

Greatest Story of the
"Tests" Ever Written . . .

"THE TEST MATCH HOPE!"

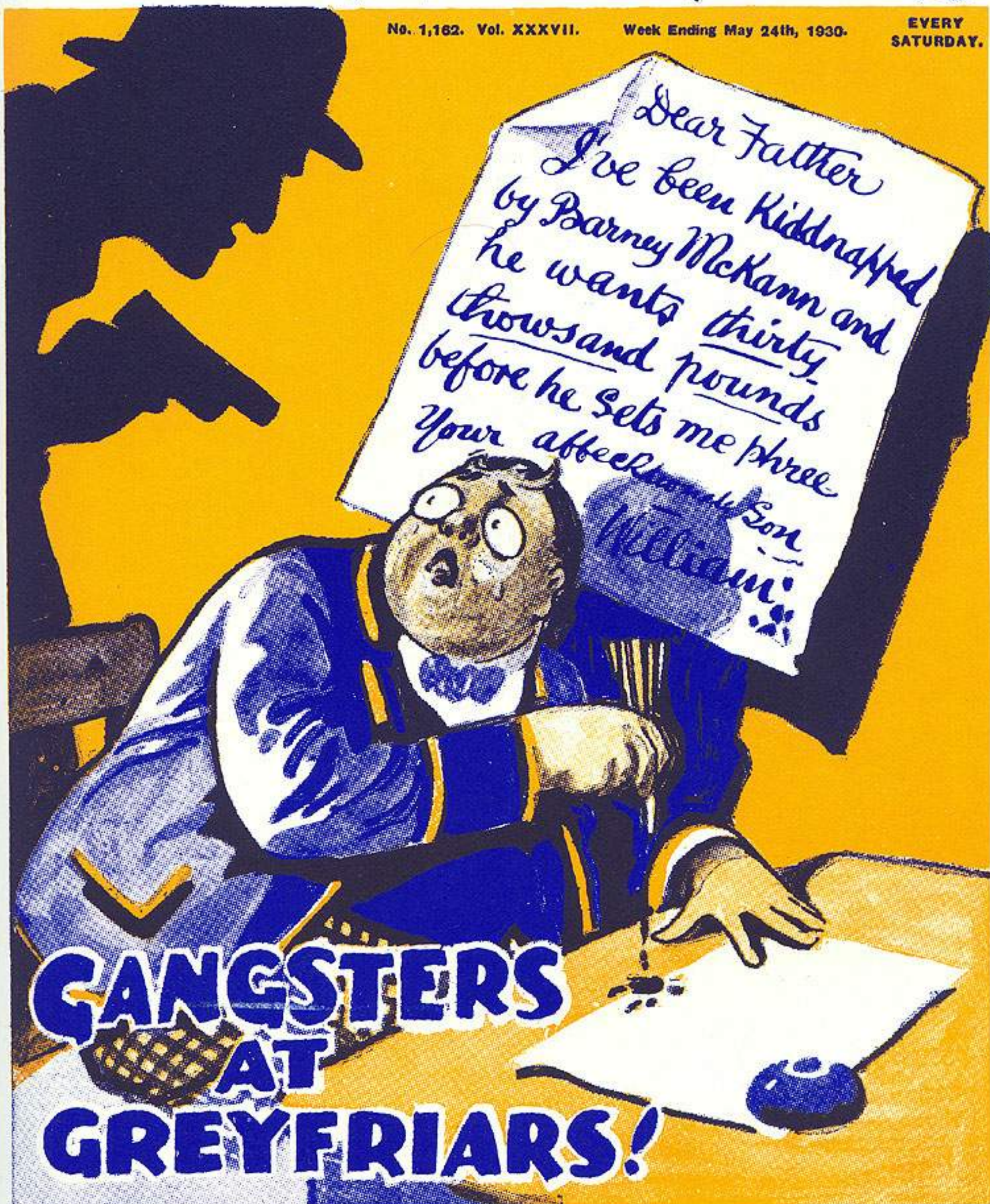
Start It
To-day!

The MAGNET²

No. 1,162. Vol. XXXVII.

Week Ending May 24th, 1930.

EVERY
SATURDAY.



THE KIDNAPPED SCHOOLBOY!

Here we are again, chums!



Come Into the Office, Boys!

Always glad to hear from you, chums, so drop me a line to the following address: The Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

I EXPECT most of my readers have wished, at some time or other, that they could have joined in one of the famous "gold rushes" that have taken place in the world! In those days a man of pluck and grit could easily win a fortune for himself, although, of course, he had to "rough it" considerably, especially during the great Klondyke gold rush.

It is said that a certain Australian who took part in the Klondyke rush got there too late, and found all the gold-bearing land taken. But he looked around and was amazed to find that the land looked remarkably like certain land which he knew in Australia. Straightway he went back to Australia, started prospecting—and found gold!

And it is interesting to know that that happened exactly forty-nine years ago this Wednesday! Gosh! Don't I wish I'd been one of the lucky people who lived in Australia in those days! You can be sure I would have been one of the first in the rush—and so would most of my readers, I expect!

There are many other

MEMORABLE DAYS

this week. For instance, it was 342 years ago this Monday that the Spanish Armada sailed from Lisbon. They set out with high hopes of wiping the British from the face of the sea—but you all know what happened!

Next Saturday, too, is a memorable day, because it is Empire Day, and was also the day upon which Queen Victoria was born. But the most romantic day of the week is Thursday, for on that day, in 1797, the famous Mutiny of the Nore broke out.

Life in the navy in those days was certainly not as enjoyable as it is to-day, for the food was bad, and wages were small. Most of the men were pressed men, who took badly to the iron discipline. Things reached a head

WHEN THE NAVY MUTINIED

at Portsmouth, and demanded an increase in wages. In those days the marines were carried more or less as a guard for the officers, and they were ordered to fire on the mutineers. Several were killed, but eventually the men's wages were increased, and the mutiny subsided, the men being pardoned.

No sooner had the Portsmouth mutiny been settled than the sailors at the Nore broke out, and this was by far the more serious mutiny. It held up all the traffic at the Nore, and lasted for about three weeks. The ringleader was a sailor named Richard Parker, who immediately declared himself to be a Rear-Admiral, and for some time the rest of the mutineers followed him.

Eventually, however, the mutineers were rounded up, and several of them—including Parker—were executed. There have been several mutinies since those days, but none of them so serious as the Mutiny of the Nore.

Here is an amusing limerick which comes from Miss Elsie E. F. Jaggar, 35, Moore Avenue, Wibley, Bradford, Yorks. It well deserves the pocket wallet which I have sent her. Have you got your wallet yet? If not, there is still time for you to have a shot at winning one!

Give a cheer for the Famous Five,
The best set of fellows alive.
Through adventures galore,
They have come to the fore;
For thrills are on which these chaps thrive.

BY the way, it is getting near holiday-time now, so don't forget that if you come across any unusual experiences while you are on holiday, I will be pleased to hear about them, and pass them on to my other readers. One of our authors has just been telling me that he crossed over to Ostend a few days ago, and had a very bad crossing. The boat reached Ostend without trouble, and everyone was getting ready to leave when—she ran aground!

The entrance between the piers at Ostend is very narrow, and the high wind swung the ship around and fixed her between the piers, blocking up the harbour in exactly the same manner as the famous Vindictive did during the war. Fortunately, however, no one was injured, and tugs eventually pulled the vessel off. But as the boat was broadside on to the sea, she rolled very heavily for over an hour. You can be sure the passengers were glad when the vessel at last got alongside the landing stage!

Now let me see what questions you fellows have to ask me this week. Here is one that comes from Dick Harpur, of Whitstable. He wants to know who was **THE GREATEST RUNNER WHO EVER LIVED?**

A Norwegian named Mensen Ernst can claim this distinction, for he was certainly "some" runner! For instance, he ran from Paris to Moscow in two weeks, over all sorts of bad roads, in all kinds of weather. During the run he had to swim across thirteen wide rivers, but, despite all this, he averaged 125 miles per day!

His greatest run, however, was from Constantinople to Calcutta and back. He took fifty-nine days to do this, swimming rivers, crossing deserts, and putting up with the blazing sun across Anatolia, Persia, Afghanistan, and India. The

total distance was 5,625 miles, and he averaged 95 miles per day! That record will take some beating!

I WILL answer the next few questions with **RAPID-FIRE REPLIES.**

What were "Moss-troopers"? (A. D. of Southwark). These were bands of outlaws who secreted themselves in the mosses on the borders of England and Scotland. They ravaged and plundered the border districts, and, although many expeditions were sent against them, they continued to terrorise the district for many years.

What is the highest mountain in the world? (J. G. of Inverness). Mount Everest, which is 29,002 feet high.

What are "Napier's bones"? (A. G. of London, E.). This was the name given to Logarithms, which were invented by Baron Napier just at the time that calculating by means of pieces of ivory was discovered. Hence Logarithms were called "Napier's bones."

I think we've just got time for a yarn before I have to look at the Black Book and tell you what is in store for you next week. This yarn comes from George Chester, 55, Belvoir Road, Coalville, Leicester, who gets a penknife for it.

PROOF POSITIVE!

"I hear that Bob's had an accident. Is that right, Jack?"

"Yes. Someone gave him a bear cub, and said it would eat off his hand."

"Well?"



"It did!"



Now let's have a look at the Black Book. Frank Richards comes out top, as usual next week, with a really ripping yarn, entitled:

"THE HOLD-UP AT GREYFRIARS!"

I think Mr. Richards gets better and better every week, don't you? When you've read next week's yarn you'll wish it had been twice as long. Even a hardened reader like myself, who has read hundreds and hundreds of his yarns, always finds something fresh in these weekly tales of his. Next week's yarn, let me tell you, is a real thriller.

Talking about thrills brings me to our grand new feature, "The Thrill Club," the first sample of which you'll find in this issue. You'll like it no end, I'm sure, and will look forward to

"THE LIVING ARM!"

which is No. 2 in this series.

"THE MASTERS' GOLF TORNYMENT!" is another of Dicky Nugent's tales of St. Sam's, and, of course, it is told in Dicky's peculiar—and certainly amusing—manner.

Next comes instalment two of John Brearley's powerful serial:

"THE TEST MATCH HOPE!"

What do you think of the first instalment? Great, what? Wait until you get further into this story—you'll say that you've never read anything to beat it.

Supporting this fine feast of fiction you will find another rousing poem and, of course, my usual chat. What more could you want?

Cheerio,
YOUR EDITOR.

Send along your Joke or your Greyfriars Limerick—or both—and win our useful prizes of leather pocket wallets and Sheffield steel penknives. All efforts to be sent to: c/o "Magnet," 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.).

OUR TIP-TOP YARN OF THRILLING SCHOOL ADVENTURE!

GANGSTERS AT GREYFRIARS!



Featuring Harry Wharton & Co., the popular chums of Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Modest Request!

FISHER T. FISH, the American junior in the Greyfriars Remove, pushed open the door of Study No. 1 and inserted a sharp face and a very bony figure into the doorway.

"Say!" he remarked.

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent looked round. They had just finished tea when Fishy arrived.

"Go it!" said Wharton, with a smile.

Fisher T. Fish had lately been in Coventry for his sins. Now that he was out of Coventry he was entitled to talk if he liked. There was no doubt that he liked. Fishy had suffered severely in Coventry. He simply had to talk, and he had been reduced to the necessity of talking to himself, for the sake of hearing the sound of his own voice. Enormous quantities of conversation had been bottled up in Fishy, and now that he was out of Coventry it came out in a spate.

Wharton was not interested in Fishy's conversation. His thoughts were on the match that was to take place at Highcliffe on the morrow; and Fishy never talked cricket. He talked money—a topic that was not popular in the Remove.

But Fishy had suffered so severely from enforced silence that the captain of the Remove kindly made up his mind to give him a few minutes.

"Fire away, Fishy!" said Nugent, laughing.

Fisher T. Fish came into the study,

and perched his bony form on a corner of the table.

"Say, you guys are playing cricket tomorrow at Highcliffe," he began.

Wharton and Nugent stared at him. Cricket was the last subject they had expected Fishy to mention.

"That's so!" said Harry, quite cordially. "Like to trot over and see the game?"

"Sure! But it can't be did!"

"Oh, yes! I forgot you were gated! Hard cheese!" said Wharton.

"I guess it's getting my goat!" said Fisher T. Fish lugubriously. "I ain't been outside the school gates for nearly a week. According to the popper there's

Barney McCann and his two-gun pard from "Noo Yark" make things hum at Greyfriars this week!

a bunch of guys looking for a chance to cinch me. Of course, a galoot don't want to run risks. But I'll say it's getting my goat!"

The chums of the Remove grinned.

Fisher T. Fish, in these days, was rather an object of peculiar interest to the whole school.

All Greyfriars knew that his father had cabled from New York to the Head, informing Dr. Locke that Fishy was in danger of being kidnapped.

That the Head took the matter seriously was proved by the fact that Fishy was "gated." He was strictly forbidden to venture outside the school gates on any pretext whatsoever.

"I'm telling you," said Fishy, shaking

his head. "It ain't all candy to be the son of a millionaire in the United States! No, sir! Since the popper cornered pork, and the dust came rolling in, a bunch of kidnapping guys have got busy. Look at this letter I've had from Noo Yark!"

Fisher T. Fish fished in his pocket and produced a letter.

"It's from the popper," he explained, "and I can tell you ho's anxious. Look at it."

Wharton and Nugent glanced at the letter.

They were not deeply interested in Fishy and his affairs, but they felt a certain amount of sympathy for a fellow in so peculiar a position.

It was rather hard lines to be gated, especially on half-holidays, and the knowledge that certain bad characters were lurking outside the school, watching for a chance to collar him, must have been rather disturbing to Fishy.

At the same time, Fishy was a little disposed to swank on the subject.

It was a sort of distinction, at any rate, and it brought Fisher T. Fish into the limelight. And Fishy loved the limelight.

"Read it!" said Fishy; and the two juniors read:

"Dear Fisher,—I guess the Head's had my cable, and put you wise. You want to watch out, son. I've got it sure that Barney McCann and Slick Flick, and some more of that bunch,

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are in England now, and there ain't a doubt what they're after. If they get you they'll hold me up for fifty thousand dollars. They're the same bunch that cinched the Stuyvesant boy last fall, and touched his popper for a small fortune. They're the bunch that grabbed young Googengoomer. Son, you watch out, and keep watching out. You get me? Chew on it.

"Your affectionate popper,
"HIRAM K. FISH."

"This is what comes of cornering pork," said Wharton gravely. "Your pater should have given the pork a miss, Fishy. But look here—if your father really thinks you are in danger you can have police protection."

Fisher T. Fish laughed.

"I guess Barney McCann's bunch could lay over the whole police force in this pesky old island," he said. "There ain't any flies on Barney! He would jest smile."

"But why haven't these bounders been arrested in the United States?" asked Nugent. "Your father says they've kidnaped people before."

"I guess they've got a pull," said Fisher T. Fish. "Barney McCann's got the law in his trousers' pocket."

"Oh, my hat!"

"He's some galoot, I'm telling you!" said Fishy, who evidently admired Mr. McCann, though unwilling to become the object of his attentions. "Why, Barney's been running this kidnapping business for fifteen years, and I guess he's making a pile out of it. You don't understand these things in this sleepy old island. It's a regular business in the Yew-nited States—there's capital at the back of it, and some big men in it—and I guess if some smart Alec of a detective ran Barney in he would lose his job so sudden it would make his head swim."

"What a delightful country!" murmured Nugent. "I think I rather prefer a sleepy old island myself."

"Look at the way they cinched young Googengoomer!" said Fisher T. Fish quite enthusiastically. "I'll say it was some stunt! I guess you've heard of the Googengoomers—one of the oldest families in the States—the oldest aristocratic family in Noo Yark! What the thump are you grinning at?"

"Nothing, old bean! Go on!"

"Waal, they got Googengoomer and stacked him away in a shack in the Catskills, and froze on to him till his popper couched up thirty thousand dollars!" said Fisher T. Fish. "I guess the Noo Yark police was looking for him everywhere—except in the Catskills. They wouldn't look for him there in case they found him, and Barney McCann would have got his mad up."

"Oh crumbs!"

"That's the sort of guy Barney is," said Fisher T. Fish. "I'll say he makes things hum when he gets on his hind legs and starts."

"He won't find the police so accommodating over here," said Wharton. "A bobby here would get promotion for running him in."

"It's a queer old island, ain't it?" said Fisher T. Fish. "The cops seem to be in the business for their health, and never think of making a stake to retire on. But never mind that. I ain't letting Barney get a holt on me to stick up the popper for a ransom! Nope. But I ain't gone on keeping inside the pesky gates of this one-horse school! That's why I mentioned the cricket."

"Blessed if I see—"

"You're taking a team over to High-

cliffe to-morrow. Well, if I was a member of that team, Quelch would let me go. He would reckon I was safe in the middle of a bunch of cricketers."

"I suppose so," assented Harry. "But you're not a member of the Eleven."

"That cuts no ice. Put me in."

"Eh?"

"Put me in! I'll play cricket for you," said Fisher T. Fish. "I guess it's a jay's game, and I ain't keen on it. But I want to get out of gates sometimes. See? I'll play cricket for you to-morrow."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Is it a go?" asked Fish.

"Not quite," said Wharton, laughing. "You see, though it's only a jay's game, we want to beat Highcliffe. And you can't play cricket for toffee. We can't afford to give Highcliffe a wicket—not even to get you out of gates for the afternoon."

"Aw, talk sense!" said Fisher T. Fish. "Your silly old game don't matter a whole lot, I reckon."

"It does—a little."

"Besides, I'll play a good game for you," said Fisher T. Fish persuasively. "I guess it would liven the thing up to get a real live Amurrican in it. Call it a cinch!"

"You silly ass!" exclaimed Nugent indignantly. "You dodge games practice every time you can."

"You calculate I've got time for playing bat and ball?" said Fisher T. Fish derisively. "Think again."

"Well, if you can't find time to play bat and ball, as you call it, you can hardly expect to play in a fixture," said Wharton.

"I guess I want to get out of gates. I'm sure getting fed-up with mooching about this one-horse place."

Harry Wharton chuckled. He did not expect Fisher T. Fish to understand much about cricket, or to understand the other fellow's views on the subject. But this request struck him as rather cool.

"Call it a cinch, bo," urged Fisher T. Fish.

"Can't be done!"

"Now, you look here—"

"You silly owl, the fellows would lynch me if I put you into the team," said Wharton. "And I should jolly well deserve it, too! Can't you spend a happy afternoon thinking about the dollars your popper's making in New York?"

"Think of all the pork he's cornering," suggested Nugent. "Think of the Pork Trust, and the dollars rolling in."

"I guess I don't think much about anything else," answered Fisher T. Fish. "But a galoot don't want to stick inside gates all the time. Look here, Wharton, you jest stretch a point and put me in the team."

"Sorry!" said Wharton, laughing. "Can't be done! I guess and reckon and calculate that it isn't a cinch."

Fisher T. Fish gave a snort of disgust, and slipped off the study table.

"Aw, go and chop chips, then, you pesky gink!" he snapped.

And he removed his bony form from Study No 1, leaving Wharton and Nugent chuckling.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Who Bagged Bunter?

"O H!" ejaculated Billy Bunter. Bunter was not pleased. Billy Bunter had retired, for excellent reasons of his own, into the shades of the old Cloisters of Greyfriars; a portion of the ancient

monastic structure that was partly in ruins, and rather secluded from the school buildings.

Solitude did not often appeal to the Owl of the Remove; but there were times when Bunter saw charms in the face of solitude. A bag of jam tarts was missing from Bob Cherry's study in the Remove passage, and until those tarts were disposed of, it was only prudent for Bunter to be missing, too. Hence his retirement to the shades of the old Cloisters.

But as Bunter disappeared into the Cloisters, with the bag under his fat arm, he gave a cautious blink back over a fat shoulder. And he was dismayed to see five Remove fellows coming on in the same direction.

Harry Wharton & Co. were taking a stroll after tea, and their strolling footsteps led them towards the Cloisters, much to the annoyance of William George Bunter.

For a moment he thought that Bob Cherry had discovered the absence of the tarts, and was in pursuit. But a second blink reassured him. The Famous Five were not looking towards him, and evidently had not noticed the fat figure ahead.

Bunter hurried on.

It was unfortunate that those beasts had chosen the Cloisters for their stroll; but there was plenty of cover in the rambling old place Bunter rolled on hurriedly.

He reached the last of the old stone pillars, near the wall that shut off the adjoining lane, and came to a halt beyond it.

If the fellows came strolling along the Cloisters, they were not likely to come so far as the very extremity. Besides, as they were proceeding in a very leisurely way, Bunter would probably be finished with the tarts before they came into the offing. Bunter was not slow in these matters. A tart a minute was his average speed.

Feeling fairly safe, the fat junior sat down on a block of stone, and opened the paper bag.

A cheery grin came over his fat face as he drew out a rich, red, juicy tart. There was a crunch and a squash, and Bunter realised that life was worth living.

The second tart followed, and the third. Life seemed more and more worth living.

In his happy enjoyment the Owl of the Remove almost forgot the Famous Five. Anyhow, he could not yet hear their footsteps. His capacious mouth closed on a fourth tart, as juicy and luscious as the others.

Bunter, naturally, lad eyes only for the tarts. It did not occur to him that he was not alone in the Cloisters. Had he glanced round, however, he might have discerned two faces peering at him from the cover of a stone pillar near at hand.

