

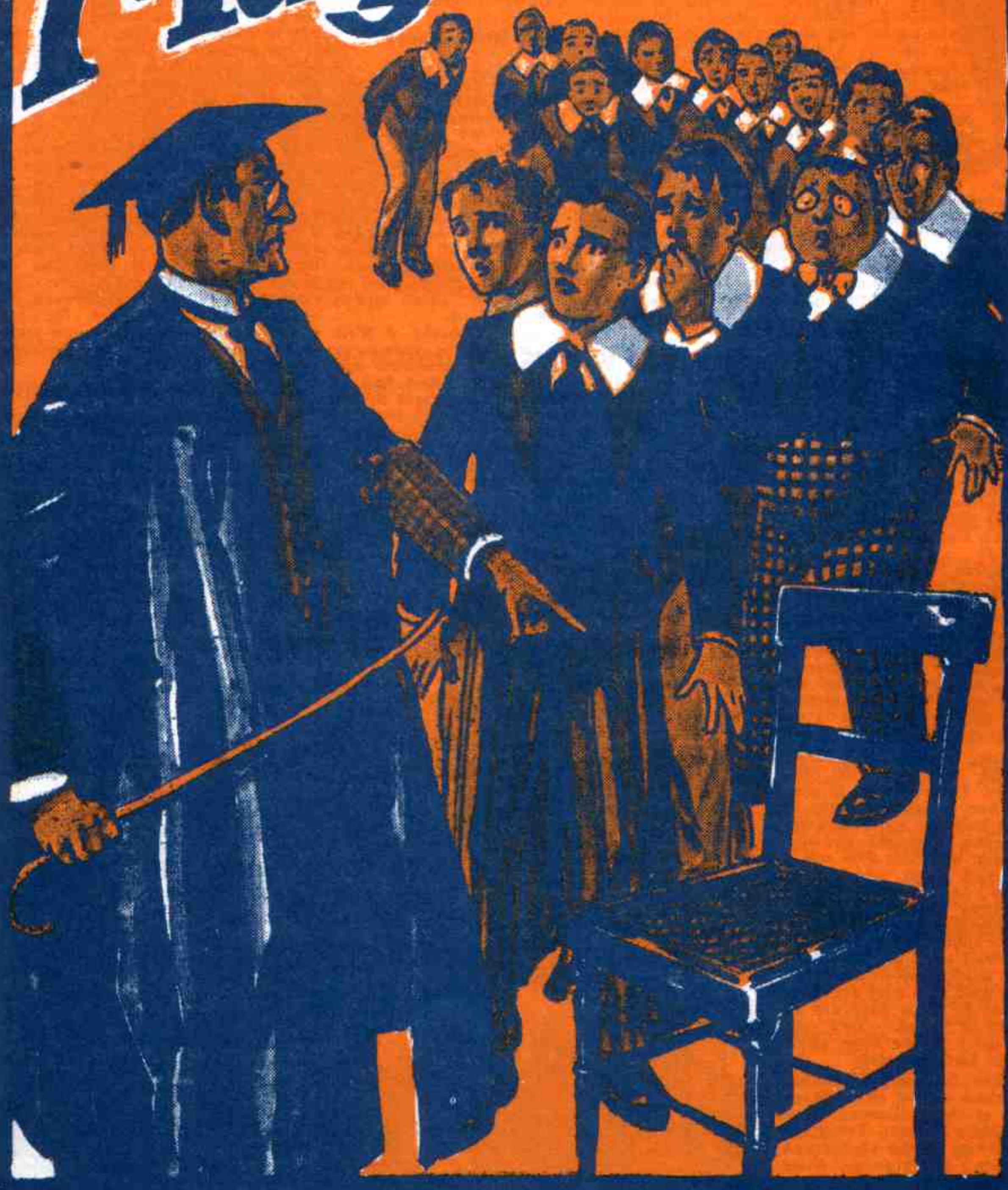
Ask for No. 1 of "MODERN BOY" TO-DAY!

No. 1,043. Vol. XXXIII. Week Ending February 11th, 1928.

The Magnet 2^d

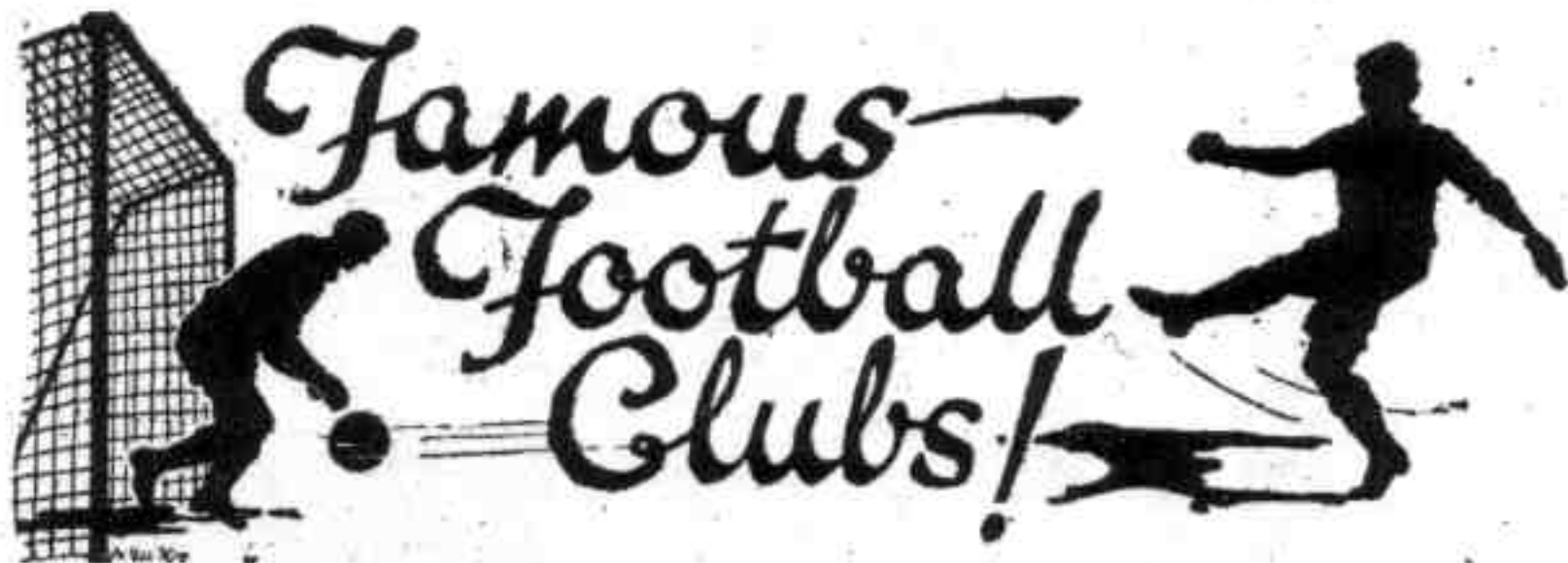
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EVERY SATURDAY.



LINING UP FOR THEIR "GRUEL"!

(A "striking" incident from the long complete school story in this issue.)



This Week:

West Ham United F.C.

who hold the distinction of playing in the first Final Tie at Wembley.

WHEN a famous artist was asked how he mixed his paints, he gave this reply, "With brains." When the manager of a football team sets about the work of getting together a successful side—and of keeping a successful side—that is the chief ingredient in the mixing—brains.

Of course, some managers have a very useful second to brains in the shape of a cheque-book. But that isn't the way the team is built at West Ham. It is built with brains without a cheque-book. Not that West Ham haven't any money—they have what I should consider a big fortune. But they don't spend their cash on buying ready-made footballers. They hunt round home and make their own men—mould them according to plan.

Cheap—but Good!

The cheapest team in the First Division—that's West Ham. Why, the other week they won a big match with a team which had in it only one man for whom a transfer-fee of any kind had been paid. That was Yews, the outside-right, and the fee for him was £120. Think of that, you fellows! Something worth boasting about! With West Ham, though, it isn't a case of cheap and nasty. They are cheap—but good!

Before I introduce you to this cheapest team in big football, let me say a word about the Hammers as a club. If you went to the ground for one of their matches, you would hear this cry quite frequently—"Up the Iron!" You might wonder how the cry arose; what connection it had with West Ham United. I'll tell you.

Long ago they used to build battleships on the River Thames—ships of iron. A firm which did some of the building was called the Thames Ironworks, and connected with this firm was a football team which bore that name. Out of the Thames Ironworks sprang the present West Ham Football Club. They built the football team like they built the battleships—of iron, and the men who play for West Ham in these days are as hard as the nails they used to drive in the ships which went forth to battle.

Now for the introduction of these men of iron. Starting at the goalkeeper, there is Eddie Hufton. You won't find him in the photograph which accompanies these notes, for the simple reason that when it was taken Hufton was nursing a broken arm. He played for England against Ireland some

months back—his first International. He went out to tackle an Irish forward in true do-or-die spirit, and finished in hospital.

Typical of West Ham!

Isaac Tate, who took his place, is a tall youngster, from Newcastle United, who is now only twenty-one years of age; and the Hammers have also another goalkeeper, who was found in a curious way. His name is Bailie. A couple of years or so ago West Ham decided to build a new stand. The workmen engaged on the job used to play football in the dinner-hour. Bailie was one of those workmen, and one day Manager Syd King, of West Ham, went without his dinner to watch the scratch match. After that he signed on Bailie as a goalkeeper. That's typical of the West Ham methods.

The two stalwart full-backs of West Ham are also typical of the courageous way in which football problems are tackled way down in the East End of London. Earlier in the present season things weren't going well with the side—too many goals were going to the opposition. So the regular backs were dropped, and two local lads, Earl and Norrington, were promoted. One came to the Hammers from Summerstown and the other from Barking Town. Especially is Cyril Norrington regarded as a find.

Local Talent!

The whole of the first team half-backs are local lads, too. James Collins, the

right-half, is a product of East Ham school football. I have no knowledge of what the schools of East and West Ham are like so far as the three "R's" are concerned, but I will say this—that if the teachers of those schools are as efficient at teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic, as they are at teaching football, then they must have turned out some wonderful scholars.

The strongest bit of iron in the West Ham side is Jimmy Barrett, the centre-half. He signed on for the club when he was sixteen years of age, and played for the first team regularly before he was eighteen. But he was a man in all but years, like the smith the poet had written of—"a mighty man is he, with arms—and legs—like iron bands." He has played in several positions, including centre-forward, but centre-half is his best place. On his left is another newcomer—Cox, who jumped right from the Ilford side into the West Ham first team.

The Brains of the Attack!

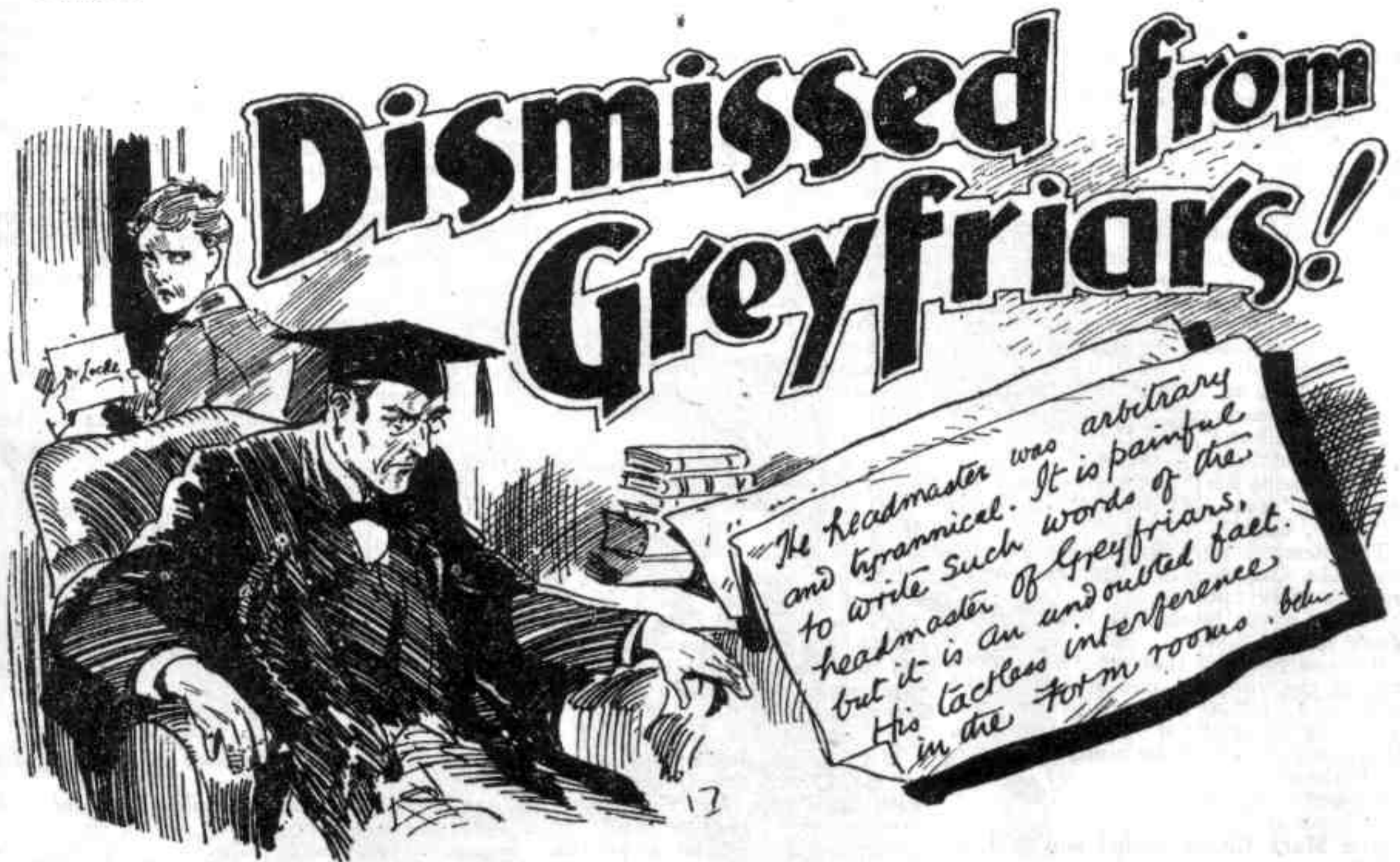
I have already mentioned outside-right Yews as one of the few men for whom a transfer-fee was paid. The brains behind the attack of West Ham are carried on the shoulders of inside-right, Stanley Earle. What an aristocratic team it is—with an Earl at full-back and an Earle in the forward line. Stanley Earle played for West Ham when he was an amateur connected with the Clapton club. He has since turned "pro," but he hasn't given up
(Continued on page 28.)

HAMMERS—AND PROUD OF IT, TOO!



Reading from left to right, photo shows: Back row: Cox, Collins, Tate, Earle (S.), Barrett, Norrington. Front row: Yews, V. Gibbins, Watson, Earl (A.), Moore, Ruffell,

ALL THROUGH SKINNER! Like a bolt from the blue comes the letter from Dr. Locke dismissing Mr. Quelch, his old colleague and friend of many years' standing. And no one at Greyfriars knows the real meaning behind this sudden dismissal except Harold Skinner, the cad of the Remove, who has schemed for revenge on his Form-master!



A Magnificent New Long Complete School Story of Harry Wharton & Co., the world-famous chums of Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

While the Cat's Away!

“QUELCHY'S late!”
 “Better late than ever!” remarked Skinner.
 “Ha, ha, ha!”

Mr. Quelch—disrespectfully alluded to by his Form as Quelchy—was undoubtedly late.

The Remove had gone into their Form-room for afternoon class, quite punctually. Mr. Quelch was a punctual gentleman himself, and insisted upon punctuality in the Remove. The Remove did not agree with him; but they were accustomed to giving Mr. Quelch his head.

Now he was late.

For ten minutes the Lower Fourth had been in their Form-room, and Mr. Quelch had not appeared.

It was almost unprecedented. The Removites were surprised, and they could not help wondering.

Not that they minded. The later Mr. Quelch was, the better his Form liked it. Latin prose was the order of the day, and hardly a man in the Remove was keen on Latin prose. They did not love the dead languages; indeed, there was a strong opinion in the Remove that those languages, being dead, ought to be buried.

But it was surprising, as well as gratifying, for Mr. Quelch to be late. Often Mr. Quelch had told his Form that punctuality is the politeness of princes, and that procrastination is the thief of time. It was really remarkable for Mr. Quelch to give up the politeness of princes in favour of the thief of time.

Surprised as they were, the Removites hoped that Mr. Quelch, late in life, was forming new habits, and that they would be permanent.

The juniors, deprived of the

delights of Latin prose by the unpunctuality of their Form master, were not wasting their time. Had they been perfect characters they would, of course, have sat down quietly at their desks, opened their books, and studied sedulously, while they waited for their Form master to arrive. But the perfect characters in the Greyfriars Remove could have been counted on the fingers of one hand, leaving out several digits. They improved the shining hour in quite different ways.

Lord Mauleverer, on a back form, leaned on the wall and dozed comfortably. Mauly was always prepared to put in a doze when he had a spare moment. Billy Bunter, greatly daring, put a cigarette into his mouth, though he did not venture to light it. Half a dozen fellows played leap-frog. Others stood around and chatted. Bolsover major, who had a squirt, filled it with ink, and took surreptitious pot-shots at fellows who were not looking. At that time in the afternoon the Remove-room should have been very quiet and orderly. Instead of which, there was noise in the Remove-room, which gradually grew into a din.

And still Mr. Quelch did not come. “Quelchy's awfully late,” said Harry Wharton. “Don't make too much row, you men; they'll hear it in the other Form-rooms.”

“Let 'em,” said Bolsover major. “We don't want Capper or Hacker to come along.”

“Rats!” retorted Bolsover. And, to display his independence, Bolsover major gave up the squirt, and started tramping noisily.

“Chuck it, you ass!” said Bob Cherry.

Bolsover major tramped more loudly than ever. Skinner, and Snoop, and Stott promptly joined him. It was sufficient for Wharton to express an

opinion for Skinner & Co. to take the opposite tack.

There had been noise in the Remove room before. Now there was an uproar.

Frank Nugent opened the door, and glanced along the passage. In the Form-room passage there was no sign of Mr. Quelch.

In the other Form-rooms the various Forms were assembled—the Second with Mr. Twigg, the Third with Mr. Wiggins, the Fourth with Mr. Capper, the Shell with Mr. Hacker, the Fifth with Mr. Prout. At a greater distance, fortunately, was the august apartment where the Sixth sat with the Head. All Greyfriars was on the grind—excepting the Remove. Unaccountably, Mr. Quelch had not turned up to take his Form.

“Shut that door, Nugent, you ass!” said Hazeldene. “We shall have the Head here at this rate.”

Nugent shut the door.

“Quelchy's not coming,” he said.

“It's jolly odd,” remarked Johnny Bull.

“The oddfulness is terrific,” observed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. “But as the esteemed Skinner has remarked, the lateness is better than the neverfulness.”

“I say, you fellows—”

“Hallo, hallo, hallo! Bunter knows!” exclaimed Bob Cherry. “Bunter knows everything except his lessons. Why hasn't Quelchy come, Bunter?”

Bunter grinned.

“He's at it,” he said.

“At what, fathead?”

“Scribbling.”

“Oh!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“I saw him,” explained Bunter. “Saw him from the quad, before we came in! Scribbling away like billy-o!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,043.

The Removites understood now.

They were well aware that Mr. Quelch, in his hours of scanty leisure, had literary occupations. A History of Greyfriars had been growing under Mr. Quelch's pen for years and years. When he had completed a section of that great and extensive work, Mr. Quelch would type it out on his typewriter, the click of that machine from Mr. Quelch's study was a well-known sound at Greyfriars. Mr. Quelch was not at the typer now; he was in the throes of composition. In those throes he had forgotten class—forgotten the Remove—forgotten all things but his literary work!

"Oh, that's it, is it?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Good egg! More power to his giddy elbow!"

"What-ho!"

"Let's hope he'll keep it up all the afternoon," said Johnny Bull heartily.

"Hear, hear!"

The Remove were only too willing to leave Mr. Quelch at his literary labours without interruption.

"What about reminding him?" asked Mark Linley.

But the voice of that scholastic youth was as the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Not a single voice was raised in support of the suggestion. There was a roar of derision.

"Fathead!"

"Ass!"

"Chuck it!"

And Mark Linley smiled and said no more.

"What about a game of footer?" asked Bob. "Quelchy may be hours yet—may stick at it till tea-time. Who knows? What about footer? We can use a dic. for a ball."

"Hear, hear!"

"Bravo!"

The suggestion caught on at once; it was evidently much more popular than Linley's.

Football, with a dictionary for a ball, was not likely to be Soccer at its very best; but any kind of football was obviously ever so much better than lessons; and football in the Form-room was undoubtedly a lark.

Sides were picked up at once.

"I say, you fellows, suppose Quelchy butts in!" squeaked Billy Bunter.

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"On the ball!" roared Bolsover major.

"Play up!"

It was an exciting game. There was more kick and rush than anything else, but it was exciting, and it was jolly. It beat Latin prose to a frazzle.

For some minutes the Removites moderated their transports, so to speak; but as the excitement of the game grew they forgot all about Mr. Quelch, as Mr. Quelch had apparently forgotten all about them. They kicked, they rushed, they trampled, they shouted, they roared, they cheered. Masters' studies were a good distance from the Form-rooms, and Mr. Quelch was not likely, after all, to hear. But the juniors were not thinking of him now, anyhow. They were enjoying their afternoon—quite unexpectedly; and the din and uproar in the Remove-room grew, and grew, till anyone passing by that room might have fancied that pandemonium had broken loose there.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Remove Rag!

"SCANDALOUS!"

Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, put his head out of his Form-room doorway, like a tortoise popping its head out of a shell,

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,043.

and ejaculated. "Scandalous!" and popped his head in again.

Mr. Capper came out of the Fourth Form-room, and Mr. Hacker out of the Shell-room. They stared along towards the Remove quarters, and exchanged astonished glances.

"Extraordinary!" said Mr. Capper.

"Amazing!" said Mr. Hacker.

