bunter could see the contents. The cardboard case was packed with fireworks.

Roger hastily placed the cardboard case behind him; but it was too late. Bunter chuckled.

"What's the game?" he asked.

"Find out!" said Roger gruffly.

"He, he, he! You're a bit out of date with fireworks," said Bunter. "Think it's the Fifth of November?"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Oh, really, young Quelch——"

"Buzz off!" roared Roger, and he picked up a volume from the table and took aim.

Billy Bunter dodged out of the study and slammed the door.

Roger Quelch proceeded to unpack the fireworks, and dispose them in his pockets. Roger had had those fireworks lying by for quite a long time—since the last Guy Fawkes Day, in fact—and he had brought them in his box to Greyfriars, probably with a view to using them somehow in the indulgence of his peculiar sense of humour. They were to come in useful now. With a considerable quantity of squibs, Roman candles, and crackers concealed about his clothes, Roger left the study.

Bunter was waiting for him in the Remove passage.

"I say, young Quelch——"

Roger hurried towards the stairs without heeding.

"I say, young Quelch!" bawled Bunter. "What are you up to with those fireworks? Don't you know fellows ain't allowed to have fireworks in the House?"

Roger breathed hard, and turned back.

"You fat idiot! Shut up!"

"Oh, really, young Quelch——"

"Mind your own business!" said Roger savagely.

The Owl of the Remove gave him a lofty blink.

"This is my business," said Bunter.

"You're going to play some trick with those fireworks. I say, you."

"Go and eat coke!"

"I'm afraid I can't allow you to play these tricks, young Quelch," said Bunter, with a shake of the head. "It's too thick, you know. I'm afraid I shall have to mention this to a prefect."

Roger looked at the fat junior as if he could have eaten him.

"There's a limit, you know," explained Bunter. "This sort of jape may be all very well for High Coombe. But it won't do for Greyfriars."

"You fat chump!" muttered Roger.

"By the way, old chap," said Bunter, with a sudden change of manner, "I've

been disappointed about a postal-order to-day."

"Oh, rats!" grunted Roger. Mr. Quelch's nephew had not been long at Greyfriars; but he had been there long enough to learn all about Billy Bunter's celebrated postal-order, which was always expected and never arrived.

"I asked you to lend me a bob this morning," said Bunter. "You said you wouldn't."

"I'll say it again, if you like!" growled Roger.

"Just as you like, of course," said Bunter. "But about those fireworks. I feel bound to speak to a prefect. You see——"

Roger did see.

He gave Bunter a look that ought to have withered him up on the spot, though it produced no perceptible effect on Bunter. Then he groped in his pocket and extracted a shilling.

"There you are, you fat ass!"

"Thanks!" said Bunter airily. "As you're so obliging, young Quelch, I think I can keep it dark about those fireworks. One good turn deserves another, what? He, he, he! I say, will you have this back out of my postal-order when it comes, or shall I leave it over till I get my allowance?"

Roger did not stop to answer that important question. He hurried down the Remove staircase. But Bunter hurried after him. Whether the Owl of the Remove took his postal-order seriously himself, or not, he liked others to take it seriously.

"Hold on a minute, young Quelch!" he bawled.

Roger stopped on the middle landing, fuming with impatience. As he was supposed to be under detention in the Remove Form-room, it was disconcerting to have his name bawled out on the stairs for all Greyfriars to hear.

"What do you want?" he hissed.

"Wait a minute, old chap."

Bunter came panting down the stairs to the middle landing. Roger eyed him with angry impatience.

"What is it?" he snapped.

"You didn't answer my question!" gasped Bunter.

"What?"

"You've lent me a bob——"

"I've given you a bob, you fat rotter!"

"I hope I'm not the sort of fellow to let a fellow tip me bobs!" said Bunter, with dignity. "You've lent me a bob. I can let you have it back out of my postal-order—when it comes——"

"You fat idiot!"

"Or will you wait till I get my allowance?" asked Bunter. "That's what I want to know. See?"

"You've called me back to ask me that?" gasped Roger.

"Yes. You see—— Yarooogh!" roared Bunter.

Bump!

Roger snote only once, but it was a mighty snote. William George Bunter sat on the landing and roared.

He was still roaring when Roger Quelch vanished down the lower staircase. Heedless of Bunter further, Roger hurried away to Masters' passage, and stepped into Mr. Quelch's study.

In that study the fire was laid, all ready for the Remove master to put a match to it when he came in. Roger knelt before the fire, and proceeded to rearrange it a little. He removed coal and wood, and removed the fireworks from his pockets. The fireworks were stacked into the back of the grate, and then the coal and wood were replaced. When Roger had finished, there was

nothing to show that the grate had been interfered with. But undoubtedly there was a surprise in store for somebody when the fire was lighted and began to burn through.

Roger surveyed his handiwork with a smile, and then quitted the study.

He returned to the Form-room and his detention task.

P. Vergilius Maro was as unattractive as ever; but Roger scolded down to translate as much as he could before the Remove master returned. He had the consolation of anticipating what was to happen in the Remove master's study when the fire was lighted there. Somebody, certainly, was likely to receive the surprise of his life.

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

### Mr. Quelch Decides!

MR. QUELCH came into the House with Mr. Capper, when the two masters returned from their walk. Five was striking from the clock-tower of Greyfriars. The two gentlemen walked to Masters' passage together, and Mr. Capper, with a nod to his colleague, went into his own study. Mr. Quelch passed on, and entered his own room. It was time to release his nephew from detention, but Mr. Quelch was in no hurry. The more Latin translation Roger did, the better, no doubt, for Roger.

Mr. Quelch was a little tired from his walk, and he sat down for a few minutes. It was chilly in the study, and he rose and looked for a box of matches to light the fire. Mr. Prout, of the Fifth, would have rung for Trotter to perform that duty; but Mr. Quelch was not a man to bother servants for trifles. He struck a match, and put it to the fire; and, having seen that it had caught, he left the study, and proceeded towards the Remove Form-room.

"Ah! Mr. Quelch!"

It was the Head.

Dr. Locke was coming majestically along the corridor, and he stopped to speak to the Remove master.

"I was coming to your study, my dear Quelch! I desired to speak to you on the subject of your nephew. No doubt you have decided by this time whether you desire me to place his name on the books as a member of your Form. If you are not otherwise engaged, we might discuss the matter now, and come to a decision."

That was the Head's gracious way of putting it. No member of his staff was likely to be "otherwise engaged" when the Headmaster desired to converse with him. But Dr. Locke was nothing if not courteous.

"Certainly, sir," said Mr. Quelch. "I am entirely at your service."

"Very good!"

"I was about to step into the Remove-room, to release a junior who is under detention there——"

"Quite so," said the Head graciously. "I will take a seat in your study, my dear Quelch."

"A few moments only, sir," said Mr. Quelch.

"Pray do not hurry."

The Head sailed on to Mr. Quelch's study, where he sat down majestically in the armchair by the fire, which was beginning to burn through.

Mr. Quelch went on to the Remove-room.

Roger Quelch was busy at his desk.

Quite a pile of sheets lay beside him, covered with translation—more or less correct—of the second book of that great work, the *Aeneid*.





“May I inquire,” said Mr. Prout, in tones of the deepest sarcasm, “why you have locked yourself in your own study, and why you are knocking on your own door, Mr. Quelch?” “I have not locked myself in the study, Mr. Prout,” yapped the Remove master, savagely. “It is locked—on the outside. Would you be good enough to turn the key?”  
(See Chapter 9.)