One face was thin, with a hawkish nose; the other rather plump, and adorned with a pair of horn-rimmed spectacles.

Both faces showed the keenest interest in Bunter. Both, indeed, regarded him with gloating looks.

"It's sure the guy, Barney," whispered the horn-rimmed man. "It's sure the guy we cinched the other day, who got away when the car crocked."

"You've said it, Slick," breathed Barney McCann.

"This is luck, I guess, Barney."

"Search me!" said Barney.

"We got him!" breathed Slick Flick.

"We got him by the short hairs. We moseyed in hyer looking for a chance,

and hyer's the guy walking right into our hands."

"I guess we're getting him," said Barney. "You got the bag?"

"You bet!"

"Hit it, then."

The two men crept out from behind the pillar.

With noiseless footsteps they approached the pillar, at the foot of which Billy Bunter was seated, from behind, keeping the pillar between them and Bunter as they advanced.

Bunter heard nothing.

The fifth tart was disappearing, and a smile of ecstatic enjoyment was overspreading the fat visage of the Owl of the Remove. He was not thinking of danger. He was thinking of jam tarts.

He did not look up, and remained quite unaware that a gloating face peered round at him from either side of the stone pillar.

Suddenly he jumped; but he jumped too late. The open end of a bag descended over his head and shoulders, and in the twinkling of an eye it was drawn tight round his fat neck under his chin.

A startled gasp came from the interior of the bag.

"Groogh!"

Bunter started up, struggling wildly and gurgling horribly. Some of the tart had gone down the wrong way. Wild, weird sounds came from inside the bag.

"Oooogh! Gooogh! Woooogh! Gug-gug-gug!"

Strong hands gripped Bunter's arms, and pinned them down to his sides. He struggled frantically.

"Groogh! Oooogh! Beasts! Leggo! Oooogh! Woooogh! Leggo, you rotters! I say, you fellows— Whoop!" gurgled Bunter. "I say, they weren't your tarts, you beast! I say, leggo, Bob Cherry, you rotter! Ow! I never went to your study! Wow! Leggo! They ain't your tarts. Besides, I'll pay for them when my postal-order comes! Ow!"

Bunter felt himself dragged along as he gurgled. He kicked out wildly, and there was a sudden howl.

The kick landed on a shin; and Mr. Slick Flick howled and hopped.

"Whoooooh!"

"Yow-ow-ow! Leggo!" gurgled Bunter. "I'll jolly well hack your shins! I'll— Grooogh!"

"Hallo! Hallo! Hallo!" roared a startled voice.

Bunter felt himself suddenly dropped. He rolled on the stone flags, his head still enveloped in the bag.

There was a pattering of feet on the flagstones. Billy Bunter rolled and gurgled.

"Grooogh! Oooogh! Ow! I say, you fellows— Wooooh!"

A hurried hand dragged the bag from Bunter's head.

He sat up, spluttering.

He groped for his spectacles, and set them straight on his fat little nose, and glared at the five juniors round him.

"Beasts!" he roared.

"Fathead!" said Bob Cherry. "We—"

"They weren't your tarts!" roared Bunter. "You awful rotter, bagging a fellow's napper like that! You made me chook-chook-chook-choke!"



Fish crouched down in the darkest recess inside the tower as Loder and Carne approached, looking for him!

"You silly ass! We—"

"They were my tarts! I never saw any tarts in your study! Grooogh! You've chook—chook—choked me! Ugh!"

"You've bagged my tarts, you fat villain?"

"No, I haven't!" howled Bunter. "These tarts came direct from Bunter Court—made specially by our cook!"

The fat junior staggered to his feet. "Look at me—jammy all over! You awful beasts—"

"You fat ass!" said Harry Wharton. "We never bagged you! We caught sight of you with two johnnies jerking you along towards the wall!"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" snapped Bunter.

"But we did, you dummy!" said Johnny Bull. "There were two men here, and they were holding you!"

"Rot!"

"My esteemed Bunter," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "We saw two absurd persons with our own ridiculous eyes."

"Gammon!" growled Bunter.

"Who the thump could they have been, and what the merry dickens have they been up to?" exclaimed Harry Wharton, in wonder. "What did they want to sneak in here and bag Bunter for?"

"For goodness' sake don't tell silly whoppers!" snorted Bunter. "I never saw anybody. If you fellows think it's funny to mop a bag over a fellow's head when he's eating tarts—"

"We didn't!" roared Bob Cherry.

"You jolly well did, you beast! If

you didn't, who did?" demanded Bunter.

"There were two men here—strangers to us—"

"Where are they now?" sneered Bunter.

"They nipped over the wall as we ran up."

"Oh, cheese it!" said Bunter. "I can jolly well tell you that if you think this is a joke, I don't! Ramming a bag over a fellow's head and cho-cho-choking him!"

"Fathead!"

Bob Cherry ran to the wall and clambered up. He stared over into the lane on the other side.

But there was no sign of the two men who had bagged Bunter. They had vanished with wonderful promptness.

The Famous Five had the merest glimpse of them. They had dropped Bunter and bolted as the chums of the Remove came running up, and were gone in a twinkling.

"See them, Bob?" called out Nugent.

"No; they're gone."

Bob Cherry dropped back from the wall. The Famous Five exchanged glances of astonishment. The strange affair utterly mystified them. Why two men, strangers to the school, should sneak into the Cloisters, and bag Billy Bunter, was inexplicable.

"I suppose it's some sort of a practical joke!" said Bob. "My hat! If we'd got hold of those merchants we'd have given them a tip not to come into

Greyfriars playing their practical jokes."

"Keep it up!" sneered Bunter. "Think you're going to make me believe that it wasn't you rammed that bag over my napper?"

"You benighted ass!"

"Yah!"

"It serves you jolly well right, anyhow," said Bob. "You came here to scoff my tarts—only one left out of six."

Bob Cherry picked up the paper bag, in which only one tart remained.

"Beast! I've told you I had those tarts from Bunter Court—"

"Packed in one of Mrs. Mimble's bags, from the school shop?"

"Eh?" Bunter blinked at the bag. "I—I—I mean—"

"Well, as you've had five, you may as well have the other," said Bob.

"I say, old chap, that's decent of you!" said Bunter brightly. "I don't mind your silly joke! He, he, he! Hand it over!"

"Turn round!"

"Eh? What for?"

"You're going to have it down the back of your neck," explained Bob.

Billy Bunter jumped away in alarm.

"Ow! Beast! Keep off!" he howled.

Billy Bunter was fond of tarts; but not, apparently, down the back of his fat neck.

"Collar him!"

"Yaroooh!"

Bunter fled.

The Famous Five, laughing, walked after him back to the quadrangle. They had only a distant glimpse of Billy Bunter as he vanished into the House. It was clear that Bunter did not want the last tart.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Fishy is Not Taking Any!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. walked down to the gates the following day, in a cheery crowd. It was a glorious summer's day, and the Remove cricketers were all merry and bright, and looking forward to the match with Courtenay & Co., at Highcliffe. A dozen fellows were going over with the team; among them William George Bunter. Fisher T. Fish came down as far as the gates, with a clouded brow. On that sunny half-holiday nearly every fellow in the Remove was going out of gates; but not Fisher T. Fish.

There was, no doubt, something very gratifying, in a way, in being the son of a millionaire and the object of the attentions of a kidnapping gang. It made Fishy feel important. There was no other fellow at Greyfriars School on whose account Barney McCann and his merry men would have crossed the Atlantic. It was proof positive to all who might doubt that the Fish millions were real; that Hiram K. Fish actually was rolling in dollars as a result of his corner in pork. Only a millionaire, who could be "touched" for a big ransom, was worth the attention of a crook like Barney, the biggest man in his peculiar line of business in the United States.

Fisher T. Fish fully realised how important this state of affairs made him; and he liked it. On the other hand, he did not like being gated. It was for his safety's sake that he was kept within school bounds; and Fishy had a very keen eye to his own safety. All the same, he guessed he wanted to mosey around a few.

He dug a bony knuckle into Harry Wharton's ribs as the captain of the Remove passed him.

"Say, bo—" he began.

"Ow! Don't puncture me, you ass!" gasped Wharton.

"Say, I've chewed the rag with Quelch," said Fisher T. Fish, "and he says if I play for the Form I can come over to Highcliffe."

"Bow-wow!"

"Ask him to let you come over and watch!" said Nugent.

Fishy shook his head.

"I've sure asked him; and he says nope!"

"I think I can hear Quelch saying nope," chuckled Peter Todd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess you want to put me into this team, Wharton!" said Fisher T. Fish persuasively.

"Guess again, old bean!"

And Wharton passed on. The cricketers crowded out at the gates, and Fishy cast a morose glance after them. He stepped outside the gateway; and Gosling came down from his lodge.

"Now, Mr. Fish," said Gosling, "you ain't allowed outside the gates. You get in, sir."

"Aw, can it!" grunted Fisher T. Fish.

But he got in! There was no help for it. Fishy drifted back to the House. He met his Form master as he went in, and Mr. Quelch gave him a kind nod.

"Ah, Fish," said Mr. Quelch, "possibly you will find the time hang heavy on your hands this afternoon, while most of your Form fellows are out of gates."

"Yep!" grunted Fisher T. Fish.

"If you like, Fish, I could find time to give you an hour of extra tuition," said Mr. Quelch kindly. "You are, as you are aware, very backward in class. An hour with Latin irregular verbs I—"

"Oh, great gophers!" ejaculated Fisher T. Fish.

"What? What did you say, Fish?"

"I—I—I wouldn't dream of taking up your time, sir!" gasped Fish. "I—I know you don't have a lot of leisure, sir."

"That is true, Fish," said Mr. Quelch. "Nevertheless, I could spare an hour for you, if you really desired it. No doubt it would make the time pass more quickly while your friends are absent."

Fishy suppressed a grin. If Mr. Quelch fancied that Latin irregular verbs would make the time pass more quickly, he was not likely to find any member of his Form in agreement with him.

"You're very kind, sir—"

"It is my intention to be kind, Fish," answered Mr. Quelch benevolently.

"Thank you, sir! But—but I've got a book—a book I'm frightfully interested in!" gasped Fisher T. Fish.

"Oh! Very well, Fish!"

Fisher T. Fish breathed more freely when he had escaped to his study in the Remove passage.

It was true that he had an interesting book there—a book that was, to Fishy, extremely interesting. It was an account-book.

In that book, Fisher Tarleton Fish kept an account of the total of his expenditure since he had been at Greyfriars.

As it happened, there was a doubtful item in his accounts for that term. The sum of three-halfpence was unaccountably missing.

Fishy could scarcely have spent that sum upon any forgotten article; he

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was certain, of course, that he had not given it away; so the possibility existed that he had lost it.

This was a very painful possibility. It had not exactly kept Fishy awake o' nights, but it had worried him deeply.

Now, however, he had time to go through his accounts in search of that three-halfpence, and so, for a considerable part of the afternoon Fisher T. Fish was quite happily occupied.

His satisfaction was great when he discovered, at long last, that the apparent loss was due to a slight error in the accounts, and that the sum was not, after all, lost.

Fisher T. Fish felt fully rewarded for his labour, when that discovery rewarded him at last.

Having finished his accounts, Fisher T. Fish settled down in the study arm-chair with a copy of a New York paper which his father had sent him, and which contained an account of the mighty operations of the Pork Trust—by means of which Mr. Hiram K. Fish and his friends were raking in uncounted dollars. Fisher T. Fish found the story of the Pork Trust as thrilling as any romance of Captain Kidd or Dick Turpin.

At tea-time Fisher T. Fish went down to tea in Hall.

Since his father had joined the ranks of the millionaires Fishy had been well supplied with pocket-money. But he had a deep-grained objection to spending it. Tea at the school was paid for, and it would have seemed to Fishy not merely silly, but really wicked, not to consume what was paid for.

After tea Fishy walked in the quadrangle rather dimly. Almost every fellow was out of gates that sunny summer's afternoon, and Fishy, who was a gregarious fellow, wanted company. His late sojourn in Coventry made him all the more keen to hear the sound of his own voice.

"Dog-gone that gink McCann!" growled Fishy. "I guess I'm fed-up with being gated! I guess I've a good mind to make a break, and chance it!"

But he shook his head. Fisher T. Fish was a cautious youth, not at all the fellow to run into danger. And the thought that Barney McCann and Slick Flick were lurking in the vicinity of the school, watching for a chance to "cinch" him, was quite sufficient to keep him within gates, unless he could go out with a crowd of fellows.

"Fish!" Fisher T. Fish looked round as his name was called. Loder of the Sixth beckoned him from his study window.

Fishy approached the window rather reluctantly. The Remove did not fag for the Upper School, like the Third and the Second. But Loder was the fellow to forget that when it suited him to do so, and it was rather perilous to argue the matter with a Sixth Form prefect.

Loder gave him an agreeable nod as he came up.

"Cut over to the shop for me, will you, kid?" he asked. This was quite polite from the bully of the Sixth, and Fishy nodded.

Loder held out a slip of paper from the window.

"Here's a list of the things I want for tea. Pay for them, and bring them to my study."

Fisher T. Fish held out his hand for the money. But Loder turned away from the window, apparently without noticing it.

"I say, Loder—"
"Cut off!"
"What about the dust?"

"Eh? The what?" Loder's education in the American language had been neglected.

"I mean the durocks," said Fishy. "The spondulics, you know. You said pay for the things."

"Oh, that's all right! Bring them to my study." Loder shut the window.

Fisher T. Fish breathed hard through his long, thin nose.

He was quite "wise" to Loder's little game.

Loder was short of cash. Probably his latest "dead cert" had run away with it. Fishy was to pay for those supplies, and receive payment in turn at a later date—when convenient to Loder. More than once Fishy had heard Tubb of the Third—who had the pleasure of fagging for Loder—relate with breathless indignation how Loder had ordered him to get his tea ready, without advancing the necessary cash

THIS WEEK'S TONIC LAUGH!



Diner: "I say, waiter, why did the sausage roll?"

Waiter: "Well, sir, I suppose it saw the apple turn over, the pear drop, the tap run, the hat box, the sun rise, the sword fish, the cotton reel, and the—"

But the diner had fainted.

One of this week's useful pocket knives has been awarded to S. Nathan, 16, Jupiter Terrace, Well Hall, Eltham, who sent in the above winning "smiler."

You REALLY MUST try to win one of these useful prizes, chum!

for the purpose. That was one of Gerald Loder's pleasant little ways, which did not endear him to the Lower School.

"Great snakes!" breathed Fisher T. Fish. "If that piecan calculates that he's going to string this guy along to that tune, I guess that piecan is missing his guess."

It was agreeable to Fishy to be known in the school as the son and heir of a millionaire who rolled in uncounted millions of dollars. But the position had its drawbacks, and this was one of them.

Fisher T. Fish walked away. But he did not walk to Mrs. Mumble's little shop in the corner behind the elms. He had no intention whatever of supplying the bully of the Sixth with a free tea.

At the same time, he did not want to argue the point with Loder. Loder was likely to introduce his official ashplant into the argument, and Fishy disliked the ashplant. In theory, Loder

could not cane him for refusing to fag, because that was one of the dearest rights of the Remove. But it was probable that Loder would find some other reason for applying correction.

It was prudent to keep out of Loder's reach—at least, till call-over, when all the fellows would be in and Fishy would have the moral support of the Remove if Loder cut up rusty. Although Fishy regarded Harry Wharton as a gink, a geck, and a jay, he was aware that he could rely on the captain of the Remove to back him up in a matter like this.

So Fisher T. Fish proceeded to disappear. He slipped up to his study for a book to while away the time, scudded into the Cloisters, and ensconced himself in the old tower. In that secluded spot, Fishy was quite safe from discovery, and he settled down cheerfully to eat bullseyes, and read the volume he had brought with him—which was a "Life of George Washington," and gave a very interesting account of how that hero had fought for liberty.

It was a couple of hours later that Fishy, having finished his bullseyes, and grown tired of the excellent George, wondering whether Loder was likely to be looking for him, and whether it would be safe to sneak back to the House, heard his name called.

"Fish!" It was Loder's voice. "Wake snakes!" murmured Fishy in alarm. "If that piefaced jay isn't still after me!"

"Fish!" shouted Loder. Fisher T. Fish made no sound. He backed away into the darkest recess inside the ruined tower, and hardly breathed.

Loder was coming along the Cloisters, calling his name, and not in good-tempered tones. Fishy was not likely to allow himself to be discovered.

"Fish!" shouted Loder. "If you're here, answer me, you young fool! You're wanted!"

Fish chuckled silently. He had no doubt that Loder of the Sixth wanted him; but he had still less doubt that Loder was not going to find him, if he could help it. He crouched close, and made no sound.

"He's not here!" came Loder's voice, from somewhere at hand.

"Bother him!" came the voice of Carne of the Sixth. "I dare say he's cut out of gates!"

"Well, I'm not going to look for him any longer, I know that!"

Fisher T. Fish was quite glad to hear it.

"Oh, let him rip, and be blowed!" said Carne. "But we haven't looked in the tuckshop yet. He may be there."

"Come on!" growled Loder. Fisher T. Fish heard their footsteps die away along the Cloisters. He chuckled.

Evidently it was not safe yet to venture out. He was rather surprised that even Loder, bully as he was, was keeping up the search for him like this. Still, there was no doubt about the fact, and Fisher T. Fish sagely decided to lie low till the Remove fellows came in.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Man in the Napier!

"I SAY, you fellows!"
"Bow-wow!"
Harry Wharton & Co. walked cheerily away from the school gates and stopped at the corner of the THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,162.

road, where, once an hour, the Red-clyffe motor-bus passed on its way to Courtfield, the motor-bus was to carry the Greyfriars cricketers to Highcliffe.

"But, I say, you fellows," persisted Bunter. "How are we getting to Highcliffe?"

"Travelling there!" explained Bob Cherry affably.

"Oh, really, Cherry! I mean, are we taking the bus?"

"No fear!"

"Then how are we going?"

"The bus is taking us!" explained Bob.

"You silly ass!" hooted Bunter. "Look here, it's rather rotten crowding into a rotten bus! Why not have a brake?"

"Good egg!" said Bob cheerily. "You cut back and telephone for a brake, Bunt! Tell them you'll pay for it out of your postal-order—when it comes. They may jump at the idea."

"The jumpfulness may be terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Well, I don't like this bunging into buses," grumbled Bunter. "I've a jolly good mind not to come."

"I don't think much of your ideas as a rule, old fat bean," remarked Bob. "But that strikes me as a jolly good one."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast! Who's going to pay my fare?" demanded Bunter.

"Echo answers, who?"

"The who-fulness is preposterous."

"Who's going to pay Bunter's fare, you men?" called out Vernon-Smith.

"Don't all speak at once."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

William George Bunter grunted.

As a matter of fact, he was not very keen on watching the game at Highcliffe. Cricket would never have drawn him so far. But it was probable that Frank Courtenay, the junior captain of Highcliffe, would stand a good tea for the visitors. That was where Billy Bunter was going to come out strong.

The juniors, waiting in a cheery crowd at the corner, looked along the road in the direction from which the motor-bus was to come.

A car came up the road, a powerful car, which, however, was proceeding at a very slow pace. The juniors gave it no special attention as it passed; cars were passing them every few moments.

But the man who was driving glanced at them keenly. He was a dark-skinned foreign-looking man, with a pointed black beard and a waxed black moustache. The schoolboys, if they had heeded him, would have taken him for a Frenchman. His keen eyes singled out Billy Bunter, and rested on him with peculiar interest, as the car glided by.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's the jolly old bus at last!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

The motor-bus stopped at the corner, and the Greyfriars cricketers crowded aboard. It was nearly empty when it arrived, but it was fairly well crowded when the Removites were in. It rolled on towards Courtfield, and passed the car driven by the foreign-looking man.

Evidently that motorist was not in a hurry. He dropped behind the bus, and kept pace with it, a dozen yards or so in the rear.

The car was capable of doing sixty, but the motorist seemed to be satisfied with ten. A good deal of dust was churned up by the heavy bus on the dusty road, and it could not have been nice for the man driving the car behind, but he kept at the same distance all the way to the town of Courtfield.

"That's a Napier," remarked Bob

Cherry, glancing at it from the top of the bus. Bob was rather interested in cars. "A jolly good one, too!"

His companions glanced back at the Napier. It was a handsome car, painted dark blue, and worth a second glance.

In Courtfield High Street, the Famous Five lost sight of the car among the traffic, which happened to be thick, as it was market day at Courtfield, and they promptly forgot all about it.

But when the motor-bus rolled on out of the town, and followed the wide country road that led past the gates of Highcliffe School, the dark-blue Napier came in sight again behind.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, there's that johnny again!" remarked Bob.

"That chap seems to like dust!" remarked Nugent. "I wonder what he's crawling behind us like that for?"

A dozen cars or more whizzed past before Highcliffe was reached. But when the motor-bus stopped to disgorge its passengers near the school gates, the dark-blue Napier was still at the same distance behind.

However, Harry Wharton & Co. forgot it once more as they descended from the bus and walked into Highcliffe.

Had Fisher T. Fish been with the party, they might possibly have suspected that the man in the Napier had a personal interest in them. The thought of the kidnapers might have come into their minds. But Fisher T. Fish was at Greyfriars, and the cricketers were thinking of anything but kidnapping stunts.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Who paid your fare, old fat man?" chuckled Bob Cherry. Bunter had been inside the bus.