Crash! Bump! Roar!

The Remove were going strong.

Bump! Bump! Crash!

"On the ball!"

"Pass, you fathead! Pass!"

"This way!"

"Hurrah!"

Bump! Crash! Bump!

"Yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

These sounds were undoubtedly amazing and extraordinary, proceeding from a Greyfriars Form-room in class-time.

"One ought to intervene," hazarded Mr. Capper. "Mr. Quelch must be—hem!—absent."

"He can scarcely be present, with that uproar going on," said Mr. Hacker. "It is outrageous! Mr. Quelch may, of course, act as he pleases with regard to his own Form, but this outrageous noise interferes with the work of other Forms."

"A word to Mr. Quelch——"

Mr. Hacker shook his head.

"Mr. Quelch does not like interference with his Form, Mr. Capper. He has very nearly come to words with Mr. Prout on the subject more than once. This is absolutely outrageous, but I, for one, decline to interfere." And Mr. Hacker went back to the grinning Shell.

Mr. Capper hesitated, but he went back to the Fourth at last. It was true—only too true—that Mr. Quelch resented anything like interference in his management of the Remove. The present was an exceptional case, certainly; still, there was no telling how a tart gentleman like Henry Samuel Quelch might take the most kindly and well-meant intervention. Mr. Capper decided not to risk it.

From the Remove-room the din continued and intensified. Football in a Form-room could not be conducted without noise. While the cat was away the mice were at play, and they had quite forgotten the cat by this time.

From the Third Form-room Mr. Wiggins put a worried face. From the Second the kind and benevolent face of Mr. Twigg peered.

The two masters exchanged glances.

"This is really—really—really——" said Mr. Twigg.

"It is really—really——" agreed Mr. Wiggins.

But they felt a disinclination to intervene. Mr. Quelch's business was, after all, Mr. Quelch's business.

They shut their Form-room doors again.

Ill-fortune drew Monsieur Charpentier, the French master, to the spot. There was no French set going on just then, and Mossoo was at liberty, and he was taking a walk round. The uproar from the Remove-room smote forcibly on his ears as he entered the Form-room passage, and he stared in great astonishment.

"Mon Dieu!" he ejaculated. "Qu'est-que-c'est, que cela!"

Monsieur Charpentier did not reflect, like the Form masters, that Mr. Quelch was very touchy about intervention in his Form-room. Something was wrong, that was clear, and Mossoo rushed in where angels feared to tread.

He threw open the Remove door—unfortunately, just as a sort of scrum was taking place within. In a Form-room, with a "dic." for a ball, and desks in

the way, the rules of Soccer were not closely observed. That game was enjoyable and exciting, but it resembled Rugger as much as Soccer, and a dog-fight as much as either.

Five or six juniors were bunched just inside the door when Mossoo opened it so hurriedly.

Crack!

There was a fiendish yell from Bolsover major as the door came into violent contact with his head.

"Whooooop!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Who——"

"Only Mossoo!"

"Turn him out!"

"Mes enfants!" exclaimed Monsieur Charpentier, staring blankly into the wildly disordered Form-room. "Mes enfants! Vat is all zis? Vat is zis zat you doo viz yourselves, isn't it?"

"Shut that door!"

Mossoo never was much regarded. Even in the French class he was mercilessly ragged. Now that he had butted in where he had no business, the Removites, with their blood up, were not likely to take any heed of him. Three or four books and a hassock flew through the air, and all of them crashed on Mossoo at once.

"Ciel! Mon Dieu! Ooooooh!"

Mossoo sat down in the passage.

Hazeldene slammed the door after him.

"Go it!" roared Bolsover major. "On the ball!"

"Hurrah!"

"Hold on!" exclaimed Harry Wharton breathlessly. "Mossoo may go to Quelchy——"

"Blow Quelchy! Funk!" hooted Bolsover major.

Wharton plunged into the game again at once. He was not to be considered a funk by a fellow like Bolsover.

The mixture of Soccer, Rugger, and a dog-fight was resumed in the Remove-room with more vim than ever.

"On the ball!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Play up!"

"Pass! Pass!"

"Ow! Gerroff my neck!"

Crash! Bump! Bump! Yell!

Outside the Remove-room Monsieur Charpentier sat in a dazed state. He was breathless, he was astonished, he was pained. Round him lay several volumes that had smitten him in various places.

"Mon Dieu!" he gasped. "Zis is terrible! He is one riot! He must be stopped! But I cannot stop him! Vere is Monsieur Quelch? Mon Dieu!"

There was a stately tread in the passage.

It was the Head!

The Remove were a good distance from the Sixth Form-room, and they really had to exert themselves to be heard as far as that. But they were exerting themselves now. In the august apartment where the Head and the Sixth had been revelling in the joys of Sophocles, the uproar had been heard—with amazement. The Sixth-Formers looked at one another, the Head looked more and more surprised and perturbed, till at last he had left the Sixth and Sophocles to themselves, and sallied forth to investigate the cause of this unwonted disturbance.

It was easy enough to trace the din to the Remove-room. The Head arrived there, and blinked over his glasses at the slim French gentleman who was sitting on the floor.

"Monsieur Charpentier!" he ejaculated.

"Oh! Ah! Je vous demande pardon, monsieur!" gasped the French master, scrambling to his feet breathlessly.

"What—what——"



“Whoop!” There was a fiendish yell from Bolsover major as the opening door came into violent contact with his head. “Hallo, hallo, hallo!” cried Bob Cherry. “It’s only Mossoo! Turn him out!” (See Chapter 2.)

“I have been smite viz book, sir! I have been trown over by trowing of two-three books!” gasped Monsieur Charpentier. “Je crois—I tink zat Monsieur Quelch he is absent, and ze boys zey are out of ze hand.”

The Head frowned. “It would seem so!” he said.

There was thunder in the brow of the headmaster as he stepped towards the Remove door.

“Mais—but—I complain not!” exclaimed Mossoo hurriedly. He was a kind-hearted little gentleman. “I zink it is fun zat make zem garçons trow book; zey forget zemselves some little, monsieur. It is nozzing—rien de rien—nozzings at all.”

And the little French gentleman drifted away, hoping that the Remove were not going to get it too severely. Judging by the Head’s expression, that hope was ill-founded.

Dr. Locke turned the handle of the door and opened it. There was a roar within.

“That outsider again!”
“Bang an ikpot at him!”
“Biff him with a die.”

The next moment the roars died away in a quavering gasp.

“The Head!”
And silence fell on the Remove-room—a silence that could be felt.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.
The Head Takes a Hand!

“THE Head!”
The Removites seemed frozen.

In the excitement of that happy and uproarious afternoon they had forgotten Mr. Quelch, and they had not thought of the Head at all.

The sudden apparition of their headmaster standing in the doorway, with Jove-like wrath and majesty in his brow, smote them with dismay.

Sudden stillness fell upon the juniors. Peter Todd, who was taking a kick, actually stopped with his foot in the air, suspended in space like the coffin of Mahomet. Billy Bunter, who was lying on his back roaring, suddenly ceased to roar. Lord Mauleverer, who had dozed comfortably all through the riot, woke up.

For some moments the gaze of the Head held the startled eyes of the Removites like a magnet.

He spoke at last, and his voice though not loud, was deep, and it seemed to reverberate through the Form-room.

“What does this mean?”

Silence.

“What does this riot mean?”

Still silence.

“What does this outrageous riot mean?”

Still there was no answer as the Head went on crescendo.

“Wharton!”

“Oh! Yes, sir?”

“You are head boy in this Form, I think.”

“Ye-e-e-es, sir!” stammered Wharton.

The captain of the Remove could not help feeling conscious that he had not been acting in precisely the manner expected of the head boy of a Form.

“Did Mr. Quelch leave you in charge here?”

“Oh! No, sir!”

“Nevertheless, in the absence of your Form master it is your duty to attempt to maintain some semblance of order.”

Wharton was silent, his cheeks crimson.

“Where is Mr. Quelch?”

“I—I don’t know, sir.”

“Has he not yet taken his Form?”

“N-no, sir.”

Dr. Locke compressed his lips.

“You are very much to blame, Wharton, in not seeking to stop this riot in the absence of your Form master. If I am not mistaken, you were taking part in it.”

“It—it wasn’t exactly a riot, sir,” stammered Harry. “It was only a—a sort of game, sir.”

“Just to pass the time, sir,” ventured Bob Cherry.

The Head made a gesture for silence.

“Shall I call Mr. Quelch, sir?” asked Skinner officiously. “I know where to find him, sir.”

“You may call him, Skinner.”

Harold Skinner scudded out of the Form-room. He was rather glad to get out of the headmaster’s sight—as the other fellows would have been had it been possible. But the whole Form could not offer to go and call Mr. Quelch. Skinner had spoken first, and it was a case of first come first served.

“Take your places!” said the Head in a deep voice.

The Remove took their places.

Dr. Locke went to the Form master’s high desk and sat down there on Mr. Quelch’s high chair.

The Remove faced him, sitting in tense silence. They fully expected some exemplary punishment. Even Bolsover major admitted that they had been rather going it. All the fellows knew that they had gone far over the limit, though they had not exactly intended doing so; they had not intended anything in particular except to have a good time while their Form master was away. That the Head was deeply wrathful they could see, and some of them surmised that he regarded it as a serious

matter to be called away from the Sixth.

But the Head said nothing of punishment. He sat and waited, evidently for the arrival of Mr. Quelch. Some fellows hoped that Quelch was going to catch it, instead of their culpable selves. Not that that, on reflection, would have done much good; for Quelch would be certain to "take it out" of them afterwards, twice or thrice-fold.

In the midst of the deadly silence the stage whisper of Billy Bunter was heard. Bunter, of course, was bound to speak.

"I say, you fellows, he's frightfully waxy!"

"Shurrup, you born idiot!" breathed Peter Todd.

"Oh, really, Toddy——"

"Shut up, Bunter!" hissed several Removites, with terrified glances at the Head.

But the Head gave no sign.

Certainly he must have heard Bunter's whisper, but he disdained to heed it. And the almost homicidal looks of the fellows round him prevailed upon the Owl of the Remove not to offer any more remarks. The whole Form waited in silence for the arrival of Mr. Quelch—the Head sitting as still and silent as a bronze image at the Form master's desk.

Meanwhile, Skinner had reached Masters' Passage and Mr. Quelch's study. He tapped at the study door and opened it and stared in curiously.

Mr. Quelch was seated at his table, and had not even heard Skinner's tap, so deeply immersed was he in his literary work. It was but seldom, if ever, that Mr. Quelch forgot time and space in this manner—but even Form masters, after all, are only human, and for once Mr. Quelch was in fault.

The fact was that he had reached a particularly interesting period in that great work the "History of Greyfriars School," by Henry Samuel Quelch. He was now dealing with the barring-out that had occurred a century before—in those rough-and-ready old days when barrings-out were barrings-out. In those old days a certain Dr. Trumpington had been headmaster of Greyfriars, and he had flogged not wisely but too well. And the barring-out had been a tremendous affair, led by Lovelace of the Sixth, the captain of the school.

Mr. Quelch, of course, could never have approved of a barring-out, under any provocation whatsoever.

But he was a gentleman with a judicious mind, and he was dealing with his subject fairly, judging both sides impartially.

That old headmaster, Trumpington, had been a hard-handed tyrant, and his tyranny had caused the trouble that shook Greyfriars to its foundations in the far-off days of William IV.

In that tremendous affair, which was now only a dim tradition at Greyfriars, soldiers had come over from Wapshot camp to deal with the rebels—soldiers with fixed bayonets had guarded the headmaster's study. They were the days for such deeds.

It was really not surprising that Mr. Quelch, dealing with that heroic period in the history of Greyfriars, had become for once so deeply engrossed in his subjects that he had forgotten the Greyfriars of the present day.

Skinner grinned as he looked at him. Sheets and sheets of paper covered the Remove master's table, some fully written up, some containing only sections and sentences that were to be worked later into the main narrative.

In Skinner's opinion the whole thing was rot; but to the Remove master it was a life's labour and a darling task.

Mr. Quelch paused to gnaw the handle of his pen.

Then he sighted Skinner.

Skinner's mocking grin vanished instantly as the gimlet eye of the Remove master turned on him. He looked awfully serious.

Mr. Quelch jumped.

The sight of Skinner in his doorway jerked him back from the past tense to the present tense. At a bound he covered a hundred years.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

He rose hurriedly to his feet.

"I am late for class!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, sir!" said Skinner.

"Upon my word, I—I am very late!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, in some agitation. "It is most—most unfortunate! You came to call me, Skinner?"

"Yes, sir."

"Thank you, my boy! I am much obliged to you!" said Mr. Quelch.

Skinner had hard work not to grin. Mr. Quelch supposed that he had come of his own accord to call him—which really was not a probable proceeding on Skinner's part.

The Form master glanced at his

watch. He really was shocked at his own thoughtlessness. He was an hour late for class!

"I—I trust the boys have been keeping order in the Form-room, Skinner?"

"Hem! I think some fellows were kicking up rather a row, sir!" said Skinner blandly. "The Head——"

"What!"

"The Head's there, sir!"

Skinner was not a good-natured youth. He fairly revelled in the dismay and discomfiture of Henry Samuel Quelch at that moment.

"The Head is there?" repeated the Remove master faintly.

"Yes, sir!"

Mr. Quelch gasped.

"Do you mean to say, Skinner, that the Head was drawn to my Form-room by any disturbance there?"

"I—I think so, sir."

"Bless my soul!"

Mr. Quelch turned away to gather up the precious sheets on his table. As soon as his back was turned Skinner permitted himself a broad grin.

But it occurred to Mr. Quelch at once that he had not an instant to spare even for his literary works if the Head had been forced to leave the Sixth Form to deal with a disturbance in the Remove.

He turned round again at once, and so it was that he caught the sneering, malicious grin on Harold Skinner's face before Skinner had time to compose his features.

Mr. Quelch glared.

It was no grinning matter for him. He proceeded to make it no grinning matter for Skinner.

"Oh, you consider this disgraceful state of affairs a laughing matter, Skinner!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, his eyes fairly darting flame at the hapless Skinner. He clutched up a cane.

"Bend over that chair!"

"I—I—I——"

"Bend over!"

Skinner—no longer grinning—bent over the chair.

Whack! Whack! Whack!

Skinner fairly yelled. The whacks were severe—awfully severe. They expressed Mr. Quelch's feelings at the moment, and expressed them emphatically.

"Yow-ow-ow! Yooooop!" yelled Skinner, doubling up with anguish.

Mr. Quelch threw down the cane, and, without another glance at Skinner, he hurried from the study, and whisked along the passages to his Form-room. Skinner did not follow him. He really couldn't for the moment. He leaned on Mr. Quelch's table—regardless of the priceless manuscripts he was sprawling on—and roared.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

After the Feast—the Reckoning!

"DR. LOCKE!"
"Mr. Quelch!"
Breathless, with a total absence of his usual sedate dignity, Mr. Quelch hurried into his Form-room.

Dr. Locke rose to greet him.

Mr. Quelch's face was crimson.

He had been caught out in a fault—a very serious fault. That was bad enough in itself. But he was caught out in the presence of his Form—that made it ten times worse. The Head was the most courteous of old gentlemen; for no consideration would he have humiliated a member of his staff, especially in the presence of schoolboys. But facts were facts! Mr. Quelch stood like a delinquent in his presence; that was



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the actual fact, and the most courtly courtesy could not alter it.

And the state of the Form-room showed plainly enough that the Head's intervention had not been uncalled for.

Books and papers were strewn far and wide. A desk was overturned. The wastepaper-basket had yielded up its contents, which were scattered all over the room. Many of the juniors were extremely untidy and dusty, many of them still breathless. Obviously, there had been something like a riot in the Remove room.

It was a moment of bitter discomfort and humiliation to Mr. Quelch.

He was the member of the Greyfriars staff who was on the most amicable terms with the headmaster; he was, indeed, Dr. Locke's right-hand man. Between the two masters was a mutual regard and esteem.

But the Head's face was cold and impassive now; Mr. Quelch's crimson with mortification.

"I found it necessary to step into your Form-room, Mr. Quelch," said the Head gently.

"I—I—I must have forgotten—" stammered Mr. Quelch.

The Head made a gesture.

He was not the man to add to the Form master's confusion by a word or a look. What had happened was in itself a sufficient punishment for the Remove master; there was no need for his chief to rub it in.

"I now leave your Form in your hands, Mr. Quelch!" said Dr. Locke, with polished urbanity.

That was all.

Fellows who had expected to hear the Head "slang" Quelch were disappointed.

With a polite bow, Dr. Locke passed from the Form-room, leaving Mr. Quelch in command.

The Form master stood quite still for some moments.

Had the Head "slanged" him in the presence of his boys, as some headmasters would have done, the humiliation would have been too bitter for endurance. Mr. Quelch would have resigned his post on the spot.

But the Head's mode of treatment was almost more bitterly galling to the Remove master than slanging.

Obviously the Head intended to say nothing more whatever about the matter, but that could not undo what had happened. Had he been rated by his chief, Mr. Quelch would have been supported by feelings of anger and resentment. But he could not resent polished courtesy; he could not be angry at gentle urbanity. He had, in fact, not a leg to stand upon. His confusion and humiliation was overwhelming.

Harry Wharton & Co. wished from the bottom of their hearts that they had not indulged in that good time that afternoon. They could feel for the position in which their Form master was placed.

Mr. Quelch stirred at last.

"There has been a riot here!" he said, in a trembling voice. "For once I am late, and my boys could not behave themselves in my absence! The headmaster was forced to intervene!"

"We're sorry, sir!" said Harry Wharton, sincerely enough.

"The sorrowfulness is terrific, honoured sahib!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"We—we never thought, sir—" stammered Bob Cherry.

Mr. Quelch breathed hard and deep.

"I shall cane the whole Form!" he said.

"Oh!"

Many of the Removites had been feeling sorry for Mr. Quelch. All of them now felt sorry for themselves.

They had reason.

Mr. Quelch took a cane from his desk—a stout cane. A chair was placed midway between the Form master's desk and the Form. In a quiet but intense voice, Mr. Quelch directed his hapless pupils to march past that chair, each bending over in turn as he passed it.

Harry Wharton, as head boy of the Form, led the march. He received six severe cuts. One by one the Removites bent over the chair, receiving four cuts each.

The Remove was a numerous Form, and Mr. Quelch had set himself a hefty task. But he proved equal to it. No one, looking at Mr. Quelch, would have suspected that he was such an athlete.

His right arm rose and fell tirelessly. Removite after Removite bent over the chair, received his punishment, and limped back to his place. It was a wholesale execution, such as had very seldom taken place in any Form-room at Greyfriars.

There was weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth in the Remove-room. Billy Bunter tried to explain that he was as innocent as a babe in arms in the matter, and received an extra cut as a reward; Mr. Quelch was not in a mood to be reasoned with. Lord Mauleverer, who really had taken no part in the riot—the only Remove man who hadn't—manfully followed along with the rest. There were sounds of woe, and set, grim faces, all through the Form.

An angry Form faced an angry master when the execution was over. Mr. Quelch, breathing hard, laid down his cane.

It was then that he observed that Skinner had not yet returned to the Form-room.

"Wharton!" he said harshly.

The captain of the Remove looked at him grimly.

"Go and tell Skinner to come here immediately. You will doubtless find him in my study," said Mr. Quelch. "I shall not leave the Form-room myself—I cannot trust my Form in my absence."

Wharton left the Form-room without a word. Latin prose began at last—very late. Nobody was in a humour for it: never had Latin prose seemed so prosy. But every fellow gave it his best attention. Mr. Quelch was not to be trifled with; his manner reminded his pupils of a tiger about to spring. Wriggling uncomfortably on their seats, mumbling and gasping, breathing wrath, nevertheless, the Remove devoted themselves to Latin prose as if they loved it.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Chance for Skinner!

SKINNER, in Mr. Quelch's study, had ceased to gasp and groan.

He was in no hurry to return to the Form-room, however.

He had a shrewd idea that caning would be the order of the day there, and he had a faint hope of slipping in quietly after it was over.

But that was not his only reason for lingering in Mr. Quelch's study. Skinner was hurt, and Skinner was revengeful.

His malicious eyes roved over the numerous papers scattered on Mr. Quelch's table, all more or less covered with writing in the Remove master's hand.

How dear those manuscripts were to the Form master, Skinner well knew.

And he was thinking whether he dared damage any of them, in return for the three terrific cuts he had received.

The temptation was strong. Injury to his precious manuscripts would have touched Mr. Quelch on the tenderest spot. Skinner would have had no compunction whatever in damaging or even destroying them. But he shook his head. He dared not. Mr. Quelch knew that he was there—would recall later that he had lingered there—and would not fail to guess who had done the damage. There was no limit to Skinner's malice, but there was a very decided limit to his courage. Reluctantly he refrained from jamming any of the priceless papers into the study fire.

But as he glanced over them, Skinner gave a sudden start, and picked up a partly-written sheet.

He stared at it blankly, his eyes opening wide.

Mr. Quelch wrote out his literary works on an ordinary writing-pad, and detached leaf after leaf as soon as written. It was the same writing-pad that he sometimes used for ordinary correspondence, when he did not use the school paper. Some of these loose leaves were covered—others contained only a few sentences—all this being merely the rough draft of the great work.

Only a few sentences were on the page Skinner was staring at with amazed eyes.

For the moment Skinner did not realise that what he was reading formed part of the ancient history of Greyfriars, at a period very remote from the present; and he was astounded to see such words written in Mr. Quelch's hand. For the fragment ran:

"The Head was arbitrary and tyrannical. It is painful to write such words of the headmaster of Greyfriars, but it is the undoubted fact. His tactless interference in the Form-rooms, between masters and boys, earned him both dislike and contempt."

Skinner stared, and stared; and then it dawned upon him that what he was reading referred to a dead-and-gone headmaster of Greyfriars, and was, in fact, a part of the history that Mr. Quelch was compiling.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Skinner. "Some jolly old headmaster we've never heard of, I suppose; blessed if I didn't think for a minute that he was writing this about old Locke."

Skinner grinned.

The thought flashed into his keen, cunning mind, that if Dr. Locke had seen that sheet, detached from the rest, he would certainly have fallen into the same error.

