

SCHOOL, SPORTING & ADVENTURE YARNS INSIDE!

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EVERY SATURDAY.

The MAGNET²





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.

SILENCE for a moment, please, while your Editor blows his own trumpet! Really, I can't help it! You see, in Fleet Street, there is a paper published which deals exclusively with Press matters, and I've just seen a copy of an issue in which this journal deals with boys' papers. Need I tell you that the MAGNET is singled out for special commendation?

Knowing this little paper of ours as well as I do, you won't be surprised to learn that the newspaper critic, after more or less criticising other boys' journals, proceeds to give us a large-sized pat on the back! And he singles out our Greyfriars yarns as being the most amusing and interesting of all boys' stories. So, naturally, I feel somewhat "bucked" with myself this week!

However, just because we've been praised, that doesn't say that we won't continue to uphold our standard. The MAGNET's motto is "Better and better"—and we've been getting better and better for over twenty-one years now! And, as we started as good as any other boys' paper, you can see how far ahead of them we are now!

Ready for a prize-winning yarn? Right! Then here is one which wins a penknife for P. Bryon, 2-39, Freeman Road, Nechells, Birmingham.

UP-TO-DATE!

Mrs. Quiz: "And what is your husband doing for a living now?"

Mrs. Mizz: "Oh, he's talking for the pictures."

Mrs. Quiz: "Talking for the pictures! What an up-to-date occupation! And what does he say?"

Mrs. Mizz: "Sixpennies, ninepennies, and shillings this way, please?"

That diary of mine has quite a lot to say about things which have happened during this present week. The first deals with

"THE GLORIOUS FIRST OF JUNE,"

which is always remembered as a wonderful day in the history of the British Navy. On that day, in 1794, Lord Howe attacked the French fleet off Ushant. The British had only twenty-five ships to the Frenchmen's twenty-six, but they captured six of the Frenchmen and sank another. It was a most decisive victory for the British fleet.

On the same day, during the South African War, General Roberts took possession of Johannesburg from the Boers.

This Tuesday is also an interesting day, because King George V was born on that day, in 1865. This Thursday, however, is the anniversary of a very tragic occurrence. It was on that day in 1916 that Lord Kitchener was drowned aboard H.M.S. "Hampshire," during the Great War.

Things had not been going any too well with our Russian allies, and Lord Kitchener was ordered over to Russia to try to put things straight. The only way to get to Russia was round North Cape and then through the White Sea. So the "Hampshire" started off on its journey. Unfortunately, however, a hurricane sprang up in the North Atlantic, and the "Hampshire" struck a floating mine, and sank, carrying practically everyone on board with her.

A friend of mine happened to be serving on a cruiser on patrol near the spot at the time, but so sudden was the end of the "Hampshire" that wireless messages could not be sent out. Even if news of the tragedy had been received, he tells me, it would have been impossible for any rescue to be effected, so mountainous were the waves. And that, too, was why no one escaped in the boats, for no boats could possibly have lived in such tremendous seas.

Talking about

MOUNTAINOUS SEAS

reminds me that this is another example of how we call things by wrong names. A hill of eighty feet in height would certainly not be called a "mountain," but a wave of that height is regarded as abnormal, and an old sea captain was telling me the other day that in all his experience at sea he had only once seen a wave as high as that. Even in the greatest of storms, the waves are rarely more than fifty feet high from trough to crest.

But a wave of that height can easily swamp a vessel unless she is perfectly handled. On the occasion that the captain saw waves of eighty feet, one struck his vessel, smashed down the bridge as though it had been made of matchwood, and twisted the thick brass engine-room telegraphs as though they were copper wire, ripping them from the bridge.

It also carried away the steam steering gear and the wireless, and plunged the ship in darkness. The vessel drifted broadside on to the sea, and it took the strength of ten men to move the rudder by means of the hand-steering gear. Then ensued

A MIGHTY BATTLE WITH THE SEA

which lasted for two days. Had it not been that the vessel was near to the Hebrides, and that the crew were able to manoeuvre the islands between it and the

full force of the wind and waves, the ship would have gone down. As it was, hardly anyone aboard expected to win through, but they stuck to their guns—as British seamen always do—and gained the victory in the long run.