"I did!" said Bunter, in a deeply injured tone. "I told the man my friends on top would pay, and then that beast Smithy butted in and said I hadn't any friends on top, and the conductor made me pay."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at," grunted Bunter. "If you think it's worth a bus fare to see you play cricket, you're jolly well mistaken, see? But I say, you fellows, did you notice a car behind the bus? I believe I've seen that car before."

"You jolly well haven't," said Bob, shaking his head. "It was behind all the time."

"You silly ass—"

"Well, you couldn't have seen it before when it was behind," argued Bob. "Not even with your specs, old fat man."

"Oh, really, Cherry! I believe that's the same car that gave me a lift to Courtfield last week," said Bunter. "It's a different man driving it, but it looks like the same car. I told you fellows—"

"You did, old bean! We know it by heart now."

"Beast! I was practically kidnapped," said Bunter. "There were two of them, and they offered me a lift in the car and buzzed off like anything. The car upset and I got away. I was in frightful danger, you know. I ran for it—"

"You would," agreed Johnny Bull, "whether you were in danger or not! I believe you ran for it!"

"The runfulness was probably terrific," grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I was practically kidnapped—"

"Bow-wow!" said Bob. "They were larking with you—if it really happened at all."

"Haven't I told you it happened?" snorted Bunter.

"Yes, that's why I don't feel sure it did."

"Beast! Of course they may have been larking," said Bunter. "But one of them had a pistol—"

"Not a machine-gun?" asked Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I tell you I saw it," howled Bunter.

"And then—"

"Then you woke up?"

"Beast! It was kidnapping," said Bunter. "Fishy makes out that there's a kidnapping gang after him. Well, Fishy isn't the only pebble on the beach. They may have heard that my people are awfully rich—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can cackle!" said Bunter. "But what would you feel like, if I were kidnapped, and you never saw me again?"

"Ripping!"

"Fine!"

"Top-hole!"

"The top-holefulness would be terrific."

"No such luck!"

"Beasts!" roared Bunter.

And the cricketers chortled. Fisher T. Fish, as the object of the attentions of a kidnapping "bunch," was in the limelight, but William George Bunter had no chance of getting any of that limelight. The enormous wealth of the Bunter clan existed only in W. G. Bunter's fertile imagination, and it was not, therefore, likely to tempt Barney McCann and his bunch.

But the chums of the Remove were not aware of one peculiar circumstance, which Bunter himself, as a matter of fact, had forgotten.

That was, that the fat junior had had a letter belonging to Fisher T. Fish in his possession, and had dropped it fairly under the noses of Mr. McCann and his associate, Mr. Slick Flick. That little circumstance had led Mr. McCann and Mr. Flick, rather naturally, to suppose that he was Fisher T. Fish; the kidnapers being quite ignorant of Billy Bunter and his little ways with other fellows' correspondence.

And so, if Harry Wharton & Co. had only known it, it was William George Bunter who was in danger of kidnapping—owing to that misapprehension on the part of the "bunch."

Had they been aware of that, the chums of the Remove might have guessed who had "bagged" Bunter in the Cloisters the previous day, and might have wondered whether the man in the blue Napier was on mischief bent.

But they did not know it; and they were thinking of cricket, and not of Bunter. And so it came to pass that while Fisher Tarleton Fish was safe at Greyfriars, Mr. McCann was getting busy, under the totally erroneous impression that Fisher T. Fish was with the cricketers at Highcliffe that afternoon. And Mr. McCann's erroneous impression was destined to have startling results for Bunter.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Highcliffe Match!

"WE'RE goin' to be licked this time, Frank!" said De Courcy, of the Highcliffe Fourth lugubriously.

"Rot!" said Courtenay cheerfully.

"Not an earthly, old bean!" said the Caterpillar, shaking his head.

He gave the Greyfriars cricketers a reproachful look.

"You never told us you were springin' Bunter on us!" he said. "We've been



"What would you feel like if I were kidnapped and you never saw me again?" said Bunter. "Fine!" "Ripping!" "Top-hole!" The cricketers were unanimous!

nursin' our little hopes of gettin' away with this match; and now you spring Bunter on us at the last moment!"

Harry Wharton & Co. grinned, and Frank Courtenay laughed. Billy Bunter gave a complacent smirk.

"It's all right, old chap!" he remarked. "You see—"

"But it isn't all right," said the Caterpillar, shaking his head again. "We've been trainin' hard for this match, and lookin' forward to wipin' Greyfriars off the surface of the jolly old globe! And now—" The Caterpillar looked quite sad and downcast.

"But, you see—" recommenced Bunter.

"I see it's all U P!" said the Caterpillar. "Look here, you men, we may as well save time and trouble by callin' it a win for Greyfriars! What's the good of strugglin'?"

"But I'm not playing!" said Bunter. "Eh?"

"I've only come over to see the match," explained the Owl of the Remove. "I'm not in the Eleven."

"I breathe again!" said the Caterpillar gravely.

There was a chuckle among the cricketers. William George Bunter was the only fellow present who was taking the Caterpillar's remarks seriously.

Highcliffe won the toss, and Harry Wharton & Co. went into the field. Billy Bunter sat in a deck-chair to watch, and the Caterpillar lingered by his side. That playful youth seemed to derive some amusement from pulling Bunter's fat and fatuous leg.

"Not much of a game, old chap!" said Bunter, blinking at the field through his big spectacles. "As a matter of fact, they want a man like

me in the team to pull it together. Give it a backbone, you know!"

"But what about poor little us?" argued the Caterpillar. "Give poor little us a chance, you know! Where should we come in if you were bowlin', Bunter?"

"Well, you wouldn't come in at all—you'd go out!" grinned Bunter fatuously. "It's rather a good thing for Highcliffe that Wharton doesn't know how to pick a good man for his team!"

"Oh, my hat! I mean—yes, rather! Jampot's bowlin' rather well, though, isn't he?" remarked the Caterpillar, as Hurreo Janset Ram Singh sent down a ball that gave Courtenay a narrow escape.

"Oh, so-so!" said Bunter. "Not like my bowling!"

"I believe that!" agreed De Courcy.

"If your men know how to bat they'd be getting the runs," said Bunter. "But, of course, Highcliffe cricket is pretty rotten, isn't it?"

"A Daniel come to judgment!" said the Caterpillar gravely.

"Look at Courtenay, for instance," said Bunter, with a blink at the captain of the Highcliffe Fourth.

"I'm lookin'!"

"He calls that batting, I suppose," remarked Bunter. "All right for Highcliffe. Rather a fumbling ass, don't you think?"

The Caterpillar gave Bunter quite a curious look. Courtenay was his special chum, and Bunter was quite aware of it. But William George Bunter had his own ideas of politeness. His manners and customs were entirely his own.

"And that ass Yates, at the other end," said Bunter. "Standing there like a sack of coke! Ho, he, he! Lucky for them I'm not bowling! And

look at the field! Jevver see such a lot of duds?"

"Go on, Bunter," said the Caterpillar, with interest. "It's an education in cricket to listen to you!"

Bunter smirked.

"Well, I fancy I know something about the game," he observed. "You see, when I play cricket, I play it, with the accent on the 'play.' Look at that ass Cherry! Did you see him muff that catch?"

"But the ball never went within three yards of him!" murmured the Caterpillar.

"I should have got it!" said Bunter. He blinked at De Courcy. "Getting your pads on already?"

"I go in next."

"You won't be wanted for an hour, with bowling like that," assured Bunter. "Inky can't bowl for toffee! The batting's rotten, but it's too good for the bowling! As for the field, they couldn't catch anything if it dropped into their mouths!"

"You're rather encouragin', Bunter!" remarked the Caterpillar. But he buckled on his pads all the same. His own opinion of the Greyfriars game differed widely from Bunter's.

"Oh, you'll see that I'm right, old bean!" said Bunter. "I say, Courtenay ought to have taken more than two for that over. I should have taken about a dozen."

"We can't expect to get anywhere near your form, you know!" remarked the Caterpillar.

"Well, that's so, of course," agreed Bunter. "A game like this makes a cricketer like me feel a bit tired. Just fumbling and fozzling about, you know! Smithy's going on to bowl

against Yates! Yates can sit down if he likes! Smithy can't bowl."

"My hat, that was a close thing!" ejaculated the Caterpillar, as Yates of the Highcliffe Fourth barely stopped a fast ball from the Bounder of Greyfriars.

"Fluke!" said Bunter. "Fluke on both sides, in fact! Smithy can't bowl and Yates can't bat! He, he, he!"

"Well, if the bowlin's so rotten, I dare say I might have time to slip off to the House and fetch a box of chocolates!" remarked the Caterpillar thoughtfully.

"Lots of time!" exclaimed Bunter eagerly. "Bags of time! Jolly good idea! Cut off, old chap!"

"But I suppose you wouldn't care for chocs—"

"Wouldn't I just!"

"The fact is," said the Caterpillar, "that I thought you might be comin' over with the team, Bunter, and I got a chocolate box all ready for you."

"I say, old chap, that was awfully decent!" said Bunter. "Cut off and get it! Lots of time!"

The Caterpillar grinned. It was evident to everybody but Bunter that Yates was barely able to keep in existence at the wicket against Vernon-Smith's bowling. At any moment the crash might come, though Bunter was blissfully unconscious of it. As the Caterpillar was next man in he was not likely to leave the field.

"I'll get a chap to go," said De Courcy, and he called to a fag who was looking on near at hand. "Here, young Coote, cut into the House and get a box of chocolates off my study table!"

Coote of the Third nodded, and departed to the House. The Caterpillar watched the game keenly. Yates lived through the over; and Hurree Singh went on again to bowl to Courtenay. A single left Yates at the batting end, to face the deadly bowling of the Nabob of Bhanipur, and the Caterpillar had no doubt that he would be wanted very soon.

Bunter, however, had lost his interest in the game, and his sage comments had ceased. He was watching for the return of the fag with the box of chocolates from De Courcy's study.

Coote of the Third came back and handed a large chocolate box to the Caterpillar.

Bunter's eyes glistened behind his big spectacles.

It was a large handsome box, and the Owl of the Remove's mouth watered at the thought of the contents.

There was a shout from the field.

"How's that?"

Yates' wicket was down.

"Dear me! The bowlin' seems to have gone home, after all," remarked the Caterpillar. "Bunter, old bean, I must love you and leave you! Here's the chocolate box! I got it in specially for you, you know, so don't spare the contents!"

And the Caterpillar dropped the box on Bunter's fat knees, and went into the field as Yates came off.

How the Caterpillar stood up to Hurree Singh's bowling was not a matter of interest to Bunter. His interest was concentrated on the chocolate box.

He snapped the coloured ribbon that tied it, and opened the box.

Then he gave a blink of surprise.

He naturally expected to find it crammed with chocolates. Instead of which, there was another chocolate box of a smaller size, inside.

Bunter took it out, snapped the ribbon, and opened it. Then he gave

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a gasp of astonishment. A third chocolate box of a still smaller size was within.

"What the thump—" ejaculated Bunter.

He opened the third box. Opening it disclosed a fourth box of a more diminutive size.

Bunter's little round eyes gleamed behind his spectacles.

The Caterpillar had told him that he had got the box of chocolates specially for him. Bunter began to suspect a jape.

He opened the fourth box. It contained a fifth box—this one a very small one.

"Beast!" gasped Bunter.

With a lingering hope he opened the fifth box. Inside it was a sixth box, quite a tiny one.

"Rotter!" hissed Bunter. All his friendly feelings towards the playful Caterpillar had vanished now.

The sixth box, unfortunately, proved to be empty. Billy Bunter sat frowning, with empty chocolate boxes littering the grass round him. His feelings were too deep for words had the Caterpillar been there to hear them.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Highcliffe Rag!

CECIL PONSONBY of the Highcliffe Fourth, strolled on the cricket ground with his hands in his pockets, and a supercilious expression on his face. His friends, Gadsby and Vavasour, strolled with him. The game was going strong, Courtenay and the Caterpillar making the running in spite of good bowling and good fielding. But Ponsonby & Co. did not give much attention to the cricket. Cricket was rather beneath the notice of the knuts of Highcliffe. Pon would have been glad to see Courtenay bowled for a duck. But his interest in the game did not extend much further than that.

"Rotten show!" he remarked to his friends.

"Piffing!" agreed Gadsby.

"Absolutely!" assented Vavasour.

"There's that fat ass Bunter!" remarked Ponsonby. "Let's go 'an stuff his cap down the back of his neck! I can't stand that fat bounder."

"Better not kick up a row," said Gadsby shaking his head. "Courtenay would make a fuss—"

"There's a lot of Greyfriars men here," remarked Vavasour. "We don't want a shindy, Pon."

Ponsonby grunted. As usual, he was in a mood for idle mischief, and Billy Bunter was easy game. Still, there were a dozen Greyfriars men at hand, and Pon did not want trouble with anybody who would give him some in return.

"Who's that foreign-lookin' johnny?" he asked with a nod towards a man who was standing near Bunter's deck-chair. "What the thump is he doin' here?"

Gadsby and Vavasour glanced at the man. He was a stranger to them—a rather thin man, with a black pointed beard and dark moustache and dark complexion. He was the foreign-looking man who had been driving the Napier behind the motor-bus that afternoon.

"Never seen him before," yawned Gadsby. "I suppose he's dropped in to watch the cricket. People are allowed to if they like. Let him alone, Pon; it's rotten bad form chivvyin' a man."

Pon grunted again.

"He seems more interested in Bunter than in the cricket," he said. "He's not

watchin' the game, he's watchin' Bunter."

"Wonderin' what he's doin' outside the Zoo, perhaps!" said Gadsby.

"Absolutely!" chuckled Vavasour. "Well, let's go and talk to Bunter," said Ponsonby. "We've got nothing to do until Monson comes in to make a fourth at bridge."

"Oh, bother Bunter!" said Gadsby. "Who wants to talk to that fat ass?"

"I do!" said Ponsonby. "Come on!"

Pon walked over to Bunter's chair, and his comrades followed him. Pon gave the fat Owl a light tap on the shoulder.

Bunter blinked up.

"Glad to see you here, old bean," said Ponsonby heartily. "You haven't been to Highcliffe lately, Bunter!"

Bunter had looked uneasy for a moment. More than once he had suffered at the hands of Ponsonby & Co., and he had not forgotten certain raggings. But Pon's cheery manner reassured him. It was always easy to pull William George Bunter's fat leg.

"You should let us see you sometimes, old chap," said Pon. "You rather neglect your friends, you know."

"Well, the fact is, a fellow doesn't have much time," said Bunter. "When a fellow's popular in his Form, and run after, and all that, fellows seem to think they can take up all his time."

"Oh, quite!" assented Ponsonby. "Still, you shouldn't forget that you've got friends here who are always glad to see you."

Bunter smirked. Although he neither liked nor trusted Pon, he was very pleased to be picked out like this by the handsome, well-dressed dandy of Highcliffe.

"Yes, you shouldn't forget that, old bean," said Gadsby, taking his cue from his leader. "We feel rather neglected."

"Absolutely!" said Vavasour.

"No good askin' you to call in at the tuckshop, I suppose?" said Pon. "You've been doin' yourself rather well with chocs, haven't you?" He glanced at the litter of empty boxes.

Bunter gave a snort.

"No fear! That beast De Courcy gave me a box of chocolates, and there was nothing in it but a lot of empty boxes—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Another snort from Bunter.

"Well, perhaps you think it's funny," he snapped. "I don't!"

"Not at all, old bean," said Pon, becoming grave again. "Rotten joke! Just like that outsider the Caterpillar."

"Absolutely!"

"We're just goin' round for a ginger pop," went on Pon. "Like to trot along, Bunter? Unless you're keen on the cricket—"

"Oh, blow the cricket!" said Bunter promptly, and he rose from the chair. "It's a rotten poor game, not my style at all. I'll come with pleasure, old fellow."

"Now that's really decent of you, old bean," said Ponsonby. "Do you mind if I take your arm?"

Bunter did not mind at all. He was rather proud of being seen walking arm-in-arm with the dandy of Highcliffe.

Ponsonby walked him away, and Gadsby and Vavasour followed, grinning. They did not suppose that the walk would lead Bunter to ginger-pop. It was likely to lead him to something much less pleasant when he was out of sight of the crowd on the cricket-ground.

Ponsonby headed for the school shop;
(Continued on page 12.)

THE PICKLED CARPENTER!



Each week the members of the Famous "Thrill Club" foregather, and many are the sensational stories they have to tell. This week, in accordance with the rules of the club, Boatswain Bellows tells of his most hair-raising experience!

greenish tinge, peeped out from behind the clouds every now and again. It came to eight bells—midnight—and a sailor, known as Bluenose Pete, went aft to take his turn at the wheel.

A couple of minutes later we heard a terrible shriek, and Pete came dashing back into the forecabin. His face was as white as a sheet, his eyes were staring, and his teeth were chattering.

"It's Chips!" he cried. "Chips, arisen from the dead—all green and horrible-looking!"

We told him he must have been dreaming, but he refused to budge on deck again.

"Go and see for yourselves!" he kept saying; and there was nothing else for us to do.

Up on deck we all went, and made our way to the harness cask, which stood just at the break of the poop. Then we gave one cry simultaneously.

For there was the carpenter, rising out of the cask! His hair was standing on end, his face was a horrible green, and his eyes glared at us terribly in the moonlight. I've seen some queer sights at sea, but none so queer as that. My legs felt as though they were giving way. The others turned and bolted—and I'm sorry to say that I bolted with them!

We congregated in the forecabin, and every man-Jack of us was white and shivering. We numbered some hard cases amongst the crew—men who were afraid of nothing which they could understand. But the idea of a man who had been dead for nearly five days, and who had been pickled in a harness cask as well, coming back to life, was something that shook us to the core.

The captain, who had reached the poop without passing the harness cask, discovered that the watch had not been relieved, and yelled out for the watch. But no one moved, and eventually the captain and the mate came forward to drag us out. They came by way of the port side—and Chips' harness cask was on the starboard side.

Eventually the captain, who had not yet seen Chips, managed to get us out on deck again, and he led the way back to the harness cask. We nearly bolted again when we saw Chips still there, coming out of his cask, and we might have bolted if it had not been for the captain.

He was a real hard case, afraid of neither man nor devil—and he marched straight up to the harness cask, while the rest of us gathered round in a semi-circle.

Chips never moved as the captain approached, although he still looked as horrible as ever in the greenish moonlight.

Then the captain stretched out his hand and touched Chips. But still the carpenter did not move. And we stood there as though we had been petrified.

It would have been possible to hear a pin drop as the boatswain ceased speaking and took a sip from the glass which was in front of him. The members of the Thrill Club waited patiently, until one of them could stand the strain no longer.

"You—you don't mean to tell us that Chips had become alive again?" he gasped. "He couldn't after all that time—especially as he'd been pickled!"

"I have told you the truth, gentlemen," Bellows said. "What had happened was this—we had had to force the carpenter into the cask, remember, and the brine had pickled him and made his body stiffen. That had knocked off the top of the cask, and the body had sprung half-way out."

"It was the brine which had made him look so fearful, as the captain discovered. There was nothing else for it but to barrel up the carpenter again."

He made as though to sit down, and then paused a moment while he added:

"Anyway, poor old Chips had his last wish granted, and he was buried in the West Indies, where anyone can see his grave. The story of the pickled carpenter, amazing though it may seem, is true, gentlemen—absolutely true!"

(Look out for another ten-minute "thriller" next week!)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,162.

"CURIOUS things happen at sea, gentlemen," announced the chairman of the Thrill Club at the weekly meeting. "Certainly one of the most curious happenings was the episode of the Pickled Carpenter, of which one of our members, Boatswain Bellows, is going to tell us to-night."

Boatswain Bellows stood up. He was a typical old sea-dog, with a face that was brick-red and a smile of joviality upon his countenance. In bluff, seamanlike fashion he told the following tale:

Many years ago I was bo'sun of the barque Anitra, and I was very friendly with the carpenter—who is always called "Chips" at sea. Chips, unfortunately, fell foul of a tropical disease, and it was perfectly evident that he would not live to set foot on land again. We were bound for the West Indies, and Chips, who knew that he was fast slipping his cable, began to babble of green fields and waving trees.

The captain did his best for Chips, and the old carpenter plagued the captain until the latter promised him that, no matter what happened, Chips should not be buried at sea but would be found a snug harbour ashore.

That eased the mind of Chips and reconciled him to his approaching end. He hung on until the day before we were due to arrive in port, then passed away peaceably. On the following day, when we dropped anchor, we would land poor old Chips and have him buried ashore.

But there is no telling what will happen at sea, and that night a hurricane rose and blew us out to sea again. We worked like niggers, but the wind was ahead and we simply could not get into port. It looked, indeed, as though we would not touch port for some days, and therefore some of us felt that Chips should be buried in his hammock at sea. But the captain would not hear of it.

"No," he said flatly. "I promised Chips that he should be buried ashore, and not be meat for sharks. When I make a promise I keep it."

Now, gentlemen, you know that it is impossible to keep a dead man for long in the tropics, and it looked as though we would never anchor. Again we asked the captain to give Chips a sea burial, but he would not break his promise to the dead man. At last, however, he realised that something must be done, and he had a brainwave.

"I promised him he should have a shore burial," he said, "and a shore burial he shall have. But as we can't keep him much longer, we'll have to preserve him—in the same way as we preserve meat!"