Skinner breathed hard.

Suppose Dr. Locke saw it—suppose Skinner took measures to make it impossible for him to avoid seeing it!

Skinner hastily folded that sheet into the ordinary shape for an envelope, picked up a blank envelope out of Mr. Quelch's stationery cabinet, and put the paper in it.

He slipped it into his pocket.

Skinner had not yet fully thought out the matter, or decided what he was going to do with those startling words written in the Remove master's well-known hand. He knew that the possession of that sheet placed it in his power to play a deadly trick on his Form master; and that was enough for him.

He had little fear that a single sheet would be missed from the dozens on Mr. Quelch's table.

The Remove master could scarcely remember the whole of what he had

written that busy afternoon; and even if he missed the sheet, he would only suppose that he had mislaid it or inadvertently destroyed it.

There was little danger in purloining a single, partly-written sheet from among so many.

Skinner turned to the door.

With that stolen sheet in his pocket, he realised that the sooner he was out of Mr. Quelch's quarters, the better.

He trod away softly down the passage.

"Oh! Here you are, Skinner."

Harry Wharton met him at the corner of the passage. Skinner gave him a rather furtive look.

"Quelch send you for me?" he asked. Wharton nodded.

"You've been through it?" asked Skinner, as he walked back to the Form-room with the captain of the Remove.

"Yes, rather—the whole Form, caned all round. Yours is to come, I suppose."

"I've had some," grunted Skinner. "Quelch gave me three because he thought I was laughing at him."

"And you weren't, of course?" grinned Wharton.

"Well, perhaps I was; but I suppose a fellow can smile without getting three awful cuts," growled Skinner.

"Not this afternoon," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Quelch's on the giddy war-path."

"Blow him!" grunted Skinner. "He'd better leave me alone—I'll jolly well make him sit up if he gives me any more, I know that."

"Rot!" said Harry.

"You'll see."

They entered the Remove room, and Wharton went to his place. Skinner hoped to sneak quietly to his place; but the sharp voice of his Form master called a halt.

"Skinner!" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

Skinner turned back, scowling apprehensively.

"You shared in the riot in this Form-room, Skinner."

"I've been caned once, sir," said Skinner sullenly.

"That was for impertinence in my study," said Mr. Quelch sternly. "You will be punished for your share in the disgraceful riot here, Skinner, the same as the others. Bend over that chair."

With a face that resembled that of a demon in a pantomime, Skinner bent over the chair which had already been used in the wholesale execution of the Lower Fourth.

Whack! Whack! Whack! Whack!

Mr. Quelch had tasted blood, so to speak. At any other time he would probably have let Skinner off more lightly, in view of his previous caning only a short time before. Now he did not even think of letting him off lightly. Four times the cane rang on Skinner, as it had rung on every other fellow in the Remove, and Skinner squirmed and wriggled and yelled.

"You may go to your place, Skinner," said Mr. Quelch harshly.

Skinner crawled away.

Latin prose was resumed.

The rest of that afternoon was a nightmare to the Remove. It had started happily—exuberantly—but after the feast had come the reckoning, and the reckoning was severe. As if to make up for lost time, Mr. Quelch worked his Form hard, and the slightest fault, the most excusable mistake, was punished with lines or a caning on the spot. Never had the Remove known their Form master to be so implacable; but never, it was true, had his Form given Mr. Quelch such deep offence.

The fellows fairly gasped with relief when the hour of dismissal came and they escaped from the Form-room.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,043.

"What a life!" groaned Bob Cherry as they went down the passage.

"Awful!" grunted Toddy.

"The awfulness is terrific."

"I dare say Quelch will be all right to-morrow," said Harry Wharton. "After all, we did rather get his rag out, you know."

"The beast!" said Skinner, between his teeth. "I've had seven cuts altogether, and every one a swipe! I'll make the brute sorry for swiping me."

"Ob, rats!" said the Famous Five, with one voice.

"I say, you fellows, I'm suffering fearfully!" groaned Billy Bunter.

"Suffer quietly instead," suggested Bob.

"Beast!"

"I'll make him sit up!" said Skinner savagely. "I know how to do it, too! You'll see! You may see Quelch booted out of the school one of these days."

"What on earth do you mean?" demanded Wharton. "Talking out of the back of your neck!"

"You'll see!" growled Skinner.

And he swung away and said no more. Skinner was full of his scheme of vengeance, and brooding over it; but it was not a scheme that it was safe to talk about. Skinner said nothing, even to his own chums, Snood and Stott; but he thought the more.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Scheming of Skinner!

HARRY WHARTON & CO., and all the Remove, felt sore in a double sense. But those feelings wore away. After class the Famous Five punted a footer in the keen air in the quad, and felt much better. After that they went in to tea; and hot tea and sosses and cake made them feel better still. By that time they were in a mood to realise that though Quelch had come down heavy, the weight of his coming down was only in proportion to the offence given by his Form, and they generously forgave Quelch. Most of the other fellows in the Remove felt the same. Those cheery youths were too healthy and wholesome to brood over grievances and nurse grudges. A fellow who keeps himself physically fit seldom or never bears malice. So, for most of the Remove, the affair blew over, after tea, and they had little further thought to waste on it. But it was not so with Skinner.

Skinner's slacking, slouching ways, his habit of surreptitious smoking, did not make him fit or healthy. Had he joined in punting the footer about before tea, the keen north wind might have blown away his grievances. But Skinner hated football, hated punting a footer, hated a north wind, hated anything that called for energy or hardihood. He frowsted over his study fire instead of facing the wind in the quad, and the more he slacked, and the more he frowsted, the more bitter, and malicious he felt. He had, as a matter of fact, been treated rather severely; he had some cause for complaint. And instead of taking that as a bit of ill-luck, to be dismissed from his mind when the pain had worn off, Skinner brooded on it, hugged it, almost gloated over it, as if his injury was a sort of precious jewel he could not bear to part with.

There were few fellows like Skinner in the Remove, or any other Form at Greyfriars; but one was enough to cause plenty of mischief at times. And Skinner's brooding over his wrongs and thoughts of vengeance was destined to

cause, on this occasion, more mischief than even Skinner ventured to dream of.

In the privacy of his study he read over and over again the scribbled sheet he had purloined from his Form master's study.

He gloated over it and grinned over it.

Those few lines, written on a sheet from an ordinary writing-pad, looked like a part of an ordinary letter.

What would the Head think if he saw it?

What could he think, excepting that the words written by Mr. Quelch referred to the happenings of that afternoon in the Remove Form-room?

More and more closely Skinner's little scheme was forming in his sharp, malicious mind.

No name was mentioned in the written sheet—only the Head. And was Dr. Locke likely to guess that the Head referred to was not himself, but a head-master of generations ago?

Interference in the Form-room was mentioned, and that afternoon Dr. Locke had intervened in the Remove-room.

What could the Head think if he saw that paper, except that the Remove master, embittered by the occurrence, had written a letter on the subject to some friend or relation outside the school, referring to the Head in terms which that gentleman could never either forget or forgive?

Skinner chuckled.

If the Head, seeing that paper, fled into a temper, he might very likely never tell Mr. Quelch what his offence was—might dismiss him from his post, in his anger and resentment, and let it go at that.

That was a happy thought to Skinner.

He had long scores against Mr. Quelch, a master who was indeed rather hard, as a rule, on slackers and frowsters.

If the Head did not fly into a temper—if he was only grieved and hurt—at least he could not fail to turn the "marble eye" on Mr. Quelch; the confidence and friendship between the two masters would be shaken, perhaps destroyed for ever.

Another possibility was that the Head might show that paper, if it came into his possession, to Mr. Quelch, and demand an explanation. Mr. Quelch, of course, could explain, but would the Head believe him?

Skinner, who judged others by himself, and doubted everybody's word on principle, thought it unlikely that the Head would credit the Remove master's explanation.

Which ever way Skinner looked at it, it seemed that he was certain to score, if only that tell-tale paper could be conveyed to the Head, in some manner which would not betray the hand of a malicious meddler.

As for the risk, there was none, so far as Skinner could see; he had only to take care that he was not detected in possession of the paper.

A scheme of revengeful mischief-making, with no risk attached, was exactly what appealed to Skinner.

He thought and thought.

If the Head was to suppose that that sheet was part of a letter written by Mr. Quelch, referring to the events of the afternoon, somehow the fact must be accounted for that it had not been sent off by post, or at least had not remained in the Remove master's study.

If Dr. Locke, for instance, found it lying in his own study, he would wonder how it had got there, and might suspect something.

This was rather a problem for

Skinner, and required the exercise of all his keen wits.

Skinner was still thinking it over, with many half-formed schemes floating in his mind, when Snoop and Stott came into the study to tea. He hastily thrust the paper out of sight in his pocket.

"Hallo, what have you got there?" asked Snoop at once.

"Nothing," answered Skinner.

"You're in a jolly hurry to get nothing out of sight," grinned Snoop.

"What is it—a letter from a bookie?"

"Just that!" assented Skinner.

"Liar!" chuckled Snoop. "You wouldn't say so, if it was. Got over your licking yet, old bean? You seem to have bagged more than any other man in the Form this time."

Skinner scowled.

"I dare say Quelch will be sorry for it, some time," he said.

him were rather surprised to see him smiling. Skinner had had more punishment than the rest of the Remove, and he was not a fellow to bear any punishment at all without flinching. Yet he seemed quite cheerful now, as if comforted by some inward solace.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Who's had an accident, Skinner?"

Skinner stared at him.

"Nobody, that I know of," he answered.

"Anybody ill?"

"I haven't heard of it."

"Somebody up for a flogging?"

"Not that I know of."

"Then what the thump are you looking so jolly pleased about?" asked Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That jolly old grin means that somebody's up against something, doesn't it?" inquired Bob Cherry.

left puzzles for subsequent generations to perplex their minds about—puzzles of the deepest interest to old scholastic gentlemen.

That evening Mr. Quelch had not dropped in.

That the Remove master was keen on that obscure passage in Sophocles, keen to resume the discussion when his duties allowed, the Head, of course, knew. Yet Mr. Quelch had not dropped in.

Dr. Locke, of course, was not at loss to divine the cause.

It was the unfortunate incident in the Remove-room that afternoon.

Mr. Quelch had been in fault; the Head had had to intervene. A certain awkwardness resulted.

It was not the Head's intention to make the remotest reference to that unfortunate episode, now or ever. Mr. Quelch was so extremely dutiful and painstaking a master that one fault

Mr. Quelch turned round suddenly and caught the sneering, malicious grin on Skinner's face. "So you consider this disgraceful state of affairs a laughing matter, Skinner?" he exclaimed wrathfully, clutching up a cane. "Bend over that chair!" (See Chapter 3.)



"You're going to punch his nose?" asked Stott humorously.

"Or whack him with his own cane!" grinned Snoop.

"More ways than one of killing a cat," said Skinner sourly.

"If you've got anything up against Quelch, you can tell us," said Snoop.

"We're with you all along the line."

"Yes, rather!" assented Stott.

Skinner shook his head.

"Oh, nothing!" he said hastily. "I'd like to make him sit up, of course; but a fellow has no chance against a Form master. He's safer left alone."

Sidney James Snoop looked at him keenly.

"That means that it's something awfully deep if you won't tell your pals," he remarked. "Mind your eye, Skinner, old man. Quelch is about as safe to play with as a wild tiger, just at present."

"Oh, I'm letting him alone, of course," said Skinner. "What about tea?"

After tea, Skinner left the study and went to the Rag. Fellows who noticed

"Go and eat coke!" snarled Skinner. And he lounged away, leaving the Famous Five laughing.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Bitter Blow!

"PLEASE, sir—"

Dr. Locke paused in his majestic walk. He was proceeding along Masters' Passage towards Mr. Quelch's study.

It was a custom of Mr. Quelch's to drop into the Head's study some time after class, and before the hour when the Head dined in his house, for a chat, sometimes on the affairs of the school, sometimes on the topics of the classics, which both the old gentlemen loved with a deep devotion.

The latest enthralling topic was a certain obscure passage in Sophocles, which the Head elucidated in one way, Mr. Quelch in another—Sophocles being one of these ancient authors who have

could very easily be forgiven, and the Head's only desire was that the Remove master should forget the incident, dismiss it entirely, obliterate it out of existence.

That was why he was now on his way to the Form master's study.

As the mountain had not come to Mahomet, so to speak, Mahomet was going to the mountain.

Dr. Locke intended to drop into Mr. Quelch's study, instead of Mr. Quelch dropping into his; and in Mr. Quelch's study the enthralling topic of Sophocles could be resumed, and every vestige of awkwardness banished between the two old friends.

On his majestic way to the Remove master's quarters the Head was addressed timidly by a Remove junior.

"Please, sir—" said Skinner.

The Head paused, looking down at Skinner, who held a folded paper in his hand.

"Excuse me, sir; I think you dropped this," said Skinner, with an air of

respectful timidity becoming in a junior addressing his headmaster.

"Dear me!" said the Head.

He took the folded paper from Skinner.

It was obviously written upon, but it was folded with the writing inside, and could not be read without unfolding.

"I do not think I dropped this paper, sinner," said the Head kindly. "Where did you find it?"

"I picked it up this minute, sir," explained Skinner. "It was just where you passed, sir, so I thought you must have dropped it. Of course it may have blown out of one of the studies. I never thought of that, sir."

"Quite so," said the Head. "Thank you for picking it up, Skinner; it may be of some importance."

And Skinner respectfully retired.

Dr. Locke was left with the paper in his hand.

He was sure that he had not dropped that paper, as the junior had—perhaps—supposed. No doubt some master had left a window and a door open, and the draught through his study had done the rest. Dr. Locke unfolded the paper, to ascertain to which of the masters it belonged from what was written on it. Valuable as his time was, he could spare a few moments to restore the paper to its owner. He had no doubt that it was some exercise which might have cost some Form master time and trouble.

He unfolded the paper and glanced at it by the light that burned in the passage.

From the corner of the passage, out of sight, with palpitating heart, Harold Skinner was watching him.

He saw a strange alteration in the Head's face.

Dr. Locke gazed at the paper, recognising at once the familiar handwriting of the Remove master.

But at the same moment, of course, he took in the sense of what was written.

It seemed as if for some moments he could not believe his eyes, for Skinner saw him adjust his glasses and read the paper a second time.

The kind old face set sternly. For this is what Dr. Locke, the headmaster of Greyfriars, read, in the hand of his Remove master:

"The Head was arbitrary and tyrannical. It is painful to write such words of the headmaster of Greyfriars, but it is the undoubted fact. His tactless interference in the Form-rooms, between masters and boys, earned him both dislike and contempt."

The hand that held the paper trembled.

There was something like horror, as well as amazement and anger, in the face of the headmaster.

Skinner, peering round a distant corner, was almost frightened by what he saw, and he backed away, and tiptoed off the scene, his heart thumping.

Dr. Locke stood motionless.

He read the paper for a third time, and the blood flushed into his cheeks.

He made one step towards the Remove master's study. This paper, which had apparently blown out of the Remove master's study, belonged to Mr. Quelch. To restore it to him, without a word, with rebuking dignity, was the Head's first thought.

But he stopped.

Mr. Quelch was not only his Remove master, but his colleague and friend. At least, the Head had fancied that he was his friend. He knew differently now. No friendly hand could have written

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,043.

such bitter, scathing words. No friendly heart could have nourished such resentment for the incident of the afternoon—a trifling incident, after all. Posing as his friend, this man was holding him up to ridicule and contempt to some unknown correspondent. So it appeared to the Head. Seeing Mr. Quelch, speaking to him, was too inexpressibly painful in the circumstances.

Dr. Locke returned to his own study.

Dislike!

Contempt!

Those words fairly burned into Dr. Locke's mind.

According to Mr. Quelch he was disliked and despised by his staff. It was false! Whatever might be Mr. Quelch's own feelings—and they were plain enough from this letter, or portion of a letter—such feelings were not shared by the rest of the staff. The Head was certain of that. Other masters at Greyfriars did not nourish bitter, treacherous hostility under a show of amiable confidence. The miserable, false words recoiled on the head of the writer, proving only that his own mind was perfidious and malicious, that his own heart was bad.

It was a severe shock to the Head.

His duty as headmaster caused him to intervene in every Form-room on certain occasions. Did the masters regard this as tactless interference between masters and boys?

They did not; he was sure of it. Only Mr. Quelch—only the Remove master, whom he had trusted more than any other member of his staff.

"It is shocking!" the Head whispered to himself. "Such callous want of proper feeling, such—such perfidy—"

His hand trembled as he placed the paper in a drawer of his desk and locked the drawer.

No eye but his must see that paper; he was thankful to remember that the junior who had picked it up had handed it to him folded, and could not have seen what was written upon it.

He would not overwhelm the Remove master with confusion by returning it to him. Indeed, the man who was capable of writing such words of the headmaster who trusted him was capable of lying and shuffling, of attempting to make false explanations, of any deceit. No explanation was possible; the Head knew Mr. Quelch's hand as well as he knew his own. He shrank with loathing from the thought of listening to halting falsehoods, still more from the thought of a bitter scene, if the man who had written these base words, realising that all disguise was over, should speak out at last, in plain language, all the rancour he doubtless nourished in his breast, and had doubtless nourished through long years of seeming friendship.

The paper was safely locked up; the Head could not decide what he should do with it, except that he would never allow Mr. Quelch to learn that he had seen it. But—after this exposure of the man's secret thoughts it was impossible for him to remain at Greyfriars.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Trouble Coming!

HARRY WHARTON & CO., the following day, had almost forgotten the shindy in the Remove room, and the execution that had followed. They observed that day that their Form master was very quiet and thoughtful; and he was remarkably punctual. It was not likely that Mr. Quelch would forget classes again—a thing that had probably not

happened twice or thrice in all his scholastic career. He was rather sharp with the Remove that day, which looked as if he did not forget the shindy so easily as the juniors did. But as a matter of fact, Mr. Quelch was not thinking of the faults of his pupils, or of his own fault; he was thinking of the Head.

He was rather troubled in mind.

As a matter in fault, in whose Form-room the Head had been compelled to intervene, he had felt a certain delicacy in dropping into Dr. Locke's study for the usual chat. He had hoped that the Head would come to his study; but the Head had not come, and Mr. Quelch did not know how very nearly he had come.

Mr. Quelch was unwilling to allow the slightest breach to open between himself and his respected Chief. He knew that the Head would never dream of humiliating him, and he could not bear that the Head should think that he was resenting the visit to the Form-room. For that reason the Remove master had, that morning, intentionally placed himself in the Head's way when Dr. Locke went to the Sixth Form-room.

A cheery good-morning, a few minutes' chat, would have cleared the air and placed matters on their old footing.

To Mr. Quelch's surprise, the Head had passed him with a formal bow, without even bidding him good-morning.

Mr. Quelch was so astonished that he stood staring after Dr. Locke until the headmaster's stately form disappeared into the Sixth Form-room.

It was no wonder that the Remove found their Form master very thoughtful that morning.

Mr. Quelch could only conclude that the Head took a serious view of yesterday's happening, that he was angry, and desired the Remove master to see that he was angry—that he was, in fact, treating a gentleman of Mr. Quelch's standing as a culprit.

The bare thought of being treated as a culprit made Henry Samuel Quelch's cheeks burn.

Certainly he was not the man to be so treated.

Mr. Quelch was not, like so many Form masters, wholly dependent upon his appointment in the school.

He was a careful gentleman with money, and he had private resources. More than once he had dabbled with the idea of a headmastership elsewhere, for which he was well fitted in every way. It was his love of Greyfriars, his keen interest in the school that he had served well for so many years, and his personal regard for the Head, that combined to keep him where he was. He had never seriously contemplated leaving Greyfriars at all—at least, so long as Dr. Locke was headmaster.

Now he was tempted to resign.

It would be a wrench to him—a severe wrench. But Henry Samuel Quelch was not a man to be taken into favour, and turned out of favour, at the whim of another man, even if that man was his chief.

The thought of resignation, however, was followed by a feeling of resentment and obstinacy.

Why should he resign over a slight mistake of which the headmaster chose to take an absurdly serious view?

Other masters had been late for class many times, Mr. Quelch hardly ever. Mr. Wiggins, the absent-minded master of the Third, had been known to start on a walk when classes were due; the Head and Mr. Quelch had often smiled together over Mr. Wiggins' absent-mindedness. Mr. Prout, the portly

master of the Fifth, was late for class at least once a week, sometimes oftener. Mr. Twigg, of the Second, was nearly always late. From the Second Form-room it was not at all uncommon to hear uproarious noises at a time when classes should have been on.

Yet one disturbance in the Remove was to lead to all this fuss!

Mr. Quelch, utterly ignorant of what was really in the Head's mind, could only conclude that Dr. Locke was either taking a childish serious view of a small episode, or that the Head actually desired to humiliate him and to pick an occasion for a break. He even began to wonder whether it was their difference of opinion over that obscure passage in Sophocles that had caused it. They had differed—rather emphatically, it was true. Many masters, diplomatically, would have come round to the Head's opinion, or at least affected to do so. Mr. Quelch was not that kind of a master. Sycophancy of any sort was not in his line. And hitherto, most decidedly, the Head had seemed to value him for his sincerity and candour. But—you never could tell!

If the Head wanted sycophancy he would not get it from Henry Samuel Quelch. But if he wanted to establish absolutely formal relations, Mr. Quelch was bitterly prepared to meet him half-way.

He would avoid the Head as much as he could; when he had to see him he would be coldly respectful, icily deferential. But he would not yield to his first indignant impulse and leave Greyfriars. He would not leave his life's work because of another man's foolish vagaries.

And so, when Mr. Quelch, taking a walk in the quad after morning class, passed the Head, he bowed as formally

as the Head had done that morning near the Sixth Form-room—and passed on.

And half a dozen fellows, who saw the meeting, exchanged glances, and some of them winked at one another.

"I say, you fellows, Quelch and the Head are rowing!" Billy Bunter breathlessly announced to the Famous Five, a little later.

"What?" roared the five together.

"Rowing!" gasped Bunter. "I saw them pass in the quad, and they fairly glared at one another."

"Fathead!"