SOME time ago I referred in my chat to New York, and one of my readers has written to ask me why it is sometimes called "Manhattan." The island upon which New York is built is called Manhattan, and there is a curious reason for this. The name is a corruption of

AN INDIAN NAME

which was originally Mannaha-ta. When the Florentine explorer Verrazzano first landed there, he gave the Indians their first taste of "fire-water," and the Indians sampled it not wisely but too well! That was why they called the place Manna-ha-ta, which simply means "The place of drunkenness!" But "dry" Americans prefer to forget how their chief city became so named!

I THINK I can just squeeze in a limerick before I come to next week's programme. James Farrell, of Ardganagh Lodge, Sandymount Avenue, Ballsbridge, Co. Durham, gets a pocket wallet for this:

There's a happy Removite named
Cherry,
Who is always exceedingly merry.
If in trouble or woe
On you he'll bestow
A joke that will gladden you very.

Our top-liner next week is:

"THE MYSTERY OF THE POPLARS!"

By Frank Richards.

It's a yarn that will hold you enthralled all the way through, and you'll find the Famous Five well to the fore (no pun intended!). Your old friend, Billy Bunter, plays a principal part in the yarn also, so you may be sure of reading a real tip-topper when next week's issue is in your hands.

How are you enjoying our serial,

"THE TEST MATCH HOPE!"?

Judging by the many congratulatory letters I have received, John Brearley has certainly hit the mark with this ripping Test match story—and there are thrills galore in store for you!

There are more thrills, too, in:

"THE GOLDEN CROCODILE!"

which is the next "Thrill Club" yarn. Tell your chums about this fine new attraction in our pages. Tell them also that they'll enjoy the laugh of their life if they read Dicky Nugent's centre-page contribution, which is entitled:

"THE ST. SAM'S GARDEN PARTY!"

And tell them, too, there will be another clever poem by the Greyfriars rhymester, and that your Editor will be in his office as usual next week, waiting to have a chatty little confab. with them.

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.).



CATCHING FISH!

A Gripping Yarn of School Adventure, featuring Harry Wharton & Co.—the cheery chums of Greyfriars.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Raiders!

DON'T make a row!" "Who's making a row?" "Well, don't!" "Look here——" "Shut up, Bolsover! Now, you fellows ready?" asked Harry Wharton. "Ready, O Chief!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"The readyfulness is terrific!" It was dark in the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars. Only a dim glimmer of starlight fell in at the high windows. Dim figures were moving silently in the gloom.

Twelve had boomed out from the clock-tower.

At that hour of the night all the Remove ought to have been in bed and fast asleep. Their Form master, Mr. Quelch, had long ago gone to bed, nothing doubting that his Form were safe in the embrace of Morpheus.

Instead of which, the Removites were very much awake.

The Famous Five were all out of bed and a dozen other fellows had turned out with them. And every one of the fellows who had turned out had brought his pillow with him.

Any master or prefect who had looked into the Remove dormitory just then would have guessed that a pillow fight was toward.

But at that hour masters and prefects were fast asleep, and the last light had long been extinguished in the school.

Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove, looked over his shadowy array in the dim starlight from the windows.

"Any more coming?" he asked. "We ought to go in force. Temple had a crowd with him last night when they raided us."

"You coming, Bunter?" called out Bob Cherry.

Snore! "What about you, Skinner?" Snore! "All the funks are fast asleep," chuckled Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry——" "Hallo, hallo, hallo! You're awake, Bunter? Coming with us to raid the Fourth, old fat man?"

Snore! Billy Bunter had apparently decided to be asleep. Midnight raids on rival dormitories did not appeal to Bunter.