“Roger!”

The Form master's nephew rose respectfully to his feet.

“Yes, uncle,” he said meekly.

“I see that you have not been idle,” said Mr. Quelch approvingly.

“I—I hope not, uncle.”

“I trust, Roger, that your additional work this afternoon has helped to give you a more thorough knowledge of a great classic poet.”

“I trust so, uncle.”

Mr. Quelch gave him a suspicious look.

“I am sorry that I had to detain you this afternoon, Roger.”

“So am I, uncle.”

Mr. Quelch coughed.

“I hope it will be a lesson to you, Roger. If I had found that you had spent your afternoon in idleness, I should have been very angry with you.”

“Oh, uncle!”

“I am very glad to see that you have not slacked in my absence. I am now about to see the Head, in my study, on the subject of entering your name on the school books. The matter must be decided; and, upon the whole, I shall decide in your favour, Roger.”

“You—you mean——” asked Roger eagerly.

“You shall remain at Greyfriars”

“Oh!” said Roger, crestfallen.

Mr. Quelch knitted his brows.

“You do not look pleased, Roger!”

“Hem!”

“I trust you are not ungrateful!”

“Um!”

“You may go now Roger!” said

Mr. Quelch rather crossly. “I will examine your translation another time; I cannot keep Dr. Locke waiting now.”

Roger started a little.

“Did—did you say the Head was in your study, sir?” he faltered.

“Yes, he is waiting for me there.”

“Oh!”

Mr. Quelch gave his nephew a very sharp look. Roger turned away to gather up his books, and the Remove master left the Form-room. As soon as he was gone, the High Coombe junior gave his books no further attention. He stared after his uncle, and whistled expressively.

“Oh, my hat! The Head! I wonder if the fire's lighted? Oh, my only aunt! I've done it this time!”

Roger almost limped from the Form-room.

“Hallo, hallo, hallo!” It was Bob Cherry's cheery voice. “Enjoying life, what?”

“Oh dear!” murmured Roger.

“We beat them,” said Bob.

“Eh? Who beat whom?” said Roger vaguely.

“My hat!” exclaimed Bob indignantly. “Have you forgotten that we were playing Redclyffe this afternoon?”

“Oh, yes! Blow Redclyffe!”

“Well, you cheery ass!” said Bob Cherry warmly. “What's the matter with you? Afternoon with jolly old Virgil tired you out?”

Roger grinned.

“Yes; but that's nothing. I—I say, the Head's in my uncle's study.”

“Why shouldn't he be?” asked Bob, with a stare at the High Coombe junior.

“The Beak often goes along to Quelch's study for a jaw.”

“Yes; but——”

“But what?”

“Oh dear!” said Roger.

He moved along to the end of Masters' passage. There had been no sound of disturbance so far from Mr. Quelch's study. Like the sword of Damocles, it was still impending. It was bound to come. And the Head was there! Roger of the Remove had plenty of nerve—indeed, he was superabundantly supplied with that article. But even Roger of the Remove would never have thought of japing the Head. He wondered what was going to happen when the fireworks started.

“What's the trouble?” asked Bob, following the High Coombe junior, and glancing along the Masters' passage. “Mr. Quelch has just gone into his study. Anything up?”

“There will be in a minute,” groaned Roger.

“But what——”

“Hark!”

Bang!

## THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Exit Roger!

**D**R. LOCKE turned his head and gave Mr. Quelch a gracious nod as the Remove master entered the study.

“And now, about your nephew, my dear Quelch?” he said.

“Certainly, sir.”

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 995.



"Bless my soul! It is a little chilly," said the Head.

"The fire has been only recently lighted, sir. I will stir it," said the Remove master.

Mr. Quelch picked up the poker.

The fire was burning slowly but steadily. It had not yet reached the mass of varied fireworks stacked in the back of the grate. Mr. Quelch little dreamed what was to be the result of stirring the fire.

He thrust the poker into the grate and stirred. Tongues of flame ran through the combustibles there, and then—

It was a squib that caught first.

Sizzzzzzzz!

A shower of sparks shot out of the grate and played playfully round Mr. Quelch's trousers.

The Form master jumped back.

"Dear me! What—"

The explosion of the squib did it. The rest of the stacked fireworks ignited on the spot.

Bang!

"What—what—"

Bang! Crack! Fizzle! Crack! Bang, bang!

"Bless my soul!"

"Good heavens!"

Mr. Quelch staggered back, dropping the poker with a crash to the floor.

"What—what—what—"

Bang, bang, bang!

"What—what is happening?" exclaimed the Head. "Bless my soul! An—an explosion! A—a bomb! Good heavens!"

Dr. Locke was a stately gentleman, and he had reached a time of life when movements were naturally sedate and leisurely. If any Greyfriars fellow had been told that Dr. Locke could hop like a kangaroo, he would have laughed at the idea. But the bound that Dr. Locke made out of the Form master's arm-chair would have done credit to the most agile kangaroo that ever hopped.

Bang, bang, bang!

Wood and coal and all sorts of fragments shot out over the study. Mr. Quelch tottered back as far as the door, overcome with amazement and dismay.

Many a time had the Remove master put a match to a fire laid ready in his study. Nothing of this kind had ever happened before. It was amazing—appalling! This time he seemed to have put a match to a power-magazine!

Bang, bang! Crack! Bang! Fizz! Splutter! Bang!

Dr. Locke staggered against the study table. He was so utterly astounded that he hardly knew what was happening, or what he was doing. Fireworks, hurled out of the grate by the explosion, spluttered all over the study. One of those fearsome contrivances known as a repeating or jumping cracker dropped at the doctor's feet and exploded there, with a bang that made him jump clear of the floor.

"Oh!" gasped the Head.

He came down again fairly on the cracker as it exploded a second time.

Bang!

"Ooooooooooh!"

Bang!

"Help!"

Bang!

Dr. Locke rushed across the study. The twirling cracker followed him as if it had been endued with life, and was actually in pursuit of the headmaster. It banged again under his feet, and he jumped, and it banged again as he jumped.

"Help!" shrieked the Head.

"Oh, good heavens!" panted Mr. Quelch. "What—hap—"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 995.

Bang, bang, bang!

The door of the study was thrown open. Mr. Prout looked in with a startled face. There was a buzz of excited voices in the passage behind the Fifth Form master.

"What—what is it?" gasped Mr. Prout, rushing into the study. "What has happened? What— Oh! Ow! Wow!"

The last squib was going off as Mr. Prout rushed in, and he was greeted by a volley of sparks.

He staggered back, and collided with Mr. Quelch, and sat down on the carpet.

"Help! Fire! Help!" roared Mr. Prout.

Bang!

The last cracker exploded, and silence—blessed silence!—descended on the Remove master's study. The air was thick with the smell of gunpowder; smoke filled the room, and fragments from the fire littered it from wall to wall.

Round the open doorway was a crowd of excited, startled faces. The fat squeak of Billy Bunter was heard.

"He, he, he! I know now what young Quelch wanted with those fireworks! He, he, he!"

"Shut up, Bunter!" breathed Bob Cherry.

"He, he, he!"

"What—what—what has happened?" asked Dr. Locke faintly. The Head was clinging to the window-curtains for support in a dazed and dizzy condition. "What—what—what was it, Mr. Quelch?"

"An explosion!" gasped Mr. Prout. "It seems to be over! A gunpowder explosion! Some Bolshevik outrage!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came from the passage. The suggestion of a Bolshevik outrage at Greyfriars seemed to tickle the fellows there.