I don't know whether you gentlemen know what a harness cask is, but it's a large cask which is used at sea for pickling meat with brine, and it's about big enough to hold a man. We got the harness cask and the brine ready, and we had to force the poor old carpenter into the cask, cover him with brine to preserve him until we reached port, and then close up the cask.

Chips had been dead for three days then, and we were three more days before we managed to reach port. The night before we anchored was a weird kind of night. The wind whistled through the shrouds, and the moon, with a

GANGSTERS AT GREYFRIARS!

(Continued from page 10.)

but he suddenly changed his direction and led Bunter off towards the school gates.

"Monson's gone out," he exclaimed. "We're expectin' him back every minute. You'd like to meet Monson? He was askin' me yesterday why he never saw Bunter now, and I told him I thought you must be offended about somethin'."

"Oh! Not at all!" assured Bunter.

"Well, we'll get Monson and make up a little party for tea," said Ponsonby.

"That is, if you like the idea, Bunter."

"What-ho!" said Bunter.

"Come on, then."

Ponsonby strolled out of gates with his friend Bunter. Gadsby and Vavasour, still grinning, followed on.

Bunter was happily and unconsciously walking into the trap. Really, it was almost too easy to pull the wool over the eyes of the fatuous Owl of the Remove.

The four juniors walked down the road and turned from it into a narrow lane. Farther up the lane a car was standing—the dark-blue Napier that had followed the Greyfriars cricketers to Highcliffe. Evidently it had been left there while the foreign-looking man was on the cricket ground at Highcliffe. Ponsonby gave the car a glance, and noticed that it was empty. He came to a halt in the lane.

Bunter blinked at him.

"Is Monson coming this way?" he asked.

"Well, I rather think not," drawled Ponsonby, with a wink to Gadsby and Vavasour, who chuckled.

"But ain't we going to meet him?" asked Bunter.

"Nunno; not quite."

"Eh? Then, what have we come here for?"

Ponsonby turned to his friends.

"Bunter wants to know what we've come here for, you men," he remarked. "You'd almost expect him to guess, wouldn't you?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Gadsby.

"Absolutely!" chuckled Vavasour.

Billy Bunter gave the three Highcliffians a blink of alarm.

"I—I say, you fellows, no larks, you know," he stuttered.

The Owl of the Remove wished himself back on the cricket field. There was no one in sight in that lane. And it began to dawn on Bunter's fat brain why he had been inveigled there.

"I'll tell you, old fat man," said Ponsonby genially. "The fact is, I can't stand Greyfriars cads. And when they're fat an' flabby, I can stand them less than ever."

"Oh, really, Ponsonby—"

"You see, there's a ditch along this lane," Ponsonby further explained. "I thought it would be rather amusin' to sit you down in it. What do you think, Bunter?"

"Look here—"

Bunter gave the grinning Highcliffians an alarmed blink, and made a jump to escape. Gadsby promptly put a foot in his way, and the Owl of the Remove rolled over, with a roar.

"Whoop!"

"Collar him!" chuckled Ponsonby.

"Yaroo! Leggo!" roared Bunter.

"Ow! Beasts! Wow! Help! Rescue!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But there was no help or rescue for the hapless Owl. In three pairs of hands he was swung to the side of the lane, where a shallow ditch ran, with

six inches of oozy mud and an inch of water in it.

Splash! Squash!

"Yooooop!" roared Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter sat in mud and roared. The three Highcliffians roared also, with laughter. This was a jape after Ponsonby's own heart.

"Don't get out, old fat man," he advised. "If you do, we shall pitch you in again. Sit there and smile."

"Yarooogh!"

Bunter struggled and wriggled in oozy mud.

"Look out! Somebody's comin'!" muttered Gadsby suddenly.

Ponsonby, who had picked up a clod to pelt the hapless junior in the ditch, dropped it. From the Highcliffe road a dark, foreign-looking man was coming up the lane. It was the man they had seen watching Bunter on the cricket ground.

"Beat it!" murmured Ponsonby.

And the three Highcliffians walked down the lane, leaving Bunter roaring and spluttering in the ditch.

They passed the foreign-looking man. He glanced at them as they passed, and then went on up the lane. Ponsonby & Co. quite cheered and bucked by their successful rag, walked back to Highcliffe with smiling faces.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Kidnapped I

"O W! Wow! Help! Yarooogh!" Bunter, squelching in six inches of soft and clinging mud, spluttered and roared.

The splash, as he landed in the ditch, had streaked mud all over him. There was mud on his fat face, and mud in his neck; mud daubed over his jacket and collar—in fact, he was of the mud, muddy.

He struggled to get out of the ditch as the Highcliffians walked away. But it was not easy to get a footing in the slippery ooze. Bunter half rose and sat down again.

"Oh crikey!" gasped the Owl of the Remove. "Ow! Beasts! Help! Oh, crumbs! Oh, the awful rotters! Help!"

The dark, foreign-looking man who had passed the Highcliffians, stopped by the ditch, and looked down at Bunter.

There was a faint grin on his face. Something of a comic nature, perhaps, struck him in the aspect of the Owl of Greyfriars.

"I say, lend me a hand!" spluttered Bunter.

"Sure!" answered the stranger.

Bunter, muddy and perturbed as he was, could not help blinking at the man in surprise as he made that reply.

The man looked like a foreigner of Latin race, with his curled moustache and pointed, black beard and swarthy complexion. But he spoke with the accent of an American.

However, the important matter was to get out of the ditch, surprising as it was to hear that Frenchified-looking man speak in the American language.

Bunter stretched out a fat hand; a thin, wiry hand grasped it, and the fat junior was dragged out of the clinging mud, a good deal like a cork from a bottle. He landed on dry ground squelching mud, and spluttering for breath.

The swarthy man smiled at him.

"Say, you look muddy!" he remarked.

"Ow! Those beasts!" he gasped.

"Some guy spilled you into the ditch?"

"Ow! Yes! Those rotters!" Bunter blinked down at his clothes. His trousers dripped with wet mud. "Ow! Look at me!"

"You sure want a scrape," said the obliging rescuer. "I guess I've got some rags in my car you can rub down with."

"Oh, thanks!" gasped Bunter.

"This way, sonny!"

The swarthy man walked up the lane towards the car, and Bunter limped after him, dripping mud. Once or twice the man glanced over his shoulder as if to make sure that Bunter was following, though he really need have had no doubts on that point. The fat junior was only too eager to get the garment of mud scraped off.

Bunter blinked at the dark-blue Napier as he drew near it. Now that he was close to it he recognised it as the car that had followed the motor-bus, and, at the same time, he realised that his rescuer was the dark-skinned man who had been driving it.

The fat junior felt a qualm of uneasiness. The car looked very like the car in which he had been given a lift by two Americans the week before, when he had been rushed away along the Redclyffe Road, and had escaped when the car overturned.

But the swarthy foreigner looked nothing like either of the Americans who had collared him on that occasion. As the man threw open the door of the car, Bunter blinked at him very curiously. He noted now that the man had a long, hawkish nose like one of the two Americans, though in other respects he looked quite unlike the man. But Bunter was feeling vaguely uneasy now.

The man did not seem to observe it. He reached a cloth out of the car, and rubbed the wet mud from Bunter's clothes. Bunter was still looking very muddy when he had finished, but, at last, he was fairly dry.

"There, sonny!" said the stranger, tossing the muddy cloth back into the car. "That's better, I guess."

"Thanks!" gasped Bunter.

"Oh, don't mench! I guess I'll give you a lift if you're going my way," answered the swarthy man.

Bunter backed a pace. After his previous experience he did not want any more lifts from strange motorists.

"Thanks! I'm going back to the cricket," he said. "It's only a few minutes walk—don't trouble."

"Aw! Step into the car, sonny!"

Bunter backed farther away. He was growing alarmed now. There was a peculiar grin on the swarthy face that alarmed him. And the nasal voice was growing more and more familiar to his ears. The man looked like a Frenchman; but he spoke like an American. There was nothing whatever French about him, but his looks.

"You won't have a lift, sonny?"

"No!" gasped Bunter.

"I reckon you're missing your guess!" drawled the swarthy man. "You hop into that car and save trouble. You get me?"

"Oh dear!" gasped Bunter.

He knew now.

For a moment he was rooted to the ground, blinking wildly at the mocking face before him.

The man gave a quick glance down the narrow lane towards the road. No one was in sight.

He stepped closer to Bunter; and the fat junior, with a sudden terrified squeak, jumped back and spun round and ran.

A grip that seemed like steel dropped

on his fat shoulder, and he was twirled back. He let out a frightened yell.

"Can it!" The voice was low and menacing. "You ain't going to be hurt, kid—you're too valuable to hurt! But you got to come on a leetle pasear with me! You let out another yaup, sonny, and you'll get a crack on the cabeza that'll send you to sleep mighty sudden."

"Ow!"

Bunter crumpled under the grip on his shoulder. The steel-like thin fingers seemed almost to bite into his flesh.

He was jerked to the open door of the car, and pushed in. The man followed him in and closed the door.

"Now you keep quiet, and don't give any trouble, kid," he said. "I guess you know by this time why we want you, and you're wise to it that you ain't going to be hurt. But keep quiet! You're going to stay with some friends. I guess—till your popper comes round and coughs up the dust! You're wise to that, I guess! Now can it!"

"I—I—I say—" gasped Bunter.

"Can it, I'm telling you! You want a crack on the cabeza to send you to sleep?"

"Ow! No."

"Then can it like I keep on telling you, bo!"

Bunter "canned" it. He did not

that the strangers had been "larking," but obviously this was no lark. The man in the Napier had followed the Greyfriars party; he had parked his car in the lane near Highcliffe during the cricket match, and had no doubt been looking for a chance to get at Bunter, when Ponsonby's rag placed the fat junior fairly in his hands. The rug, the strap, the prepared gag, all showed that a kidnapping had been planned. It was clear to Bunter's dizzy brain that he had been kidnapped—but why was a mystery to him. From what the kidnapper had said, he apparently supposed that Bunter knew the reason; but Bunter was far from even guessing the reason.

But, whatever the reason was, there was no doubt about the fact! Billy Bunter was kidnapped; and a fast car was rushing him away, whither he

voices. The door was opened, and someone looked in at him.

"You've got him, Barney?"

"I've sure got him, Slick!"

"I'll say this is luck!"

"You've said it!"

Bunter was lifted out of the car and the rug was unstrapped and unrolled. The wooden gag was removed from his mouth.

"Groooooogh!"

That was Bunter's first remark.

He put his spectacles straight on his fat little nose, and blinked round him dizzily.

The foreign-looking man was standing there, with a fat man in horn-rimmed glasses, whom Bunter had seen before. He was one of the two Americans who had picked him up on Courtfield Common a week ago. Mr.



A thin, wiry hand grasped Bunter's, and the fat junior was dragged out of the clinging mud like a cork from a bottle!

venture to resist, as the man rolled him in a large, heavy rug, round which he fastened a strap as soon as the fat junior was enveloped.

Then a little wedge was placed in Bunter's mouth, and secured with a cord. Bunter had to "can" it now, whether he liked or not; he was gagged.

"Now, jest you lie still where you are, and don't even give a wriggle, else suthin' may happen to you sudden!" said the voice of the kidnapper; and Bunter remained still.

A minute later he heard the snort of the car. He felt the vehicle in motion, grinding over the muddy ruts of the lane. Then he felt the car move more swiftly and smoothly, and knew that he was on the high road.

The car dashed away; in what direction Bunter did not know.

He lay strapped in the rolled rug, palpitating.

He was kidnapped! There was no doubt about that now. On the last occasion there had been a possibility

could not tell! Strapped inside the heavy rug, unable to see, unable to speak, Billy Bunter lay on the floor of the car, and was borne away swiftly—into the unknown!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Mysterious!

BILLY BUNTER never knew how long that journey lasted. It seemed endless to him, as he lay rolled in the thick rug. It was a warm afternoon, and in that rug it was uncomfortably hot and stuffy. But Bunter, for once, was not worrying about discomforts. He was wondering dismally what was going to happen when the journey's end was reached. But it was long before the car, swift as it was, came to a stop; and he knew that it must have covered a long distance. Where he was he could not guess; but he knew that he must be very far from Greyfriars.

When the car stopped, Bunter heard

Slick Flick grinned at him amiably. Evidently Mr. Flick was very glad to see Bunter.

"Say, bo, I'm sure glad to meet you!" he remarked. "You ain't what I'd call a good-looker; but this here is a sight for sore eyes!"

"I—I—I say—" gasped Bunter.

He stared round him. He was standing under the wooden porch of a house; a house in its own grounds. At a little distance was an encircling fence, and a row of tall poplars grew along the fence, shutting off the view. Far in the distance was a hill, but it was a hill that was unfamiliar to Bunter's eyes. He was nowhere near Greyfriars, that was certain.

"Don't you worry, sonny!" said the fat man amiably. "You're among friends—friends that'll guard you like a treasure!"

"You've said it, Flick!" chuckled the other. "I'll say he's some treasure!"

(Continued on page 16.)

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The MAGNET TALKIES



Meet Jack Manley, the slickest man that ever graced a screen.
He'll go anywhere, do anything, and anybody for that matter.
Watch his breathless capers in Mexico!

This week:
**THE MAYOR
OF EL TEXO!**



"Don Tango must be captured!"

"SENIOR MAYOR! We've come!"
"I can see that, senors. Now what about going?"

"Ha, ha! The mayor jokes! Citizens of El Texo! You may laugh!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But now to the business! Honoured sir! We have called on you, as mayor of this thriving town of El Texo, to ask you the question that is agitating every citizen to-day, namely, what about it?"

"What about what?"

"Why, the villainous motor-bandit who is terrorising the town by his nefarious activities!"

"Aha! You are referring, senior, to Don Tango, the mysterious masked bandit of El Texo?"

"Excellency! You have said it!"

"Well, what do you wish me to do about Don Tango, senior?"

"All we ask is that you take steps to capture the villain."

"Caramba! I have taken steps already. Only yesterday I took several steps to the local police-station to inform the police of the matter officially. Yet Don Tango still eludes the clutches of the law. What more can a mayor do?"

"We have come to suggest one more move, Excellency. To-day, an aeroplane crashed in the market-place. In the plane was a young English detective named Jack Manley."

"Dios! Did he escape alive?"

"Si, si! Now what we propose, Senior Mayor, is that you employ this daring young sleuth to track down Don Tango and his bandit gang and bring them all to justice."

"What happens, senors, if I refuse to accept your suggestion?"

"In that case, excellency, we will riddle your noble body with bullets!"

"Ahem! Then I will adopt the suggestion without delay. Tell my trumpeters to blow a fanfare and usher in this young English genius!"

Ta-ra! Ta-ra!

"Excellency! He is here!"

"How do, mayor! I'm Jack Manley! Anything I can do for you?"

"Si, si! You think you can track

down Don Tango and his band of masked bandits, Senior Manley?"

"Why, that's easy!"

"Sacramento! You are very confident, my young friend; but the task may be a leetle more difficult than you suppose. Don Tango is a desperate man!"

"That's all right, mayor; I prefer 'em desperate—makes it more exciting!"

"Dios! The man who pits himself against Don Tango may get a leetle more excitement than is pleasant! You still wish to go on?"

"Rather! Wouldn't miss it for worlds!"

"Then you shall do so. Senors, you have your wish! Jack Manley will now proceed to track down Don Tango and his nefarious band."

"Here I come gathering bandits bold,
Bandits bold, bandits bold!
Here I come gathering bandits bold,
On a bright and beautiful morning!"

Bang! Crash! Wallop!

"Ow! Sounds like somebody's back tyre's gone West! Now, where's my magnifying-glass? This is where I start looking for Don Tango's footprints!"



"Whoop! This is getting too warm!"

Bang! Boom! Bang!

"Ye gods and little fishes! El Texo seems a noisy sort of town. Aha! A clue!"

Crash! Bang! Crash!

"Someone else dropped his false teeth by the sound of it! Now to examine this footprint. It's a size ten, with hobnails in front and a rubber heel at the back. Well worn. Obviously, this is the hoofmark of a thoroughgoing scoundrel! Ten to one it's Don Tango himself! I will follow it up and see where it leads."

Boom!

"Wonder where the earthquake is? Aha! The clue develops! My quarry has taken ten short steps, then five long ones, then performed a step-dance and walked a few paces on his hands. Evidently he is trying to throw me off the scent; but it won't come off with this chicken!"

Bang!

"Yaroooooh! Something bit me while

I was bending down! Police! Where are the police?"

"I am here, senior! What can I do for you?"

"Ow! Did you see something bite me then?"

"Ha, ha! The English senior make the joke! He think something bite him, when all the time it was a bandit firing his gun at him! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dashed if I see anything to guffaw about! Mean to say I've been shot by a bandit?"

"The senior has said it."

"Then why the thunder didn't you arrest him?"

"Ha, ha! The idea of arresting a bandit in El Texo! The senior is ver' funny!"

"My hat! Some police force in El Texo! Then I suppose all those noises I heard just now were guns?"

"What else should they be, senior? The bandits have been using their machine-guns on you for the last half an hour! And here comes another of them with a bomb!"

Bang! Crash! Boom!

"Whoop! Well, I can stand a lot, but this is getting a bit too warm for me, thanks all the same! I'm going home for my bomb-proof suit; but once I've got into that I shall never lay down my magnifying-glass till Don Tango and his infamous band are laid by the heels!"

"Fellow-bandits! Here is the bank! All that is necessary is for the remainder of you to keep the citizens at bay with your guns, while Pedro and myself raise a conversion loan inside." (Joke!)

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Are you all ready, boys?"

"Si, si!"

"Or, as the English say, what-ho!"

"Then blaze away!"

Bang! Crack! Bang!

"Come on, Pedro! No slacking!"

"I'm with you, Don Tango!"

Boom! Bang! Boom!

"Keep it up, lads! Show 'em you can shoot!"

"Yarooooop!"

"Whoooooop! I'm hit!"

"Fire! Murder! Police!"

"Ha, ha! They call for the police—it is ver' funny! Keep them back, boys! Don Tango and Pedro between them will clean out the bank in a couple of shakes, and our fortunes will be made!"

"Sapristi! Who is the daredevil that races towards us on a pair of roller-skates? He asks for the trouble with the capital T!"

"He shall get it! Dios! I recognise him—it is the English detective, Senior Manley! Shoot him, lads!"

Bang! Crash! Wallop!

"Ha, ha, ha! Ever been had? You



"Dios! It's Senor Manley!"

didn't know I was wearing my bullet and bomb-proof suit, did you? You're going to get some more shocks when I get my knuckles near your ugly faces!"

"Caramba! Nothing can stop him! Where is Don Tango? We must fly before he reaches us!"

"Maledictos! What's the big idea, boys?"

"Don Tango! Danger threatens. We must flee before we are caught by this daredevil Englishman—"

"Sacramento! If it isn't Jack Manley, the fool English sleuth! This is just the chance we've been waiting for, boys!"

"But we can't hit him! He's wearing a bullet-proof suit!"

"Then we'll drive off and lead him a chase round the town till we get to headquarters. Jump in and drive like fury, Pedro! The rest of you keep on firing!"

"Si! Si!"

Honk-honk!

Bang! Crack! Bang!

"Come back, you cowards. No? Then I'll pursue you till I get you or till the rollers drop off my skates!"

Whiz!

"All ready?"

"Si, si, Don Tango!"

"Don't forget, then; as soon as Manley enters the room, throw yourselves at him. Ah! Here he comes!"

"Here I come gathering bandits bold, Bandits bold, bandits— Whoop!"

Crash! Bang! Wallop!

"Down with the Englishman!"

"Sapristi! He punch the nose of me!"

"A million curses! He black my eye!"

"But still we win, my brave bandits! The odds are only six to one against him, and yet he cannot triumph! Pile in!"

"Grooogh! Foul! Someone's sticking pins in me, and someone else is biting my neck! Where's the ref?"

"Aha! There is no referee to help you here, senor! Seize him, my bravos, and tie him up! You have lit the gas-stove, Pedro?"

"Si, si, Don Tango!"

"That is good business! Now, dog of an Englishman!"

"Bah! I defy you!"

"Ha, ha! Soon you will be begging us for the mercy you will never get! Cast your eyes over the neat little surprise we have prepared for you!"

"G-g-great Scott! What is it?"

"Quite a simple little arrangement, senor. It is all worked by clockwork. You see the chair?"

"Yes; but—"

"Silence, dog, and I will explain! Very soon you will be tied to that chair. Now, as you see, it is suspended over a cauldron of boiling oil. At the hour of nine the works of the clock will operate a lever—"

"Go on, Don Tango!"

"Which, in its turn, will fire a revolver arranged in such a position that it chips off the tip of your nose—"

"Oh crikey!"

"And then cuts in two the rope that holds your chair. Immediately this happens, you will be plunged into boiling oil, the gas-stove will explode and blow you to pieces, and a concealed gramophone will play demoniacal laughter. Ha, ha, ha! It is the good joke, what?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Awfully funny, I must say. What a clever lot you all are, aren't you?"

"You flatter us, senor! Well, boys, you can tie him up in the chair now, and we'll leave him. Mustn't forget our appointment."

"What appointment is that, Don Tango?"

"Why, the police dance at the Town Hall, of course."

"Ah! Of course!"

"There you are, Senor Manley! All you have to do now is to wait till nine o'clock, when the fireworks begin. Adios!"