"Let's get going!" said Bolsover major. "We're wasting time."

"Come on!" said Harry. He opened the door of the dormitory,

U.S. GANGSTERS CATCH FISH WITH REVOLVER!

glanced out into the dark passage, and listened.

All was still! Nobody was likely to be stirring at so late an hour. Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Fourth, were certain to be asleep.

The previous night there had been a raid by the Fourth on the Remove dormitory. Temple & Co. had arrived at eleven o'clock, and, taking the Lower Fourth by surprise, had smitten them hip and thigh and swiped them right and left.

Possibly they had expected a return visit. It was for that reason that Harry Wharton & Co. had left the raid till midnight. They astutely considered that if Temple & Co. expected them they would give them up long before midnight. And the Fourth Form were going to be surprised in their turn—if all went well.

Harry Wharton led the way into the

dormitory passage. Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Janset Ram Singh followed him. Then came Bolsover major, and Peter Todd, and Squiff, and Tom Brown, and Vernon-Smith, and Redwing, and the rest of the crowd.

Once outside the dormitory, they were silent and very cautious.

As the Fourth had raided the Remove, it was, of course, quite right and proper that the Remove should raid the Fourth. But the rightness and propriety of the proceeding would never have been appreciated by a master or a prefect; least of all by Henry Samuel Quelch, the master of the Remove. In such matters masters and pupils did not see eye to eye.

Instead of realising how very right and proper it was, Mr. Quelch would certainly have punished the raiders very severely had he discovered them out of their dormitory at midnight. So it was necessary to be very careful. Even Bolsover major was quiet, and even Bob Cherry trod softly.

As stealthily as Red Indians on the warpath the Removites crept along the dark passage, each fellow gripping his pillow, every pillow having been beaten and twisted as hard as possible, for the benefit of the Fourth.

Silently, like an array of dim ghosts, the raiders reached the landing at the end of the passage. Across that landing lay their way to the Fourth Form quarters.

Harry Wharton halted suddenly. "Cave!" he breathed.

"What——" "Quiet!"

"But what——" breathed Frank Nugent, listening hard.

"Hush! Somebody's up!" The Removites stopped, in a breathless group. Every fellow listened intently.

The ancient building of Greyfriars

was quiet and still. Not a sound came from the surrounding gloom.

"Rot!" muttered Bolsover major. "Nobody's up!"

"I heard something," whispered Wharton. "Somebody's up down-stairs."

"Rot! Who would be up without a light? There's no light."

"Quiet!"

Bolsover major grunted.

"For goodness' sake dry up, Bolsover!" whispered Bob Cherry. "If we're bagged by a prefect it means a licking all round."

"Quelch may be up," whispered Nugent. "He's been as nervous as a cat ever since those kidnappers got after Fishy. Just like him to make a round of the House in the middle of the night."

"Hush!"

The juniors remained still, listening. Even Bolsover major admitted that Nugent's suggestion was probable. The fact that a Remove boy was in danger of kidnapping was enough to make the Remove master unusually wary and watchful.

Creak!

The juniors all heard the sound, and it gave them a thrill. The creak came from the staircase. The ancient oak was creaking under a soft and careful tread.

Creak!

The sound was repeated, and it was nearer.

Whoever it was that was on the staircase, was coming up.

There was no whispering now among the juniors. They crouched back against the wall in the darkness, making themselves as small as possible.

Someone was coming! He was coming softly, in the darkness. The juniors had no doubt that it was Quelch, making a late round of the House, to make assurance doubly sure that Fisher T. Fish was safe. More than once, they knew, their Form master had done so, since Barney McCann and his "bunch" had got busy.

There was another faint creak, and another. Faintly, dimly, a figure flitted in the gloom.

A sudden beam of brilliant light shot through the darkness. It came from an electric torch, suddenly turned on.

The juniors scarcely breathed.

Fortunately, that brilliant beam of light did not turn in their direction, or it must infallibly have revealed them.