"Silence!" roared Mr. Quelch.

The Remove master's face was black as a thundercloud.

"It is a—a—a trick!" he panted. "Fireworks have been placed in the grate—the dastardly trickster intended them to explode when the fire was lighted! Upon my word, I—I—I—"

Words failed the Remove master. "A—a—a trick?" gasped the Head. "Bless my soul! Mr. Quelch, the perpetrator of this outrage shall be sent away from the school immediately—immediately!"

The Head was not often wrathful; but he was crimson with wrath now. He had been greatly alarmed, not to say terrified, and he had hopped about the study like a festive kangaroo. No punishment could be too severe for the wretch—the rascal—the iniquitous villain—who had caused the stately Head of Greyfriars to hop like a kangaroo.

"Who has done this?" boomed Mr. Prout.

"Who, indeed?" articulated the Head. "The—the rascal—the—the ruffian must be discovered at once!"

Mr. Quelch set his lips. He had little doubt as to the identity of the rascal—the ruffian.

He stepped to the door.

"Is my nephew there?" he rapped out.

"Here, uncle!" said Roger meekly.

"Come here!"

Roger entered the study.

He looked a good deal as Daniel might have looked when that ancient gentleman entered the lion's-den. He eyed his uncle very warily as he came in. Mr. Quelch looked dangerous.

"You! It was you!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, uncle!"

"Do you venture to deny it?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Nunno!"

"You—you have dared to play such a trick—on your headmaster?"

"I—I didn't know the Head would be here, uncle!" gasped Roger. "I—I never dreamed of it. I—I—it was only a joke, sir—just a little joke!"

"Mr. Quelch! Am I to understand that your nephew was the author of this—this unparalleled outrage?" exclaimed the Head.

"It appears so, sir! The severest punishment—the very severest—"

Dr. Locke held up his hand.

"It is not a question of punishment, Mr. Quelch, as your nephew does not belong to this school, and as he never will belong to it. He is here on a visit. I suggest that his visit should conclude at the very earliest possible moment!"

And Dr. Locke swept majestically from the study.

"And I suggest," boomed Mr. Prout, "that the young rascal should be thoroughly thrashed before he is sent home."

And the Fifth Form master sailed out.

Mr. Quelch closed the door. He fixed his eyes upon his hopeful nephew.

"You heard what the Head said, Roger?"

"Yes, uncle," said Roger meekly.

"You will not be allowed to remain at Greyfriars, after what has happened."

"Oh, uncle!"

"As you will not, and do not, belong to the school, it is doubtful whether I am entitled to punish you, as a Form master."

Roger brightened up.

"But as an uncle, it is my duty to punish you with the utmost severity!"

The brightness faded from Roger's countenance.

Mr. Quelch picked up his cane.

"Bend over that chair!"

Outside the study, Harry Wharton & Co. and a crowd of other fellows listened, wondering what was going to happen. They soon knew!

Whack! Whack! Whack!

The rhythmic strokes of a cane rang beyond the study. They were accompanied by loud yells. It was more than "six"—indeed, it really seemed as if Mr. Quelch were going on to sixty. Fortunately, he stopped short of that.

The next day Roger's place was vacant in the Remove.

Roger was gone.

His visit to Greyfriars had come to a very sudden end. The Head had decided that he was not to join the Remove; and Mr. Quelch fully agreed with the Head. He had wholly and totally lost any desire to train that hopeful nephew under the avuncular eye.

Roger went back to High Coombe; and as that was what he wanted, he was satisfied. Mr. Quelch was relieved of the most troublesome and exasperating fellow that had ever entered his Form, so he was satisfied. But it was long before the Remove fellows ceased to chuckle over the brief but hectic career of the Form master's nephew at Greyfriars.

THE END.

(Next week's MAGNET will contain another magnificent story of Harry Wharton & Co.: "Bunter's Brain-Storm!" As the title suggests, the Owl of the Remove is the principal character—which is proof enough that the story is a good one. Don't miss this record laugh—order your copy well in advance!)



**THE WRONG BOY!** What would you do if you knew that a boy, kidnapped in mistake for you, was likely to meet a sudden terrible end at the hands of an unscrupulous rascal? Would you leave him to his fate, or would you try and rescue him? Read what Jack Horner does in similar circumstances!

# The TRAIL of ADVENTURE!

by  
Lionel  
Day



(Introduction on page 21.)

**A Powerful New Serial that will keep you enthralled from beginning to end.**

## The Secret Opening!

**T**HE look in Squall's eyes seemed to suggest that that was the opinion he had formed long ago, and that he was wondering why his master was delaying. Jack looked about him. There was not a trace of anyone on the quay. Beyond the dock gates lay Brentford—to Jack a strange, mysterious place crammed with more houses than ever he had seen in his life. How could he possibly track the gang down and find out what had become of the unfortunate boy who had been kidnapped on his account? It seemed a hopeless proposition.

Then he remembered that he had an ally who possessed a sense that was denied to him. Give Squall something by which he could track the gang, and the wolf-dog would never leave the scent. And Jack had something. In his hand was the handkerchief which had been bound about the dog's muzzle!

Jack picked up the loose end of the rope that he had cut away and tied it to Squall's collar. Holding one end of the rope, he bent down and allowed the dog to sniff the handkerchief.

"Find them, Squall! Find them, boy!" he whispered.

Instantly the dog put his nose to the ground, searched about for a moment, and finally, with a bound that almost jerked the rope from Jack's hand, started off across the dock at a great pace. Worming his way among the litter of cargo on the quayside, he presently came to a wooden fence. Here Jack saw that three of the wooden uprights had been removed, leaving a gap large enough to allow a man's body to pass. In a moment they were through the gap. Beyond was a dark lane, flanked on one side by tumbledown houses. Racing down this lane, Jack came suddenly upon his first uninterupted view of the Thames.

The great tidal river stretched there—a sheet of silver in the moonlight. The tide had turned and was rushing swiftly seawards. Jack halted, throwing all his weight on the rope, checking Squall, who struggled frantically. Ahead of

them, lying alongside a derelict quay, were two barges and a tug.

Even as the boy watched he saw some men run a long, crate-like box on board the leading barge. At that distance it was impossible to distinguish any one single man. They moved about the deck of the barge like shadows. And then suddenly one of the men lifted up his head. The moonlight illuminated his face for a moment. Jack's heart gave a leap. It was the man *Curly*. He remembered that brutalised face even at that distance—the high cheek bones and flattened nose, the receding forehead, and lastly the wisp of hair which had evidently earned the man his nickname.

Now Jack realised what was happening. That box, which looked so like a coffin, contained the body of the waif who had been kidnapped in mistake for himself. The brutes were going to take the boy somewhere, to some terrible fate. And there was no chance of his escape unless he, Jack, helped him.

"Full steam ahead!" a voice whispered.

At that command there was the sudden "jug-jug" of a screw. The tug had begun to move, and, with the tiller hard over, was heading for the middle of the river. Now the tow-rope fastened to the first barge felt the strain. Jack could see the men crouching down on the deck. Instantly he saw what he must do. He must try to scramble unobserved into the second barge. There was a risk, of course, that he might be seen, but he must take that risk. He could not leave the boy, who was suffering on his account, without doing his best to help him.