"It's true!" yelled Bunter. "Lots of fellows saw them. Skinner thinks that Quelch is going to get the sack."

"Skinner had better let Quelch hear that!" grinned Bob Cherry. "More likely the sack for Skinner then!"

"Cheeky ass!" said Harry Wharton.

"I can tell you the beak gave him the marble eye," said Bunter, "and Quelch gnashed his teeth!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Co., greatly tickled at the idea of Mr. Quelch gnashing his teeth.

"Well, he gritted them hard, anyhow!" said Bunter. "At least, he set his lips! He really did, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, if Quelch gets sacked, we may be a week or more without a Form master!" said Bunter brightly. "That means an easy time for the Remove. I hope he'll be sacked! We might get an easy-going merchant like old Twigg of the Second. Fancy that!"

Bunter beamed at the thought.

"Or an absent-minded ass like old Wiggins of the Third, you fellows! Fancy having a Form master who forgets to ask for a fellow's lines."

"Gorgeous!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"The gorgeousness is terrific!"

Skinner strolled up, with a happy smile on his face. Skinner had witnessed the meeting of the two masters with great enjoyment.

"Looks like trouble among the beaks, you men," he remarked. "The Head practically cut Quelch in quad."

"What utter rot!" said Harry Wharton sharply.

"Well, he did; ask Toddy!" grinned Skinner. "Toddy saw them. Here, Toddy, you saw the Beak and Quelch?"

"It's jolly queer, you chaps!" said Peter Todd. "The Head and Quelch gave each other the marble eye. That row in our Form-room yesterday can't have caused trouble, surely?"

"Well, the Head chipped in," said Frank Nugent, "and Quelch is rather touchy!"

"Believe me, Quelch will have to go!" smiled Skinner.

Harry Wharton gave the cad of the Remove a keen look.

"You were saying something like that yesterday, Skinner," he said. "You can't have been playing any of your knavish tricks, I suppose?"

Skinner laughed, and strolled away. His intervention in the matter was not likely to be discovered, and certainly he had no intention of revealing it.

That afternoon all the Remove knew that the Head and Mr. Quelch were giving each other the marble eye. All the masters knew it, and it was a topic in Masters' Common-room—a room where the smallest topic was discussed with avidity, as in most masters' Common-rooms at most schools. Silence fell suddenly on the room when Mr. Quelch came in.

The Remove master knew why perfectly well, but his impassive face gave

(Continued on next page.)

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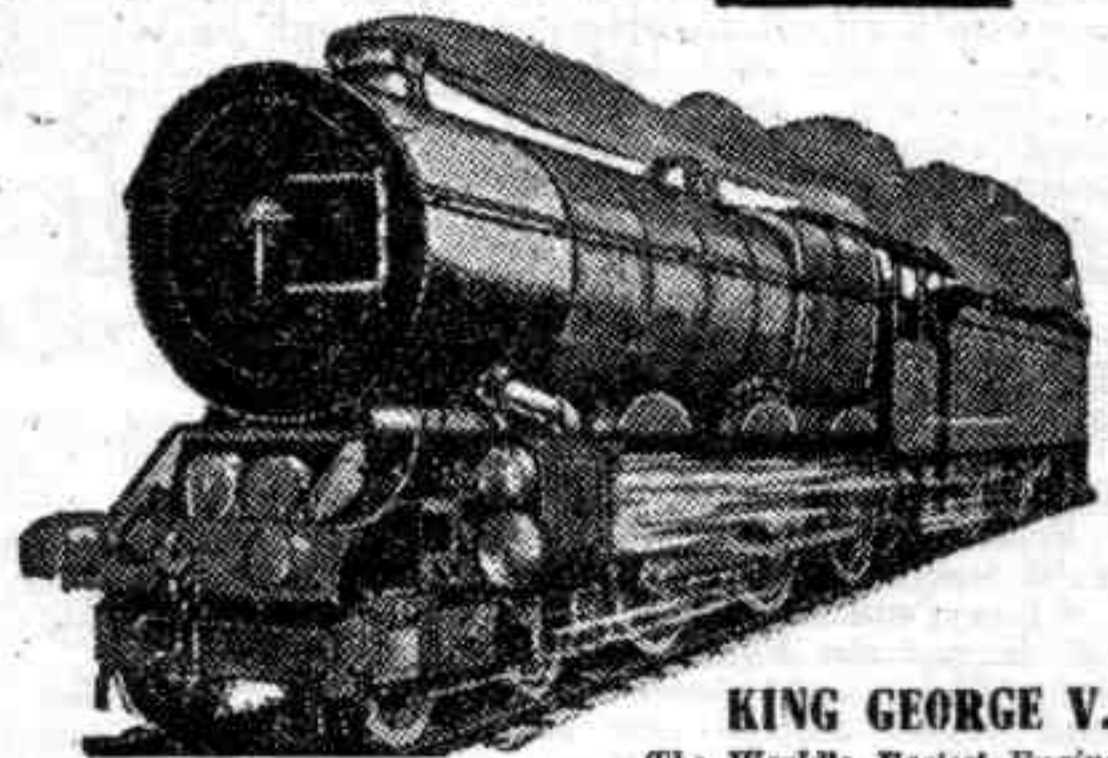
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no sign. Mr. Prout, who never could keep his attention fixed solely upon his own affairs, ventured a condolence.

"I hear that there was some disturbance in your Form-room yesterday, my dear Quelch," he remarked.

"Indeed," said Mr. Quelch icily.

"In fact, I was considerably disturbed by the uproar," remarked Mr. Prout.

"I regret that, sir," said Mr. Quelch. "Such things will happen occasionally, however, as when all the Forms were disturbed by the trouble in the Fifth Form room recently, with one of your boys, named, I think, Coker."

Mr. Prout frowned.

He did not like receiving a Roland for his Oliver.

"I understand that the Head takes a somewhat serious view of this matter, Mr. Quelch," he remarked, rather tartly.

"Indeed."

"Yes, indeed!" said Mr. Prout, more tartly than before.

"No doubt the Head has informed you of his view," suggested Mr. Quelch, with sarcasm.

"The Head has not spoken to me on the subject."

"Then I fail to see how you can be acquainted with the matter at all, Mr. Prout."

Mr. Prout breathed heavily.

"I believe it is the talk of the Form rooms and the passages, Mr. Quelch," he answered.

"Ah," said Mr. Quelch, "I have always considered it a mistake to take any notice of the tattle of the passages!"

And the Remove master rustled out of the Common-room before Mr. Prout could think of a rejoinder, leaving the Fifth Form master with a purple face.

"Mr. Quelch takes it to heart!" remarked Mr. Hacker.

"His position is somewhat painful!" observed Mr. Capper.

"In his place, I should resign!" boomed Mr. Prout.

"If the Head actually reprimanded him—"

"I have no doubt he did."

"An actual reprimand—"

"I am assured of it."

"Very painful for Mr. Quelch!"

"Very painful indeed!"

"Most unfortunate!"

All the staff had remarks to contribute; really, it might have been supposed that they were gloating over this item of news; the endless cackle of Common-room had started, and was not likely to cease until a fresh topic turned up. And Mr. Quelch, who had not been a schoolmaster for so many years without learning what a Masters' Common-room was like, was perfectly aware of it, and he almost writhed to think of it.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Problem!

"PETER, old chap—"

Peter Todd waved his hand, as if waving Bunter away.

"I say, old fellow—"

"Stony!" rapped out Peter Todd.

"Oh, really, Peter—"

"Shut up!"

"It isn't that!" howled Bunter.

"It's my lines!"

"Oh! Not a little loan, to be repaid at the Greek Kalends, or when the cows come home?" asked Peter Todd.

"No, you beast! Quelch gave me fifty lines to-day, and I haven't done them," said Bunter.

Peter Todd grinned.

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"Then my advice to you, my fat pippin, is to do them, and hand them in before prep. You want to be tactful with Quelch these days!"

"I was thinking that you might do them for me, old chap."

"Think again!"

"You can make your fist like mine," urged Bunter.

"I could put on enough blots and smudges and bad spelling to make Quelch think the impot was yours," agreed Peter. "But you can do your blotting and smudging and bad spelling yourself, old fat man!"

"I'll tell you what, Peter. You do my lines, and I'll have you home for the Easter hols. at Bunter Court!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Peter.

"I mean it!" said Bunter, blinking at Peter through his big glasses. "Honest Injun, Peter! I'm no snob!"

"Eh?"

"It will rather let me down, having a chap like you home for the hols. But I don't care! I'll do it!"

Peter Todd ceased to laugh, and picked up an inkpot. It was so obvious what he intended to do with that inkpot that even the Owl of the Remove was not in doubt. William George Bunter vanished through the doorway of Study No. 7 at a marvellous speed, considering the weight he had to carry.

"Beast!" he roared, from the safe side of the door.

"Come in, old fat man. The inkpot's ready!"

"Look here, I've got to come in and do my lines!" howled Bunter.

"I'm not stopping you!" chuckled Peter. "In fact, I'm going to supply you with ink free of charge."

"I say, old chap, chuck it!" pleaded Bunter.

"I'm going to chuck it when you come in!"

"I don't mean that, you ass!"

"I do!" said Peter cheerfully.

"Beast!"

William George Bunter decided not to come in. He rolled away down the Remove passage, and looked in at Study No. 4, where Herbert Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing were already at prep. The Bounder looked up.

"Outside!" he said briefly.

"I've come here to speak to Redwing, not to you, Smithy!" said Bunter, with dignity. "I say, Redwing, old fellow."

"Prep!" said Redwing.

"I say, do listen to a chap," said Bunter peevishly. "I've got fifty lines to do for Quelch, and they've got to be shown up before prep."

"Better buck up, then."

"The fact is, I've hardly enough time left. You're a good chap, Redwing—I've always liked you."

"Thanks!" said Redwing, laughing.

"Well, look here, I'll do my lines here, and you can help me," said Bunter. "You can make your fist a bit like mine."

Tom Redwing hesitated; he was, as Bunter had said, a good-natured chap. But the Bounder settled the matter by picking up a hassock and taking aim at Bunter. The Owl of the Remove had just time to dodge out before the cushion flew.

"Beast!" he yelled.

"I'll take the poker if you come in again," called out Vernon-Smith.

"Yah! Rotter! Come out here, and I'll lick you!"

There was a sound of a chair moving; and William George Bunter departed in haste, without waiting for the Bounder to come out. He rolled into Study No. 1, where Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent were sorting out their books for prep.

"You fellows like to do some lines for a chap?" asked Bunter.

"Thanks," said Wharton, laughing.

"No!"

"Not the least little bit in the world," grinned Nugent.

"I say, you fellows, you might lend me a hand, after all I've done for you," urged Bunter. "Don't be ungrateful. Remember what Shakespeare says—how sharper than a serpent's tail it is to have a thankless tooth."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Lend me a hand, Wharton, old chap—"

"I'll lend you a foot!" said the captain of the Remove. And he did, and Bunter departed once more.

It really began to look as if William George Bunter would have to do those lines himself, if they were done at all. But Bunter had a deeply-rooted objection to doing lines, if he could help it. Lines were work; and work had never appealed to Billy Bunter.

He rolled along to Study No. 14, which belonged to Johnny Bull, and Squiff and Fisher T. Fish. Johnny Bull and Squiff were there, but the American junior seemed to be absent.

Bunter blinked into the study.

Fisher T. Fish, a business-like youth, was always prepared to do lines for a fellow, for a consideration. Bunter, it is true, had no consideration to offer; but he had a faint hope that Fishy might do the lines on "tick." But Fishy was not there.

"I say, you fellows, where's Fishy?" asked Bunter.

"Gone to see a man in the Shell, I think," answered Johnny Bull. "Don't jaw—prep."

"I wanted him to do some lines for me!" groaned Bunter. "If you fellows would like to whack them out—"

"Fathead!"

"Fishy's been grunting and groaning over his own lines," said Squiff, laughing. "He's had fifty."

"Oh!" said Bunter.

He rolled into the study, and looked at Fisher T. Fish's impot, which lay finished on the table. When Fishy did lines for another fellow, that fellow generally would write a few, and Fishy would keep as near the hand as he could in doing the rest. But Fishy's own natural scrawl was not unlike Bunter's—a ragged round-hand, written as fast as the pen could travel over the paper. Bunter blinked at it.

"Fishy must have forgotten to take this in," he said. "I'd better take it to him."

"Better leave it alone," said Johnny Bull.

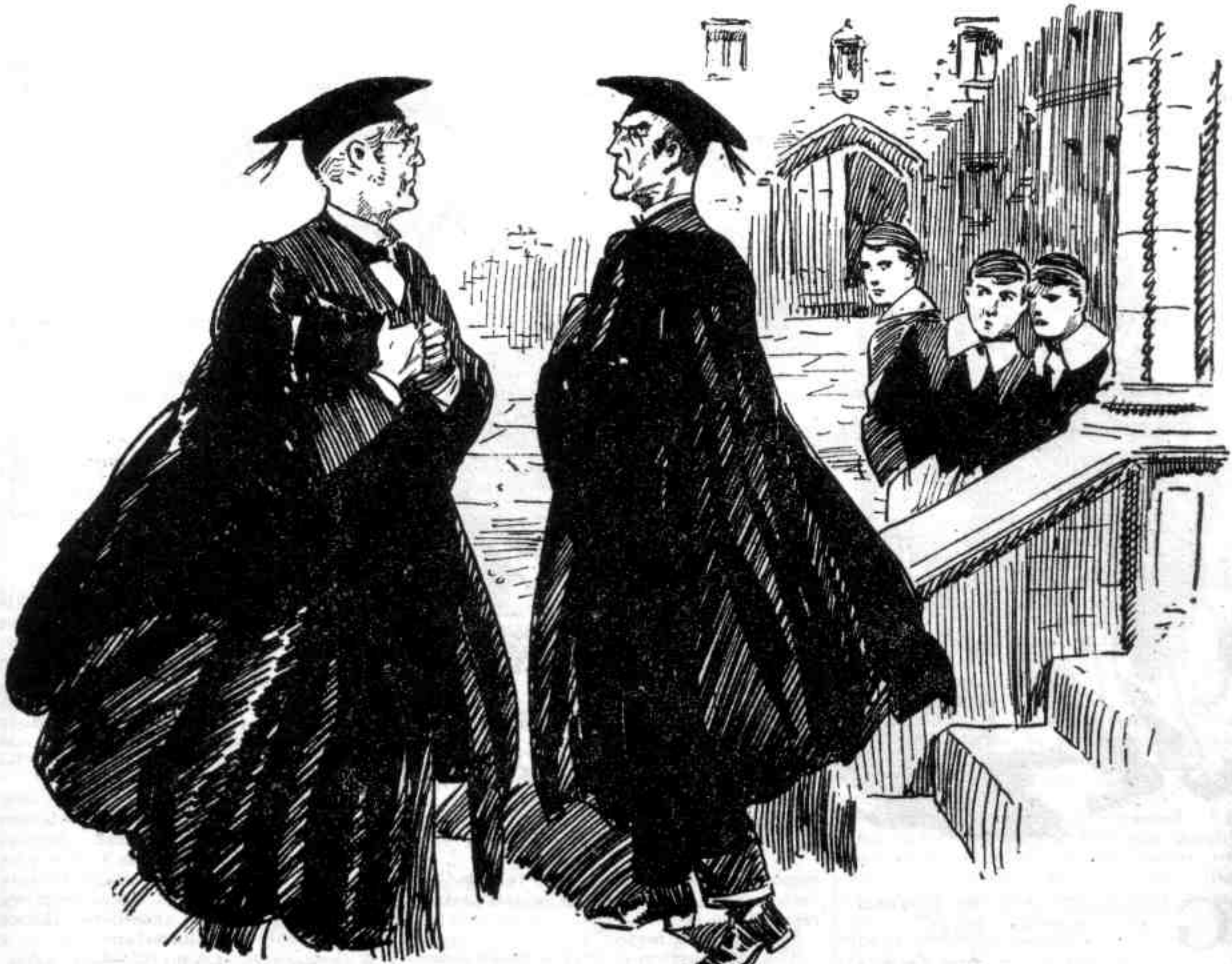
"Oh, really, Bull! I suppose I can do a kind action if I like. Fishy might be caned for being late with his lines."

"Rats!"

"Yah!"

Bunter picked up the impot and rolled out of the study. He took it down to the Rag, where there were pens and ink; he did not want to go back to his own study while Peter Todd was in his present unreasonable mood. Seated at the table in the Rag, Bunter made a few alterations in the imposition, which made it a little more illegible than before, and dropped a few blots, and added a smudge or two. With these improvements and additions, it needed a keen eye to detect that that impot was not William George Bunter's own work.

It was true that Mr. Quelch had a keen eye—compared by his pupils to a gimlet for its keenness. But in a matter of this sort a certain amount of risk had to be taken. Bunter was not



As Mr. Quelch passed the Head in the quad, he merely bowed stiffly and passed on. The juniors who saw the meeting exchanged glances and winked. "My hat!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Something's wrong somewhere, you fellows!" (See Chapter 8.)

fond of taking risks; but an uncertain risk was better than a certain task, in his opinion. Hoping for the best, the Owl of the Remove rolled away to Mr. Quelch's study with the impot for delivery.

What Fisher T. Fish would say, and do, when he found that his impot had been appropriated in this unblushing way, Bunter did not know. He did not think about that. At present he was thinking about satisfying Mr. Quelch. Fishy would come later. Besides, Fishy could be squared by the usual payment for the lines, when Bunter's postal-order came. Anyhow, Fishy did not matter very much.

Bunter arrived at Mr. Quelch's study and tapped at the door. The sharp voice of the Remove master—a little sharper than usual—bade him enter.

Bunter rolled in.

Mr. Quelch was seated at his table, with a little pile of exercises before him, which he was marking. He was not at his literary work now. After that unhappy occurrence in the Remove Form-room, Mr. Quelch had locked up his manuscripts—without, as was natural, missing a single unfinished sheet from among so many. He was doing Form work now—carefully, almost viciously. There should be no further occasion for fault-finding, the Remove master was bitterly determined.

He glanced up at Bunter.

"Well?"

"My lines, sir!"

Mr. Quelch held out a hand.

Bunter had hoped that he would be told to lay them on the table, to be looked at later, at the Form master's leisure. He would have preferred not to be present when Mr. Quelch examined those lines. But the Remove master took them from him, and proceeded to examine them in his presence—just as if he was suspicious of trickery, as Bunter scornfully reflected. Billy Bunter did not approve of a suspicious Form master. Certainly, his methods would have been safer with an unsuspecting one.

The expression that came over Mr. Quelch's face made it clear that he was, indeed, suspicious of trickery.

Bunter quaked inwardly.

Mr. Quelch looked up with a glittering eye.

"Did you write these lines, Bunter?"

"Oh! Yes, sir."

"Oh!"

"M-m-may I go now, sir?" murmured Bunter, as the Form master began to examine the imposition still more carefully. Schoolboy scrawls were often much alike, and Mr. Quelch, though not in a happy mood or a cordial temper, did not want to be unjust.

"Wait!" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, yes, sir!" mumbled Bunter.

He waited.

Tap!

The Remove master looked up irritably as the tap came at his door.

Billy Bunter involuntarily backed away.

"Come in!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

It was Trotter, the House page, who entered. He laid an envelope on the table before Mr. Quelch.

"From the 'Ead, sir, and, if you please, I'm to take back an answer, sir," said Trotter.

"Very good!" said Mr. Quelch quietly.

He took up a paper-knife and slit the envelope, and drew out the enclosed note, Trotter waiting with a stolid face. Billy Bunter's little round eyes and big round glasses were fastened on the Form master's face. And he fairly thrilled with inquisitiveness as he saw the change that came over the countenance of Henry Samuel Quelch.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Dismissed!

MR. QUELCH had forgotten Trotter. He sat with the headmaster's note in his hand, staring at it, as if he could scarcely believe what his eyes told him was written there. Astonishment was at first his feeling; it was succeeded by deep anger, which his look betrayed only too plainly. Bunter noted it, with breathless excitement, as an item of news to retail in the Rag. Even the stolid Trotter had a sense that something was wrong. Mr. Quelch's eyes glittered, and his jaw set square

(Continued on page 16.)

Eggsit the Ventriloquist!

By Dicky Nugent.



Since Dr. Birchmall has tried his ventriloquial tricks on the scholars at St. Sam's, life has been unbearable. But Jack Jolly & Co. rise to the occasion in grand style, with the result that the wily Dr. Birchmall is hoist with his own petard!

School for a week? All over the place, fellows and masters had been heard making remarks that had led to trouble, and invariably they had denied making them. It certainly looked as if this was going to be another such case.

The fellows continued with the lesson with baited breaths. They couldn't tell who

was going to be caught next in this fishy business. With voices coming mysteriously out of nowhere, things were certainly very uncertain.

With deep suspicions in their hearts, the Fourth sat with set faces. Dimly they suspected that the Beak's fowl influence was at work somewhere. So long had they endured the yoke of his tyranny that they knew him for a thorough bad egg, and it would not have surprised them to learn that the downy old bird was at the back of the mysteries.

Jack Jolly had a thoughtful look in his dille as he rather jingly rescoomed his seat. He knew full well that he had not said the words for which he had been punished. It therefore followed that somebody else had said them. Who could it be?

Jack was a smart ladd. And just then he was smarting under a sense of injustice, and his anatomy was smarting under the cool blows of the Head, which made him extra smart—so smart, in fact, that a glimmering of the truth began to pennytrate his brainbox.

"I wonder—" he mermered. He watched Dr. Birchmall very carefully for the remainder of the lesson.

Very soon his scrootiny was rewarded. In less than five minnits, another mysterious interruption occurred. Mr. Lickham was eggsplaining the difference between nouns and verbs at the time.

"Take the word 'wallop,'" he was saying. "I can say 'I am going to wallop you,' or 'I am going to give you a wallop on the boko.'"

"Like to see you try it on!" came the sarkastic voice of Stedfast, from the back of the class.

There was a gasp from the Fourth. Stedfast was a cheeky ladd, but he had never had the face to say a thing like that before.