It shone into the passage that led to the Remove dormitory. Only for a few seconds was it visible, then it was shut off. Soft footsteps passed up the passage and died away.

"Oh crumbs!" breathed Bob Cherry.

"Jolly narrow escape!" murmured Vernon Smith.

"Rot!" grunted Bolsover major.

"Our number's up. Quelch's gone to our dorm. That passage leads nowhere else, unless he's going to root into the attics—and he isn't! He's gone to our dorm to see if that blighter, Fishy, is safe."

"Blow Fishy!" murmured several voices.

"He mayn't notice we're out of bed!" muttered Nugent.

"Rot! He will spot it at once."

"Rotten!" grunted Peter Todd.

"The rottenfulness is terrific."

"May as well go back and own up!" growled Bolsover. "We shall hear Quelch's toot in a minute."

"Hold on!" said Harry Wharton quietly. "Quiet, you fellows! Something's up! That wasn't Quelch!"

"Who the thump was it, then?"

"It wasn't Quelch!" repeated the

captain of the Remove. "Quelch uses a candle when he roots about late at night. He wouldn't be creeping about in the dark and flashing an electric-torch."

Bob gave a jump.

"Oh, my hat! You don't think it's a giddy burglar, do you?"

"Phew!"

"Oh scissors!"

"Rot!" said Bolsover major. "What would a burglar want in a junior dormitory? Think he's after Bunter's felled-gold watch?"

There was a faint chuckle.

"Quiet!" said Wharton. "I don't think it's a burglar! But I jolly well think it's that kidnapper after Fishy."

"Oh, holy smoke!"

There was a thrill all through the party. The attempts that had been made to kidnap Fisher T. Fish since his "popper" had become a millionaire, had caused much excitement in the school. Fisher T. Fish had become the most celebrated man at Greyfriars.

"Blessed if I don't think you're right!" muttered the Bounder. "It could hardly be Quelch creeping about like that."

"It's the kidnapper!" said Tom Redwing quietly. "He tried it on before and failed. Now he's trying it on again."

"Rot!" said Bolsover.

Bolsover major never subscribed to any opinion unless it originated with himself.

"Ten to one!" said Bob. "Anyhow, whoever the johnny is, he's gone to our dormitory."

"How would an American kidnapper know which was our dormitory?" argued Bolsover. "He's never been in the school."

"They kidnapped Bunter in mistake for Fishy, and Bunter's told us that they made him give them a description of the place, and drew up a plan!" said Harry. "Look here, it's ten to one it's the kidnapper—let's get back! If he's after Fishy, we're after him."

"Yes, rather!"

"Come on," said Wharton, "and keep quiet."

And Harry Wharton led the way back to the Remove dormitory, and the whole party followed at his heels. Temple, Dabney & Co., if they were dreaming, did not dream what a narrow escape they had had.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Man in the Dark!

SNORE!

That musical sound rumbled through the Remove dormitory.

Billy Bunter had slid comfortably back into balmy slumber the moment the raiders were gone.

But the other fellows were awake. Those who had not joined in the raid were interested to know how it turned out.

"Silly asses!" remarked Skinner.

"Ten to one they'll be lagged. Old Quelch is always rooting about at night these days. We're never safe from him since Fishy's pater cornered pork."

"Fishy's getting to be a nuisance," said Snoop, with a yawn. "Blessed if I don't wish the kidnappers would bag him and have done with it."

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

"I fancy the Head's getting fed-up," said Skinner. "The school's got into the newspapers now, and the Beak hates that."

"The Beak is sure some jay!" said

Fisher T. Fish. "He's getting a whole lot of publicity for nothing; and publicity costs money, as a rule. He ought to be thankful."

"I don't fancy he feels thankful!" chuckled Hazeldene. "If this goes on, Fishy, your pater will get a hint from him to send for you home to New York!"

Fisher T. Fish sniffed.