Bending low, he raced for the quay, Squall straining madly at the rope. The second barge, its tow-rope now taut, had begun to move. Its stern was already swinging clear of the quay. Jack, loosing his hold of Squall, made a spring. Catching the gunwale, he managed to hang on. The wolf-dog shot at one bound on board, turning instantly to see how his master was getting on. A fraction of a second later,

and Jack found himself, very breathless, on board the deserted barge.

He had never seen a vessel of the kind before, and its emptiness and its vastness filled him with alarm. He crept along the bottom of the vessel, Squall slinking by his side. Now he could feel a certain motion. The tug, straining and fussing ahead, had dragged its escort into mid-stream, and was heading eastwards.

The boy crept cautiously to the bows, and, lying there, looked over the side. He could see the green and red lights of the tug, and immediately ahead of him the leading barge. Voices faintly reached him—coarse, laughing, mocking voices. The gang were evidently congratulating themselves on a piece of work well done.

But what was going to happen next, Jack wondered. Where were they going? He forgot the dangers of his adventure for a while in the wonder of the unfamiliar scenes that opened up before his eyes. On either side houses crowded down to the banks. Lights seemed everywhere. And always in his ears above the clacking of the screw was the restless murmur of the great City. Now they shot a bridge along which he could see crowds walking and motor-cars passing along. How strange it was, he reflected, that all those people could be going about their business and their pleasure quite heedless of the tragedy that was happening so close to them. It flashed into his mind that he might stand up and hail them, and tell them of the dastardly deed that was being perpetrated; but he was stopped from making this rash attempt by the recollection that his shrill voice would not carry such a distance amid so much tumult.

Half an hour went by, and now the houses on the left bank grew more stately. A huge block of buildings rose up against the sky. Jack held his breath as he recognised, from a picture he had seen in the illustrated papers, the Houses of Parliament.

Now the bridges seemed to grow more numerous. Against the moonlit sky lie  
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had a vision of the dome and cross of St. Paul's. The houses on either side were growing less stately. It was as if they had passed from one layer of society into another. Now there were no longer stately embankments but factories, store-houses, wharves, and shipping. They were going fast down stream, eastwards.

He stared in wonder at the Tower Bridge. The river seemed to be widening, and there were more and more boats about. A launch went up stream at a terrific pace, a wave at its bows. Jack caught a vision of a number of men in uniform.

He noticed too, that the gang aboard the leading barge had disappeared. But he had no means of connecting these two facts. To the boy, brought up in the heart of the Cumberland mountains, the very existence of the River Police was unknown. Had he hailed that launch, he might have effected his purpose without any further danger. As it was, he let it pass, thinking that they would pay no attention to his calls for help, and believing staunchly that it was his duty to rescue, alone and unaided, if he could, the unfortunate waif who had been kidnapped in his place.

Another half hour went by. The fussing of the tug seemed to decrease. They were slowing down. On the left bank of the river, there rose up a tangled disorder of buildings—sinister buildings of mouldering brickwork and rotting wood. The noise of the engine ceased. They were turning towards the shore. The bank drew nearer.

Jack could see a level stretch of grass-strewn quay, now. He crouched down, for the gang were standing up with ropes in their hands. Evidently the journey was at an end. The tug backed and as the tow-rope slackened, someone cast it off. Another moment, and a man had jumped from the leading barge on to the quay, and had checked the weigh of the two barges by slipping a rope round a stanchion. There was some confusion for a moment as the vessel on which Jack was collided violently with the one in front, causing the boy and Squall to tumble headlong into the dark depths of the barge.

When he gained his place of observation again, it was to find that all the men had landed, and that the crate lay on the ground at their feet.

The tug, its work done, had disappeared. There was only the gang there now. Jack watched them, his heart in his mouth. What were they going to do next? He was not left long in doubt.

"It's all clear, now, boys. Get a move on! We don't want to keep Black Michael waiting."

At the mention of that ominous name, Jack felt a thrill of horror. He remembered the dark shadow-like figure he had seen—Black Michael, who seemed to him like some evil force hunting him down for some obscure reason that he could not understand—Black Michael, who was in league with his uncle—who had pursued him so relentlessly across the mountains that night of his flight.

"Give the signal, Jim," someone whispered.

The tall tumble down building that faced the quay, was without any windows at all, Jack saw, and there was no sign of a door. With a curiosity that almost stifled his creepy sense of fear, he observed one of the men stoop down and tap on the brickwork. There was a pause for a moment and then, suddenly, where there had been apparently solid

brick, there was now a square-cut hole. Without a word, the men lifted the crate from the ground and carried it to this aperture. It slid inwards with the ease of a battleship leaving the stocks. Another moment and it had disappeared. Again there was a signal, and the trap-door closed.

"Well, boys, I guess we've posted the goods and our job's done. What about a drink? I'm fair parched with all this running about."

The suggestion was hailed with a chorus of approval, and the gang began to move along the quay in single file. Another moment, and they had disappeared round the corner of the building.

— —

### Squall Does His Bit!

**J**ACK wasted not a moment, but slipping down the side of the barge, leaped ashore. The next instant, he was on his knees, fumbling for the place in the wall through which the crate had disappeared. Now he could see that, though it was intended to look like brickwork, that part of the wall was really made of wood. It was simply a trap-door camouflaged to look like bricks. There, somewhere beyond that trap, was the unfortunate waif who was suffering on his account. He must get him—somehow he must get him. He couldn't leave him there helpless, in the lurch.

The trap had been opened in reply to a signal. He might repeat that signal. While he was debating this point, he pressed against the trap. To his delight and amazement, it yielded to the push. Whoever was responsible for manipulating it, must have forgotten to push home the bolts.

Jack peered inside. All beyond was impenetrable blackness. But it was down there the boy had been taken. Jack drew in a deep breath and, clenching his teeth, took a step forward. Instantly, his feet shot from under him, and he slid down—down a steep incline into that pit of blackness.

There was no time to think—no time to do anything, but to try and keep himself in a sitting posture. Something bumped against him from behind. Putting out his hand, he felt the comforting touch of Squall's ruff. At any rate, he was not alone, and that thought gave him courage.

### 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 Dane's Farm. Together with his faithful wolf-dog, Squall, Jack flies from the house.

**BLACK MICHAEL**, a mysterious individual, who visits 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. Knowing nothing of these things, Jack is trudging across the Cumberland mountains when he spies a number of men hard on his trail. Eluding his pursuers by leaping aboard a passing lorry, he reaches the docks where he finds a new home with

**BILL BOWKER**—the skipper of the monkey-boat Emerald—and his wife, Black Michael's men, however, soon discover Jack's whereabouts, and stealing aboard the Emerald one night, capture, in mistake for Jack, a waif who has wandered on deck in search of food. Concerned for the waif's safety, Jack turns to his faithful dog.

"We must try and find him, Squall!" he gasps.

(Now read on.)

That plunge into that abyss of darkness, ended almost as abruptly as it had begun. Jack's feet struck something soft, flinging him face forward. As he lay there, he discovered that it was a mattress of some kind, evidently placed there to deaden all sound.

He picked himself up to feel Squall's body against his leg. He patted the dog's head, deriving a strange comfort from the touch. The thought, indeed, occurred to him, whether, had he been quite alone, he would have gone on with this strange adventure.

And it certainly was the strangest and most mysterious of adventures. He was there, alone in a vast tumble down building on the banks of the Thames—a building evidently constructed for the sinister purposes of the gang, by whom he was being pursued. And, somewhere in that building, was the crate and the waif who had been kidnapped in his stead.