Mr. Lickham was almost petrified. "G-grate pip!" he mannidged to

I.
"GOOD-MORNING, Mr. Lickham! Good-morning, boys!"
"Good-morning, sir!"
corussed the Fourth Form at St. Sam's, giving the Head a somewhat black look.

Dr. Birchmall had just entered the Form-room, whistling cheerily. The Fourth Form realised, however, that his cheerfulness did not necessarily mean that they were going to be cheerful, too. Usually, the reverse was the case.

"Don't let me interrupt the doings. Mr. Lickham!" said the Head obligingly. "Get on with the giddy washing, dear boy!"

"Right-ho, sir!" said Mr. Lickham. "I was just taking the boys in grammar when you come in."

"Was you, indeed?" said the Head, with interest. "Carry on the good werk, then!"

Mr. Lickham rescoomed the lesson, inwardly wondering at the Head's sudden modesty.

As a rule, when Dr. Birchmall entered the room, Mr. Lickham had to take a back seat. Evidently the Head was changing his tick-facks.

If Mr. Lickham had realised that the Head had merely come into the Form-room for the purpuss of playing practical jokes, he wouldn't have been quite so pleased about it. Nevertheless, that was the truth. Unknown to the School, the Head had become an eggspert ventriloquist, and for a hole week he had, been japing the fellows and masters all over the School.

The results were, to put it mildly, unforchunate. Sevveral old friendships had been severed, thick ears galore had been distributed, and jennerally speeking, there had been ructions at St. Sam's. So far, nobody had suspected that a ventriloquist was in their midst.

"Well, boys," said Mr. Lickham, "to

resoom our studies. We were taking the verb 'can.' Take it in its interrogative form—'can I?'"

"Can it, you meen!"

The interruption seemed to come from Jack Jolly, the handsome young kaptin of the Fourth. There was a chuckle from the Form, and Mr. Lickham turned pink.

"Come out here, Jolly!" he thundered. "Such dispertinence is intollerable! Come out and bend over, immejately!"

"What for, sir?" cried Jack Jolly in amazement. "I haven't done anything!"

"How dare you say 'I haven't done anything'—in grammar lesson, too!" said Mr. Lickham fewriously. "How many more times am I to tell you that the correct way to put it is, 'I ain't done nuthink'?"

"Sorry, sir!" gasped the perplexed kaptin. "But, I assure you, sir, I am innoesent!"

"Ratts!" mermered Dr. Birchmall, who was lissening with an amowsed smile playing about his thin lips. "We all herd you make a fassceshus remark, Jolly. Bend over, and take your grool! What's more, I'll give you a hand, if you like, Mr. Lickham!"

"Certainly, sir!" said Mr. Lickham, handing over his cane to the Head. "Now, Jolly, bend over immejately!"

The dignified kaptin of the Fourth had no option but to obey. He bent over, and his trousers were well and trooly dusted before he was aloud to resoom his normal position again.

Meanwhile, the rest of the Form were looking at each other with very perplexed eggspressions on their diles. It seemed incredible that Jack Jolly should ask for trubble by such a ridikewlous interjection. Yet they couldn't get away from the fact that it had sounded like his voice. Was this insident going to provide another of those misteries that had been puzzling the

stutter, at last. "You—you impudent young rascal, come out!"

"Me, sir?" asked Stedfast, gratefully surprised. "But it wasn't me!"

"Kindly speak more grammatikally, Stedfast!" roared Mr. Lickham. "To say 'it wasn't me' is not good English; you should say 'I never done it'! Come out immedjately!"

"Stop!"

It was the stern voice of Jack Jolly. And this time it really was his voice. The kaptin of the Fourth was standing on his feet, his eyes gleaming eggsitedly.

"Stop!" he repeated. "Before you go any further, sir, make quite sure you've got the guilty party!"

At those kryptic werds the face of Dr. Birchmall turned a garstly white.

"Take no notiss, Lickham!" he said harshly. "You've got the guilty party all right! I saw him with my own ears!"

"I certainly recognised the voice myself as that of Stedfast," said Mr. Lickham. "What's the merry idea, Jolly?"

Jack Jolly pointed a trembling finger at the Head.

"The idea is this: Dr. Birchmall is a ventriquoist!" he said dramatically.

"A what-ist?"

"A ventriquoist!" repeated Jack Jolly firmly. "I've been watching him very cairfully, and I saw his lips move when the voice came. It was not Stedfast who spoke, but the Head!"

"Oh crikey!"

"It's a lie!" cried the Head feercely, but his dile gave the lie to his werds and everybody could see that it was only too troo. He had turned quite yellow; gilt was all over him.

"Well, I'll be jiggered!" muttered Mr. Lickham, staring at his chief in dismay. "If this isn't the giddy limit! Now we understand!"

Mr. Lickham could now see the eggsplanation of the eggstraordinary interruptions which had turned the Masters' Meeting into a riot, only a week before. He could now see, as throo a window, with almost paneul clearness, what had cawsed all the trubble in the School in the past few days. Light came to him at last, and his brow darkened.

"Well, sir," he remarked, "with all dew respect to you, you're a humbug. You ought to be ashamed of yourself. I hate to be disrespectful, but you really forse me to it!"

"Bow-wow!" retorted the Head sinnically. "Go and eat coke, Lickham! Things are coming to a pretty pass if a Headmaster can't have a bit of fun in his own School!"

"As for you, Jack Jolly," he said, turning an evil look on the kaptin of the Fourth. "I've tried to distill it into your mind for years that your best policy is to mind your own business. I can see that I haven't given you enuff of the birch in the past. That will be remmedied in the future!"

"Do your worst, sir!" retorted Jack Jolly skornfully. "You may find me a danjerous ennemy!"

Biting his lips with rage, Dr. Birchmall kwitted the Form-room, leaving the Fourth in a buzz over Jack Jolly's discovery.

"What a worm!" mermered Mr. Lickham, when he had gone. "I'm afraid I did you an injustiss just now, Jolly, owing to that cadd!"

"Forget it, sir!" said Jack cheerfully. "I'm going to take it out of the Head pretty soon. The Guvvners' half-yearly visit is coming along soon, and I'm going to see if I can't have a bit of my own back on Dr. Birchmall. Just keep your peepers open, and you'll see what you shall see!"

II.

THE afternoon of the Guvvners' visit dawned. And the old quad at St. Sam's ekkoed with the sound of motor tyres, bath-chair traks, and footprints, as the Guvvners arrived.

In Big Hall the hole School was assembled. The fellows whiled away the period of waiting by discussing the roomor that Dr. Birchmall had become an eggspert ventriquoist, and that his ventriquoial trix had been the caws of all the trubble that had occurred.

At last, led by Dr. Birchmall, the Guvvners of St. Sam's hobbled on to the platform, and, led by Burleigh of the Sixth, the School gave the customary cheer.

After a few formal werds by the Head, Sir Frederick Fungass, Chairman of the Board of Guvvners, rose on his hind legs, and the School began to settle down to a quiet snooze for an hour or two, while the verboze Sir Frederick let loose his usual flow of ellokwenche.

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows!" began Sir Frederick, in his quiet, aristocrattic way. "I know that we have a long program before us, and I therefore don't propose to detain you for more than an hour or two, myself. In the first plaice, I want to say how glad I am to be addressing you again, and all that sort of rot. Secondly—"

He broke off abruptly as a voice that sounded eggsactly like Jack Jolly's called out in sarcastick axcents:

"Put a sock in it, Freddie!"

There was a brethless hush. Not a sound could be herd in the Hall save the shuffling of feet and the eggsited chattering of hundreds of boys.

"Grate pip!" gasped Sir Freddie at last, turning round to the other Guvvners. "Did you here what that cheeky brat said then?"

"We herd, Sir Freddie!" the Guvvners replied in corus.

"Rest assured that he shall be punished, Sir Freddie!" said the Head, with a gleem in his eyes. "I know who it was, and I'll see that he gets it where the chicken got the chopper!"

"All serene!" said Sir Frederick Fungass, a little Molly-fied. "Well,

you chaps, to get back to where I left off—"

"Sit on him, somebody!"

This time it was unmistakably the voice of Bright of the Fourth.

There was a chuckle from the assembled School, and even the grave and dignified masters cackled, in a grave and dignified manner, of course.

Sir Freddie's face turned the culler of a ripe tomarto.

"This is monstrus!" hō'eggsclaimed. "It really is the outside edge, Birchmall! If you brought me hear to be consulted by your chaps, you've tackled the wrong customer! How dare they interrupt me!"

"I beg your pardon, I'm sure, Sir Freddie!" said Dr. Birchmall, apparantly very much distressed by the interruption. "I know who that was, too; and I assure you I'll flog him without mersy, later on!"

"I hope you will!" said Sir Frederick sorely. "Well, anyway, you chaps, as I was saying—"

"Can't you dry up, Freddie?"

It was the voice of Frank Fearless of the Fourth. This time the few remaining hairs on the head of Sir Frederick Fungass seemed to stand upright.

"You disrespectful young villains!" he hooted, his aristocrattic dile distorted with rage. "I'll smash you! I'll spifficate you! I'll—"

"One moment, sir!"

Mr. Lickham, the master of the Fourth, advanced to the centre of the platform and laid a restraining hand on the eggsited Chairman. There was a gleem in Mr. Lickham's eye.

"One moment, sir!" he repeated. "I think before we go on, that you should know what the hole School knows by now. The voices you just herd did not emminate from any of the boys. They came from that fooling chump who is standing on the platform with you at present."

"You meen—" Sir Frederick broke off and looked round at the other Guvvners in suspishon.

"I meen our slab-sided idiot of a Head!" replied Mr. Lickham fearlessly. "Or, as the vulgar would put it, Dr. Birchmall!"

"Grate pip! Are you serious?" gasped the Chairman of the Guvvners. "But the voices came from different directions!"

"Very likely, sir!" said Mr. Lickham, with a shrugg. "That, however, is easily eggsplained. Dr. Birchmall, I have discovered, is a ventriquoist, and can chuck his voice all over the place. On this occasion he scent it in different directions to put you off the sent!"

Sir Freddie almost eggsploded with rage, and when he spoke his voice was like the rumble of distant thunder.

"So we have rumbled you, Dr. Birchmall!" he said sternly. "A ventriquoist, indeed! Do you take St. Sam's for a variety theatre? Or, if not, what's the big idea?"

(Continued on page 28.)



The Guvvners of St. Sam's arrive!



(Continued from page 13.)

and hard. Bunter would have given a great deal to have been able to read what the Form master was reading.

The Head's note, which so astonished and angered the master of the Remove, was brief, but very much to the point. It began with "Sir." Always, when the Head had occasion to send a note to the Remove master, it began with "Dear Mr. Quelch," or "My dear Quelch." There was a change now, with a vengeance.

"Sir,—I am somewhat surprised that I have not received from you an offer of your resignation. I have no doubt that you will be willing to offer it as I to accept it. Please send reply by bearer.

"H. LOCKE (Headmaster)."

Mr. Quelch was surprised himself by the anger that welled up in his breast. This—for so trifling an occurrence—this, for practically the first fault his chief had ever had occasion to find with him. The injustice of it stung the Form master to the very soul.

For long minutes he sat staring at the note, the colour deepening in his face, his hands trembling with anger and resentment.

There had been a disturbance in his Form-room, and his resignation was demanded. Trouble in Mr. Prout's Form-room, only a week before, had been the talk of the school; but there had been no hint of resignation from Mr. Prout—the Head, indeed, had appeared unconscious of the whole matter. But Mr. Quelch, it seemed, could not make the smallest slip without what amounted to dismissal descending upon him at one fell swoop.

And this was the man who had been, as he supposed, his friend as well as his chief!

Mr. Quelch laid down the note at last and drew ink and paper to him. With black bitterness in his face and in his heart, he indited his reply to the Head of Greyfriars:

"Sir,—I have received your note with the greatest surprise. I have no intention whatever of resigning my position here. If you desire to dismiss me, that is in your power.

"H. S. QUELCH."

Mr. Quelch sealed that note carefully in an envelope and handed it to Trotter.

"Take that to Dr. Locke, Trotter."

"Yessir."

Trotter shuffled out of the study and closed the door.

Mr. Quelch sat motionless, his eyes fixed on the headmaster's note, reading and re-reading it.

Billy Bunter could see that his presence in the study was utterly forgotten. He wondered whether he had better draw the Form master's attention to himself by coughing or shuffling his feet. But the expression on Mr. Quelch's face was so black, so bitter, that Bunter was extremely unwilling to draw his attention just then. He remained as silent as a mouse, and Mr.

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Quelch did not once glance in his direction. The hapless master of the Remove was sunk in a deep and gloomy reverie. Tap!

Mr. Quelch started out of his dark thoughts.

"Come in."

Trotter re-entered the study.

"From the 'Ead, sir," he said, "and if you please, I'm to take an answer."

Mr. Quelch nodded, and took the note from him. It was shorter and sharper than the first:

"Dr. Locke regrets that Mr. Quelch does not see his way to resign, and has no alternative but to dismiss Mr. Quelch from his present post at Greyfriars."

The Remove master drew a deep, deep breath. He had asked for it, and he had received it. To resign was to admit, in some measure, dereliction of duty, which he had no intention of admitting in the very least. But it was in the headmaster's power to dismiss him, and the Head had done so.

Dismissed!

It was a heavy blow—a crushing blow. But indignation helped Mr. Quelch to bear the blow. He wrote a brief reply, which he handed to Trotter.

"Sir,—I shall not demand, as is my right, your reason for acting with tyranny and injustice. I have no desire to serve a headmaster whom I can no longer respect. I shall leave Greyfriars at the earliest possible moment.

"H. S. QUELCH."

Trotter departed with that final message. Mr. Quelch sat like a stone image. The angry flush died out of his face, leaving it quite pale.

"Dismissed!"

That word dropped from his lips.

"After all these years! Dismissed!"

Billy Bunter trembled.

Burning with curiosity as he was, he dared no longer leave Mr. Quelch in ignorance of the fact that he was there, within hearing. He gave a fat, frightened cough.

Mr. Quelch started, and spun round towards him.

"Bunter! You— What are you doing here?"

"You—you told me to wait, sir!" gasped Bunter, in terror.

For a moment the Remove master's eyes blazed at him. But he controlled his temper.

"Quite so," he said calmly. "You may go now, Bunter."

Bunter was only too glad to go.

The study door closed behind him, and the Owl of the Remove scudded away. Breathless with excitement, he tore up the staircase, and burst into the Remove passage—with news more startling and exciting than any he had ever had to tell before in the whole course of his fat career.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Doubting Thomases!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter burst into Study No. 1 in the Remove almost like a bombshell.

"I—I say—" he gasped.

Wharton and Nugent glared at him.

They were at prep, and they felt that, in view of the recent happenings in the Remove, it behoved them to be very careful with prep.

Apparently it did not behove Bunter; he seemed to have forgotten prep.

"Shut up, you fat ass!" exclaimed

Nugent. "Buzz off! Shut the door after you!"

"I—I—I say—" stuttered Bunter.

"Hook it!" rapped out Wharton.

"I—I say—grooogh!" gurgled Bunter. He had made such hot haste to the Remove passage with his startling news that he was quite winded, and could not get the news out.

"If you're going to have a fit, hop out and have it in the passage," said the captain of the Remove.

"Grooogh! Gug-gug!"

"Shy that die. at him, Franky!"

"What-ho!"

Frank Nugent picked up the Latin dictionary.

"I—I—I say!" gurgled Bunter. "I say, you fellows, listen to a chap! Quelchy's sacked! Ow! Grooogh! Sacked!"

"Who's sacked?"

"Quelchy!" stuttered Bunter. "The Head's sacked him. What do you fellows think of that?"

"You fat idiot!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"You burbling chump!" exclaimed Frank.

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Go and tell your funny stories up the passage," said Wharton. "No use for them here."

"It's true—"

"Fathead!"

"I heard—"

"Buzz off!"

"Quelchy said so!" shrieked Bunter, greatly exasperated by this reception of his amazing news. "Quelchy himself!" "Quelchy said so to you?" exclaimed Wharton, staring at the Owl of the Remove.

"Yes," gasped Bunter.

"Sort of confided it to you, what?" grinned Nugent.

"Exactly."

"Oh, my hat!"

"He told me in his study," explained Bunter. "Told me by word of mouth, you know, that he was sacked by the Head."

"I think I can hear Quelchy telling a Lower Fourth man that he was sacked!" chuckled Frank.

"He didn't say sacked exactly."

"Oh, not exactly!"

"Nunno. He said dismissed."

"Quelchy told you that he was dismissed?" demanded Wharton.

"Yes. Spoke to me like a friend," said Bunter. "I could see that he was rather cut up, so I sympathised with him."

"Great pip!"

William George Bunter had intended at first to relate only the facts, which were startling enough in themselves. But facts were never safe in Billy Bunter's keeping. His fertile imagination was already at work. Already the story was growing, like Jack's beanstalk in the fable.

"Awfully cut up!" said Bunter. "It quite touched me to see tears in his eyes—"

"Tears in Quelchy's eyes!" shrieked Wharton.

"Tut-tut-tears!" stuttered Nugent.

If Bunter had stated that he had seen tears in the eyes of the bust of Socrates over Mr. Quelch's bookcase, his statement could not have been more startling.

"Absolutely weeping!" said Bunter.

"Woo-woo-weeping!" gasped Nugent.

"Yes, poor chap! I put my hand on his shoulder, and said, 'Bear up, old fellow! I was quite touched!'" said Bunter.

"I think you're quite touched!" ejaculated Wharton. "No mistake about your being touched, you potty

duffer! But you're not touched enough to call Quelchy 'old fellow'!"

"I don't mean that sort of touched, you silly owl! I mean, it touched my heart! I said 'Never mind, Quelchy'!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Study No. 1. "Oh, really, you fellows, if you don't believe me—"

"Believe you!" sobbed Nugent. "Oh, my hat! Believe you!"

"He's going!" said Bunter. "Poor old Quelch! Of course, he's a beast, but I'm really sorry for the poor blighter, you know! He's going! We're going—"

"We're going?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Yes, we're going—"

"Are we sacked, too?"

"I mean, we're going—"

"Sure you mean anything?"

"We're going," howled Bunter—

"we're going to have a new master in the Remove. Can't you let a man speak? I say, you fellows, fancy Quelchy being sacked—turned off after all these years, you know!"

"I can't quite fancy it!" grinned the captain of the Remove. "I haven't your lively fancy, old fat bean!"

"He told me—"

"Fathead! Travel along and tell some other study—only don't let it get to Quelchy! He would skin you!"

"I tell you it's true—"

"Ass!"

And Wharton closed the door of Study No. 1, Bunter having just time to jump back into the passage. Wharton and Nugent laughed, and went on with their prep, not placing the slightest faith in Bunter's remarkable tale.

The Owl of the Remove gasped with indignation. He had imparted the thrilling tale to Study No. 1 first, and instead of thanking him, the study had not even believed him. He rolled to the next study. In Study No. 2 Tom Brown and Hazeldene were at prep.

"I say, you fellows, Quelchy's sacked!" announced Bunter.

"Idiot!"

"Ass!"

There seemed to be plenty of doubting Thomases in the Remove.

In Study No. 3 Bunter found Ogilvy and Russell. They were not even interested in the news, which they regarded as an unusually wide stretch of Bunter's well-known imagination. Ogilvy rewarded him with a whizzing dictionary, and Bunter roared and ran.

He looked into Study No. 4, and Tom Redwing laughed when he made his announcement, but the Bounder looked interested.

"How do you know?" demanded Smithy.

Redwing looked at the Bounder.

"You don't think there's anything in it, surely, Smithy?" he exclaimed.

"Might be. I know there's some trouble between the two old jossers," answered the Bounder coolly. "How do you know, Bunter?"

"Quelchy told me," explained Bunter.

"Told you!" yelled Vernon-Smith.

"Yes; spoke like an old friend. I'm dismissed, after all these years, Bunter!" was what he said. His very words.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Redwing.

Vernon-Smith jumped up. He had no doubt now that the Owl of the Remove was pulling his leg.

"Quite funny!" he remarked. "But when a fellow's at prep, you shouldn't butt in with your funny stories! Travel!"

Bunter travelled so fast, with the Bounder's boot to help him, that he fairly flew into the Remove passage.

"Yaroooooh!"

Bunter's yell and Bunter faded away along the passage.

In a state of seething indignation William George Bunter rolled into his own study—No. 7. He had expected to thrill the Remove from end to end with his news; instead of which he had not found a single believer so far, and he began to doubt whether he would find any at all. But his own study-mates, he considered, were bound to believe him—fellows who knew him so well.

But even in his own study Bunter found only disbelief—perhaps because the fellows knew him so well.

"I say, Toddy, Quelchy's sacked!"

"Can it!" said Peter, without even looking up.

"He told me so!"

"Cheese it!"

"The Head's dismissed him!"

"Shut up, ass!"

"Dutton, old man!" Bunter turned, almost in despair, to his other study-mate, Tom Dutton, the deaf junior. "I say, Dutton—"

"Eh?"

"Quelchy's sacked!"

Dutton stared at him.

"Smacked! Smacked whom?"

"Not smacked—sacked!" howled Bunter. "The Head's sacked him!"

"Yes, I think I can see the Head smacking a Form master!" said Tom.

"Give us a rest, you fat duffer!"

"Sacked!" shrieked Bunter. "Dismissed!"

"Who's missed?"

"Dismissed—Quelchy!" shrieked Bunter.

"I can't make you out! Who's missed Quelchy?" asked Dutton. "I know I shouldn't miss him!"

"He's turned out of the school!" yelled Bunter.

"Rabbish! If he was going to turn out a fool, he would have done it before now! What do you mean?"

"Oh dear!" gasped Bunter. "I say, you tell him, Peter!"

"Tell your own whoppers, old fat man!" answered Peter Todd.

"It isn't whoppers!" wailed Bunter. "It's true! Every word the frozen truth! Quelchy told me—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"At least, I heard him say so!"

Bunter came down to the facts at last.

"Cheese it!"

The door of Study No. 7 opened, and a keen hatchet-face looked in.

"Is that fat clam here now?" asked Fisher T. Fish. "Oh, hyer you are, Bunter! What have you done with my lines?"

"Eh—what?"