"You scoundrels! But if you think you're going to hear me squeal, you're going to be disappointed. Even after I've been shot, boiled in oil, and blown to bits, I shan't complain! Bah!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Adios, senor!"

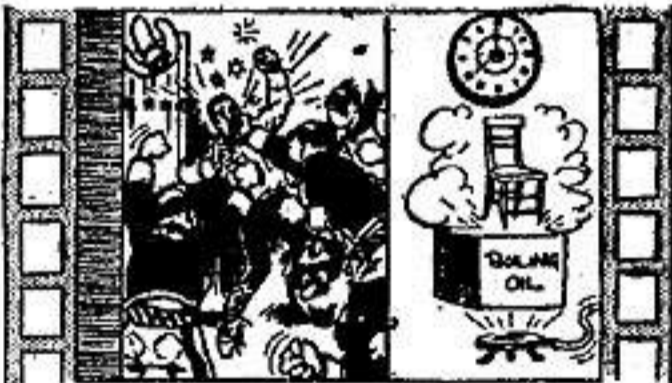
Tick-tock! Tick-tock!

"Oh dear! To think that every tick brings the end nearer! I wouldn't mind being shot and boiled in oil and blown to bits if it stopped at that! But when they crown it by putting laughter on the gramophone, it's enough to put even a hard-bitten sleuth off his stroke—"

Tick-tock! Tick-tock!

"This suspense is awful! Only another minute to go!"

"Hold on, though! What's happening?"



"Now, dog of an Englishman!"

"Can it be? Yes, it can! Hurrah! They've forgotten to wind up the clock, and it's stopped just half a minute before the hour. Now, it's only a question of waiting till their office-cleaner comes along. And, if I'm not mistaken, here she comes!"

"Dios! What are you a-doing of up there, senor?"

"Quick, senora! Turn out the gas-jets, and release me. Oh, thank you! Here's an I O U for sixpence for your trouble. And now for the police dance at the Town Hall, where I shall at last lay Don Tango and his gang by the heels!"

"Nine o'clock, boys! The fireworks have just gone off at headquarters, and the fool English sleuth will trouble us no more! Three cheers!"

"Ai, ai, ai!"

"And now on with the dance! Another bottle of wine to drink to the success of Don Tango and his bandit gang!"

"Ai, ai! Success to the Don Tango gang!"

"Stop!"

"Maledictos! The Englishman again!"

"Ten million curses!"

"Hands up, everybody! I've got the drop on you!"

"Sapristi! How did you escape?"

"That, my dear Don Tango, is no concern of yours. Now, if you please, I should like to see your face. Take off your mask!"

"Ha, ha! It is a pleasure to obey the English senor. I will do so."

"What—what—"

"Take one good look at me, Senor Manley!"

"Great Scott! It's—it's—"

"Ha, ha, ha! Of course it is!"

"It's the mayor himself!"



"Success to the Don Tango Gang!"

"Precisely, Senor Manley!"

"Then—then—that means—"

"That the mayor and Don Tango are one. Exactly; I admit it. I am the Mayor of El Texo, and also Don Tango, the bandit chief. Thought you'd have guessed that long ago!"

"Why, you—you double dyed deceiver—"

"Pardon, senor; I am not. I have never deceived these fellows about it, have I, fellow-bandits?"

"Not you, Don Tango!"

"Never mind; deceiver or not, I'm still going to have you and your gang placed under lock and key. I'll call the police now!"

"But, senor— Ha, ha, ha! My bandits are all policemen. Aren't you, boys?"

"Si, si!"

"Ha, ha, ha! You are surprised, Senor Manley. What are you going to do now?"

"I shall call the rest of the police force, who are dancing innocently in the adjoining ball-room, and denounce you as Don Tango's gang!"

"But they all know already!"

"Eh?"

"They are all members of the gang, too. In fact, the only police recruits who are ever considered in El Texo are members of Don Tango's gang."

"My hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha! The English senor finds it a leetle difficult to understand the way we have in El Texo?"

"I should just think I do! Best thing for me to do now is to give up detecting in the town and take the first boat back to home, sweet home!"

"An excellent suggestion, senor! And I hope you will take back with you the happiest recollections of us. Waiter! Another bottle of wine for our English friend! And now let us all join hands and sing Don Tango's chorus, to the tune of 'Men of Harlech.'"

"We're the bandits of El Texo, All of us have cast-iron necks—ho!"

"Tees we shoot and trains we wreck so,

Join our happy band!"

THE END.

(Next week's MAGNET will contain another Dicky Nugent "shocker," entitled: "THE MASTERS' GOLF TORNYMENT!" Boys, you're on the biggest laugh ever, here!)



(Continued from page 13.)

"You're jest going to be a guest in this here mansion, sonny!" continued Mr. Flick cheerily. "We're all ready for a guest. You're going to have a good room, and the best of grub, and good company."

"I—I say—"

"The only thing you'll miss is your lessons at school," went on Mr. Flick. "And, dog-gone my cats, if you're keen on them, we'll get you some school books to pass the time!"

"Get him in, Slick!" said the swarthy man.

"You bet! This way, sonny!"

The fat man took Bunter by the shoulder, and led him into the house. The kidnapper followed and shut the door.

Bunter found himself in a rather large hall, fairly well furnished. He was led across the hall to a room, also well furnished, but with wooden shutters locked on the outside of the window. The room was dusky; but Slick Flick turned on the light.

"I guess you'll have to do without daylight, son!" he said, quite apologetically. "We ain't taking chances with a valuable guest like you. But if you behave, you'll be allowed to walk in the grounds for exercise, with me along. We sure want to make you comfortable. I guess we ain't never made our guests anything but comfortable—eh, Barney?"

"You've said it, Flick."

Billy Bunter turned his spectacles on the swarthy, foreign-looking man, with a jump of astonishment.

The man was taking off the black beard and the curled moustache. Obviously—now—he had been disguised.

And as soon as the disguise was removed, in spite of the swarthy complexion that remained, Bunter recognised the thin, clean-shaven face. It was the man who had been with Slick Flick on the previous occasion.

The man grinned at him.

"I guess you know me now, sonny!" he remarked.

"Oh dear!" gasped Bunter.

"You've sure heard of Barney McCann?"

"Ye-e-es!" stammered Bunter.

"Waal, now you see him," said the man with the hawk nose, "and my side-partner here is Slick Flick. You got away from us last time, son, when the auto went over. You was spry; but you don't beat Barney McCann! No, sir! Barney's been looking for you ever since. You can't put it across Barney! Nope!"

"You've given us more trouble than we calculated, son!" said Mr. Flick, with a shake of the head, almost reproachfully. "Why, we had you dead to rights yesterday, and a bunch of guys horned in, and we had to quit, leaving you with a bag on your cabeza. You've wasted a lot of time."

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Bunter jumped.

"Oh!" he gasped. "W-w-w-was it you bagged me in the Cloisters? I—I thought it was those beasts larking."

"I guess it was this party," grinned Mr. Flick; "and we'd have had you over the wall and into the car in two shakes of a possum's tail if the mguys hadn't horned in like they did! But I guess we got you safe now. Sit down, son! Take it easy!"

Bunter sank into a comfortable arm-chair.

He blinked at the two Americans. Both of them seemed very good-humoured, both seemed very amiable and highly satisfied. They were elated with their success, and obviously not at all inclined to do Bunter any harm. That was a considerable relief to the fat junior. He was still utterly perplexed; but he was no longer in a state of funk.

"That's right—make yourself at home!" said Barney McCann encouragingly. "Don't you worry none, sonny!"

"I—I say, what have you brought me here for?" stammered Bunter.

"I guess you're wise to that!" chuckled Slick Flick.

"I—I don't know—"

"You don't savvy how valuable you are!" grinned Barney McCann. "Say, ain't your popper warned you a bunch was after you?"

"No!" gasped Bunter.

"Waal, I reckoned he was wise to it, I sure did!" said McCann. "I guess he put your headmaster wise, anyhow; and I reckon that old guy would have kept you safe inside the school if he'd had any hoss-sense. He surely would!"

"Oh, they don't know how many beans make five on this side of the pond," said Mr. Flick disparagingly. "They surely don't know enough to go in when it rains."

"I believe you!" said McCann. "Anyhow, we got the goods."

"We've surely got the goods!" chuckled Mr. Flick.

"You—you're going to keep me here?" stammered Bunter.

"Search me!" answered McCann.

"But—but what for?"

"Aw, I guess you know all we can tell you about that! We're keeping you here till your popper weighs in with the dough."

"The—the dough?" gasped Bunter.

"Aw, you've forgotten your own language, have you?" said Mr. McCann, in disgust. "Say, you've learned to talk like an English guy at an English school, you surely have."

Bunter blinked at him blankly.

"Of course!" he gasped.

"All the time I've chewed the rag with you I ain't heard you guess once!" said Mr. McCann. "You talk jest like you was born in this mouldy island."

"Of course I do!" gasped the amazed Bunter. "Why shouldn't I?"

Mr. McCann sniffed.

"Anyhow, that don't matter to this bunch," he said. "You're here till your popper ponies up the dough. I guess we're going to put him wise that we've cinched you. Say, you figure that your popper prices you up to thirty thousand dollars?"

"Eh?"

"I guess he can spare that small sum out of what he's skinned off the public, what?"

Bunter could only blink. It dawned upon his fat mind that he was to be held for ransom.

"Thirty thousand dollars?" he gurgled. "Oh crumbs! How much is that in real money?"

Mr. McCann sniffed again.

"You forgotten what a dollar is?" he sneered. "Waal, it's six thousand pounds in English money."

"I guess your popper will cough it up easy, son," said Mr. Flick. "It won't be a circumstance to him."

"But—but he couldn't!" gasped Bunter, in dismay. "My father ain't really rich."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Barney McCann and Slick Flick together. They seemed to take that statement as an uproarious joke.

"I—I say it's the truth!" gasped Bunter. "Wha-a-a-at made you think my father was rich?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared McCann and Slick Flick.

Mr. Flick, in the excess of his merriment, wiped his eyes.

"Your popper ain't a millionaire, what?" chuckled McCann.

"No!" gasped Bunter.

"He ain't been raking in the dollars by the bucketful?"

"N-n-no!"

"You don't figure that he could pony up thirty thousand dollars?"

"I—I'm sure he couldn't!"

"I guess we'll take the chance," said Barney McCann, chuckling. "Say, Flick, you look after the kid while I get on the phone. Give him anything he wants; his popper's going to pay. Anything you want, son, you sing out; this bunch always treats a guy handsome. Why, sometimes a guy's quite sorry to leave us and go back to his sorrowing parents! I'm telling you!"

"I—I say, I—I'm rather hungry!" said Bunter hopefully.

"Mike!" shouted McCann.

A red-headed man put his face in at the door.

"Yis, sorr!"

"The kid's hungry! Look after him and treat him well."

"Yis, sorr!"

The two kidnappers left the shuttered room. A few minutes later Billy Bunter was seated at the table, delving into a meal with a keen appetite. He was still hopelessly perplexed and puzzled; but he was feeling easy in his mind now. Evidently he was not going to be hurt; equally evidently, he was going to be well fed. If this was kidnapping, Billy Bunter realised that there might be worse experiences for a fellow than being kidnapped!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Startling News!

B UZZZZZZZZ!

"Dear me!" said the Head. The headmaster was busy in his study when the telephone-bell rang.

Dr. Locke was enjoying a half-holiday in his own way, fully as much as Harry Wharton & Co. were enjoying it in theirs. While the Remove men were urging the flying ball at Highcliffe; and Billy Bunter was tucking into a square meal in some place unknown, the Head was adding a Latin note to his edition of Sophocles, which was destined—some day—to create quite a stir in learned circles and to cause the approving wagging of several wise and learned and bald heads at Oxford.

With a fascinating Greek volume open before him, and notes in Ciceronian Latin gliding from his pen, the Head was happy—as happy as Harry Wharton with a bat in his hand or

Billy Bunter sitting down before a dish of jam tarts.

So the buzz of the telephone-bell was distinctly unwelcome.

With a sigh the Head laid down his pen. He lifted the receiver from the hooks and listened.

"Hallo!" came a voice that was quite strange to him. "That Greyfriars School?"

"Yes!" replied the Head.

"I guess I want Dr. Locke."

"Dr. Locke is speaking."

"How do, doc?"

"Dear me!" murmured the Head.

This was quite an unusual greeting for his majestic ears.

"Say, I guess you've heard of me?" went on the cheerful voice. "I'm Barney McCann."

Dr. Locke almost dropped the receiver.

"Bub-bub-Barney McCann!" he stutered.

"Yep!"

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated the Head.

"You've heard of me, feller?"

"I have certainly heard the name. It was mentioned to me in a communication from Mr. Fish. It was mentioned as the name of a lawless and unscrupulous person who had designs on Mr. Fish's son! If you are, indeed, that person—"

"You've got it!"

"Then I regard it as insolence on your part to speak to me!" exclaimed the Head indignantly. "How dare you, sir?"

"Take it easy, old sport!"

"Wha-a-a-t?"

"I guess I've called you to talk business! You see—"

"I refuse to listen to you, Mr. McCann!" said Dr. Locke. "I refuse absolutely to hear a single word. I—"

"I've got the goods."

"Eh?"

"I reckon you want to know that I've got the goods."

"I fail to understand you! I have no knowledge of the goods to which you refer. I—"

"The boy!"

"What?"

"Fish!" said Mr. McCann. "I cinched him this afternoon at Higheliffe."

"Bless my soul!"

"I've got him!" went on the voice of Barney McCann. "I've sure got that young guy by the short hairs! You want to believe me, doc."

"Is—is—is it possible that—that you have telephoned to me, to—to tell me that you have kidnapped the boy Fish?" stammered the Head.

"Correct!"

"I—I do not credit your statement! I have given instructions for the boy to remain within gates. I—"

"I've got him! Say you mosey round and look for the guy, and I guess you won't see hide nor hair of him! I've sure got him fixed! Now, doc, I'm putting you wise to save trouble. That kid Fish is in my hands. I guess you don't know much about Barney McCann on this side of the pond, but I'm telling you that Barney means business, every time, from the word go. That kid is fixed safe. He's got a price on him—thirty thousand dollars! You want to cable to his popper in Noo Yark and let him know."

The Head gasped.

"I shall do nothing of the kind! If you really have had the audacity to kidnap a boy belonging to this school, I shall invoke the aid of the police at once, and you will be arrested and punished—"

"Aw, cut it out, doc! You figure that your cops can worry Barney McCann? Forget it!"

"Rascal!" exclaimed the Head indignantly.

"Forget it, doc! I'm jest putting you wise! If you want the kid back, you send that cable to his popper. I guess I ain't fixed up to send cables, and I shall have to write. That takes time. While I'm waiting, the kid stays with me. You can call in all the cops you want; they won't find the kid in ten years. Are you sending that cable to Mr. Fish?"

"Certainly not!"

"Say, you better!" advised Mr. McCann. "Old Man Fish knows what's what! Once he's wise to it that Barney McCann has got hold of his boy, he will know it's no use wriggling. He will step up with the dollars and part. It will save time."

"I shall communicate with the police immediately!" gasped the Head.

"Aw, you make me tired, doc! What

HOW'S THIS FOR A CLEVER GREYFRIARS LIMERICK, CHUMS?

If excitement and laughter
you seek,
Read the tale of Greyfriars
each week;
And the famous Remove
By their capers will prove,
That for fun, here is some-
thing unique.

The above winning effort has been sent in by H. E. Crooker, 36, Jubilee Road, St. George, Bristol, who is now the proud possessor of one of our useful leather pocket wallets.

use you figure your police are? I guess they wouldn't find me if I told them my address! No, sir! But please yourself! The kid's in my hands! You can save time by cabling to Old Man Fish! Time's dollars, doc!"

"From where are you speaking?" gasped the Head.

There was a chuckle again.

"Not from headquarters, you bet!" said Mr. McCann. "If you ask them at the exchange after I've hung up, they'll tell you a call-box! Say, doc, you don't think I'm telling you where I live, do you?"

Dr. Locke compressed his lips.

"I refuse to bandy words with you," he said. "You may be able to defy the law in the United States, sir, but you will find that it is scarcely possible to do so in this country. You may look for immediate arrest."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mr. McCann.

The Head jammed the receiver back on the hooks.

He was fed up with Barney McCann. He was breathing hard, and his cheeks were flushed, as he stepped away from the telephone.

"Bless my soul!" murmured Dr. Locke. "Such insolence—such audacity—such rascality—upon my word!"

The Head was greatly agitated. Never before had the scholastic calm of his tranquil life been disturbed by such a happening; it was his first experience

of enterprising American crooks. He paced his study in a very disturbed frame of mind. Sophocles lay unheeded on his desk. Sophocles had lost his charm. Neither the Greek text, nor the Latin notes appealed to the Head now. Mr. McCann had spoiled his half-holiday!

He quitted his study at last, and rustled down Masters' passage to visit Mr. Quelch.

The Remove master was in his study. Mr. Quelch was also enjoying the half-holiday in his own way. Deep in black-letter manuscripts, the Remove master was at work on his celebrated "History of Greyfriars," which had occupied his leisure hours for so many years.

"Mr. Quelch!"

The Remove master forgot the History of Greyfriars as he beheld the headmaster's agitated face. He rose quickly to his feet.

"Dr. Locke! What—"

"Mr. Quelch! I am sure that you carried out my instructions with reference to the boy Fish—"

"Fish! Certainly, sir!"

"You have not allowed him to go out of gates, since Mr. Fish warned us that an attempt was to be made to kidnap him?"

"Certainly not!"

"I was sure of it," said the Head. "I lay no blame on you, my dear Quelch. The boy has evidently disobeyed your orders, and gone out—"

"I hardly think so, sir—" Mr. Quelch shook his head. "It is true that he asked for leave to go to Higheliffe for the cricket match there, and had he been in the Eleven I should have given leave, as he would have been safe in such circumstances. But I refused him leave to go over to watch the match, as I could not be sure that he would remain with the others. I cannot think that he has directly disobeyed my commands. Fish is not of a venturesome nature."

"I have received a telephone message from the person named by Mr. Fish—a person called McCann—"

"Is it possible?"

"He informs me that the boy Fish is in his hands."

Mr. Quelch almost jumped.

"According to his statement on the telephone, he has kidnapped Fish!" said Dr. Locke. "He had the unparalleled insolence to suggest that I should cable the news to Mr. Fish."

Mr. Quelch knitted his brows.

"If Fish has gone out of bounds, without leave—" he said.

"It would appear so, from this rascal's statement," said the Head. "He would scarcely take the trouble to telephone a statement without grounds. What purpose could he serve?"

"That is true! But—"

"The police must be communicated with at once, Mr. Quelch. I—I presume that there is nothing else to be done?"

The Head winced as he spoke. In his mind's eye, he could see the name of Greyfriars in all the newspapers, a prospect that made the old gentleman shudder. The modern craze for publicity had not reached the headmaster's study at Greyfriars School.

"No doubt," said Mr. Quelch. "But before taking such a step, we must ascertain beyond doubt that the wretch's statement is correct. I can scarcely believe that Fish has recklessly placed himself within reach of the kidnapper. He is a boy of the most cautious character."

(Continued on next page.)

"According to the statement of this person McCann, he found the boy at Highcliffe!" said the Head.

"Certainly Fish asked leave to go over to Highcliffe with the cricketers," said Mr. Quelch, pursing his lips. "But as he was not a member of the team, I refused him leave definitely."

"I fear that he must have disregarded your instructions. The man's statement was explicit, and he certainly mentioned Highcliffe."

Mr. Quelch's eyes glinted. "The boys are at Highcliffe now, sir," he said. "It will be easy to ascertain whether Fish went there. I will telephone Highcliffe, and ask to speak to Wharton."

"Very good!" said the Head. And Mr. Quelch, his eyes still glinting stepped to the telephone.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

No Fish!

"WELL caught!"
"Oh, well caught!"
"Bravo, Caterpillar!"
Harry Wharton made a wry grimace.

He had taken twenty on his second innings, when the Caterpillar brought off that catch.

It was not an easy catch. Wharton seldom gave easy catches. But the Caterpillar had brought it off, and the captain of the Greyfriars Remove was out.

"Good man, Caterpillar!" shouted Courtenay.

The Caterpillar smiled his sleepy smile as he held up the ball.

"How's that?" he murmured.

"Oh, well caught!"

"Good old Caterpillar!"

"Hard cheese, old bean," said Bob Cherry, as he passed Wharton coming off. Wharton nodded, and went on to the pavilion.

Bob Cherry took his place at the wicket, facing Courtenay's bowling. Wharton dropped his bat, and turned round as he received a tap on the shoulder. Langley, a Highcliffe Sixth-Former, gave him the tap.

"You're Wharton?"

"Yes," said Harry.

"I've been waiting for you to come off; I wouldn't interrupt your game," said Langley, with a smile. "Somebody's telephoned from your school, your Form master, I think. Will you go to Mobbs' study—you know where it is."

"Yes," said Wharton, in wonder.

"Mobbs asked me to tell you," said the captain of Highcliffe. "I fancy the man's hanging on the wire, so you may as well buck up."

"Right-ho."

Wharton hurried off the cricket field, wondering what was up. He was unwilling to leave the ground, with a hard-fought match drawing to its climax, but if Quelch wanted him on the phone, there was no choice in the matter.