"I guess this old island makes me tired!" he answered. "Look at the advertisement the school is getting—free, gratis, and for nothing! Why, in Amurrica a guy would jump at publicity like this with both feet! I guess the Head's miles behind the times. I guess—"

Fisher T. Fish broke off suddenly, as there was a sound from the door of the dormitory.

The door-handle turned softly. The sound would not have awakened any of the fellows had they been asleep; but, being wide awake, they heard it plainly enough in the silence of the night.

Instantly every head was laid on a pillow, and every eye closed.

It was not time yet for the raiders to return; they could hardly have reached the Fourth-Form quarters so far. The fellows in the dormitory had no doubt that it was Quelch, on one of his "prowls." And they did not want to be found awake.

The door opened.

The listening juniors in the beds heard the softest of footfalls.

They listened in silence. Only Billy Bunter's rumbling snore broke the stillness.

If Quelch turned the light on he could not fail to note that most of the beds were vacant. Skinner & Co. congratulated themselves on not having joined in the raid. Harold Skinner had declared that it was too risky, now that Quelch had taken to prowling; and apparently he had been right.

Still, Quelch was not likely to turn on the electric light at that hour. Several times, since the "bunch" had been after Fishy, Quelch had looked into the Remove dormitory after lights out; but he had always brought a candle with him. Uneasy as he was on the score of Fishy, he naturally did not desire to disturb the slumbers of the whole Form at untimely hours.

So, though they could hear the newcomer in the room, the fellows in the beds were not surprised that the light did not come on. They only wondered why Quelch had not brought his usual candlestick.

Suddenly a light gleamed.

It was a beam from an electric-torch, and it shot across the dark dormitory like a searchlight.

Skinner felt the bright beam that flashed over his face, though his eyelids were closed. He opened his eyes involuntarily.

The beam had been shut off; the room was in darkness. But a soft footfall was audible.

"What the thump—" breathed

Skinner.

Quelch might have provided himself with an electric-torch instead of a candle; but it was rather perplexing what he was up to now. He could have no object in visiting the dormitory, except to ascertain that Fisher T. Fish was safe. So he might have been expected to step direct towards Fishy's bed and look at him. Instead of which, Skinner heard the light step approaching his own bed.

He glued his eyelids shut. Quelch

was not going to find him awake and

fancy that he was concerned in the raid that was going on. When he missed the raiders from their beds Skinner was not going to know anything about it.

With a calm face and closed eyes, Skinner felt the heat of light play on him for a second. Then it was gone.

He ventured to open his eyes wide enough for a peep, quite interested to find out what Quelch was up to. Not for a moment, so far, had it occurred to Skinner that this was not Quelch.

The man with the electric-torch was flashing the light on Snoop, in the next bed.

In the darkness Skinner could see only the beam of light; he could make out nothing of the man who held the torch.

Snoop's eyes were closed; he, like the rest, was shamming sleep. The beam passed swiftly to the next bed.

Skinner wondered. Surely Quelch hadn't forgotten which bed was Fishy's—if he was looking after Fishy. Yet he seemed to be going from bed to bed, as if engaged in a search.

The next bed to Snoop belonged to the Bounder, and it was empty. Skinner's peeping eyes saw the beam of light linger on it for a second. He expected immediate exclamation on the part of Quelch. He could not fail to see that Smithy was not in his bed.

But there was no sound. The beam was shut off; and a moment or two later it glimmered on the bed next to the Bounder's. That also was empty; and the glimmer passed on to the next.

Skinner wondered whether he was dreaming.

The man with the light had seen two beds empty—and made no remark. What could it mean?

Skinner gave a shiver. He guessed what it meant. The man with the light was not Quelch. The Form master would have taken action instantly on finding empty beds in the Remove dormitory at midnight. That was a certainty. This was not Quelch—it was not a Greyfriars master at all—and Skinner fairly cringed under his blankets as he realised that there was a stranger in the dormitory—someone who had entered the House secretly in the darkness like a thief in the night.