Jack stood quite still, listening. Not a sound reached his ears, and, worst of all, there was nothing to be seen. The darkness in front of him and around him, was absolutely impenetrable. A step to the right or the left or forward, and he might fall into some trap. But he must find the boy.

Once again, in his difficulty, he fell back upon Squall's assistance. For the wolf-dog, the dark had no difficulties. The mysterious sense he possessed, would tell him of any dangers, though he couldn't see them. Jack laid his hand on Squall's collar.

"Go on, old boy," he whispered.

The dog began to move cautiously forward. Now they were clear of the mattress.

Jack could feel that he was walking on a cement floor. Presently, putting out his hand, he felt a wall on his left. They were in some sort of passage, and the discovery gave him comfort. He was no longer surrounded by a vague stretch of darkness. He felt Squall turn sharply to the right and a few yards further on, to the left; and then, abruptly ahead of him, the darkness was pierced by what looked almost like a star.

He halted, staring at this light in utter astonishment. By no possible means could a star be shining there in that building. It was absurd. And then he saw that the light came from a keyhole in a door.

Jack crept forward noiselessly. The murmur of voices reached him. There were men on the other side of that door. He gained it, and, stooping down, put his eye to the keyhole. What he saw beyond almost took his breath away.

It was a room the like of which he had never seen before. Down one side were placed a number of divans screened by bead curtains. In the middle of the floor was a huge idol—a squatting, grotesque figure, painted in violent reds and greens and gold; a horrifying-looking image, whose face seemed to have been designed to express all the villainess and cruelty that lies hidden in the heart of man.

This strange apartment was unoccupied save for one man. He was a Chinaman, wearing an Oriental silk dress which hung down to his knees. He was standing with his back to the door, peering, so Jack discovered, like himself, through some small aperture in the wall.

He was well over six foot, and down his back hung a long pigtail. Jack's heart began to pound painfully against his ribs. Into what dark, sinister, mysterious haunt had he stumbled?

For a moment panic seized upon him;





Squall leapt into the air to land on the Chinaman's chest with his fore feet, flinging him back to the ground. As he did so, Jack sprang across the room and seized the revolver. (See this page.)

he couldn't go on. Squall and he must try and struggle back up the chute and escape as they had come. He dared not enter that nightmare room, or face the terrifying figure that stood there motionless, keeping observation on something that was going on beyond. Jack felt a strange longing for the cosy cabin of the Emerald, and the comforting presence of old Bill Bowker and his wife. He must go back while yet there was time.

And then abruptly a harsh voice reached his ears.

"Get that crate opened—quick! If the kid's dead, so much the better; if he's still alive, I want to question him."

It was Black Michael's voice. Jack remembered the cold, brutally callous tone, all the more terrifying because of its cultured accent. He thought of the waif whom he had wanted to feed, and he knew at once that, come what might, there was for him no going back. Let the perils and dangers be what they might, he must do his best to save the unfortunate boy.

Through the keyhole Jack took a rapid survey of the room beyond. By the side of the idol there was a little Chinese table, made of lacquered bamboo, and on this there rested a number of articles with the use of which he was quite unfamiliar. But there was something there that he did not know the use of. Amidst all that fantastic, Oriental setting, it stood out as something plain and practical. It was a revolver.

Jack, though he was only fourteen,

was, oddly enough, familiar with a revolver, because his dead mother had possessed one which his father had given her, and he had played with it in secret until it had been discovered one day by his uncle and confiscated. The sight of that revolver had the same effect upon him as a magnet has on a piece of steel. If only he could get possession of it, what might he not do?

He measured the distance from the table to the door. It was about eight feet away, and the Chinaman was posted at exactly the same distance. But Jack would have to open the door, and in doing that he might alarm the motionless figure, enabling him to snatch up the weapon. Jack's only hope lay in Squall. He must rely upon the wolf dog to pin the Chinaman to the ground and hold him there.

The boy lifted his hand and felt along the surface of the door. His fingers touched a handle. He turned it slowly. Fortunately, the lock was well oiled, for it made no noise. Then, when he had turned the handle to its extreme limit, he took a deep breath and pressed against the door. It opened. From within came a faint astringent odour—a scent of tobacco-smoke that was yet not tobacco-smoke. Jack felt Squall pressing against him, as if anxious to act. There was no drawing back now. Noiselessly he opened the door wide.

As he did so the Chinaman turned with incredible swiftness, and his blank, expressionless face was visible to the boy for a moment. He saw him stare again with his almond eyes, and then make

a movement towards the table. But he never reached it.

Without a sound the wolf dog leapt. Straight into the air he seemed to leap, coming down on the Chinaman's chest with his fore feet, flinging him back on the ground. Even as he did so Jack sprang across the room and seized the revolver.

It became clear immediately that he had not been a moment too soon. From somewhere within his silken robe the Chinaman had produced a long, glittering knife. He was in the very act of driving this upwards into the body of the dog when Jack thrust the muzzle of the revolver into the Oriental's face.

"Drop that knife!"

There was the tinkle of steel on the ground as the Chinaman responded impassively to that whispered order. Jack waited only a moment to kick the knife away, and then, still holding the revolver to the man's head, told him to turn over on his face with his arms behind his back.

#### Desperate Measures!

"HOLD him, Squall," he said in an undertone.

Squall leapt on the man's back, his ears back, his jaws open. One movement and those fangs would fasten in the man's neck. But the Chinaman never moved. He lay there as grotesquely still as the carved and painted idol in the centre of the



room. Looking about him, Jack uncarthed from one of the divans a number of gaily-coloured handkerchiefs. With these he bound the Chinaman's hands tightly behind his back, finishing up with tying his ankles together.

A vague remembrance of something that he had read—that Chinamen were dim, with all sorts of tricks and devices at their disposal—made him go over those bonds carefully, to see that they were secure.

"I think you'll do," he muttered to himself; and then added in a whisper to Squall: "Guard him, old fellow, until I call."

It was curious how now that he had faced this danger and overcome it he felt braced up and full of confidence. He was only fourteen, and yet, with Squall's assistance, he had got the better of this very awe-inspiring Oriental. It seemed to him that he had only to display the same reckless daring to accomplish what had brought him to that lonely, sinister spot in London. He had a revolver, and there was always the wolf-dog ready to sell his life, if necessary, on his side; and his cause was just—of that he had no shadow of doubt.

Behind a curtain composed of strings of many coloured beads he discovered a door. Obviously, from the sounds that reached his ears, it was through this door that the crate containing the street-waif had been carried. He could hear Black Michael's voice, cold, cutting, callous.

"You men—are you going to take all the night over opening that crate? I should hurry, if I were you. I should be sorry to have to hasten your movements!"

Jack wished he could see what was going on in the room. The crate had not yet been opened, and, so far, the boy it contained was safe. Then he remembered the spyhole through which the Chinaman had been watching. He hurried back to the spot, and, mounting a bamboo stool, put his eye to the aperture. It was so constructed with an ingenious lens that he was able to see every corner of the room.

Obviously, the Oriental had reasons of his own for having the means of keeping observation on the adjoining apartment.

It was a strange scene that opened up before Jack's eyes—a room like the one he was in, covered with Oriental tapestries and furnishings. In the centre was the crate he had seen carried on board the barge. Over it stood two members of the gang, working strenuously to force open the lid. It struck Jack as a curious coincidence that, though he was apparently face to face with a solid wall, he could hear the movements and the breathing of the men even more distinctly than when he had stood at the door with his ear to the keyhole. And then the reason flashed upon him.