Bunter had forgotten all about the impot he had borrowed from Fisher Tarleton Fish.

"Bull says you took my lines to give them to me. You haven't given them to me! Where are they?"

"Oh, that's all right!" said Bunter. "Quelchy won't ask you for those lines, Fishy! He's sacked!"

"What!" yelled Fisher T. Fish.

"Sacked, old chap! We're done with Quelchy!"

Fisher T. Fish looked at Bunter as if he would bite him.

"You've bagged that impot!"

"I tell you it's all right—you won't have to do it again! Quelchy won't ask you for any lines, now he's sacked!"

"You—you—you—" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "You've bagged my impot, and now you spin me a yarn like this! Why, I—I—I'll—"

"Here, you keep off!" yelled Bunter.

Fisher T. Fish did not keep off. He rushed at Bunter and clasped him round the neck, and a bony fist jammed hard on Bunter's little fat nose.

"Yaroooooh! Help!" yelled Bunter.

"You fat clam! You pesky mug-wump! Take that—and that—and that!" gasped Fisher T. Fish.

"Yow-ow-ow! Peter, old chap—"

(Continued on next page.)

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Yaroooh! I tell you Quelchy's sacked! Yooop! It's all—yarooogh!—right! Oh crumbs! Whoooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Peter Todd.

"Grooogh! Help!"

Fisher T. Fish was punching at the Owl of the Remove, as if he took Billy Bunter's fat countenance for a punch-ball. William George Bunter roared and wriggled and squirmed, till Peter kindly intervened and grasped the incensed Fisher, and with a swing of his powerful arm tossed him into the passage.

"Ow! Ow! Wow!" gasped Bunter. "Oh dear! Ow! Oh! Ow! I say, Peter, old chap, Quelchy is sacked!"

"Chuck it!"

And Billy Bunter, in deep indignation, "chucked it" at last. He sat and caressed his fat little nose, which had been considerably damaged by Fishy's bony knuckles, and gave attention to prep.

When his own work was done, Peter gave the fat junior a word of advice.

"You'd better do some prep, you fat ass! You'll get it hot and strong from Quelchy to-morrow."

"I'm not going to do any prep! Quelchy's sacked!"

"You fat chump—"

"I tell you he's sacked—"

Peter took the Owl of the Remove by the collar, and gently but firmly knocked his head on the study table.

"Yooooop!"

Then Peter, still unbelieving, left the study, leaving Bunter rubbing his head instead of his nose.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

A Shock for the Remove!

BILLY BUNTER rolled into the Rag a little later; and in spite of the reception which his news had met in the Remove passage, he expected to find the Rag buzzing with it.

But the Rag was not buzzing.

The juniors who had heard Bunter's tale did not believe a single word of it; and so far from being excited by it, they had dismissed it from their minds. Nobody was discussing the matter; and nobody heeded Bunter when he rolled in, important as the Owl of the Remove was at this moment as the only fellow who really knew!

The matter was important enough to the Lower Fourth—had the fellows believed it. A change of Form master was a very unusual happening. The Second Form sometimes had a change, Mr. Twigg often being laid up with one complaint or another, and going away for a time, when a temporary master would take his place. Yet though Mr. Twigg must have caused the Head a great deal of extra trouble, it obviously never crossed the Head's mind to dismiss him or request him to resign. For the Head to dismiss a master—for any master to transgress to the extent of earning dismissal—was not only unknown at Greyfriars School, but unthinkable. Certainly the Remove would have been very interested had they believed that they were to have a change of Form master. But the bare idea of the dismissal of Mr. Quelch was absurd.

Billy Bunter grunted discontentedly as he blinked round the Rag. The thrilling news was true—unlike so much of Bunter's news; and really it was hard for a fellow not to be believed when he was telling the actual truth for once, by accident, as it were.

But the Owl's fat face brightened as he saw Skinner & Co. in a group by

the fire. He remembered that Harold Skinner, for some reason unknown, had surmised that the Remove master might be sacked. In Skinner, therefore, he was likely to find a believer. So he rolled up hopefully to the black sheep of the Remove.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo! Where did you get that nose?" asked Skinner genially. "Is it a nose?"

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"I guess I gave Bunter that nose," growled Fisher T. Fish, "and I guess I'll give him another if Quelchy comes down on me about my lines!"

"My hat! Then he'll have two!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Quelchy won't come down on you, you silly, skinny ass!" snapped Bunter. "He won't come down on any of us any more."

"Eh? How's that, umpire?" asked Skinner.

"Because he's sacked."

"Quelchy sacked?"

"Just that!"

"What utter rot!" said Snoop.

"Piffle!" said Stott.

But Skinner's eyes were gleaming. Bunter had been right in expecting to find a believer in Harold Skinner. Skinner had his own reasons for expecting to hear news of that kind sooner or later.

"Tell us how you know, old fat man," said Skinner.

"I was in his study with my lines—"

"My lines, you mean, you fat clam!" hooted Fisher T. Fish.

"Oh, shut up, Fishy! I was in his study, when Trotter came in with a note from the Beak. Quelchy sent an answer, and then Trotter came back with another note—notice of dismissal."

"You saw it?"

"Quelchy told me."

"Quelchy told you he was sacked?"

"That's it! He was quite—quite overcome," said Bunter. "Leaning on my shoulder, he said—"

"Quelchy leaned on your shoulder?" gasped Snoop.

"Yes—leaning on my shoulder, he said in a faint voice, 'I am dismissed, after all these years! I said, 'Buck up, Quelchy!'"

"You—you—you said 'Buck up, Quelchy'?"

"You—you—you said 'Buck up, Quelchy'?" babbled Snoop.

"My very words! He cried—"

"Cried?" shrieked Skinner.

"Cried on my shoulder, like a child," said Bunter. "I said, 'Never mind, old chap! Bear up!'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" said Bunter crossly. "I can tell you, it's jolly serious for Quelchy. All right for us, of course—I've done no prep. He won't ask you for any lines, Fishy. There won't be any classes to-morrow! Something like—what?"

"Now tell us what really happened," suggested Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You might have told us this before prep, you fat idiot! If I'd known Quelchy was going I wouldn't have done any. Luckily, I haven't done much."

"You don't believe it, Skinner?" exclaimed Stott, staring at him.

"I believe that Quelchy is sacked. The rest is lies, of course."

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"Tell us what really happened, you fat fool!" went on Skinner. "How do you know that Quelchy has got the push?"

"I've told you!" howled Bunter.

"Tell us again—and keep to the facts."

Skinner proceeded to question the Owl of the Remove, and gradually elucidated what really had occurred. Remove fellows gathered round and listened. The fact that Skinner believed the news had a good deal of effect on the other fellows, Skinner's sharpness being well known. And when Billy Bunter's story was boiled down, so to speak, to the actual facts, it sounded a good deal more probable.

Skinner's eyes glistened.

"It's the boot for him, right enough," he said. "Well, there'll be a whole lot of dry eyes in the Remove when he clears."

"I don't know about that," said Harry Wharton sharply. "If it's true, I'm sorry enough to hear it."

"The sorrowfulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The esteemed Quelchy has not had justice or fair play."

"It can't be true!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "The Head would never dismiss a master like that! What has Quelchy done?"

"Only that shindy in the Form-room."

"Well, that was our fault, not Quelchy's. All he did was to forget class for once; and the other masters forget sometimes—especially old Wig-gins; he's always forgetting something."

"Jolly queer that the Head should come down heavy like this on Quelchy, if it's true," remarked Hazeldene. "He was more friendly with Quelchy than with any of the other masters."

"It can't be true!"

"Oh, really, you fellows—"

"It's true enough," said Skinner. "I'm glad to hear it, for one. Old Quelch is a good deal too free with the cane in the Form-room, for my taste."

"Look here, Skinner, what do you know about it?" exclaimed the captain of the Remove.

"Only what Bunter's told me, of course."

"You were saying something of the kind yourself yesterday—"

"Merely expressing a hope, which turns out to have been a winner," said Skinner blandly. "How could I know anything about it personally?"

"It's jolly odd if Mr. Quelch is dismissed after what you said," answered Wharton. "If it were possible for you to have played any rotten trick, I should think you'd done so."

"Thanks!" sneered Skinner.

"But you couldn't make mischief among the masters as you do among the fellows," said Harry, knitting his brows. "All the same, I believe you know something about it."

"Believe what you like, old bean," said Skinner, with a yawn. "I fancy Bunter's yarn is true. I'm going to see Quelchy."

"Going to ask him?" gasped Snoop.

Skinner chuckled.

"Not quite; I don't want to be bitten in two! But a fellow can go to his Form master to ask a question about translation—in fact, Quelchy likes it. And a fellow can watch his face while he's asking."

"Better leave him alone," said Squiff. "If this is true, Quelchy will be feeling pretty rotten now."

"Very likely," agreed Skinner. "Looking rotten, too, I fancy—and that's what I'm going to see."

And Skinner left the Rag.

He came back again in about ten minutes, grinning serenely. A dozen fellows looked at him with mute inquiry.

"It's true enough," said Skinner. "Quelchy looks as white as chalk. He's



Fisher T. Fish rushed at Bunter and clasped him round the neck. The next moment a bony fist jammed hard on Bunter's little fat nose. "Yaroooh!" yelled the Owl of the Remove. "Help!" "You fat clam! You pesky mugwump! Take that—and that—and that!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. (see Chapter 11.)

frightfully cut up. He was sorting books out of his bookcase and making a stack of them on his table: Getting ready to pack."

"I don't believe it!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Go and see for yourself, old bean."

"Oh, rats!"

"I guess I'll mosey along," said Fisher T. Fish. "I can make an excuse about my lines for batting in. I guess I want to know."

And Fisher T. Fish made his way to Mr. Quelch's study and tapped at the door.

"Come in!"

Fishy entered.

Mr. Quelch was standing before his bookcase, sorting out books. His face was not white as chalk, as Skinner had said; but certainly it was pale, and looked worn. Fisher T. Fish was a little startled; he had never seen his Form master look like that before.

"What is it, Fish?" asked Mr. Quelch very quietly.

"My—my lines, sir," stammered Fish. "I—I haven't done them, sir—"

"You are excused the lines, Fish. You may tell all other boys in my Form that all impositions are cancelled," said Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, thank you, sir!" gasped Fish.

He retired from the study and went back to the Rag. There he announced Mr. Quelch's message.

"It's true, then!" said Harry Wharton.

"Cancelling the impots must mean that he's going," said Hazel. "Good luck; I had a hundred to do!"

"I had a hundred," grinned Bolsover major. "I say, this is jolly good news!"

"I guess I'm sorry for him," said Fisher T. Fish soberly. "He looked

cut-up, I guess. It isn't playing the game for the beak to come down on him like this!"

"I can't understand it," said Harry Wharton. "Dr. Locke couldn't be so harsh and unjust as to dismiss a master for what happened in our Form-room yesterday. There must be something else."

"What else could there be?" asked Nugent.

"Blessed if I know!"

"Up to that time they were on good terms," said Hazeldene. "I saw them jawing yesterday morning, cheery as anything. It's the shindy in our Form-room that's done it."

Wharton frowned.

"Looks like it," he said. "But if that's so, it's rotten unjust; and I can't understand the Head acting like that."

"The injustice is terrific, and the esteemed sympathise with Quelchy is very great," said the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Look here, you men!" It was Lord Mauleverer who spoke. His lordship had been listening so far without a word. But his noble brain had been at work. "Look here, you men, this is too thick. It's simply sickenin' for a man who's been here so long to be turned off like this. The Head can't have a right knowledge of what happened yesterday. He may think that Quelchy has grown careless, or undutiful, or somethin', and that he's often forgettin' classes, or leavin' the Remove to run wild. He must be actin' under some mistake, or he wouldn't be actin' like this; the Head's a gentleman."

"Right on the wicket, Mauly," agreed Bob Cherry.

"If the Head's makin' a mistake, what about settin' him right?" asked the schoolboy earl.

"Oh, my hat!"

"We're to blame for havin' played the goat in the Form-room yesterday," said his lordship. "If Quelchy's sacked, it's our fault. It's up to us to chip in and put the Head right."

"Is this your funny turn, Mauly?" grinned Skinner.

"You shut up, Skinner!" growled Johnny Bull. "Mauly's right, you fellows. If this really turns out to be true, it's up to us to go to the Head and put him right. He must be making some mistake."

"Hear, hear!"

Harry Wharton nodded.

"Mauly's right," he said. "Old Mauly generally is right when he takes the trouble to talk at all. We shall know for certain to-morrow. And if Mr. Quelch really is dismissed we'll go in a body to the Head—"

"Leave me out!" sneered Skinner.

"I mean all the decent chaps will go in a body to the Head," said the captain of the Remove. "That will leave you out, Skinner."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's a go!" said Bob Cherry. "Quelchy is a bit of a Tartar at times, but he's a good man; and even when he licks us, I dare say he fancies it's for our own good. Masters do, you know. We might go a jolly long way without finding a better Form master. Why, I've always looked on him as a fixture—like old Gosling, or the Head himself, or the gargoyle on the water-spout—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter's news had had its effect at last—now that it was more or less verified. The Remove were undoubtedly in a state of excitement when they went to their dormitory that night.

Long after lights-out the Removites were discussing the dismissal of their

Form master, and almost all the Form agreed that that dismissal was an act of high-handed injustice, only to be excused on the ground that the Head was under some misapprehension. That, indeed, was the truth of the matter, if the juniors had only known it. But there was only one fellow in the Form who knew—and Harold Skinner was very careful to keep his own counsel.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Harry Wharton & Co. Mean Business!

GREYFRIARS knew it the following morning; from end to end of the school it was known that Mr. Quelch was going.

The news was almost incredible.

Masters' Common-room fairly buzzed with it.

It was such a topic as that apartment had rarely had. It thrilled Common-room.

Every man on the staff sympathised with Mr. Quelch.

While the Remove master had simply been under the frown of the great man, as it were, many of the staff had been rather inclined to rub it in.

Mr. Prout especially had never seen any reason why the Head should select the Remove master from all the staff for personal friendship and for his right-hand man—Mr. Prout, in his own estimation at least, being much more suitable for selection. Mr. Prout, therefore, had not been displeased when the Remove master fell from his high estate.

But matters were different now.

Dismissal was quite another affair. So far as the staff knew, Mr. Quelch had given no offence, save that single instance of neglect of duty, that single instance of forgetfulness, which had led to a riot in the Remove Form-room.

A kind and considerate chief like Dr. Locke was not expected to issue even a reprimand for such an occurrence; he was expected to leave it to the good sense of the master concerned not to allow such an incident to recur.

Apparently the Head was not so kind and considerate as his staff had always believed.

Instead of a reprimand, which would have been considered too severe, the Head had decided on dismissal which was an act of severity out of all reason.

Petty jealousies and resentments in Masters' Common-room were banished in the presence of catastrophe.

For it was a catastrophe; all the staff knew that. Greyfriars had been so long Mr. Quelch's home that his work there was practically his life's work; cut adrift from the old school he had served so long and so well, he was like a rudderless ship, drifting.

Sympathy for Mr. Quelch, indignation at the Head's action, filled Common-room with eloquence.

Mr. Capper even suggested a remonstrance to the Head; though that suggestion was not taken up.

The Head was, after all, the Head, and he was not a man to be remonstrated with, when he had decided. All the Common-room agreed that his act was an act of flagrant injustice; that it destroyed the confidence that had hitherto obtained between staff and chief. But they had no power to intervene, and they knew it. Indeed, if the Head was developing unreasonable tyranny, it behoved the staff to walk very warily in dealing with him, and they knew that, too. A post at Greyfriars was a good and well-paid post;

and no other member of the staff desired to follow the Remove master into the wilderness.

All the Forms discussed the startling news, and in every Form there was surprise, and some indignation. Wingate of the Sixth had been requested by the Head to take charge of the Remove for a few days until a new master was appointed. Wingate almost fell down in his amazement when Dr. Locke made that request. It was his first intimation of the present state of affairs.

"Is Mr. Quelch leaving, sir?" he stammered.

"Yes, Wingate."

"But, sir—" gasped Wingate.

The Head's face was cold and severe. "That is not what I desire to discuss with you, Wingate," he said, in an icy voice.

"Oh! No! No, sir! Of—of course not!" stammered the Greyfriars captain.

"I desire you to take charge of the Remove for a few days. I shall rearrange the time-table, and the French master and the mathematics master will take the Lower Fourth for additional sets. For the rest, I think I can trust you with the Form, Wingate."

"Oh, certainly, sir!" said Wingate.

"That is all, Wingate. Thank you!" said the Head, in his most stately manner.

And the prefect withdrew, utterly astonished.

"Something or other's happened," he told his friend Gwynne of the Sixth. "The Head looked like an iceberg when he mentioned Mr. Quelch."

"That shindy in the Remove the other day—" said Gwynne.

"If it's only that, the Head is acting very badly."

"What else could it be?"

"Goodness knows."

Wingate was quite perplexed.

"I say, you fellows, Wingate's taking us this morning," Billy Bunter announced to the Remove fellows after breakfast. "It's put up on the board."

"That settles it, then," said Bob Cherry. "Quelch's really going."

"It's a rotten shame!" said Johnny Bull.

"The shamefulness is terrific!"

"What about goin' to the Head?" asked the Bouncer. "I agree with Mauly. After all, Quelch's our Form-master. I've ragged him enough, and he's taken it out of me often enough; but this is too thick. I never thought the Head would do a rotten thing. But this is rotten."

"Sheer tyranny!" said Frank Nugent hotly.

"I'm going to speak to Mr. Quelch," said Wharton. "We must have it officially before we butt in."

"He wasn't at brekker," said Squiff. "He breakfasted in his own study, I think. That proves it."

"He doesn't want to face us, under sentence of the jolly old sack," grinned Skinner.

"Shut up, Skinner!" howled a dozen fellows.

Skinner shrugged his shoulders and shut up. Most of the Removites, now that they were to lose their Form-master, realised that they were rather attached to Mr. Quelch. They had always respected him; the fact that he would stand no nonsense from them made them respect him. But a good many fellows were surprised to realise now that they liked him, too.

Severe master as he was, there were few fellows in the Form who had not received acts of kindness from him, at one time or another; scanty as his leisure was, he was always willing to help a fellow who needed help.

And he was being treated with injustice. He was down now, and there are few fellows who do not sympathise with a man when he is down.

Harry Wharton went to the Remove master's study. As head-boy of the Form, he had a right to speak. Mr. Quelch had not been seen that morning by his boys; and the notice on the board showed that they were not to see him in the Form-room. Almost all the Remove had joined in the idea of going to the Head in a deputation; but obviously it was necessary to place the matter beyond a shadow of a doubt before that step was taken.

Wharton tapped at Mr. Quelch's door.

"Come in!"

Mr. Quelch's voice was firm as usual, but pitched unusually low. Harry Wharton entered the study.

He was shocked at the change in the Remove master's looks.

Mr. Quelch was not a man to wear his heart on his sleeve; he was quiet and self-contained, and he had not intended to show a sign of the trouble and distress that he was feeling. His manner was calmness itself. But he could not disguise, perhaps he was even unaware of, the pallor in his face, the deepening wrinkle in his brow, the worn droop of his mouth. Harry Wharton felt a throb of compassion. It had never occurred to him that the time would ever come, when he would compassionate the grim, severe master of the Lower Fourth. But he pitied him now; and mingled with his pity was a growing indignation.

"What is it, Wharton?" asked the Remove master, very gently.

"Please excuse me, sir," said Harry respectfully. "It is being talked all through the school that you are leaving us, sir."

Mr. Quelch's lips twitched.

"That is correct, Wharton!"

"I'm sorry, sir! Every fellow in the Remove will be sorry you're leaving, sir."

"Thank you, my boy!" Mr. Quelch's voice trembled for a moment, but it was firm again as he went on: "I am leaving somewhat suddenly, Wharton—I have a few preparations to make, but later in the day I shall be gone. I am glad you have come in—I desire to say good-bye to you, and through you, to all my Form—my late Form. I have always tried to do my duty by my Form—I have tried to be a friend and helper to my boys, as well as their Form-master. Whether I have succeeded I cannot say—but I hope that my boys will try to remember me with kindness."

"Oh, sir," said Harry. He felt a lump in his throat, as he realised, dimly, that he was in the presence of a tragedy.

"That is all, my boy," said Mr. Quelch. "I am sorry to be leaving you—very sorry, indeed!"

"It's our fault, sir," said Wharton miserably. "If we'd behaved ourselves the other day, this wouldn't have happened. I—I hope you'll forgive us, sir—we never meant any harm."

The next moment he could have bitten off his tongue for having uttered the words; which had revealed to Mr. Quelch the fact that his boys knew that he had been dismissed. The Form-master himself had spoken only of leaving. For an instant, a flush snowed in Mr. Quelch's cheeks. But he answered the junior kindly.

"I am sure of that, Wharton. My Form acted thoughtlessly—boys will be boys, and the fault was mine. But I gather from what you say that it is reported in the school that I am under

dismissal." In spite of his self-control, Mr. Quelch's voice shook. "It is perfectly true, Wharton—I had not desired it to be discussed, but it is certainly correct. But you must not think that the fault was yours, or that of your Form. Now good-bye, my boy!"

"It's a shame, sir!" broke out Wharton passionately.

"You must not say that, Wharton! Good-bye!"

The Remove master shook hands with Wharton, and signed to him to leave the study.

Wharton went out with a flushed face.

He went to the Rag, where all the Remove had gathered. His look, as he came in, was enough for them.

"Official?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Yes."

"He's going?"

"Yes."

"It's a rotten shame!"

"And if he goes, the Head's going to know that we think it a rotten shame!" said Wharton, with a flash in his eyes. "I'm going to the Head now. All you fellows follow on."

"Yes, rather!"

"Hear, hear!"

"What rot!" jeered Skinner. "Oh! Ow! Leggo! Yaroooh! Whoop!"

Skinner went spinning across the Rag and sprawled on the floor. He sprawled there dizzy and spluttering.

"Want any more, you rotter?" bawled Bob Cherry.

"Ow! Grooh! Ow!"

"Shut up, you cad!"