He hurried to the House and tapped at the study door of Mr. Mobbs, the master of the Highcliffe Fourth.

Mr. Mobbs gave him a glance.

"Your Form master desires to speak to you, Wharton!" he said. "You may take the call."

"Thank you, sir."

Wharton crossed over to the telephone, and Mr. Mobbs, with a slight grunt, returned to his papers. Apparently Mr. Mobbs was not pleased by the interruption.

Wharton picked up the receiver.

"Hallo! Wharton speaking."

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"I have been waiting, Wharton!" came Mr. Quelch's voice, in very acid tones. "I have been waiting for some time."

Wharton grinned. As he had been batting when the call came, he could hardly have answered it immediately. But he did not explain that to his Form master.

"Sorry, sir!" he said. "What is it?"

"Have you seen Fish?"

"Fish!" repeated Wharton blankly. He had, at the moment, utterly forgotten the existence of Fisher T. Fish of the Remove. "Fish, sir?"

"Yes, Fish! Have you seen Fish at Highcliffe?"

"Nunno, sir!" gasped the astonished junior. "I—I haven't seen any fish, sir—we've been playing cricket, sir, not fishing—"

"What? What? I am speaking of Fish—"

"Yes, sir; I heard you. We've not been fishing—"

"Are you presuming to jest with me, Wharton?" came a formidable voice over the wires.

"Nunno, sir! You asked me—"

"I am speaking of Fish of the Remove."

"Oh!" gasped Wharton. "I didn't catch what you meant, sir! No, sir, I haven't seen Fishy—I mean, Fish. How could I sir?"

"Fish asked for leave to accompany you to Highcliffe. I refused it. Are you sure he did not come?"

"He did not come with us, sir!" said Harry.

"Are you aware whether he followed you?"

"I—I think not, sir! I haven't seen anything of him. Of course, I've been playing cricket, and may not have noticed him if he came—"

"It is important to ascertain whether Fish has been at Highcliffe this afternoon, Wharton. The Head has received a message that he was kidnapped there by the—the persons—"

"My hat!"

"Kindly ascertain at once, Wharton, whether he has been seen at Highcliffe this afternoon!"

"Very well, sir."

"I will hold the line."

"Yes, sir."

Harry Wharton left Mr. Mobbs' study and returned to the cricket field.

"What's the row?" asked Johnny Bull. Bob Cherry and Vernon-Smith were at the wickets, but the rest of the Greyfriars batsmen were wondering what Wharton had been called away for.

"That ass Fish!" said Harry.

"Quelch seems to think that he's been here, and that those American kidnapers have bagged him. Anybody seen the ass?"

There was a general shaking of heads. Fisher T. Fish had not been seen at Highcliffe.

"Where's Bunter?" asked Harry.

"Bunter would know. Bunter knows everything!"

But Billy Bunter was not to be seen.

"Bunter seems to have cleared off early in the game," said Nugent. "I haven't seen him for some time."

"Bother him!" said Harry. "Well, it's pretty certain that Fish hasn't been here. If the kidnapers have been catching fish, they haven't caught any at Highcliffe."

And Wharton returned to Mr. Mobbs' study—receiving another grunt from Mr. Mobbs—and took up the receiver once more.

"Fish hasn't been here, sir!" he said.

"You are sure of that, Wharton?"

"Nobody's seen him, sir."

"Very well!"

Mr. Quelch rang off and Wharton returned to the cricket. And it is much to be feared that Fisher T. Fish passed wholly and completely from his mind on the spot. The Caterpillar was bowling now, and he was showing uncommonly great form. The Greyfriars wickets were falling. Bob Cherry came out looking rather rueful.

"That man can bowl!" he remarked.

"Franky, old man, pull up your socks."

Nugent pulled up his socks in vain; he was dismissed for two. Peter Todd followed him, and was dismissed for one. Greyfriars still wanted twenty to win, with two more wickets to fall, and the bowling at high-water mark. So it was not surprising that Wharton had no thoughts to spare for Fisher T. Fish.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Missing!

MR. QUELCH laid down the receiver.

The Head peered at him over his glasses.

"Fish has not been seen at Highcliffe, sir!" said Mr. Quelch. "Wharton is positive on that point."

"The man's statement was explicit!" said the Head. "The boy may have followed the cricketers, as he was refused leave to accompany them, and this—this lawless rascal may therefore have found him alone—on the road, perhaps—"

"It is possible—"

"I—I object very strongly to the intervention of the police," said the Head. "But in the circumstances—"

"I think, sir, that it would be well to ascertain first, beyond doubt that the boy is not in the school," said Mr. Quelch.

"Oh! Quite so! But I very much fear—"

"I will ascertain at once, sir!"

Mr. Quelch hurried from the study. As a matter of fact, he had little doubt that Barney McCann's statement was well-founded; there seemed no conceivable reason why the kidnapper should have made that statement otherwise.

There was no purpose to be served by giving a false alarm; indeed, its only effect could be to put the school authorities still more upon their guard, now that they had definite knowledge that McCann was in the vicinity. Hitherto, it was only from Mr. Fish that they had heard of the enterprising Mr. McCann, now they knew that he was on the spot. If it was a false alarm, McCann had certainly made his own task more difficult to carry out.

So Mr. Quelch really had little hope of discovering that Fisher T. Fish was still within the precincts of Greyfriars.

He hurried up to the Remove passage and looked into Study No. 14. That apartment was empty. Johnny Bull and Squiff were with the Eleven, and Fish, if he was in the school was no longer in his study.

Mr. Quelch stopped back into the passage.

"Fish!" he called out.

Fish was unlikely to be in any study but his own if he was in the Remove quarters at all. But Mr. Quelch was leaving nothing to chance. He called out again, in a voice that awoke every echo in the Remove passage.

"Fish!"

Echo answered "Fish." But there was no other answer.



"Oh crikey! I ain't Fish!" gasped Bunter. "You're not Fish?" articulated McCann. "N-n-no! I'm Bunter!"

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips, and rustled back to the stairs. Fish evidently was not there.

On the Remove landing he came on Skinner and Snoop.

"Have you seen Fish of the Remove?" he asked.

"No, sir!"

Mr. Quelch went down the stairs.

Fisher T. Fish was "gated," but the precincts of Greyfriars were extensive, and a fellow might easily be within gates, and yet out of sight.

Mr. Quelch still hoped that he was within the precincts.

Five minutes later three prefects of the Sixth were assigned the task of looking for Fish, with orders to report in Mr. Quelch's study, if they found him—or failed to find him.

The Remove master returned to his study and shook his head in reply to Dr. Locke's anxious glance.

"The boy is not in the Remove passage, sir," he said. "But I have every hope that he will be found. The prefects are looking for him. I have every hope that they will find him."

"I trust so!" said the Head. "I trust so! We are responsible to Mr. Fish for the safety of his son."

"If the boy has absented himself against orders, sir, the responsibility is entirely his."

"Oh, quite so! Nevertheless——"

It was half an hour later that Loder of the Sixth came to the study. He reported that nothing could be seen of Fish of the Remove within the school precincts.

"Bless my soul!" said the Head.

"You have searched thoroughly?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, quite, sir!" answered Loder, rather sulkily. Loder of the Sixth had not been pleased by the task assigned to him. "I've looked everywhere, so has Walker and Carnel! He's not in the school!"

"Have you questioned Gosling?" asked the Head.

"Yes, sir. Gosling has not seen him go out. But, of course, if he was breaking bounds he would not go out by the gates."

"No, doubt," said the Head; "no doubt."

Loder left the study.

The two masters exchanged glances.

"I fear, Mr. Quelch——"

"I fear, sir——" said Mr. Quelch.

"There appears to be no doubt——"

"I fear none!"

The Head sighed.

"There's nothing remains but to communicate with the police," he said.

"Nothing, sir."

"I will speak to Inspector Grimes," said Dr. Locke, and he picked up Mr. Quelch's receiver, and asked for Courtfield Police Station.

The Head's face was very worried when he put down the receiver. Mr. Grimes had told him that he would come over immediately, which was very obliging of Mr. Grimes, but not pleasant for the Head. Certainly he wanted Mr. Grimes to find Fisher T. Fish; but he shuddered at the thought of the coming sensation in the school.

"Mr. Grimes will be here very soon," he said. "It is a most disagreeable affair—most disagreeable! It will be a very unpleasant ordeal—very unpleasant indeed! But I suppose it cannot be helped."

"I suppose not, sir," said Mr. Quelch.

The Head returned to his study to await the arrival of the police-inspector from Courtfield. Sophocles still lay unheeded on his table. The Head had no mind for Sophocles now.

It appeared certain—so far as the Head could see—that Fisher T. Fish had disregarded his Form master's injunction and gone out of gates. Three prefects had searched the school for him without finding him, which appeared to place the matter beyond doubt. That Fisher T. Fish was still within the precincts, and that he had personal reasons for not allowing Loder of the Sixth to find him, naturally did not occur to the Head. He was unacquainted with Gerald Loder's manners and customs, or Loder of the Sixth would not long have remained a prefect of Greyfriars.

There was a knock at his study door at last.

Inspector Grimes was shown in. Mr. Quelch followed him into the study.

"Thank you so much for coming so promptly, Mr. Grimes!" said the Head courteously. "Pray be seated!"

The portly inspector sat down and produced a portly notebook.

"A boy is missing, I understand, sir?" he remarked.

"Precisely! A boy named Fish. An American boy——"

"The son of an American millionaire," said Mr. Quelch.

"His father has recently communicated with me, to warn me that an attempt would probably be made to kidnap him——"

"By a person named McCann——"

"A lawless person," resumed the Head, "who apparently pursues, in the

United States, the extraordinary calling of a kidnapper—"

"And who is now in England to pursue that extraordinary calling in this country!" chimed in Mr. Quelch.

"This person has had the insolence, the—the—"

"The audacity—" said Mr. Quelch.

"The audacity," said the Head, with a nod, "to telephone and inform me that the boy is now in his hands—"

"And he cannot be found in the school—"

"Although forbidden to go out of gates—"

"He has apparently done so."

"And I fear—" added the Head.

"I greatly fear—" said Mr. Quelch.

Mr. Grimes' eyes glistened over his notebook. Mr. Grimes was far from sharing the Head's detestation of publicity. Mr. Grimes was already thinking of a sensational kidnapping case. In his mind's eye he could see the headlines in the papers:

**"KIDNAPPED SCHOOLBOY!
AMERICAN MILLIONAIRE'S SON
VANISHES FROM FAMOUS
PUBLIC SCHOOL!"**

Mr. Grimes could already see his own name in the papers, as that of the efficient officer who was on the track of the kidnapped schoolboy. The expression on Mr. Grimes' plump face was in striking contrast to that on Dr. Locke's and that on Mr. Quelch's.

"This person, this—this McCann may, of course, have deceived me," said the Head. "I hope so—I trust so! But as the boy cannot be found—"

"We shall find him, sir!" said Mr. Grimes. "Have no doubt of that, sir! We shall find him! Kindly give me all the particulars you can."

Mr. Grimes made voluminous notes. He was in possession of all the information that Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch could give him when he rose at last to take his leave.

"I trust there will soon be news of the boy!" said Dr. Locke anxiously.

"I have little doubt of it, sir!" said Mr. Grimes. "This man McCann will not find it easy to play his game on

this side of the Atlantic! He will find that he is not in New York now! Our methods are rather different over here, sir! I hope soon to have news of the boy."

And Mr. Grimes took his leave.

The Head returned to Sophocles, and Mr. Quelch to the "History of Greyfriars"—but with worried minds.

Inspector Grimes buzzed away in his taxi, with a very cheerful expression on his face.

Fisher T. Fish, looking out of a window of the old tower—he was quite tired of George Washington by that time—had a view of the road, and saw the portly inspector whiz away in the taxi, and wondered what Inspector Grimes had called at Greyfriars for!

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

A Question of Identity!

SNORE!

That musical sound greeted the ears of two enterprising Americans as they entered the shuttered room in the lonely house.

Billy Bunter was stretched on a sofa fast asleep.

Bunter had made a good meal—an excellent meal. His worst fears had been relieved; his captors were not going to keep him short of grub! The grub, indeed, had been good, and there had been plenty of it.

Having loaded above the Plimsoll line, as usual, Bunter stretched himself on the sofa for a little nap, and his powerful snore was going strong when Barney McCann and Slick Flick looked in.

They grinned at the sight of the sleeping beauty. But they had come in on business. McCann shook Bunter by the shoulder and awakened him.

The fat junior opened his eyes and blinked at him.

"Wake up, sonny!" said McCann.

Bunter sat up on the sofa.

"What do you want?" he grunted.

"Why can't you let a fellow have his nap out? Look here—"

"I guess I want you to write a letter," said McCann. "Say, I've called your headmaster on the phone, and told him

to cable to your popper that I've got you! I guess it won't surprise your popper a whole lot—he knows Barney McCann means business."

"Cable!" repeated Bunter.

"Sure!"

"Oh! You mean telegraph! I—I say, my father will be awfully waxy—"

"I guess that don't cut a whole lot of ice," grinned McCann. "I reckon he'll squeal when he has to part; but I calculate he's going to part, all the same. Thirty thousand dollars is the figure."

"Oh dear!" said Bunter.

"I guess the old guy will cable when he finds that your boneheaded popper can't get you," said McCann. "But a letter from you is going to follow to cinch it. You get me?"

"I—I say—" stammered Bunter. What the effect on Mr. Samuel Bunter would be if he received a letter from his son announcing that he was held to ransom to the tune of six thousand pounds the Owl of the Remove simply could not imagine. "I—I say, my father ain't really rich, you know—"

"Can it, sonny! Sit at that table and write."

Bunter sat at the table, and Mr. Flick placed pen and paper before him. Bunter took up the pen.

"I—I say, it's no good, you know!" he stammered.

Barney McCann's good-humoured expression was replaced by a black scowl.

"You goin' to kick?" he demanded, in a voice that made Bunter jump.

"Nunno! I—I—I'll write what you like, of course!" stuttered Bunter. "I—I want to write! I—I—"

"Get busy, then! Put your popper wise that Barney McCann's got you, and that he wants thirty thousand dollars for you!"

"Oh dear!" groaned Bunter.

There was no help for it, and he began to write. Barney McCann and Slick Flick watched him, over either fat shoulder.

"Dear Father,—I've been kidnapped by Barney McCann, and he wants thirty thousand pounds before he sets me free.

*Your affectionate Son,
"WILLIAM."*

The kidnapers watched in silence until Bunter signed the letter. Then they uttered a simultaneous exclamation.

"What's this mean, you fool?" barked McCann furiously. "You've put pounds and I said dollars! Now write the letter again, and sign it with your real name!"

Bunter, trembling in his fat skin, obeyed.

"What's that bunk?" demanded McCann.

"How long you been named William?" snapped Mr. Flick.

Bunter blinked at them.

"Eh! I was christened William," he answered—"William, George, after my uncles, I—"

"Your name's Fisher!" growled McCann.

"Wha-a-t?"

"You pesky piccan! Think we don't know your name?" hooted McCann. "Sign your own name!"

"I—I've signed it!" gasped Bunter, in amazement.

"What's the young fool getting at, Barney?" asked Slick Flick. "I don't seem to get him!"

"I guess I don't get him, either," growled McCann. "But I reckon he will smart some if he don't toe the line pronto. Now, bub, sign that letter 'F. T. Fish.'"

Bunter's little round eyes almost



BANG! BANG!

The Cowboy Kid again

Here he comes—Loopy Lane, the Cowboy Kid. Hot stuff with the gun and the rope—a regular hundred-per-cent he-man. But what's he riding? A tiger? Sure thing! Loopy and Sheba—great pals, great fighters. Their stirring adventures will keep you on the jump. Thrilling—exciting—and then some! Meet 'em in this week's grand issue of the

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bulged through his spectacles in his astonishment.

"You—you want me to sign this letter in Fishy's name?" he gurgled.

"Fishy's name? What do you mean, you pie-faced geek? Sign it 'F. T. Fish' afore I give you a sockdolager on the cabeza!"

"I—I don't mind!" gasped Bunter. Anything was preferable to a sockdolager on the cabeza. And he wrote the letter again and signed it "F. T. Fish."

"Now address this envelope!" growled McCann. "It's got to go in your own fist, or your popper may figure that we're stringing him."

Billy Bunter proceeded to address the envelope. There was a howl from McCann as he read the address:

"Samuel Bunter, Esq., Bunter Villa, Surrey."

"You asking for it, bub?" roared McCann.

Bunter jumped. "I—I say, what's the matter?" he gasped.

"Didn't I tell you to write your popper's address?"

"That's his address!" gasped Bunter.

"You boneheaded geek!" said McCann, with a ferocity in his look and tone that made Bunter's flesh creep. "You guess I'm the sort of guy you can play games with? By the great horned toad—"

"I—I—I say——" stuttered Bunter.

"You ain't forgotten your popper's address, I reckon. Now then, write it again—'H. K. Fish, 1,150, Two Hundred and Ninety-ninth Street, N.Y.'"

Bunter could only blink at him.

"Mum-mum-my father doesn't live in New York!" he gurgled at last. "He lives in Surrey."

"What?" roared McCann.

"Surrey!" gasped Bunter. "He's never been to New York, that I know of."

"Your popper's never been to New York!" articulated McCann.

"Nunno!"

"When he's cornering pork in New York at this blessed minute!" yelled McCann. "What's this game? You figure you can fool me, bub?"

"I—I—I say——" The truth was slowly filtering into Bunter's fat brain. "You—you—you don't think I'm Fishy, do you?"

"Think you're Fishy! We know you're Fish, if that's what you mean!" snarled McCann. "What you getting at?"

"Oh crikey! I ain't Fish!" gasped Bunter.

"You're not Fish?"

"N-n-no! I'm Bunter!"

"You're Bunter?" repeated McCann, like a man in a dream.

"Yes! Wha-a-at made you take me for Fishy?" gasped Bunter. "I don't look like him! He's ugly; he's long and skinny, too! We ain't a bit alike! I—I never knew you took me for him. Oh dear!"

The kidnappers gazed at Bunter in silence for some moments. Not for a moment till then had they doubted that their prisoner was Fisher T. Fish, the son of a millionaire. They could hardly doubt it now, though Bunter's terrified earnestness made an impression on them.

"You allow you ain't young Fishy?" articulated Barney McCann at last.

"Of course I'm not!" said Bunter, with some show of spirit. "It's jolly insulting to take me for him, too, I can tell you."

"He's lying, or he's loco!" said Slick Flick. "Ain't I got the letter in my pocket that he dropped, and ain't it written by old Hiram to his son?"

"That cinches it!" agreed McCann. "That letter!" gasped Bunter—he had forgotten all about the letter till he was thus reminded of it. "Oh dear! That letter—that was Fishy's—I—I happened to have it in my pocket——"

GREYFRIARS CELEBRITIES.

This week the MAGNET rhymester eulogises in verse "Micky" Desmond, a son of the Emerald Isle.



GREYFRIARS ancient noble pile
Boasts sons from many places,

And Desmond, from the Emerald Isle,
Is one that adds his graces.
Begorrah, he's a darlint boy,
A very prince of japers.
His jokes create real tears of joy;
"A 1" his merry capers.

The other chaps in Study Six,
Find Desmond bright and funny;
They're quite accustomed to his tricks,
And know his nature's sunny.
He's fiery—flaring up with force,
And blazing quite unduly,
But soon he suffers from remorse,
And feels it, well and truly.

He bears no malice—not a scrap,
Which helps his popularity.
He's quite a decent sort of chap,
With funds of jocularity.
"Bejabbers now," you hear him say,
In accents most euphonious.
His Irish brogue oft gets his way
With pleading, so harmonious.

Our Micky's very good all round,
His football's fast and snappy;
At cricket, too, he's really sound,
A strong and steady chappie.
But where he shines above the rest,
When Irish blood is rising;
In fisticuffs he comes off best,
His scrapping's most surprising.

Our Micky's got a sunny smile,
Begorrah! It's delightful!
He brought it from the Emerald Isle,
It's never cruel or spiteful.
Ould Ireland's son, her darlint lad,
Is friendly with the others;
He's always cheerful, proud, and glad
To treat his pals as brothers.

So "Michael Desmond" is the toast,
And yell it long and loudly.
He sure shall be fair Erin's boast,
He bears her banner proudly.
He may have kissed the Blarney stone.
He may be hot and heady,
But still, he's British to the bone,
And loyal and true and steady!

"Guff!" snapped McCann. "You want to make out you had another guy's letter in your pocket? Can it!"

"You—you see, I—I took that letter from the rack to give to Fishy!" gasped Bunter. "It—it came open by—by accident, so—so I never gave it to Fishy. He's a suspicious beast, and he would have thought I'd read it, so—so——"

"Jumpin' snakes!" said Mr. Flick. "I guess that fat guy is givin' us the goods, Barney! We've cinched the wrong possum!"

"I—I ain't Fish!" gasped Bunter. "I—I never was Fish! I—I mean, I'm not at all like Fish! He's skinny and ugly. If you'd ever seen Fishy you'd know I wasn't!"

"I guess I wondered that he wasn't at all like Old Man Fish, and how he'd dropped speaking like a kid that was raised in Noo Yark!" said Slick Flick slowly. "Great snakes! If he's telling the truth——"

McCann muttered an oath.

"I guess I ain't taking his word. If we made a mistake we got to try again! But I'm going to make sure. There's a kid missing from the school, and I guess it will be easy enough to pick up his name. Keep that guy safe while I'm gone!"