The wall was covered with Chinese paintings, beautifully designed and wonderfully worked. Dragons and gorgeous figures in silks, with gilded scimitars, crawled about the surface from the floor to the ceiling. Just in front of him the scene depicted was a girl evidently flying from robbers towards a pagoda in the distance. This pagoda was directly on a level with the spy-hole and was painted a dark brown. As Jack stared at it he saw that instead of mere paint it was a metal disc. Put-

ting his ear to it, he realised that it was a microphone, which enabled every word uttered in the adjoining room to be heard.

"We're being as quick as we can, guv'nor; but that durned Chink said there was no key," one of the men working on the crate protested.

"Work, man, and don't talk!" Black Michael retorted. "I'll speak to Curly for forgetting to send the key along with the box. Hurry, man!"

The box must have been very carefully constructed, for it took a full two minutes more before the men were able to force open the lid. Jack saw Black Michael, with his long, pale, strained face, approach the edge of the box and look in.

"Haul him out and let's have a look at him!"

Without any pretence of care, the men lifted the bound figure of the waif out of the box and dropped it on the ground. The boy was alive, Jack discovered, with a feeling of relief; for not only did he see his chest rising and falling, but his wide-open, terrified eyes seemed to be looking through the wall at Jack, as if begging him to help him.

"You can take that handkerchief from his mouth," said Black Michael, "and put him on his feet. I want to talk to him."

One of the men yanked the boy to his feet, and holding him by the scruff of his neck, dragged the gag from his mouth none too gently. Jack could see the waif's trembling lips and horror-haunted eyes as he stared pitifully into Black Michael's dark, evil face. A cold, frosty smile twisted the man's lips.

"Running away don't seem to have done you much good, my lad. You appear to have lost your clothes, and not to have eaten as much food as I dare say you would have liked."

"I ain't done nuffin', guv'nor!" the boy wailed pitifully. "I don't know what you think I done."

Black Michael came close to him, and, bending down, stared into his eyes.

"You crossed my path and you interfered with my plans. You think that's nothing? You'll find you made a mistake, my lad! For nearly a week I've been looking for you, and now I've got you!"

"I—I don't know what you mean—"

"What did you run away from Dane's Farm for? Answer me, you filthy little brat! I'll tear the skin off you if you don't!"

Two big tears rolled down the waif's face.

"I ain't done nothing. I tell you! Oh, guv'nor, don't 'it me! I ain't run away from nowhere!"

"You little liar!" Black Michael retorted furiously. "Answer me—why did you run away from Dane's Farm and your kind uncle and aunt?"

As if to force the boy to speak, he stretched out his hands and caught him by the ears, pulling them in opposite directions until the child screamed with pain.

"I ain't got no uncle and aunt! There's only mother—and, oh, please, sir, she won't know where I am!"

Black Michael's brows came down into a deep frown. He gave a little start.

"What do you mean by your mother? She's been dead for years. She died in 1916, just after your father was killed in France."

In spite of his terror, a look of blank

astonishment crept over the waif's emaciated face.

"I don't know what you're talking about, guv'nor—I dunno, straight! I ain't never seen my daddy. Muvver lives in Corkram Alley, and she's sick, and I was trying to earn a bit to get her some of the things the doctor said she ought to have."

Black Michael's face suddenly convulsed with a rage that made him look like a devil from hell.

"What's your name?" he demanded. "Tell me the truth, or it will be the worse for you!"

"Jim Snow, sir!" the boy sobbed.

Black Michael clenched his fists and raised his arms above his head in a very fury of rage.

"Those muddle-headed, brainless fools!" he shouted. "I'll mark them for this! They find out where the boy is, they get aboard this canal boat, and then they bring me here the wrong boy!"

The faces of the two men expressed not only their amazement, but their alarm. Clearly, when Black Michael was in one of these dark moods, there was no knowing what he might do. The man was mad with fury. Jack, through the spyhole, could see his foam-flecked lips, and his bloodshot eyes shining like those of a lunatic.

"Where's that Chink? Where's Brilliant Sing? Fetch the fool here—and one of you men go and call the gang! Somebody's got to pay for this! I'm not going to have all my prospects ruined by a lot of careless, thick-headed gutter-sweepings!"

One of the men bolted towards an outer door, obviously only too glad of an excuse to get away. As the Oriental curtains closed behind him, the man who was holding Jim Snow looked at Black Michael.

"Shall I let the boy go?" he inquired.

"Or what'll I do with him, guv'nor?" Black Michael pointed a finger that literally trembled with rage at the pitiful figure of the waif.

"That? Choke the life out of it, and chuck the body in the river!"

The man's hands closed about Jim Snow's neck. At that sight Jack jumped from the stool and rushed back to the door. He turned the handle. The door was locked on the inside. He could hear a choking sob of pain from the room beyond. They were going to murder Jim Snow, unless he could help him! How could he burst open the door?

Jack looked about him helplessly. Then suddenly he caught sight of the revolver in his hand. Instantly he realised what he must do. He placed the muzzle against the keyhole and pressed the trigger. There was a loud report, followed by a splintering of wood and a smashing of metal. He pushed at the door frantically. It swung open. In another moment he was across the threshold and face to face with Black Michael!

#### Black Michael Tries It On!

JACK pushed open the shattered door, and, springing across the threshold, faced Black Michael.

"Put your hands up!" he exclaimed in his high-pitched boy's voice.

Black Michael made no movement. He stood there, with that sinister frown on his brow, staring at the stocky little figure that had appeared apparently from nowhere.



"What are you doing here?" he demanded. "Do you know what I do with kids like you? I use a rope's-end until there isn't a bit of skin left on their backs."

There was no question that Jack had found this greeting more than a little disconcerting. According to all the rules, the man should have been terrified, have backed against the wall, and immediately put up his hands. Instead of that, he was doing none of these things. He was threatening him. Jack felt curiously small. If the man didn't do as he was told, he might have to fire the revolver, and he wanted to avoid that at all costs. He hated the idea of killing anyone—even this callous brute who had ordered Jim Snow to be strangled and his body thrown into the river with much the same air of indifference as a man buys a paper at a bookstall.

"I'll fire if you don't do as I tell you!" he stammered, but even to his own ears his voice sounded unconvincing.

Black Michael smiled darkly, but he made no attempt to comply with the other's order.

"That's a dangerous weapon for youngsters to play with. You had better put it down. It might go off, you know, and then—perhaps you would kill me, and you'd be arrested for murder, and hanged by the neck until you were dead. A pleasant prospect, isn't it?"

Jack steadied himself with an effort. Somehow this strange, frightening man with the long, white, strained face and those dark, malevolent eyes seemed to sap all his energy.

"I mean what I say," he gasped. "You aren't going to fool me—you were going to murder that other boy."

Black Michael folded his arms across his chest.

"Oh, so that's the reason of your presence here, is it? You're playing some game of knight errantry, are you? You stole that revolver, I suppose, and nothing would suit you but to come here to play the part of gallant rescuer?"

His lips curled in a malicious smile. "We'd better know something about you before we go on with this game, I think. It seems you're acquainted with Jim Snow."

Jack felt himself flush. "He's a poor boy who's half-starved, and those brutes who follow you kidnapped him and brought him here."

"You mean from the monkey-boat, The Emerald?" Black Michael inquired.

"You know that as well as I do," exclaimed Jack hotly.

The man's gaze became more fixed. It held Jack with an almost hypnotic power.