Someone who was going from bed to bed stealthily, letting his light glimmer for a second on face after face. He was in search of somebody; and Skinner guessed who he was, and of whom he was in search. And Skinner lay very still. He was not likely to stir when he believed that an armed and desperate crook was in the room. But he could not resist the impulse to peep. Through slightly opened eyelids he watched the beam of light glimmer on the bed occupied by Fisher T. Fish.

It was shut off again, but there was no further sound of footsteps. The man had stopped by Fishy's bed.

Fisher T. Fish, like the rest, was shamming sleep. But he opened his eyes very suddenly as he was lightly shaken.

"Silence!" whispered a voice.

Fishy gave a convulsive jump. It was not Quelch's voice; it was nothing like Quelch's voice. Even the

single whispered word betrayed the strong American accent.

"I guess you're Fish!" went on the whisper. "Silence! You ain't going to be hurt; but if you say one word, bo, you get a sockdolager on the cabeza that will keep you quiet! You get me?"

Fisher T. Fish lay quite still.

It was the kidnapper. He could see nothing but a dim shadow in the dimness beside his bed, but he knew that Barney McCann stood there.

He was not in fear of injury. Barney, he knew, did not design to harm him in any way—indeed, would have been very careful not to harm him if he could help it. Barney McCann, professional kidnapper in the United States, was after Hiram K. Fish's countless dollars—and

see old Hiram's features over agin. You're Fish!"

Fisher T. Fish rather wished that his thin, bony face did not so closely resemble the thin, bony face of his "popper."

"Say, I'm here to get you! Get up and get your rags on, pronto! Don't make a sound! You get a crack on the cabeza if you do that will keep you so quiet you won't know what's happening. You get me? You wake up the other guys and you get yours!"

Every fellow in the dormitory, excepting Bunter, who was still snoring, heard the whisper.

But the kidnapper evidently had no suspicion that they were awake. It was midnight; he had found the dormitory



There was a faint creak; then a sudden beam of brilliant light shot through the darkness. Harry Wharton & Co. crouched back against the wall in the darkness, making themselves as small as possible!

silent; he had flashed his light on apparently sleeping faces; and he had made no sound that could awaken a sleeper. Evidently he believed that Fish was the only wakeful fellow in the room.

"You get me?" went on the whisper. "Get up! Make no sound, or you'll be sorry for yourself!"

Fisher T. Fish slowly crawled out of bed. He dared not resist. Fishy was not of the stuff that heroes are made of.

He knew, too, that the fellows knew by this time that the kidnapper was there, and that they would give the alarm when the desperado left the dormitory. Besides Bunter, there were only three of them—Skinner and Snoop and Hazeldene—and those three were no more heroic than Fisher T. Fish. They were lying very still and quiet, palpitating under their blankets, and wishing from the bottom of their hearts that they had joined in the raid on the Fourth. Fishy was wishing the same wish very earnestly. He had funked the dormitory raid and the pillow-fight, and it had left him to this!

He began to put on his clothes slowly. He could not see Barney McCann; he could make out only a dim shadow. But he heard the man's low breathing close to him.

Fisher T. Fish was the means by which he was going to get hold of them. Fisher T. Fish was worth thirty thousand dollars to the kidnapper if he could get him safe away from the school into his hands. Barney was not likely to hurt so valuable a prize if he could help it.

On the other hand, if Fishy gave him trouble and tried to raise the alarm, Barney would think absolutely nothing of giving him what he called a "sockdolager"—a blow on the head to stun him and keep him quiet.

Fisher T. Fish did not stir and did not utter a sound; only he breathed very hard through his long, thin nose.

Fishy had felt very unique and very important as the millionaire's son who was hunted by a "bunch" of professional kidnappers. He had rather enjoyed the situation. But he was not enjoying it now. Barney was too close for enjoyment.

"I guess you're Fish!" went on the whisper. "I ain't seen you afore, and that's why that fat gink Bunter fooled me. But now I see you I guess I can

"Pronto!" breathed McCann. "Not a word—but look sharp! I ain't waiting long for you!"