"You bet!"

McCann stamped savagely from the room. Slick Flick fixed his eyes on Bunter's fat face.

"So you ain't Fish?" he said.

"No fear!"

"Seems you stole a letter belonging to Fish and made us think you was him," said Mr. Flick unpleasantly. "Turn round!"

"Eh? What for?"

"Turn round!" roared Mr. Flick, in so savage a tone that Bunter jumped and turned round at once.

Crash!

"Yarooooogh!" roared Bunter, as he flew under the heavy impact of a boot.

Mr. Flick quitted the room and locked the door, leaving Billy Bunter roaring, as if he were bent on rivalling the celebrated Bull of Bashan.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

News!

"**T**HANK goodness!" ejaculated the Head.

It was the buzz of his telephone-bell that caused Dr. Locke to utter that ejaculation.

Sophocles lay unheeded on his table. The Head simply could not fix his attention on Sophocles.

He was intensely worried.

After the warning he had received from Mr. Fish that a "tough bunch" were bent on kidnapping Fisher T., after the precautions he had taken, the disaster had happened! At least, the Head had no doubt that it had happened. He could not think of Sophocles; he could only think of Fisher T. Fish and the kidnappers.

He almost jumped to the telephone. He had no doubt that it was news from Inspector Grimes.

"Yes, yes," said the Head eagerly. "Is that Mr. Grimes? Have you news of the boy? I am very anxious."

"Say, doc!" drawled a nasal voice.

The Head started violently.

"Bless my soul! It is that scoundrel again!" he exclaimed.

"You've got it!" drawled McCann.

"Say, doc, you reckon I was giving you the straight tip? What? You missed the Fish guy yet?"

"Rascal!" said the Head, in a deep

voice. "What have you done with the boy? Scoundrel!"

There was a chuckle over the wires.

Mr. McCann seemed pleased.

To the Head, it seemed as if the rascally kidnapper had rung him up, to gloat over his worry and distress; but, as a matter of fact, Barney McCann was in search of information. He was getting it; though, had he only known it, he was not getting it right.

"You've missed young Fish, doc?" asked Mr. McCann.

"You are well aware that he is missing, since you have kidnapped him," answered the Head sternly.

Another chuckle.

"So you've got wise to it that I've got the guy!" said McCann.

"The boy is missing from the school," said the Head. "I have no doubt now that he is in your hands. Wretch! The police are informed, and they are taking action! You will very soon be brought to account for your unscrupulous rascality!"

"Say, you've spilled a whole bibful, haven't you?" said Mr. McCann. "You sure do sound riled, doc. You sending that cable to Old Man Fish?"

"Certainly not! I shall not alarm Mr. Fish unnecessarily! I have no doubt that the police will find the boy in a very short time, and bring you and your confederates to justice. If you desire to escape the penalty of the law, you will return the boy to this school immediately."

"I can jest see myself doing that—I do not think!" chuckled Mr. McCann. "Not till Old Man Fish has coughed up the dust! No, sir! The sooner you send that cable to Old Man Fish the better. Anyhow, he will hear from me. I guess he will want to give the police a run for their money before he pays. I sure don't mind! If the British police can lay hands on this baby, they're welcome to cinch him in the stone jug."

"You are not in America now, sir!" said the Head contemptuously. "The police will very soon lay you by the heels, I have no doubt. You will be well advised to send the boy Fish back to the school at once."

"Forget it, doc! The price of that kid is thirty thousand dollars—not a Continental red cent less."

"Where is Fish now?" demanded the Head. "Has the boy been harmed?"

"Aw, you figure that I'm hurting a kid worth thirty thousand dollars?" chuckled McCann. "I'm sure looking after him like he was made of solid gold, doc. He's in a safe place, that guy is, and he stays there till Old Man Fish jerks up the durocks. I'll say he's being looked after careful. You don't want to worry about that guy. He's all right."

"I repeat——"

"So long, doc! I'll give you a ring another time, and ask you how the cops are getting on, looking for a needle in a haystack."

And Barney McCann rang off.

The Head put up the receiver, and stood with a dark and frowning brow. He was deeply incensed; and he had a feeling of helplessness. It was the first time that the old gentleman had been brought in direct contact with the underworld. His calm and scholastic existence, hitherto, had passed far from the activities of such persons as Barney McCann. He had read of such persons in the United States, just as he had read of cannibals in the South Sea Islands; but he had never dreamed of

establishing contact with such dreadful characters. It was a painful shock for the Head; and he was worried and distressed and angry.

"Bless my soul!" he said, at last.

He paced his study in great agitation.

Buzzzzzz.

"Upon my word!" exclaimed the Head, in tones of great anger, as the telephone buzzed again.

His eyes glinted as he jerked off the receiver. He was in no mood for further insolence from Barney McCann.

"How dare you?" said the Head into the transmitter. "I repeat, how dare you? How dare you speak to me? I warn you, you scoundrel, that justice will not be long in overtaking you. In the meantime, if you have any sense of decency, refrain from communicating with me. Do you hear? You audacious, insolent rascal——"

"Dr. Locke!" ejaculated a surprised voice.

"Oh! Oh dear!" gasped the Head. He almost dropped the receiver. "Is—is that you, Mr. Grimes?"

"Yes, sir! What——"

"Dear me! Pray excuse me, Mr. Grimes! I was quite unaware that I—I was addressing you!" gasped Dr. Locke.

"So I infer, sir!" said the Courtfield

ANOTHER READER WINS
POCKET WALLET!

Roared Fishy to Bunter one
day:
"I'll burst you, you silly, fat
Jay!
You've pinched my jam-tart;
I'll sure make you smart——"
But Bunter had vanished
away.

Miss M. Bing, of 28, The Mall,
Faversham, Kent, who sent in the
above winning Greystriars limerick,
has been forwarded one of our
leather pocket wallets.

inspector, very dryly. "I was certainly surprised—h'm—by your observations."

"I beg you to excuse me! I fancied that it was that detestable rogue McCann again—he has just spoken to me, gloating over his successful crime. You understand?"

"Oh, quite!" said Mr. Grimes.

"I really beg your pardon, Mr. Grimes. I am sure you understand my agitation! Is there any news of the boy Fish?"

"That is why I rang, sir," said Mr. Grimes. "I thought you would be glad to hear——"

"Oh, yes—yes, certainly! I have been waiting most anxiously! What is the news, my dear Mr. Grimes?"

"Nothing very definite, so far, sir; but I have not been idle. I think I can say that a clue to the missing boy is in my possession. I think," said Mr. Grimes, slowly and judiciously—"I think I can say there is a clue."

"I am very thankful to hear it, Mr. Grimes. I have every confidence in your ability."

"Thank you, sir; I shall endeavour to deserve it," said Mr. Grimes. "I have what I regard as a definite clue; and I am following it up. I can hardly be more explicit at the present moment."

"I should be very relieved to hear anything."

"Very well, sir. I may say that a man—evidently an American—who has been staying lately at the Courtfield

Hotel, has left suddenly—very suddenly—this afternoon. His suitcase remains at the hotel, and he stated definitely that he would return for tea at five o'clock. He has not, however, returned; and I have learned that he took the London express immediately after leaving the hotel. It could not, therefore, have been his intention to return at the time stated. Whether he travelled alone I have not yet ascertained. But I am at work, sir—I am at work."

"I rely upon you absolutely, Mr. Grimes."

"Thank you, sir."

The Head felt considerably relieved when he put up the receiver again. He proceeded to Mr. Quelch's study to tell him the good news; and the Remove master was relieved also.

It was comforting to know that Inspector Grimes was following up a clue to the missing Fish. It would have been still more comforting to know that Fish was not missing at all, but was sitting at the window of the old tower watching for the return of Harry Wharton & Co. from Highcliffe; but, unfortunately, the two masters did not know that.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

"Adsum!"

"HURRAH for us!" chortled Bob Cherry.

"The hurrahfulness is terrific!"

"Just one run!" said Harry Wharton. "But we did it!"

"We did!" chuckled Bob.

It was a merry party that crowded the motor-bus rolling along the road over Courtfield common.

The Remove cricketers were in high feather. That hard-fought game had proved a victory, after all, and Highcliffe had been beaten by a run. But one was all that was wanted, in the circumstances. The finish had been very exciting; but the Greystriars men had pulled through, and they were returning victorious. And the motor-bus echoed to their satisfaction.

The cheery party dropped off at the corner near the school and walked to Greystriars. They came in in a hilarious crowd. The game had ended rather earlier than expected, but it was near time for lock-up, and a crowd of other fellows were coming in at the gates. Skinner of the Remove joined the cricketers as they tramped merrily into the quad.

"Heard about Fishy?" he asked.

"Fishy!" repeated Wharton. "What about Fishy?"

"He's missing!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"They've got him!" said Skinner. "Those jolly old kidnappers, you know! I never believed there was anything in it. I thought it was just Fishy's swank, making out that kidnappers were after him. But there's been no end of a kick-up."

"Quelch phoned me at Highcliffe to ask if he was there," said Harry. "He wasn't, of course. Mean to say he's missing?"

"You bet! It's genuine about the kidnappers," said Skinner. "The prefects have been searching the place for him; he can't be found. Old Grimes has been to see the Head; you know what that means! The police have been called in!"

"But Fishy was gated," said Bob.

"He seems to have gone out, all the same."

"I can't understand that," said Wharton. "Fishy wanted to come over to

Mr. Quelch called the roll, though he did not expect to receive an answer from Fish. It was the unexpected that happened. "Fish!" "Adsum!" said Fish, and Mr. Quelch almost fell down.



Highcliffe with us in a crowd, but he's not the man to run risks. He knew that gang were after him. I can't understand his going out of gates alone and risking it."

"Well, he's missing!"

"Poor old Fishy!"

Harry Wharton & Co. went into the House. Mr. Quelch met them as they came in, and the Remove master's expression showed that he was perturbed.

"You have seen nothing of Fish, Wharton?" he asked.

"No, sir."

"It appears that he has fallen into lawless hands," said Mr. Quelch. "The—the kidnapper had the insolence to communicate with the Head, and he stated that Fish had fallen into his hands while at Highcliffe. You informed me over the telephone that Fish had not been seen there."

"I am sure he was not there, sir," answered Wharton. "I've asked all the fellows, and nobody saw him there. Unless Bunter saw him," he added. "But Bunter had left before you phoned, sir."

"Any information would, of course, be useful to the police, who are now searching for Fish," said Mr. Quelch. "It is important to know when and where he was last seen. Bunter was at Highcliffe?"

"He came over with us, sir, but he seems to have left quite early in the match. I suppose he's back here now."

"It is possible that Bunter may have seen him, and may be able to give us some information," said Mr. Quelch. "I will speak to him. Send him to my study if you see him."

"Very well, sir."

But the Remove men did not see Bunter. The Owl of the Remove, usually in evidence, was now conspicuous by his absence. But it was close on time for call-over, and the Removites went into Big Hall expecting to see

Bunter there. They did not see him, however, and there were two vacant places in the Remove when Mr. Quelch came in to call the roll. But almost immediately after Mr. Quelch had entered a bony figure slipped quietly into Hall and joined the Remove.

The Removites gazed almost in stupefaction at Fisher T. Fish.

They stared at him as if he had been a ghost.

"Fish!" gasped Wharton.

"Fish!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"FISH!" repeated a dozen Removites in various tones of wonder and amazement.

Fisher T. Fish stared in return. The surprise of his Form-fellows seemed to cause Fishy surprise.

"Say, what's this game?" he asked. "You figure that I'm a spook—or what?"

"You—you—you're here!" stammered Skinner.

"Sure!"

"How did you escape?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Escape?" repeated Fisher T. Fish blankly.

"My esteemed Fishy—"

"Look here, you galoots trying to string me along—or what?" demanded Fisher T. Fish suspiciously. "What you getting at?"

"Haven't you been kidnapped?" gasped Nugent.

Fisher T. Fish jumped.

"Kidnapped! Who's been kidnapped? Not this baby!"

"My only hat!"

"Where have you been, then?" exclaimed Wharton blankly.

"Eh? I guess I've been around," said Fisher T. Fish. "Some guy been pulling your leg that I was kidnapped? Ha, ha!"

"You frabjous ass! Everybody thinks you're kidnapped!" howled Skinner. "The Head thinks so, and

Quelchy; and they've called in the police—"

"Oh, Jerusalem crickets!"

"Silence!" called out Wingate of the Sixth.

Mr. Quelch was beginning the roll. So far Mr. Quelch had not noted that unexpected addition to the ranks of the Remove. Fellows near at hand were all turning their heads to stare at Fisher T. Fish, but Mr. Quelch was unaware of the excitement.

He proceeded to call the names, and the fellows answered. When he came to Fish's name Mr. Quelch called it as usual, though he was not in expectation of receiving the usual answer. But it was the unexpected that happened.

"Fish!"

"Adsum!"

Mr. Quelch almost fell down.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Not Missing!

"FISH!"

"Fish!"

"Great Scott!"

Big Hall at Greyfriars was in a buzz of excitement.

Fellows repeated the name of Fish on all sides and craned their necks to look at the fellow who had answered from the ranks of the Remove.

It was quite a sensation.

Mr. Quelch, forgetting the roll, stared across at the Remove as if transfixed. The other masters stared. Even the great men of the Sixth took a lively interest in the usually unimportant existence of a Lower Fourth junior.

"Fish!" stammered Mr. Quelch.

The Remove master had already marked one fellow absent—Bunter. He had fully expected to have to mark Fish absent. And Fish was there! Fisher T. Fish, as large as life, was

standing in his place in the Remove. Mr. Quelch could hardly believe his gimlet eyes.

"Fish!" he repeated dazedly.

There was astonishment on all sides. But the most astonished fellow seemed to be Fisher Tarleton Fish himself. Fishy stared round him blankly, wondering what all the fuss was about.

"Say, you guys, what's biting the whole lot of you?" demanded Fishy. "I don't get this! I surely don't get it! What's the game?"

Mr. Quelch recovered himself a little.

"Fish! You are there, Fish?"

"I guess so, sir! I mean yep!"

"Come here!"

Fisher T. Fish left his place and advanced up the Hall. All eyes were fixed on the bony face and lank figure. If Fisher T. Fish wanted the limelight, he had it now.

Mr. Quelch's gimlet eyes bored into him.

"Fish! You are here! Where have you been? Am I to understand that you have escaped from the hands of the kidnapers?"

"I—I guess I ain't been kidnapped, sir!" said the bewildered Fishy.

"You have not?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Nopel! Not that I know of, sir!"

"Then where have you been?" rapped Mr. Quelch. "You were strictly commanded to remain within gates—"

"I haven't been out of gates, sir."

"What—what? You have been searched for over the whole school, and you could not be found!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Several prefects searched for you all through Greyfriars, and reported you missing."

Fisher T. Fish started.

He remembered Loder's call in the Cloisters. He had taken it for granted, at the time, that Loder of the Sixth was looking for him for personal vengeance. He realised otherwise now.

"Oh!" he ejaculated. "I—I guess I never knew I was being looked for, sir! I—I don't see why I should be searched for—"

"The man McCann telephoned to the Head that he had seized you at Highcliffe this afternoon!" said Mr. Quelch sternly. "Naturally, you were searched for, and as you could not be found, the police were communicated with."

"Oh, great gophers!" gasped Fishy. "But I haven't been to Highcliffe, sir! That guy McCann was sure stringing the Head along, sir, unless he's cinched some other guy by mistake. He's never seen me, that I know of. Anyhow, he never bagged this baby, sir."

"Then where have you been?" exclaimed the exasperated Remove master. "You were searched for by several prefects, and Loder reported that you could not be found within the precincts of the school."

"Oh dear! D-d-d-did you set Loder looking for me, sir?" gasped Fishy.

"Certainly I did!"

"I—I guess I never knew, sir. I—I thought he was after me to lick me," stammered Fisher T. Fish.

"What!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a roar from the school. This simple explanation of Fisher Tarleton Fish's mysterious absence, seemed to take Greyfriars by storm.

Mr. Quelch raised his hand.

"Silence!"

The laughter died away. But every face in Hall wore a grin now. The

matter, from tragic, had turned to comic.

"Then—then you knew that Loder was searching for you. Fish?" the Form master exclaimed angrily.

"I guess I heard him yowling, sir."

"You heard him what?"

"I—I mean, I heard him calling me, sir! But I guessed I'd lie doggo, sir, as I thought he was after me with a cane."

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"I never knew I'd been missed, or anything, sir. I wasn't wise to it that that guy McCann had been calling the Head on the phone. You see, sir, Loder wanted to fag me this afternoon, and the Remove don't fag; but I guessed I'd leave it till the fellows came in before I argued with Loder about it. He's apt to go off the deep end, sir."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" hooted Mr. Quelch.

Loder, from the ranks of the Sixth, looked at Fisher T. Fish as if he could have bitten him. Mr. Quelch gave the bully of the Sixth a freezing glance.

"Loder, were you aware that Fish was concealing himself from you?"

"Certainly not sir! He had no reason to do so!"

"He states that you ordered him to fag," said the Remove master coldly. "You are well aware that the Lower Fourth do not fag, Loder."

"Fish was mistaken, sir," said Loder. "I merely asked him to take a message to the school shop. I had no intention of fagging him against his will."

Fisher T. Fish grinned. But he did not go into particulars. It was not prudent to exasperate Loder, if he could help it.

"So this—this is the explanation of your absence, Fish!" said Mr. Quelch at last. "You have caused a serious disturbance in the school by this thoughtless folly. You should certainly have appeared at once when you heard Loder calling you. You will take a hundred lines. I am glad, at all events, that matters are no worse. Go back to your place."

Fisher T. Fish went back to his place. He winked at the other Removites as he rejoined them, and there was a chuckle through the ranks of the Lower Fourth.

"So that's the giddy history of the giddy mystery!" grinned Bob Cherry. "That blighter McCann must have been pulling the Beak's leg."

"I guess so."

"Unless—" said Harry Wharton gravely.

"Unless what?"

"Unless McCann's made a mistake and got the wrong man. Where's Bunter?"

"Oh, great pip! You don't suppose he—"

"Well, Bunter was at Highcliffe, and McCann said he got his man at Highcliffe. And you remember that queer thing that happened in the Cloisters yesterday—and that yarn Bunter spun us about a lift in a car last week—and he's not come back here from Highcliffe."

"Oh, my hat! But McCann couldn't make such a mistake. Bunter's nothing like Fishy to look at."

"But if he's never seen Fishy, he wouldn't know that."

"No; but—"

"Silence!" called out Wingate.

Mr. Quelch was resuming calling the roll, and there was silence in Big Hall until he had finished.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

No Bunter!

"MY dear Quelch—" said the Head.

"Fish, sir—" gasped the Remove master.

Mr. Quelch had hurried to the Head's study immediately after calling-over. He was anxious to impart the good news. He arrived a little out of breath.

"There is news, Quelch?" exclaimed the Head.

"The best, sir! The boy is here!"

"Hero!" exclaimed the Head blankly.

"It appears he was not missing at all—"

"Bless my soul!"

"The foolish boy had concealed himself when Loder was searching for him, under the mistaken impression that he was to be caned," said Mr. Quelch. "He came in, as usual, for calling-over."

"Dear me!" said the Head.

"I have given him an imposition for his foolish conduct," said Mr. Quelch. "But you will agree with me, sir, that this outcome of the matter is a very great relief."

"Very!" said the Head. "Very much so indeed! I am delighted to hear it, Quelch! Delighted! Then—then it would seem that the rascal McCann was seeking to delude me by stating that he had kidnapped Fish?"

"It would appear so, sir, though I cannot fathom his motive. Fish appears to think that McCann does not know him by sight, so it is possible that he has made some mistake, and kidnapped the wrong person. That would explain the matter."

"I trust not," said the Head; "though, if the boy concerned does not belong to Greyfriars, it is not our immediate concern. Possibly a Highcliffe boy, as he stated that he had seized him at Highcliffe. But I trust not—I trust not!"

"No doubt you will inform Inspector Grimes—"

"Dear me! Yes, yes. Yes, certainly," said the Head. "I will inform Mr. Grimes at once. It is a very odd thing that Mr. Grimes has a clue to the missing boy, when he is not missing at all. That strikes me as very odd, Quelch. However, I will speak to him."

Dr. Locke rang up Courtfield at once. He was answered by the station-sergeant, who stated that Mr. Grimes would come to the telephone at once. A few moments later Mr. Grimes' voice was heard.

"Ah! Dr. Locke?" Mr. Grimes coughed. "I have no further news, sir, none, so far. I regret to say that the clue I mentioned to you has not led us very far, sir. It appears that the American gentleman who left the hotel suddenly—H'm!—left without paying his bill, and his suit-case has been opened, and has been found to contain nothing but—H'm!—bricks. His sudden departure appears to be explained by the fact that he owed the hotel proprietor the sum of nine pounds sixteen shillings and sixpence, which he had not the means of liquidating. But—"

"My dear Mr. Grimes—"

"Rome, sir, was not built in a day," said Mr. Grimes. "I hope shortly to have more definite news—"

"But, sir—" The Head tried to get in a word.

"I may tell you, sir, that I have now

(Continued on page 28.)



THE TEST MATCH HOPE!

By JOHN BREARLEY



Out of the Past!

IT was twilight when they drew up their chairs at last, Alec watching his brother's face expectantly.