"Perhaps; but the question opens up all sorts of matters in which I am interested. If you are aware of what took place, then you must have been aboard the boat. I think I'd like to know your name."

He leaned forward a little, and his gaze became still more concentrated. Jack felt as if he were drifting off into sleep.

"Jack Horner," he answered, and then could have bitten out his tongue as he realised the folly of that admission.

The colour mounted to Black Michael's cheeks. His lips opened as if in astonishment.

"And to think I've been looking for you all over the place and been unable to find you! And now you come to me of your own accord."

"Drop that revolver!" he went on in commanding tones.

Jack made a strenuous effort to fight against that feeling of sleepiness which had taken possession of him, but it was unavailing. The room had vanished now, it almost seemed. All he saw were those two dark evil eyes that seemed to fill the very universe. They held him spell-bound. Slowly his right hand which held the revolver dropped to his side.

"That's better," Black Michael remarked. "So you are the boy who ran away from Dane's Farm?"

A reluctant "Yes" came from Jack's lips.

"And you jumped on board a lorry belonging to the Northern Cement Company, and got taken aboard the monkey-boat Emerald?"

"Yes."

"And how did you come here?"

Deeper and deeper grew the power of that trance; gradually the substantial world was drifting away from Jack. He was powerless to resist Black Michael. His will was no longer his own. He was like one of those lay figures in a "Punch and Judy" show whose performance the other commanded.

"Oh, don't leave me—don't leave me! They'll kill me if anything happens to you."

A piteous wail rang through the room. It was Jim Snow's voice. He must have realised the danger into which his would-be rescuer had sunk.

And that appeal had a curious effect upon Jack. For a moment his will power seemed to reassert itself—to break through those hypnotic bonds with which Black Michael was seeking to bind him.

He shook his head and blinked his eyes, and for the fraction of a second the power that the other exercised was in abeyance.

Black Michael must have realised instantly what was happening, for suddenly he sprang forward as if to seize the boy. His hands were almost on Jack's shoulders when the youngster gave a shout.

"Squall!" he cried. "Squall!"

As he uttered that frantic appeal, Jack ducked sideways, so that Black Michael, carried forward by the impetus of his spring, dashed past him towards the door. On the very threshold a living mass of fur with cavernous jaws and shining fangs met him in full air. There was a crash, and Black Michael levelled his length on the ground, with the wolf-dog standing over him, ears back, his ruff bristling, his flame-coloured eyes staring unswervingly down at the man's white, twitching face.

"Hold him, Squall!"

There was a tone of utter relief in Jack's voice. Only then did he realise the immensity of the danger from which he had escaped—escaped, more by luck than anything else.

Although he knew nothing of hypnotism, he was aware that Black Michael was able to exercise, from a distance, some mysterious power over him which robbed him of his will and deprived his body of any capacity for action. But he had got the better of him.

His business was to rescue Jim Snow, and get clear away out of that villainous Oriental den. He rushed at the man who still held Jim Snow. There must be no delay. He remembered that the other who had been in that room had been sent to summon the gang. He pressed the muzzle of the revolver against the man's head.

"Undo those ropes!" he commanded.

Luckily for Jack, the feel of that ring of cold steel against his forehead was sufficient inducement for the man. With fumbling fingers he hastened to undo the knots that bound the wail.

In a few seconds Jim Snow was freed. "Pick up the rope, Jim," Jack whispered, "it may be useful."

While Jim, with stiffened hands, collected the rope from the floor, Jack made the man back against the wall.

"Stand there—with your hands above your head," he ordered harshly. "And if you speak or move I'll have to shoot!"

(Will Jack and his new-found friend manage to make good their escape from this secret haunt of Black Michael's? Read next week's sensational instalment, chums.)

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# Do You Know That?

Interesting Tit-Bits for the Footer Fan!

A. G. Bower, of the Corinthians, and the only amateur to find a place in England's last International side, is very keen on golf, as well, and some time ago he beat Cyril Tolley in an open affair on the West Kent golfcourse.

Two First Division football clubs have in recent times promoted their trainer to the position of manager. These are Huddersfield Town and Tottenham Hotspur.

In the International matches played since the War, England has tried no fewer than twenty different centre-forwards. In the same period Scotland has been satisfied with three.

How is this for a real contrast. In the Second Round of the Scottish Cup this season the attendances ranged from 56,000 at a game between the Rangers and St. Mirren, and 600 at a contest between Dykehead and Montrose. What might be called the sublime and the ridiculous.

Robert Gurney, a young lad of twenty, who is coming on apace with the Sunderland team at inside-left, was strongly recommended to the club by Charlie Buchan. A boy with such a sponsor ought to have a chance.

Only four players who played for England against Ireland last October were considered good enough to play for the Old Country against Wales in February. Fancy "sacking" seven in the short space of four months.

It is thirty-one years since any side won the First Division championship and the Cup in the same season.

Some of the big football clubs think that the broadcasting of football matches will adversely affect their attendances, as people will stay at home on wet or cold days and listen rather than go out to watch. Others think that the broadcasting will bring new patrons to the turnstiles.

The half-back line which has often represented Everton this season is surely the shortest on record, not in regard to stature but the shortness of their names—Virt, Bain, and Hart.

An old and experienced League player says that dancing is fine exercise, and especially tends to add to the efficiency of half-backs. Perhaps this is because a middle man has to be so frequently on the turn, and to mind his steps.

Chadder, the Corinthians centre-half, never played Soccer, but always Rigger, until he went to Oxford, but taking to the Association game naturally he gained his Blue in his first term, and played against Cambridge.

It is calculated that in the last thirty years the Football Association and the organisations under its wing have contributed one million two hundred and fifty thousand pounds to charities. At the present time its contributions amount to about forty thousand pounds a year.

Although on dark or foggy days big football teams are often turned round at half-time without leaving the field, the players have a right to five minutes rest, and can insist upon it in spite of anything the referee may suggest.

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# THE HEAD'S JOY-RIDE!

DICKY NUGENT

A Spiffing Tail of the Breathless Adventures of Dr. Birchmell, the Head of St. Sam's.



Dr. Birchmell gets more than he bargains for when he meets the utterly rash and reckless young rascal—FRANK FEARLESS!



"I ROT right in!" said the Head cheerily, as the heavy clump of a boot sounded on the door of his study.

It was Mr. Lickham, the master of the Fourth, who cattered in at the Head's command.

Doctor Birchmell was seated at his desk, going through his morning correspondence.

There were no black-edged letters; but there were a good many bills from local tradesmen, requesting the Head to settle at his early inconvenience.

Head winced as he tossed these, one after another, into his waste-paper basket.

"Ah, Lickham," he said sadly, as he looked up and caught the Form-master's eye.

"In the midst of life, we are in debt. These dreadful tradespeople seem to take a positive delight in bombarding me with bills. I have accumulated sufficient to paper the walls of my study."

Mr. Lickham looked grave.

"When do you intend to pay those bills, sir?" he asked.

The Head quickly recovered his song-froid.

"This year—next year—some time—never!" he said gaily.

"But I have not sent for you, Lickham, to discuss such mundane matters as bills. The fact is, there is a new boy coming to-day—a lad named Fearless. You have heard of Fearless's Fatening Foods For Frail Feeders? Well, this boy I am speaking of is Old Man Fearless's son."

"Oh, yes, sir?" said Mr. Lickham respectfully.