"Come on, all of you!" said the captain of the Remove, and almost the whole Form followed him. Outside the Rag they came on Wingate of the Sixth.

"You kids forgotten Form?" asked the captain of Greyfriars. "Get off to the Form-room. Can't you tell the time?"

"We're going to the Head," said Harry.

"What? You're going to your Form-room!"

"We're going to the Head, to speak to him about Mr. Quelch," said the captain of the Remove determinedly.

Wingate stared at him.

"You're doing nothing of the kind!" he rapped out.

"We are!"

"And you jolly well shan't stop us!" roared Bob Cherry.

"What?"

"We don't want any trouble with you, Wingate, but we're going to the Head," said Harry Wharton. "Let us pass, please."

"You don't want any trouble?" repeated Wingate, almost dazedly. "Do you understand that you're talking to a Sixth Form prefect?"

"I don't care!"

"You don't care?" stuttered Wingate.

"No, I don't—not a rap!" retorted Wharton. "Will you let us pass?"

"Get into your Form-room at once!"

"Rats! Come on, you men!"

And the Remove, led by Wharton, rushed on, and Wingate of the Sixth went spinning out of the way under that rush, powerful fellow as he was.

"Good gad!"

Wingate sat up, gasping.

The Remove were gone.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Nothing Doing!

DR. LOCKE was on his way to the Sixth Form-room.

His face was clouded.

The blow which had fallen so heavily on Mr. Quelch had been a blow to the Head also.

CAPTURED AT LAST!



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He had not chosen to see the Remove master; it had been less painful to him to settle the matter by an exchange of notes. He did not wish to see Mr. Quelch again—now or ever.

But he was feeling it, all the same. He was losing the man whom he had always regarded as the most valuable member of his staff; and he was losing an old friend. True, what he had seen written in Mr. Quelch's hand seemed to prove that that friendship, on Henry Quelch's part, had been a pretence—a delusion and a snare. But real or unreal, it was a loss, and the Head missed it. He was angry with himself for missing it, angry with Mr. Quelch for having proved unfaithful and untrustworthy, and altogether, that morning, the usually kind-hearted old gentleman was in a very disagreeable mood. Not in the very least in a mood to take calmly any recalcitrance on the part of the Lower School. It had not even occurred to him that Mr. Quelch's Form might resent his high-handed treatment of Mr. Quelch. He was now to learn that.

He halted, in sheer amazement, at the sight of a mob of juniors in the Form-room passage near the Sixth Form door. What they were there for he did not yet know; but his temper was already irritated, and it was still more irritated at the unexpected sight. Really, it seemed as if Mr. Quelch's Form had no sense of propriety at all. No doubt it was time Mr. Quelch gave place to a new man with new methods.

Before any of the juniors could speak the Head rapped out at them sharply:

"What are you doing here?"

"If you please, sir," began Harry Wharton, in his most respectful manner. The Head interrupted him.

"It is time for your first class. Go to your Form-room immediately."

"May we speak to you first, sir?"

"You may do as I tell you," said the Head harshly. "I have appointed a prefect to take charge of you until a new Form master arrives here. Mr. Quelch's departure makes no difference. You may go."

Wharton drew a deep breath.

It was no light matter to face the Head, and oppose his lofty will, when he was angry. Already two or three fellows in the rear were treading quietly away.

But the captain of the Remove stuck to his guns. He had come there with something to say, and he was determined to say it.

"We want to speak to you about Mr. Quelch, sir."

"What, what?"

The Head stared in great astonishment.

"Mr. Quelch is our Form master, sir, and we shall all be sorry to lose him," said Harry.

"Indeed! No doubt you anticipate that a stricter discipline will be kept by a new Form master?" snapped the Head.

"Sure!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Oh, no, sir!" said Harry. "But we think you don't know, sir, what really happened the other day."

"What?"

"You seem to blame Mr. Quelch, sir, but every fellow in the Remove will own

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up that what happened was all our fault."

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the Head. "It's the first time this term, sir, that our Form master has ever been late for class," said Wharton. "We thought you did not know that, sir. It's happened only once, and—"

"That will do, Wharton."
"But, sir, what happened—was all our fault. Mr. Quelch caned the whole Form for it!"

"We kicked up a row, sir," said Bob Cherry. "We never meant any harm. But you can't blame our Form master for it."

"The blamefulness is ours, my esteemed sir!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Dr. Locke knitted his brows. "This is not a matter that I can discuss with juniors, as you know very well," he said. "I have listened to you patiently. Now go to your Form-room."

"But, sir—"
"Silence, Wharton! Do you dare to bandy words with your headmaster?" exclaimed Dr. Locke angrily.

Wharton bit his lip hard. "Excuse me, sir," drawled Lord Mauleverer. "We all thought, sir, that you did not know the rights of the matter, sir, and we came here to explain, sir, before Mr. Quelch left."

"I understand, Mauleverer. Now go to your Form-room."

"Is Mr. Quelch stayin', sir?"

"What? Certainly not!"
"But now we've explained that Mr. Quelch was not in fault, sir, and owned up that we were to blame—"

"I am well aware that you boys were to blame for the riot in the Remove-room. That is enough. Go!"

"We're entitled to an explanation, sir," said Lord Mauleverer coolly. "If it's admitted that we were to blame for the row, sir, may I ask why our Form master is sent away?"

"You may not!"

"We've a right to know, sir."
Dr. Locke fairly blinked at Mauly. So did the Removeites. It was utterly unlike his lazy lordship to take a forward place in any proceedings. Generally he gave the impression of being too tired to live. On very few occasions did Lord Mauleverer display anything like energy. Those occasions were only when somebody else's welfare was concerned. Now he was coming out in a way that astonished the Lower Fourth. Wharton, the captain of the Form, had been silenced, for the moment at least, and Lord Mauleverer rushed into the breach, as it were.

"What did you say, Mauleverer?" exclaimed the Head at last.

The coolness of the schoolboy earl seemed to have taken his breath away.

"We've a right to know, sir," said Mauleverer.

"Upon my word!"

"We respect Mr. Quelch, sir, and rather liked him, in a way," said Lord Mauleverer. "He makes us work jolly hard, but we don't blame him for that; he thinks it's his duty, I dare say. Form masters are like that, and a fellow ought not to blame them. So far as we can see, sir, Mr. Quelch is bein' treated with injustice—"

"What?"

"Injustice, sir."

"How dare you say such a thing to me, Mauleverer?"

"If it's not the truth, sir, I'm sorry. If it's the truth, I don't see any harm in sayin' it."

The Head breathed hard and deep.

"You boys are seeking to interfere in a matter that does not concern you," he said. "I warn you that my patience is exhausted. Go back to your Form-room."

"Is Mr. Quelch staying, sir?" persisted Mauleverer.

"No."

"Then we think it's a shame, sir!"

"A-a-a-a what?"
"A shame!" said his lordship deliberately. "A rotten shame, sir! All the Form thinks the same!"

Dr. Locke's face was quite pale with anger.

"Loder!" he called out.

Half a dozen of the Sixth were looking out of their Form-room, Loder among them.

"Yes, sir," said Loder.

"Kindly bring me a cane."

"Certainly, sir."

Loder brought a cane in record time. Dr. Locke swished it.

"You will bend over, Mauleverer."

"I'm bound to obey your orders, sir," said Mauly cheerfully, and he bent over, and received three severe cuts, under the grim stare of the Remove.

Lord Mauleverer was not supposed by the Form to be a hardy fellow. But he did not flinch under the castigation, and he uttered no sound.

The Head handed the cane back to Loder.

"Now go to your Form-room!" he snapped, his eyes glinting at the Remove.

"Very well, sir," said Lord Mauleverer. "I'm bound to say, though, that if my Form master leaves Greyfriars, I leave, too!"

"Silence!" thundered the Head.

And he stalked into the Sixth Form room with a frowning face.

Slowly the Remove trailed away to their Form-room. The appeal had been made to the Head, and it had failed, and it was a very angry and excited Form that gathered in the Remove-room.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

In Revolt!

"GOOD old Mauly!"
"Ow!" said Mauly, with a wriggle.

"Good man!" said Harry Wharton. "There's nothing doing, but Mauly put it to the Head in plain English, at least."

"Yes, rather!"

"The plainfulness was terrific," grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"But the esteemed Quelchy is going, all the same."

"It's a rotten shame!" said Wharton, his eyes gleaming. "I've a jolly good mind—"

He paused.

"Say on, O king!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"I don't see having our Form master chucked for nothing, and letting a pro- fect take us," said Harry. "If the Head chooses to leave us without a master, and a good master, he must expect some trouble. What price shifting Wingate out when he comes to handle us?"

"What?"

"Wingate's a good chap, and we all like him; but it's the principle of the thing," said the captain of the Remove.

"If we show the Head that we mean to stand by Quelchy, he may see reason."

"Hem! He may."

"Anyhow, it will be a lark," said Bolsover major. "I'm for a shindy!"

Bolsover major, as a matter of fact, always was for a shindy, if there was any chance of one. But on this occasion he found most of the Form in agreement with him.

"May a fellow speak a word, you men?" inquired Lord Mauleverer.

"Go it, Mauly!"

"Quelchy's getting injustice and

"THE REBELLION OF THE REMOVE!"

"We want Quelchy!"
That, in effect, is the cry that goes up in Remove circles now that Mr. Quelch has been dismissed from the school.

But it's more than a cry: it's a demand with the genuine backing of practically every Removeite behind it.

Not even the Head can quell the riot that springs from the dismissal of his old colleague.

And most prominent of all the Removeites, and most persistent in his demand that Mr. Quelch should be reinstated, is Lord Mauleverer, the slacker! Mauly "wakes up" with a vengeance, and the scheme he propounds, and puts into operation, is unprecedented in the history of Greyfriars.

Boys, next week's story is the most original "Barring-out" story ever written. Note the title:

"THE REBELLION OF THE REMOVE!"

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"Bow-wow!" "Rats!" "Get out!" "Go and eat coke!" Numerous voices shouted defiance as Wingate made a stride at Harry Wharton. "Rescue, Remove!" There was a sudden rush, and the captain of the Sixth had to release Wharton to face the torrent of excited fellows. (See Chapter 15.)

rotten treatment," said Mauleverer. "I'm standin' by him to the last shot in the locker. If he goes I go, as I told the Head."

"You can't, you ass!" said Squiff.

"I can and I will," said his lordship calmly. "Fair play's a jewel, and Quelch isn't getting fair play. The Head's got to see reason. If Mr. Quelch leaves Greyfriars, I leave, and chance it. I suggest that the whole Remove walk out of the school after Mr. Quelch."

"Oh, my hat!"

"That will mean floggings," said Nugent.

"Let it!"

"It may mean bunnings."

"The jolly old Beak can't bunk a whole Form. If he does, we'll go in a body," said Lord Mauleverer. "My idea is that it's up to us to stand by a man who's always treated us decently, and who's bein' treated rottenly and unjustly. We'll begin by makin' it clear that we're not goin' to be taken by a prefect."

"Hear, hear!"

"Let the Head send Mr. Quelch here, and we'll be as good as gold and as meek as lambs. Until we get Quelch back we let things rip. The motto of this Form is goin' to be W.W.Q."

"What on earth does that mean?"

"We want Quelch!" explained Lord Mauleverer.

"Oh, my hat! Bravo!"

Harry Wharton's eyes sparkled.

"Mauly's right," he said. "Mauly's given us a lead, and we're going to follow it. We back up Mauly."

"Mauly's woke up just at the right time," chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes old Wingate!" said Bob Cherry.

And the Remove faced the door as the captain of Greyfriars came in, with his official ashplant prominent under his arm. Wingate evidently foresaw that the ashplant might be required, in the present excited state of the Lower Fourth.

The Remove eyed him grimly. Hardly a man was in his place; the juniors stood in a crowd in the middle of the Form-room.

"Take your places!" rapped out Wingate.

"Sorry, old man," said Bob Cherry. "Nothing against you personally, you know; but we've decided to cut class till Mr. Quelch comes to take us."

"Mr. Quelch leaves Greyfriars to-day," said Wingate, "and it's no business of yours, anyhow. Sit down, the lot of you!"

"No fear!"

"Rats!"

"The ratfulness is terrific!"

"Go and eat coke!"

Wingate slid his ashplant down into his hand, and took a business-like grip on it.

"Wharton!" he rapped out.

"Yes, Wingate?"

"You're the ringleader in this!"

"I'm captain of the Form, at any rate, and ready to lead," answered Harry Wharton coolly. "But the Form don't need much leading. We're all of the same opinion."

"I shall make an example of you. Bend over that desk!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I'm not deaf!"

"Bend over, then!"

"Rats!"

"You refuse?" roared Wingate.

"Yes, rather!"

"You refuse to obey a prefect?" exclaimed the Greyfriars captain.

"I refuse to obey anybody except Mr. Quelch," said Wharton steadily. "I will obey my Form master."

"Mr. Quelch is no longer your Form master."

"I don't admit that," answered Wharton coolly.

"You young ass——"

"We want Quelch!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Hear, hear!"

"I order you to bend over, Wharton!" shouted Wingate.

"You can order till you're black in the face, but no man here will obey your orders!" retorted Wharton. "We want Quelch."

"Bravo!"

"Hop out, old man," advised Lord Mauleverer. "We don't want to hurt you, Wingate, old bean——"

"Hurt me!" gasped Wingate, hardly able to believe his ears.

"Yaas. But get out while you're safe!"

Wingate breathed hard. He was a good-tempered fellow, but his temper was at boiling-point now.

"I'm going to cane every fellow here who's checked me," he said. "I'm beginning with you, Wharton. For the last time, bend over!"

"Bow-wow!"

"Rats!"

"Get out!"

"Go and eat coke!"

Twenty voices shouted defiance in chorus. The Remove were wildly excited now, and the prefect's ashplant had lost its terrors.

(Continued on page 28.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,043.

BUMBLED! A German spy in the guise of a British officer hides himself that he's taken young Eric Milvain in completely. But he's congratulating himself a bit too early in the day, for Eric's British huss-sense sees through the German's wily subterfuge!

The BULLDOG BREED

By
Geo. E. Rochester



Additional interest attaches to this story in that the author was a British pilot during the Great War, and was taken prisoner by the Germans.—Ed.

An Amazing New Story of the Great War.
(Introduction on page 25.)

The One Who Went On!

SLOWLY Eric rose to his feet, but not before he had commended the dead man's soul to its Maker. It was all that remained to be done for Jacques, poor, wretched prisoner-of-war, slain by as foul a blow as could ever be conceived of man.

Then, with blazing eyes and deliberate tread, Eric crossed to the window. He felt the rope in his hands, and, clambering over the sill, slid down into the darkness. His feet touched earth. Near him, looming bulkily against the wall, stood Cranleigh.

"Well?"

The word came from the man in a husky whisper, half fearful, half defiant.

Eric released his grip on the rope, and, stretching out a hand, clutched Cranleigh by the breast of his tunic.

"You foul cad!" he said, between his teeth. "I'm going to smash you for the—the thing you've done!"

"Be quiet, you fool, they'll hear you!" whispered Cranleigh, but his voice was quivering.

"What care I if they hear me, you murderer—you treacherous hound!"

"Be quiet! Be quiet!" babbled Cranleigh. "Don't you understand? It was fatal to leave him there. You do not know the truth. I've planned this escape, worked for it—"

"And slain the very man that helped you!" cut in Eric gratingly.

Slowly, remorselessly, he drew Cranleigh to him. The man's face was white, horribly white, in the darkness.

"Listen—listen, man—" he began.

"Silence!" Eric's voice cut like a whip. "Jacques said something to me up there before he died. What it meant I do not know. But this I do know. Only one of us leaves this prison camp to-night!"

"One—one of us? What do you mean?"

"I mean the one who is still on his feet!"

With the words, Eric flung the man from him. He waited a moment till

Cranleigh had regained his balance, then leapt in. Cranleigh whipped up an arm to defend himself, but Eric's fist crashed through his guard, flush to the mouth. With an oath, Cranleigh went down, spitting blood and broken teeth. He scrambled to his feet, his hand groping in the pocket of his tunic. Again Eric leapt in, and again Cranleigh went down with a punch which had taken him full in the throat. He lay gasping, fighting for breath.

"Get up, you cur!" panted Eric; but Cranleigh made no effort to obey.

Stooping down, the boy seized him by the tunic, in order to haul him to his feet. Then suddenly he froze into immobility, for Cranleigh's hand had flashed upwards, and a ring of steel was pressed against his forehead.

"You fool!" Cranleigh's voice was laboured, jerky. "You did not know that I was armed! Stop this or—I'll shoot! I—"

It was the darkness which saved Eric. He literally flung himself sideways to the ground. The next instant he had closed with Cranleigh, his hand groping for the man's gun.

Cranleigh fought like a cornered rat. He brought up his knee sharply, taking Eric full in the stomach. Sick, winded, conscious of a deadly nausea, Eric crashed his fist full into his opponent's face. It gave him a second's precious respite, and his hand closed on the man's wrist. He could feel the cold touch of the gun barrel. Then began a struggle which was mercifully shrouded by the darkness.

Cursing and snarling, Cranleigh fought savagely, foully, to retain his weapon, to overpower his assailant. But Eric's strength found its being in cold passion. He fought with a fury which was almost berserk, and when finally he staggered to his feet, holding the revolver in his hand, Cranleigh lay battered and inert on the ground.

Almost blindly, Eric groped his way to the wall of the fort. He leant weakly against it, wiping his bruised and bleeding face with the sleeve of his prison tunic. He drew long, gulping

breaths into his tortured lungs, and once he groaned.

It was that groan which served to bring him to a realisation of his position. He straightened up, listening intently, swaying on his feet like a drunken man. Not a sound disturbed the stillness save for the creak of a barge mooring-rope on the canal.

He lurched across to where Cranleigh lay, one arm outflung. Warily he bent down, his ear against the man's chest. Cranleigh still lived. Again Eric straightened up. He stood for a moment, then, gripping the revolver, turned on his heel and lurched off into the darkness towards the canal.

Otto Umsetzen chuckled, reflectively scratched his fat paunch, then proceeded to fill his long, large-bowled pipe. A three days' old copy of the "Berlinisch Zeitung" was spread on his fat knees. It was a good paper that. Did it not tell how the field-grey heroes of the Fatherland were always advancing? And did it not have the so funny drawings of those cursed Scottish Highlanders—those devils in skirts—with their hairy legs?

It was just such a drawing which was responsible for the fat Otto's chuckle. And it was such a funny drawing that Otto laid down his pipe and stretched out his hand for his brimming beer mug. Such excellent humour needed to be washed down by beer. But, his hand half-way to the mug, Otto paused.

"Sounded like a step on the deck!" he rumbled.

Again he listened, but nothing broke the stillness save the muffled rippling of water against the prow of the moored barge, in the fo'c'sle of which Otto was seated.

"A rat, most likely!" he soliloquised, then returned to the enjoyment of his paper.

Stretching out a hand like a ham, he gripped the handle of the beer mug. Then he froze into immobility, for a

voice behind him said in fluent German:

"Move a muscle and you are a dead man!"

A Change of Raiment I

THE fat Otto moved more than one muscle. His jaw dropped and he quivered like a jelly. But he made no effort to turn his head.

"It's—it's a lie!" he stuttered.

"What is?" demanded the voice.

"That—that I have not appeared before the tribunals for military service! You've come for me—I know it! You—you're going to make me fight! You're from the garrison at Strasbourg! I—I've appeared before the tribunals at Dusseldorf and Duisburg"—his voice rose to a protesting shout—"and they don't want me! Do you hear, schweinhund? They don't want me! I'm ferrying important food supplies, and they don't want—"

"Be quiet!"

Otto was quiet with astonishing abruptness. Braver men than he would have relapsed into silence if the rim of a revolver barrel had been pressed into the nape of their neck.

"Look at me!"

Otto obeyed the command, slowly turning his head. Then he gave a strangled gasp of mingled astonishment and fear. For he found himself gazing into the battered and blood-stained features of Eric Milvain.

Fearfully he lowered his gaze, his little eyes taking in Eric's garb with its broad yellow stripe.

"You—you have escaped from the lager!" he said huskily.

"Yes! And I am a desperate man!"

"Wha—what do you want with me?"

"I want clothes first!"

"But—but the commandante of the lager will have me shot!"

"He will never know unless you tell him."

"But—"

"You will be shot by me in two minutes if you refuse to stir your fat carcass!"

Otto gesticulated with his podgy hands.

"But my clothes won't fit you!" he said frantically. "Me, I am the large one! Look! See!"

He indicated his plumpness with a circumscribing gesture of mingled pathos and pride.

"Who helps you with this barge?"

"Old Hans."

"Where is he?"

"At the house of his aunt, in the Stein Strasse. She is old—so old—but Hans is very dutiful—"

"All right! Spare me details!" cut in Eric sharply. "When do you expect him back?"

"With the dawn."

Eric nodded in grim satisfaction.

"Very good. Now find me some of his clothes, and jump to it!"

"But—"

A jab with the revolver cut Otto short. With a groan he heaved himself to his feet.

"If the soldiers come—" he protested.

"Then hurry before they do come!" snapped Eric.

Otto raised his hands in a gesture of despair and resignation. It was as though he mutely called upon his country's gods to witness that he was but the puppet of Fate and no traitor. Then he waddled towards an old sea-chest, bent wheezingly over it, threw back the lid, and rummaged inside.

Eric watched him grimly as he shuffled back to the table with an armful of miscellaneous clothing.

"Put them down and put your hands behind your back!" he ordered.

Otto obeyed.

Within three minutes the quaking Otto's hands were securely tied with his own braces. Then he watched, breathing stertorously, as Eric stripped off the prison clothes and donned the wide pantaloons and blue blouse of old Hans.

"Now listen, fat pig!" snapped the boy. "I'm going to gag you and tie you to your chair. If you resist I shall drill a hole right through your body! Do you understand?"

Otto understood. But this gagging was not necessary. No, Otto would not tell. Otto loved the quiet life. Otto would just read his funny paper and forget all about it—

Eric cut him short abruptly by thrusting him into the chair. At the same instant there came the noise of heavily-booted feet on the deck. A harsh voice rapped out a sharp command, and there came the metallic click of rifle-bolts.