He knew something was coming when Bill looked like that—often he wondered what people would say if they could only see "Smiling" Bill Murray with the fierce fighting look he only wore when they were alone!

"Alec—I've got a chance to play for England this year!"

Alec stirred at the abrupt words. There was no boast behind them; they were just a plain statement.

"Gosh, I should think so! Bill, the papers are full of you! Smiling—"

"Chuck it, fathhead! I've got a chance. It may not come off—I may not even get a trial—but Major Weaver thinks I'm a certainty if I can keep it up!"

"Of course you are!" cried Alec loyally. "Don't be an ass!"

"I don't dare think about it, lad—but there it is! It's too good to be true; but if it comes off, it means—"

He looked silently at the man at the desk, and Alec nodded.

"Dad!" he finished gently.

"Three hundred pounds saved and dad's operation at last!" cried Bill exultantly.

The two were quiet for a moment, lost in thought. Then Alec raised his head.

"But, old son," he ventured doubtfully, "can you earn all that in your first season?"

Bill's eyes gleamed deeply. He drew a long eager breath.

"Yes. If I play in all the Tests!"

"Oh!" gasped Alec, in quick dismay. The grey eyes bored into his brown ones.

"It can be done!" snapped Bill abruptly. "Ever heard of Mr. James Barr, Alec?"

"James Barr?" repeated the younger boy, knitting his brows. "You mean the millionaire chap who's just bought the Hunter estate along the road? Bit queer, isn't he?"

"Yes. Queer—but a great sportsman. He's backing up Severnshire cricket for all he's worth—"

"Oh! Well, what about him, Bill?"

"Just this. Every time I play for England this season he'll give me a cheque for fifty pounds!"

Alec came out of his chair as though he'd been shot.

"Gr-great Scott! What did he say?"

"That's all!" Bill grinned at his brother's expression. "I was coming home when he came up behind me with Major Weaver. 'Here, young Murray,' he bawls out. 'Want to earn some money?' I smiled and said I did, you bet. 'Well, then,' he said, 'there's fifty pounds waiting for you every Test you play in. Severnshire can do with an England player—and we'll see what Mr. Know-all Jenkins says to that, Weaver, my lad!' And without waiting for me to thank him, Alec, he got into a whacking great car and pushed off!"

Fifty pounds a Test Match—Smiling Murray's bank balance will be "up" £250 if he plays in all five Tests!

Alec's face was a study in joyful astonishment.

"My sainted aunt! Does he mean it?" Bill nodded.

"It's just the sort of thing he does. He's given the county a terrific subscription this season and they're going to engage another fast bowler on the strength of it! Well, what do you think?"

"Think of it, you old ass? It means five times fifty pounds to us!"

"Thanks for the compliment!" chuckled Bill. His rugged face grew resolute once more.

"I'm going to fight for it like blazes!" he cried. "Apart from the fact that playing for England'll just about make me stand on my head. We'll be made then, Alec!"

A hand closed on Alec's arm in a grip of iron.

"But it's those fifty-pound cheques

I'm after—all five of them. If everything comes off this season, with my pay we'll save three hundred pounds on our heads—and then—"

His fist smashed down on the table.

"Dad gets back his life—and his memory!" he cried in triumph. "And perhaps he'll remember—"

But Alec was not listening. He was staring at the window, eyes wide and lips parted. Slowly his hand went up, pointing stiffly.

"Look, Bill!" he whispered hoarsely.

Bill turned like a flash.

Something was at the darkened window, peering in, a shapeless, ominous figure like a phantom in a nightmare.

Even as the boys looked, the Thing melted away. And when they dashed outside there was no one, only the dusky deserted lane and a faint rustle like a fox in the hedgerow. Then silence.

In a sheltered hollow, high up among the wild Beacon Hills beyond Severn City, the ancient manor house of Woodside Hall nestled deep amid its own tangled shrubberies and trees, a picturesque and lonely relic of bygone days.

Night had fallen, and the moon had not yet climbed over the hills, so that the countryside around slumbered in shadowy silence. In the house, a hall-light, shining through the glass above the huge front door, made a sickly yellow splash on the broad gravel drive, but the rest of the rambling old pile was in darkness, its high peaked gables and quaint eaves sunk in a soft mysterious blur. And on the edge of the drive, crouching in the shadow of an old yew tree, a little man watched the house with the untiring patience of an Indian scout.

He had been at his post since the coming of dusk, waiting with a saturnine grin engraven on his wizened face. Suddenly his breath hissed softly through his battered teeth, and his wiry body stiffened. Another light had stabbed the darkness from a room on the second floor, and he could see the figure of a man moving leisurely about in front of the window.

Just as leisurely the watcher rose to his feet, and, leaving his hiding-place, began to sidle carefully towards the light; and even had anyone been at his elbow, they would scarcely have heard him go, for he moved like a shadow. Not for nothing was Joe Necker known to certain people and the police as the Weasel. Whether in city or country, amid hard bricks or open fields, he could travel as silently as a stoat in a game preserve.

For a second he showed on the glimmering drive, the next, he was lost again in the shadow of the house, gliding along to where a solid wall of ivy climbed to the roof.

Unhesitatingly, he grasped the stout twisted roots, mounting until he was level with the lighted room. A measuring glance, an outflung arm, and he was on the window-ledge, peering into a cosy well-lit study. His face creased in a spiteful grin at what he saw.

Although the night was not cold, a brisk fire sparkled in the grate, and a tall, distinguished-looking man lounged comfortably before it, absorbed in some papers he had just taken from an open case at his feet. By his elbow stood a small table, laden with a cigar box and decanter. The whole room spoke aloud of luxury and wealth.

The Weasel's sneer deepened. Raising his knuckles, he tapped gently on the glass, a curiously jerky tattoo. If a gun shot had suddenly split the quietness of the night, the man in the study could not have received a greater shock.

Slowly the papers slipped from his limp fingers, his face went chalky white with fear. Not until the signal had been repeated three times did he move, and then he almost fell out of his armchair and lurched blindly towards the window. The next instant he had flung it wide open, and the Weasel's face was thrust close to his own.

"You!" he gasped. He fell back, eyes bulging, and hands writhing nervously.

Soundlessly as ever, the Weasel slid quickly into the room and closed the window. Without a word, he crossed to the fire and took the padded armchair, calmly pouring himself out a drink. The electric light snapped out abruptly. His host came towards him in frantic strides.

"You!" he repeated hoarsely. "Joe Necker! What do you want, curse you?"

The Weasel's small eyes glittered as they surveyed him deliberately, and his lips curled.

"That's a nice greeting from one ole pal to another!" he gibed sourly. "Just come to see my old comrade, Luke, o' course."

Beads of sweat gleamed suddenly on Luke Thurston's high, white forehead. "None of that!" he snarled. "Joe Necker! By heaven, I thought you were abroad—or dead!"

"Hoped I was, you mean!" mocked the Weasel shrilly. "And I've been living quietly in the city under your very nose all the time! But you've grown into a big man these days, Luke! Swagger offices in all the big towns now, eh? Dosom pal of all the fy-nancial heads, what? Well, well!"

He bowed his head in mock humility. "This is like old times, ain't it? Remember how we used to work like dogs—together? Yes, you were a clever cove, even then, Luke! And now you're one of the big noises, eh? Well, we struggled hard enough for our

dough, and you've turned your share to good advantage, heh, heh, heh!"

"Joe! Stow it, you fool!"

Almost sobbing with fright, Thurston, one of the richest business men in Severnshire, flung himself at the door and stared wildly up and down the passage outside. The Weasel cackled with laughter.

"Ye needn't worry!" he scoffed. "No one's about to listen. Yer flunkies are all below-stairs eatin' their supper at this time; I've been watching your house for days, ole pal!"

His little evil eyes ran swiftly about the room.

"Dee-ar ole house!" he sniggered tauntingly. "What a barn it was when you first took it, Luke! But it suited us, hey? Nice and lonely then, wasn't it? Say, Luke, is the plant still—"

He jerked his thumb significantly towards the floor.

Luke Thurston sank into a chair with a groan, completely unnerved by this spectre out of the past.

"Yes!" he confessed. "Still in the basement. I never could get rid of it, so I bricked up the cellars!"

The Weasel's eyes brightened instantly, and he leaned forward, whispering.

"Did yer? Now buck up, ole pal! I ain't come hear to snack and snarl! Listen, couldn't we start again? I'll still do the work, o' course, and in your position now, you could get rid of the stuff in bales—"

A violent gesture cut him short.

"No, no, no!" gasped Luke Thurston frantically. "Stow it, Joe! The plant's still there—and stays there for ever, I hope!"

He stared piteously at the warped little crook in the big armchair.

"Why have you come here, Joe? You know I'm going straight these days! What is it—blackmail? If you're hard up—"

"Shut yer gab!" snarled the disappointed Weasel. "I don't want your dirty money—just thought yo'd like some fun again! You always were a quitter, though! 'Member the night we downed John—alright, alright, keep yer seat!"

He bent closer to the cringing Thurston, and for the first time in the interview, dropped his voice almost to a breath.

"But you've got to join up with me again, Luke, whether ye like it or not! That's what I'm here to tell you now! We've got to help each other again, my lad—and we've got to do it proper! For if we don't, by all that's living, we're in for trouble!"

His sunken eyes glowed contemptuously.

INTRODUCTION.

"SMILING" BILL MURRAY, a Severnshire County colt, causes a stir in the cricket world by performing an amazing bowling feat which enables his county to gain a surprising victory over a crack Australian touring side. In consequence of this he is hailed on all sides as the hope of England in the Tests. "Smiling" Bill is more than elated at his success, for he has a fixed purpose in life—to earn the wherewithal to pay for an operation to cure his paralysed father. Years before, Lene John Murray, private detective, had been "outed" when about to expose a conning gang in Severn City, and has been unable to speak since. Bill's aim to help his father is shared by his young brother Alec, who looks after their home in Deasford village, on the outskirts of Severn City. Returning home from the County cricket ground on the memorable day of the match with the Australians, Bill tells his brother he has some startling news for him.

(Now read on).

"An' it's through you we're in the cart at last—as I always reckoned we'd be!" he growled. "The night we downed John Murray, you should ha' let me finished him! Come on!" he ordered roughly, as Thurston crumpled in his seat. "Face the music, you hound! When I do anything, I believe in making a job of it!"

A scraggy forefinger tapped mercilessly on Luke Thurston's knee.

"I was a fool to have let you take charge that night!" went on the evil voice. "We should have stuck it out! But no; you insisted on splitting up what money we'd made, and bolting; and all because of one man, and him we'd left up in the hills—outed!"

"How did I know then that John Murray always worked alone?" replied Thurston sullenly. "When you found out he was on our track—here of all places—I thought others would, too, and that the game was up—"

"O' course you did!" sneered the Weasel.

"Oh, chuck it!" snapped Thurston wildly. "Perhaps my nerve isn't as good as yours. I don't care. It was bad enough finding someone after us—I—I just couldn't stand for murder in cold blood!"

He stared furtively at his companion, as though seeking some gleam of comfort.

"But what are you worrying about, Joe? You silenced him, didn't you? John Murray has never spoken since; and never will. I know that much. And I know now that he was the only man who'd found us out, or we could never have come back to England, let alone Severnshire!"

"I never left it!" sneered the Weasel. "You took your share and ran like a rabbit. It's always been a wonder to me the police didn't get fidgety when this house was left empty and they found John Murray—"

"Chuck it, I tell you! I was back here in six months, wasn't I? You seem to know all about me!"

"Yes; when you found out my bash on the head had shut John Murray up for ever—or so people said!" replied Necker harshly.

The financier jerked feverishly at his collar.

"Joe!" he panted. "Is there any chance of him recovering, then? The first thing I found out was that the surgeons had given him up—that he would never speak or regain his memory again! Isn't that so, Joe? Tell me, old friend. I—I—"

Under the Weasel's withering glare, he cowered pitiably, his lips trembling so that he could not speak. Necker continued to eye him for a long minute, then poured out a generous drink and thrust it towards him.

"Here, scoff this, and stiffen up!" he growled. "And listen to what I'm going to tell you. I never left Severn City; and I've never 'gone straight'—bitingly. "Instead, I've just kept my eye on things—and people!"

He leaned closer to his companion.

"Interested in cricket, Luke?" he leered surprisingly. Then, as Luke Thurston half rose. "No; I can see you ain't! Well, ever heard of Bill Murray—'Smiling' Bill Murray, as every fool in the city calls the cub!"

"'Smiling' Bill Murray!" repeated the financier shakily. "Y-yes! That's the boy the paper's are full of, just now, isn't it? Is he—"

"Yes, he is!" nodded the Weasel emphatically. "He's John Murray's

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As the Weasel tapped gently on the glass the man in the study slowly dropped the paper and his face went chalky white with fear!

eldest son! And let me tell you, he's the danger we're up against! It's a real one, Luke!"

"Oh! Let me think——"
 "You think nothing!" snarled Necker viciously. "I'm doing the thinking—and the talking, too, from now on! This kid's a cricket pro.—and he's good! Keep that in mind!"

There was a silence while he poured himself out another drink.

"I've always kept an eye on this Bill Murray!" he went on musingly. "Dunno why, quite, but there it is! O' course I had to snoop around John Murray a bit until I found out for certain that he was out of the running, and so I got to noticing young Bill. And, somehow, the way that kid acted when——"

"Yes, yes!"

"When we closed his father's trap!" continued the Weasel glaring. "Made me think! And I've been watching Mr. Blooming Bill Murray ever since. There's nothing like knowing where danger is likely to pop up from, Luke, and watching it! I've watched him everywhere he's been—cricket ground, shop, anywhere! And a couple of weeks ago watched him—at home!"

Briefly he gave Thurston an account of the conversation he had overheard between Bill and Alec on the evening following the famous Australian match. He left nothing out, and repeated Bill's vow almost word for word. Yet when he had finished a faint glow of returning confidence shone in Luke Thurston's glassy eyes.

"Then things are not so bad, Joe!" he answered timidly.

The Weasel stared.

"What d'ye mean?" he snorted suspiciously.

"Why, what you overheard really amounts to this; that John Murray is just as far off from recovery as ever—unless his son plays five times for Eng-

land this year! Well, supposing he doesn't?"

An angry fist thudded on the table. "But he will, curse you!" snarled Necker. "You fool, he's the talk of England! He's already beaten the Australians once, and since then, Severnshire's beaten Surrey and Sussex and drawn with Yorkshire—and all through him! D'ye think I haven't been finding out things this last fortnight! I tell yer, nothing but an accident can stop him earning that old fool's two hundred and fifty quid!"

He jumped to his feet excitedly.

"Besides—suppose he doesn't save it this year; he might next! Bill Murray means to get his father's memory back, and I tell yer again, Luke, behind that kid's smiling face there's enough grit to put you and me behind the bars for the rest of our lives! Now swallow that!"

Luke Thurston stood up also. Another stiff drink was swallowed in silence, and when he had finished it, a change had come over him strongly.

After four years of fancied security, a pitfall was yawning at his feet. For the crimes committed when he and Weasel Joe Necker had been busy flooding the country with false notes a swift reckoning was on its way, unless he could find a way to stop it. In that critical moment the brain that had lifted Luke Thurston to power and wealth—honest wealth, too, although started with ill-gotten gains—began to run smoothly once more. The sudden calmness of his manner astonished the vindictive Weasel.

"Well, me lord—come to earth?" he sneered.

Thurston waved his hand impatiently.

"Stop it, Joe; we're wasting time. I can see things exactly now. What's your plan?"

A smile of evil enjoyment twisted Necker's thin lips, making him look like some horrible bird of prey.

"My plan!" he whispered gloatingly. "A simple one, Luke! I'm going to save smiling Bill Murray the trouble of earning that money—because I'm going to finish the little job I started with his father four years ago!"

"You mean you're going to kill John Murray?"

"Just that!" said the Weasel calmly. "Look here——"

Thurston smiled disdainfully.

"Oh, cut it out!" he snapped. "You've ridden me enough for one night, Joe. Listen, you fool! You're going to kill a man who can neither speak nor move! I don't doubt you'll do it cleverly, but you'll stir up every detective in England for a first-class murder investigation, during which they might find out—anything! You're going to risk putting your neck in a noose, and all the time there's a

simple way of dealing with John Murray staring you in the face!"

"Where?" exploded the Weasel.

"Put Bill Murray out of action, too."

The Weasel's thin lips parted. He stood staring at Thurston until the other man laughed shortly.

"You suggested the scheme yourself, Joe!" he said mockingly. "Didn't you tell me Bill Murray will certainly play for England—barring accidents? Well, accidents have happened before, Joe!"

He put his lips to the little man's ear.

"And you've 'arranged' them before, Joe!"

The Weasel nodded slowly, his eyes glittering. For a long time he stood thinking, then at last he patted Luke Thurston's arm.

"You're right, old pal! You've still got a head on you—and I'm the mug! If Bill Murray should have an accident—one that'll stop him playing cricket for keeps—then John Murray's tongue'll stay as silent as ever it was!"

He held out his hand.

"I'll see to it, Luke. Perhaps—after all—Smiling Bill Murray won't play for England this season. Or ever!"

(If Thurston and Necker succeed in their purpose, "Smiling" Bill Murray's success is going to be short-lived. But, whatever you do, don't miss next week's gripping instalment—it's full of startling situations!)

GANGSTERS AT GREYFRIARS

(Continued from page 24.)

secured a clue of a rather more definite nature," went on Mr. Grimes. "I have every hope of reporting soon that we are on the track of the boy Fish—"

"Bless my soul! I—I rang you up to tell you, Mr. Grimes, that—"

"I understand, sir! You are naturally anxious! But shortly I have every hope of communicating news of the missing Fish—"

"He is not missing, Mr. Grimes!" jerked out the Head.

"Eh?"

"He is here!"

"Wha-a-t?"

"It proves that he was in the school all the time—"

"Well!" Mr. Grimes' voice expressed deep feelings. "Well! Really, Dr. Locke—"

"I am sorry—very sorry—"

"Really, Dr. Locke—really—" Mr. Grimes' voice conveyed infinite disgust. "Really, sir, I think that might have been ascertained before the forces of the law were set in motion! Really—"

"I regret it very much, Mr. Grimes! I can only apologise! The foolish boy has been punished! I can only say—are you there, Mr. Grimes? Can you hear me? I beg to repeat—Dear me!" said the Head, blinking at Mr. Quelch, "Inspector Grimes has rung off! I wonder whether Inspector Grimes is feeling offended about anything."

Mr. Quelch smiled.

"At all events, the matter has ended satisfactorily, sir!" he remarked.

"Oh, quite! Quite."

Mr. Quelch left the study and the Head, quite relieved in his mind now, sat down to Sophocles and prepared for an hour of sheer enjoyment.

The Remove master, equally relieved, rustled away to his own study. But his relief was destined to be of short duration. Harry Wharton was awaiting him in his study.

"Well, Wharton, what is it?" asked Mr. Quelch, with a kind glance at the captain of his Form.

"Bunter has not come in yet, sir."

"Indeed!"

"I think there is something that I ought to tell you, sir," said Harry. "I've talked it over with my friends, and we agree that Bunter may be in trouble. He left Highcliffe early, but he never came back here. And—and I hear that that man McCann said that he kidnaped Fish at Highcliffe—" Wharton paused. "I—I think the man may have made some mistake, sir, and—and got hold of Bunter."

Mr. Quelch started.

"Come, come, Wharton! For what reason—" Mr. Quelch saw his relief and his peace of mind fading away once more.

Wharton explained concisely, and Mr. Quelch pursed his lips as he listened.

"We never took much notice of Bunter's yarn about that lift in the car, sir—he's always spinning yarns. But what happened in the Cloisters yesterday looks very queer—now. Bunter hasn't come in, and the kidnapper says he got somebody at Highcliffe—"

"Thank you for coming and telling me this, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch. "I hope, however, that Bunter is merely staying late out of gates—he has done so several times. You did quite right in coming to tell me this—we shall see soon."

Harry Wharton left the study, leaving Mr. Quelch with a frown on his brow. Once more the Remove master wore a worried look.

Bunter did not come in for prep. After prep, he had not put in an appearance. At half-past nine, when the Remove went to their dormitory, there was still no Bunter.

That settled it, in the minds of the Remove. How the kidnapper had come to make such a mistake they could not guess, but every fellow in the Form had the same opinion, somehow or other. Billy Bunter had fallen into the kidnapper's hands by mistake. Everything seemed to point to that conclusion, above all, Bunter's continued absence.

"I guess they've got him!" said Fisher T. Fish, after lights out. "They've cinched that fat guy for me! They're sure welcome to him."

"But he'd tell them he wasn't you!" said Nugent.

Fisher T. Fish chuckled.

"So should I if they got me!" he answered.

"Oh!"

"They wouldn't believe him, of course, if they think they got the right guy!" said Fisher T. Fish. "Barney's made a mistake—and I guess I'm powerful glad I never went over to Highcliffe with you galoots—he mightn't have made a mistake if I had! Dog-goned if I guess how he came to take that bat-eyed jay for me—it's rather insulting to me—but he's done it! He's got Bunter."

And when the next morning it was found that Billy Bunter had not returned, there was no doubt in any mind at Greyfriars that the kidnappers had "got Bunter."

THE END.

(Now look out for the next ripping yarn in this series, entitled: "THE HOLD-UP AT GREYFRIARS!" It'll thrill you no end, chums!)

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