"His father has just written to me," went on the Head. "I don't know whether he picked the boy up at an auction or not, but he describes him as a bad lot. He has been a source of considerable anxiety to his parents, and they don't relish his wild and wayward capers."

"Then the best thing they can do is to pack him off to school," said Mr. Lickham.

The young scamp has already been sent to several schools; but he has not found the discipline to his liking, so he has just turned round and toddled home again. His father is at his wits' end to know what to do with him. But he has heard of my reputation as a breaker-in of refractory young cubs, and he has written to ask if I will take the boy."

"And will you, sir?" inquired Mr. Lickham.

He discarded his gown and mortar-board, and, stepping to the mirror, started to comb his long beard with a special rake which he kept for that purpose.

The Head was thus engaged when the door opened, and a strikingly beautiful girl swept into the study.

She was a girl who had seen about fourteen winters—and one English summer. Her bingled hair hung gracefully down her back; there was a dimple on one rosy cheek, and a pimple on the other.

"Good morning, pop!" she said gaily. "I just looked in to see if you could spare the time for a game of croaky."

"Sorry to disappoint you, my dear," he said, "but duty calls. And if I neglected my duty in order to play croaky, I should be put through the hoop myself! Fact is, I've got to go and meet a new boy."

"Oh, bother!" said Molly with a pout. "Yes, it's an awful nuisance," agreed the Head. "But it's too late for me to riggle out of it."

The Head turned from the mirror and lifted a bony frowninger in solemn warning.

"Mind you take grate care of yourself, Molly. I have heard that there is a gang of gipsies in the neighborhood—not the nice kind of gipsies, but ruff and ruffianly characters. If they should way-lay you, and kidnap you—"

Molly Birchmell laughed in her father's face.

"What nonsense you do talk, pop! Why on earth should a gang of gipsies want to kidnap me?"

"To hold you to ransom, with the idea of eggshoring a large sum of munny out of me. They are the sort of sicondrels who would stoop to anything low," added the Head.

"If they start any kidnapping stunts they won't catch this kid napping!" she said.

Then, bestowing a dutiful peck upon her parent's cheek, Molly tripped out into the sunshine. From his study window the Head watched her fairly feet fitting across the quadrangle.

"Well may I be proud of such a daughter!" he muttered. "A bonny lass, indeed! She has inherited all her father's good qualities—and none of his bad ones. I trusted that no harm will come to her. But, there! Molly knows how to take care of herself."

So saying, the Head dismissed his daughter from his mind, and sallied forth to catch the ten-twenty, which was to carry him on his mission to Fearless Towers.

"I WENTY miles!" groaned the Head. "Twenty long, weary miles to St. Sam's—and I must trudge every inch of the way!"

Head consoled himself with the reflection that he would make things warm for Frank Fearless when he at last got back to St. Sam's.

"Fancy the young rascal daring to leave home before I arrived!" cried the Head. "He seems to have no respect whatever for orthodoxy. But I'll learn him! My fingers are itching to brush him black and blue!"

The Head strode on savagely. He was fresh now, and full of beans; but he wondered what he would feel like by the time he got to St. Sam's—if ever he got there.

There was a sudden foot-foot behind him, and the Head kept into the ditch just in time to save his skin. A car flow past him in a flash.

"Stop! Stop, you rotter!"

But the car disappeared in a cloud of dust. The Head crawled out of the ditch and put his thumb to his nose, and spread his fingers out fan-like.

"Yah! Kow-doggs!" he shouted scornfully.

And he resumed his weary tramp. Progress was slow; for ever and anon the Head had to dart into the hedge, or seek the friendly shelter of a ditch, to avoid being run down. He yelled at each and every motorist who passed him; but he was so bedraggled with mire that he looked like a tramp, and nobody cared to give him a lift.

After five miles of this sort of thing, the Head came upon a weird and wonderful spectacle.

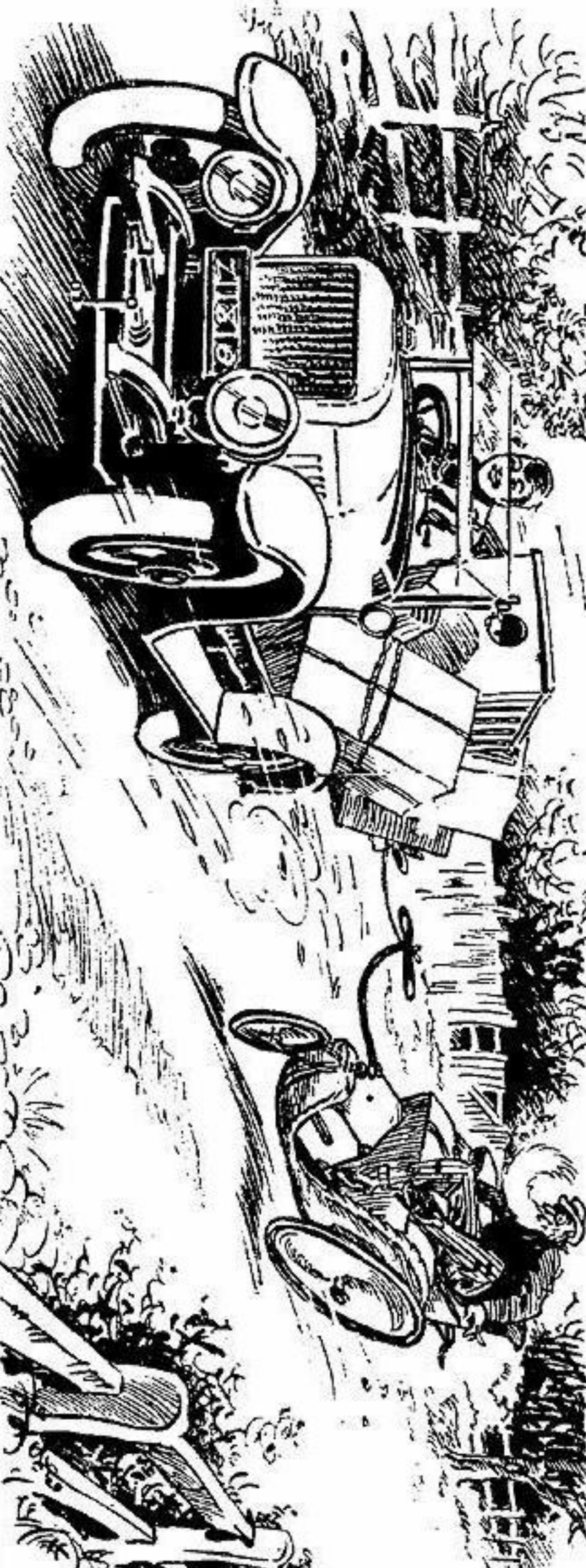
A strange thing on wheels—for it could not be called a car—stood stationary in the roadway. It could not be called a car, for the simple reason that it was only half a car. It had no body. It was just a shassay, with the bonnet and steering-wheel in front. An inverted soap-box formed the driver's seat.

Where the body of the car should have been there was a sort of menagerie of beasts and birds. There was a rabbit-hutch, full of tame bunnies; there was a large coop, which contained a domesticated goat; there was a cage of white mice; and there was a smaller cage which contained a chattering parrot. All these things were heaped together in wild disorder; and the driver of the car—a freckled-faced youngster of fourteen—was trying to fasten a couple of coops together with a length of rope, which wasn't nearly long enough.

Behind the disembodied car, attached by means of a stout rope, was an old-fashioned hatched-trail. It contained no

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