McCann was evidently in fear of the other fellows awakening. He had looked at only four or five beds before arriving at Fisher T. Fish's, and so he was not aware that most of them were empty. Two or three empty beds had not made him suspicious, but certainly he would have guessed that something was up had he known that there were only five fellows altogether in that dormitory. But he did not know that.

Fisher T. Fish was allowed only to slip on trousers and shirt. Then the hand of the kidnapper, like a steel vice, fastened on his shoulder.

"That'll do!" McCann's whisper was barely audible. "You'll be warm enough in the car, I guess; and I can't wait. If any of the other guys woke up and got fresh I guess there would be bad trouble! Come—and quiet! Keep thinking that I've got a lead pipe just behind your head!"

Fishy shuddered. He knew the ways of New York "toughs," and he had no doubt that McCann was armed with the favourite weapon of the Bowery ruffian—a length of gas-pipe wrapped in cloth. A tap from that disagreeable implement would certainly have placed it out of Fisher T. Fish's power to give the kidnapper any trouble.

The steely grip on his shoulder led him towards the door. There was no sound from Skinner & Co. They were going to give the alarm when the kidnapper was gone. But they were going to wait till they were quite sure he was out of reach of them. They did not like the idea of Barney McCann's length of gas-pipe any more than Fishy did.

As the kidnapper led Fisher T. Fish

towards the door there was no sound in the dormitory, save the deep and rumbling snore of William George Bunter.

"Snorrrrrrrrr!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Hand to Hand!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. reached the door of the Remove dormitory.

There they halted.

The door was closed, and there was no sound from the room within.

The juniors' hearts were beating fast. Most of them had no doubt that the man who had crept across the landing was the kidnapper, and that he was inside the dormitory at that very moment. It was a thrilling thought. Some of the party, perhaps, were feeling rather doubtful. But there were two dozen fellows in the party, and most of them felt a match for any kidnapper. There was no hesitation about the Famous Five; and Smithy and Redwing, Toddy and Squiff, and most of the others were equally determined.

"He's there!" whispered Bob Cherry. "He's there all right!"

"Suppose it's Quelch, after all——" muttered Bolsover major.

"Fathead! How could it be Quelch? He would have missed nearly all the Form by this time, and would be raising Cain!"

"He mightn't have noticed——"

"Oh, rot!"

"Well, if you men bolt into the dorm to find a kidnapper, and it turns out to be Quelch, you'll look pretty sick!" grunted Bolsover.

"Bosh, old bean!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"If he's not missed us I don't see that we want to rush in and give ourselves away——" persisted Bolsover major.

"My esteemed and idiotic Bolsover——" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

The juniors paused. There was, perhaps, a possibility that the stealthy midnight prowler was Quelch, unlikely as it seemed.

"Look here," said Harry quietly, "that's rot! Quelch couldn't be in the dorm without finding out that nearly all the beds are empty. He would turn on the light and raise Cain at once. It's the kidnapper—and I'm jolly well going on, and chance it!"

"Same here!" said Bob.

"Keep ready," said Harry. "I'll open the door suddenly, and switch on the light at once; then, if you see him, go for him with the pillows."

"Right-oh!" came the whispered reply.

"And if it's Quelch——" said Bolsover major.

"Oh, shut up, Bolsover!"

"Quiet!" said Harry.

He stepped closer to the dormitory door, and took hold of the handle. A thrill ran through the crowd of Removites.

Suddenly, swiftly, Wharton hurled the door wide open. The next second his hand found the switch within and he turned it on, and bright electric light flooded the long dormitory from end to end.

There was a startled gasp.

"Great gophers!"

As the light flashed on, the crowd of juniors in the doorway had an instant glimpse of a man of spare frame, dressed in black, with a muffler drawn across the middle of his face by way of a mask.