"Ach, blatter!" gasped Otto. "It is the soldiers!"

The Search Party!

ERIC had but seconds in which to act. One glance round the small, cramped fo'c'sle showed him the utter absence of anything approaching cover. Otto's little eyes were beginning to glitter with something approaching triumph. Perhaps, after all, he could convince the commandante—for he was certain that he would be hauled in front of the commandante—that he had parted with the clothes of old Hans under pressure.

The heavy tread was approaching the door of the fo'c'sle. Eric leapt on to the table, blew out the swinging oil lamp, then dropped to the floor by the side of Otto.

"One word from you and I will fire! I won't miss you!" he whispered.

The fo'c'sle was in inky darkness, but he knew where the door was. The men were paused outside on the threshold, and someone was fumbling for the handle.

The door swung open as Eric reached it. A sergeant and four soldiers with fixed bayonets on their rifles stood silhouetted against the lighter darkness of the deck.

"Why has this light been put out?" demanded the sergeant harshly.

THE STORY SO FAR.

Captain Eric Milvain, crack pilot of the 97th Bombing Squadron, receives orders to proceed on a perilous mission to Trier—behind the German lines. He is attacked by four enemy aeroplanes and, after a terrible fight, is forced to descend in a stretch of desolate moorland, his observer dead and his machine useless. There he encounters a British Secret Service agent, fatally wounded, who hands over some valuable plans to the young airman and implores him to bury them until they can be recovered and get through to the British headquarters. This is barely done before Milvain is captured by the Germans and taken before Dr. Kauterfauld, chief of the German Secret Service, who recognises the young Englishman as the son of Professor Milvain, the inventor. Eric is imprisoned at Karlsruhe, but manages to escape, only to fall into the hands of Dr. Kauterfauld again. This time Eric is taken to Strasbourg and placed in a cell with a man named Cranleigh, who quickly informs him that he has friends in the camp who will readily help them to gain their freedom. Some instinct prompts Eric not to trust Cranleigh; but for all that, he agrees to attempt the escape. Then, when Eric discovers Jacques, who has helped them to escape, dying from a knife wound inflicted by Cranleigh, he knows that his instincts have not failed him.

(Now read on.)

The door fitted ill on its hinges, and Eric knew that chinks of light must have filtered through to the deck. But he knew also that both he and Otto were invisible in the black shadow of the fo'c'sle, and he pressed himself closer against the door behind which he had slid.

"Donner und blitzern! But there is something wrong here!" snarled the sergeant, as he snapped the button of an electric-torch.

The beam of light fell full on Otto, blinking in his chair, his hands behind his back.

The sergeant stepped into the low fo'c'sle. Eric tensed in every muscle. The wavering beam of light swept from Otto and came to rest on the bundle of prison camp clothing which Eric had discarded. The yellow stripe on the trousers seemed to take on a horrible vividness.

"Blut und hunds!" The words came from the sergeant in a roar. "But he is here—"

It was at that moment that Eric sprang. His clenched fist took the sergeant full on the side of the head, sending him crashing against a bulk-head, and the torch clattered to the floor. Then, turning, Eric lowered his head and charged. He felt his head bury itself in a soft and yielding tunic. A hand grabbed at him, but he wrenched himself free. For a few moments all was jumbled, jostling, swearing humanity. The darkness was an invaluable ally to Eric, for it was impossible to distinguish friend from foe.

"Hold him! Hold him, you swine!"

The sergeant was on his feet, groping frantically for his torch, bellowing orders and curses at the top of his voice.

But Eric was through, although his left arm was dripping with blood from one of the saw-edged bayonets. And it was only when he broke from the melee and ran stumblingly towards the canal side of the deck that the soldiers were unanimous as to who was their quarry.

One, more nimble witted than the others, whipped his rifle to his shoulder.

Crack! The darkness was split by a spurt of blood-red flame, and hard on the heels of the report there came a sullen splash. In a towering passion the sergeant leapt from the fo'c'sle. He swung a fist like iron and felled to the deck the man who had fired.

"You fool!" he roared. "If you've killed him I'll have you shot!"

And those words came clearly to Eric's ears as he struck out strongly for the farther bank.

In the Plantation!

THE first grey light of the coming dawn was streaking the Eastern sky when Eric went to cover in a small plantation about two kilometres north-west of the outskirts of Strasbourg.

He had dived from the barge simultaneously with the firing of the rifle, and, reaching the farther bank, had half walked and half ran for nearly a kilometre before recrossing. During the remainder of the night hours he had plodded on through the darkness, striking directly away from the canal, heading towards the west.

Now, utterly spent, he crawled under a clump of bushes, and was sound asleep in a minute. It was mid-afternoon when he awakened. He was stiff,

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,043.

sore, and hungry. His left arm ached intolerably where it had been torn by the jagged-edged bayonet.

Taking off his coat he examined the wound. It was red and inflamed, and looked in need of immediate attention. Drawing on his blouse again, Eric crawled cautiously to the edge of the plantation to get his bearings.

He found himself confronted by a flat, tilled field of many acres. Women, bent and aged, were working with hoes. Beyond the field his eye was caught by the glint of metal, and he recognised the main railway line which, before the War severed it, ran from Strasbourg to Nancy.

He lay for a few minutes in the undergrowth, then returned to the spot where he had lain up during the day. He was conscious of a ravenous hunger by now, but knew that no chance of staying its pangs would come till after nightfall.

And when darkness came he would strike across the field to the railway track. By dawn he should be half-way to Mulden, and the next night's travelling would see him there. He would lie up during the day, of course. It would be bad luck, also, if he could not find some orchard near the railway line. If he could not, then he'd raid a hen roost. Food was essential.

And thus his thoughts ran on. He'd get the plans, strike across country to the Vosges, and if he could not slip through the line, then he'd swing off to the left and try the Swiss frontier.

Since waking he had been conscious of a peculiar feeling of mental unrest. There was something he had to think out, something which he had been too tired to grasp last night. Then it came to him in a flood of recollection. It was about Jacques, and what the man had said about Cranleigh. There was something funny in that business.

Slowly, methodically, Eric went over the past hours in his mind. Following his escape from the Gasthof, he had been sent to Strasbourg by Dr. Kauterfauld instead of being shot. Why?

At Strasbourg he had met Cranleigh, and for some reason Jacques had attempted to warn him against Cranleigh. Cranleigh had murdered Jacques, but before Jacques died he had said something about a plot. Obviously a plot in which Eric was concerned. What was that plot?

Then why had the sergeant on the barge threatened the soldier with the death penalty if Eric had been killed by the bullet from the man's rifle?

Eric found his thoughts harking back to Kauterfauld again. Why had the man sent him to a camp where, obviously, discipline was notoriously slack? Slack! The fight under the fort walls with Cranleigh had not been a quiet affair, yet no one had heard.

Then suddenly Eric leapt to his feet, his fists clenched.

"By Jove!" he whispered. "By Jove, I've got it!"

The words died on his lips and he stood rigid. A few feet away, amidst a tangled mass of rank weeds and undergrowth, was crouched the figure of a man. His white face was turned towards Eric, and he was watching the boy.

Eric took a quick step forward. As he did so the man rose slowly, painfully, erect.

"Cranleigh!" The words came sharply from Eric's lips. "You!"

Cranleigh's Terms!

CRANLEIGH parted the bushes and advanced towards Eric. His white and haggard face bore traces of the recent fight, and he walked unsteadily.

"What the dickens are you doing here?" snapped Eric.

Cranleigh laughed bitterly.

"The same as you!" he replied. "Lying up!"

Eric stared at him in silence, and he went on:

"When—when you left me, I came round. I did the only thing possible, I—I made for the open country north of Strasbourg. When dawn came this was the only cover I could see for miles. Half an hour ago I heard someone moving about, and—and crept along to investigate. It was you!"

"Oh! And what do you propose to do?"

Cranleigh took a step forward and seized Eric by the sleeve.

"Listen—listen," he said, and the words came in a voice which shook. "I'm coming with you! I must! I can't go alone! Don't you understand? They're hunting for us now! The solitary confinement nearly sent me mad! You did something to me last night—you smashed my nerve! I can't go on—I can't—I can't!"

He plucked at Eric's sleeve with trembling fingers, but the boy stood grimly silent.

"Ah, I know what you think!" continued Cranleigh hurriedly. "You think I murdered Jacques. Last night you—you did not give me time to explain. He was a traitor. He would have sold us—"

"You liar!"

"It's true! I swear it's true! Listen, he helped me so that he could claim, when the War is over, the money I promised to put for him in the Bank of Holland. But I know he works with the Boche. To capture an escaped prisoner means promotion for someone. He would have raised the alarm a few minutes after we had left the cell. He betrayed Menzies, of the Lancashire Fusiliers! He betrayed Hylton, of the Inniskillings! They got away, but were recaptured. Two sergeants got promotion, and Jacques got money from the sergeants. I know that—I know it, I tell you!"

"How do you know it?"

"Hylton was sent for punishment to the fortress at Lille, where I was. He told us. The sergeant taunted him with it—the sergeant who captured him after he escaped!"

"And did your fear of betrayal excuse deliberate murder?"

Cranleigh released his grip on Eric's sleeve. He drew himself up, and for a moment he seemed to have himself under perfect control.

"Who are you to ask that question?" he demanded. "I will stand by what I have done before either a British or a Belgian court-martial behind the lines in France! Menzies and Hylton can prove the truth of what I say about that dirty blackguard!"

"They are in the prison camps, you say!" responded Eric dryly.

"They'll be out some day, won't they? They are my witnesses, and such betrayal as Jacques was guilty of is punishable by death. You know that?"

"Why did you not tell me all this when we discussed our plans before the escape?"

"I could not tell you that without telling you how I intended to silence him!"

"And you thought I would not agree?"

"Yes, yes! Can't you understand, man? He earned what he got, and you and I would not be here now if it hadn't been for me!"

The man's control seemed to be slipping from him again.

"You can't leave me, Milvain! I tell you I won't be hunted alone through this cursed country! You've got to let me come with you. If you don't, I'll—"

He paused.

"Yes, you'll what?" asked Eric quietly.

Cranleigh faced him, white to the lips.

"I'll give myself up, here and now, and you with me! I won't go on alone!"

"You mean that?"

"Yes, I do! Unless you give me your word of honour that we travel together, I give myself up! I promise you that if we win through to France I will go with you to headquarters and report the whole matter of Jacques' death!"

"You liar!"

"Curse you, will you believe what I say?" snarled Cranleigh. "Do you know what going on alone means? Do you know of the lonely nights, when with every step you may be walking into a trap? And the long hours of daylight when you must sleep, yet daren't sleep? I can't win through alone, and if you don't agree to my coming with you, then I walk right out of this cover and give myself up! I mean it!"

Eric saw that the man was wrought up to a high pitch of tension. Quietly he studied him for a few moments, then said:

"Very well! I agree!"

Cranleigh heaved a sigh of relief, and wiped his lips with the sleeve of his tunic.

"I thought you would!" he said, then added savagely: "What the devil are you grinning at?"

"You!" replied Eric, but there was little of mirth in the cold smile on his lips.

The Cottage!

WITH the darkness they left the cover of the plantation and struck across the field towards the railway. The need of food was paramount, and Eric's wounded arm was throbbing its entire length.

Cranleigh walked in sullen silence, and Eric was in little mood for talking. There was no moon, and the night was inky dark. For an hour or more they followed the railway track, halting once or twice whilst trains with darkened windows thundered past bearing troops to the western front.

Once, also, they came to the mouth of a tunnel. Cranleigh was for making a detour and joining the railway at the farther end.

"Yes, and spend valuable time hunting for it in the darkness!" said Eric grimly. "You can do what you like, but I'm going straight on!"

And straight on he went, stumbling over sleepers, chilled to the very bone by the raw, damp air and the moisture exuded from the walls of the tunnel.

Cranleigh followed him, swearing, whining, expostulating. Then came a rumble, and a vibrating of the metals.



In a towering passion the sergeant leapt from the fo'c'sle and felled the man who had fired. "You fool!" he roared. "If you've killed him I'll have you shot!" The words came clearly to Eric's ears as he struck out strongly for the bank. (See page 25.)

"You fool! Oh, you fool!" shouted Cranleigh. "It's a train—we're trapped!"

The rumble rose to a deafening roar, the tunnel acting like a gigantic sound-box. It was impossible to tell in which direction the train was approaching; and in the impenetrable darkness Eric did not know whether he was standing between the rails of the up-line or down.

The thunder of the approaching train seemed to deaden even coherent thought. Then from out of the blackness ahead came hurtling a glinting, metal monster. Blood red flame licked back from the engine cab, weird, fantastic—

With a sweep of his arm, Eric sent Cranleigh staggering off the track, then literally hurled himself to the cinder-strewn ground between the metals of the up and down lines.

He had a vision of a mighty bulk of metal, of racing wheels, then his world seemed to stand still in a veritable crescendo of noise as the train thundered past and roared on through the tunnel.

Weakly, dizzily, he rose to his feet, gasping for breath. Smoke, steam, and fumes from the engine permeated the air.

"Milvain? Are you all right?"

Cranleigh's voice was strained, anxious.

"Yes, let's get on!"

Fighting for breath in the foul atmosphere, they went on. Eric was swaying to his feet, for the short rations of the past few days were beginning to take their toll. They came to the farther end of the tunnel, and, throwing themselves on the grass of the embankment, lay drawing in great gulping breaths of the clean night air.

Then on again, and ten minutes later Eric halted.

"There's a light over there!" he said, looking towards where a faint, dim light glowed feebly in the darkness some distance away from the railway. "It may be a cottage, and I want food!"

"Risky, isn't it?" said Cranleigh hesitatingly.

Eric shot him a quick glance in the darkness.

"Of course it's risky!" he replied curtly. "But I can't keep on without food! I'm going to investigate!"

Without bothering to ascertain whether or not Cranleigh was coming, he broke through a low hedge and started off towards the light. "But Cranleigh followed.

The light came from the window of a small cottage, shining faintly through a drawn, paper blind. Crouched by the hedge of the small garden which fronted the house, Eric took stock of the place as best he could.

"Hope they haven't a dog!" he murmured, then turned to Cranleigh. "Considering the fact that you had the escape from Strasbourg fort so carefully planned," he said, "you'll pardon my asking you if you've got another gun. I took one, but it got soaked in the canal!"

"I haven't another!" muttered Cranleigh.

"I said you were a liar!" replied Eric quietly. "You've got one in your tunic pocket!"

Bumping against Cranleigh on the journey he had ascertained the fact that the bulky piece of metal in the man's tunic pocket bore remarkable semblance to the feel of a revolver.

"Well?" Cranleigh's voice was ugly. "What about it?"

"I'll borrow that gun!" replied Eric. "And what about me?"

"You stay here! I'll bring you some grub! There's no good both of us showing up!"

With a grunt, Cranleigh handed over the gun. Eric took it, and, rising to his feet, went cautiously up the garden path.

Reaching the door, Eric slipped the gun beneath his blouse, then knocked. A chair scraped back in the lighted room, and shuffling footsteps approached along the passageway the other side of the door. Somebody fumbled with bolts and chain, and the door swung slowly open.

A man, tall, gaunt and bearded, stood on the threshold.

"What do you want?" he demanded harshly, peering at Eric.

"Food!" replied Eric. "I've walked a long way, and I'm hungry!"

"You'll get no food here!" retorted the man. "I know what you are! Be off with you!"

"What am I?" demanded Eric defiantly.

"You are an ausreisser—a deserter! Bah! You're not the first which has come this way!"

"And I won't be the last!" retorted Eric, seeing his cue. "Ah, would you shut—"

The man had made as though to slam the door. Eric thrust his foot against the doorpost and his hand whipped to his blouse.

"Put your hands up!" he said grimly. "I want food, and I'm going to have it!"

(Will Eric's disguise pass muster, or will he be recognised as "a dog of an Engländer"? See next week's gripping instalment; boys—it's packed with thrills.)

DISMISSED FROM GREYFRIARS! EGGSIT THE VENTRILOQUIST! FAMOUS FOOTBALL CLUBS!

(Continued from page 25.)

(Continued from page 15.)

(Continued from page 2.)

Wingate, however, did not quite realise that. He made a stride at Harry Wharton, and grasped him by the shoulder, with the evident intention of bending him over by force, and applying the ashplant.

"Hands off, Wingate!" said the captain of the Remove, between his teeth.

"Hands off, you ass!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Rescue, Remove!"

There was a rush. Wingate of the Sixth had to release Wharton, to face that torrent of excited fellows. Almost before he knew what was happening, his ashplant was wrenched away, and a dozen pairs of hands were laid on him on all sides.

"Chuck him out!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Hurray!"

"You, young scoundrels!" panted Wingate, struggling frantically in innumerable hands. "You'll be flogged for this!"

"Rats!"

"You'll be sacked!" roared Wingate.

"Shut up, old bean—you talk too much!" said Peter Todd. "Now, then, all together—heave!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wingate, in a towering rage, struggling wildly, but powerless in the grasp of so many hands, was dragged to the door. He went in a breathless, struggling heap, resisting vainly. Hazel opened the door; and the crowd of juniors hurled Wingate into the Form-room corridor.

Crash! Bump!

Wingate sprawled in the passage, dishevelled, breathless, dizzy. He sat up there and blinked dazedly at the doorway, crammed with yelling juniors.

"Ow!" he gasped. "Oh!"

"Get out of it!" roared Bolsover major. "If you hang about there, we'll come out to you!"

"You—you—you—" gasped Wingate. "I shall have to report this to the Head—"

"Report, and be blown!"

"Tell the Head, and tell him we want Quelch!"

"Down with the prefects!" roared Bolsover major.

"Hurray!"

Wingate picked himself up dizzily and limped away, gasping for breath. The door of the Remove-room slammed after him. In that apartment, the wildest excitement reigned; while Wingate limped breathlessly away to the Sixth Form-room, to report to the Head that the Remove were in revolt.

THE END.

(Now look out for the second story in this original "Barring-Out" series, boys, entitled: "THE REBELLION OF THE REMOVE!" It's a winner!)

Dr. Birchmell seemed incapable of answering for a moment. His eyes were fixed on Mr. Lickham with such intensity that the Fourth Form master fairly winced.

"You fearful rotter, Lickham!" he roared at last. "What the thump do you think you're playing at? I never done no ventriloquism! It was the boys who interrupted!"

Mr. Lickham's lip curled.

"You here him, gentlemen?" he said scornfully. "Not only has he got the face to jape us, but he's got the neck to deny it! He simply refuses to shoulder his responsibility!"

"But I am innocent, I tell you!" shrieked the Head. "I—"

"Do you deny that you practise ventriloquism?" asked Sir Frederick sternly.

"No, of course not, Sir Freddie! But—"

Sir Frederick Fungass shrugged his shoulders.

"Nothing more need be said, then!" he remarked, his eyes glittering. "And to think that you had the impertinence to tell me to dry up, and put a sock in it! Ventriloquist, indeed! I'll show you!"

He made a rush at Dr. Birchmell, and gave him a terrific swipe on the boko. There was a roar of laughter from the School as the venerated Head went down with a crash.

"Now, bump him, you chaps!" yelled Sir Freddie eggsitely, appealing to the other Guvvners.

The stayed and dignified old gentlemen surrounded Dr. Birchmell, and fell on him with a right good will.

By the time the Guvvners had finished with him the Head was feeling very sorry for himself.

Afterwards, in the quad, Jack Jolly & Co. gave vent to their feelings in roars of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Did you ever see anything so funny?" asked Jack Jolly, when they had recovered a little. "The hole School and the Guvvners as well took it for granted that the Head was the guilty party!"

"And it wasn't! It was little us!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I should think this will teach him a lesson," remarked Jack Jolly, drying his eyes. "He won't be so anxious to try his ventriloquist's trix on us in future!"

And Jack Jolly was right. After that nothing more was heard of Dr. Birchmell in his role as a ventriloquist!

THE END.

(The next amusing yarn dealing with Jack Jolly & Co. is entitled: "DOCTOR BIRCHEMELL'S LATEST!" Look out for it in next week's MAGNET, chums. It'll raise a record laugh!)

his job. You can see him any day of the week steering a motor-car through the traffic maze of London's streets. I don't know whether this is good training for football, but Stanley Earle is just as efficient in weaving a way between half-backs and full-backs.

Right back to their Southern League days West Ham have had a reputation for discovering wonderful centre-forwards. George Hillsdon, George Webb, Syd Puddefoot, and Victor Watson. All these have been centre-forwards on West Ham's list, who have played for England in that position. "Vic" Watson is a fine close dribbler, with a real knowledge of the game.

Another centre-forward—or inside-left on occasions—is Vivian Gibbins. He is an amateur, as doubtless you know. Now, V stands for victory, and therefore it isn't surprising that when West Ham have V. Gibbins and V. Watson in the attack they win matches.

A useful little bundle of tricks—and the veteran of the staff—is Billy Moore, who in the years ago played for Sunderland. At outside-left West Ham have a real star in Jimmy Ruffell. He has several English International caps, which he has well earned. He can go down the touchline like the wind, and then, cutting in, sends towards the net a fine goal-scoring shot. There are few footballers who can hit them harder on the run than cunning Jimmy Ruffell.

That's the "cheap" team of West Ham. The day of which the officials are most proud was the occasion when they got to Wembley for the Cup Final—the first Final Tie which was ever played there. You may remember that the match attracted the biggest crowd which has ever attended any football match. That showed how popular are West Ham. They didn't win the Cup that day, but they will win it one of these days, because Manager King builds on a strong foundation.

Mr. King—or "Syd" as all his friends know him, is not only one of the cutest buyers in football, but he also has a fine sense of the right time to go into the market to sell the players for whom he has no further use. That is one of the reasons why West Ham are at the present moment in a particularly strong position financially.

They have a fine, compact ground, with a magnificent stand, and plenty of loyal supporters. The directors' room is a gallery of most interesting souvenirs. Among them are two cheques—cancelled, of course—all nicely framed. One of them is for three hundred pounds, and marks the departure of the club from the Southern League. They were fined that amount for leaving the League. The other is for eight thousand pounds—their share of the receipts of that first Cup Final at Wembley.

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