Under the muffler showed a clean-shaven chin; over it a pair of startled, glittering eyes, dazzled in the sudden light.

Evidently it was not Quelch.

The man was coming towards the door, with his grasp on the shrinking shoulder of Fisher T. Fish. He was not ten feet from the door when Wharton hurled it open and flashed on the light.

Whiz!

Bob Cherry was swiftest to act.

The kidnapper had only time for one dazzled blink in the sudden light, when Bob's pillow flew with deadly aim, and smote him full in the face.

Barney McCann staggered back.

Involuntarily he released Fisher T. Fish, and the instant he was released Fishy was leaping away.

Harry Wharton & Co. rushed right at the crook. He was staggering under the impact of Bob's pillow when Wharton's smote him, followed up by Squiff's and Smithy's. Barney McCann went with a bump to the floor of the dormitory.

"Pile on him!" panted Bob.

"Give him jip!" gasped Wharton.

With a panting oath McCann scrambled furiously to his feet, receiving, but hardly heeding, the swipes of the pillows.

His right arm went up, and the lead pipe was in his hand, and the savage blow, had it fallen, would have had serious results for at least one of the Removites. But Harry Wharton leaped at the rising arm, and grasped it with both hands and dragged it down. Bob Cherry's hefty fist landed on the ruffian's chin the next moment. More and more hands were laid upon him, and McCann struggled wildly and fiercely, unable to use his deadly weapon. Nugent grabbed hold of it



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and dragged it away from him, while Wharton clung to his arm.

"Down him!" panted Squiff.

"Pile on him!" roared Bob.

With gritted teeth and blazing eyes the ruffian struggled in the midst of the mob of juniors. He fought like a tiger. The odds were heavy against him; but the man was strong and muscular, and desperate. With a terrific effort he tore himself loose, and made a frantic spring for the open doorway.

"Collar him!" shrieked Bob.

The Bounder jumped in the way and reeled back from a blow, and McCann was out of the door.

"After him!" yelled Wharton.

Panting desperately, McCann raced down the dark passage. With a whoop the Removites dashed in pursuit.

The light flashed on in the passage. On the landing, at the end, appeared the startled figure of Mr. Quelch, in dressing-gown and slippers. The uproar from the Remove dormitory had awakened him, and probably everybody else in the House.

"What—what?" Mr. Quelch was ejaculating.

He had no time for more.

He was standing fairly in the way of the fleeing crook; and Barney McCann did not stop.

There was a crash and Mr. Quelch went staggering, to fall in a heap on the floor.

The next moment McCann was leaping down the stairs, three or four at a time.

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Oh! Ah! Oooooh!"

He sat up and spluttered.

With a rush the juniors passed him. They swarmed down the staircase after McCann. Darkness had swallowed the escaping crook. At the foot of the staircase Wharton switched on the light. But only an open window, with the wind from the sea blowing in, rewarded the Removites.

The kidnapper was gone.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Exciting!

GREYFRIARS School the next morning was in a state of considerable excitement.

Fellows of all Forms were discussing the exciting events of the night.

Seldom, indeed, was the scholastic calm of Greyfriars broken by such startling happenings.

To many of the Lower School it seemed rather fun. But that certainly was not the view taken by the Head and the staff.

Fisher T. Fish of the Remove, the centre of all the excitement, was undoubtedly proud of himself. It was exceedingly uncommon for the attention of the whole school to be concentrated on a junior of the Lower Fourth. Fishy was getting all the limelight; and he liked it.

Fellows who saw the Head that day declared that the Beak looked uncommonly "stuffy." Fishy might like the limelight, but the Head did not share his view. It was exceedingly probable that Dr. Locke wished that Mr. Hiram K. Fish had never placed his son at Greyfriars, or, alternately, as the lawyers say, that Mr. Fish had refrained from cornering pork in the United States.

The cornering of pork by Fish senior had led to all this excitement and trouble at the school.

Now that Mr. Fish was rolling in dollars, other unscrupulous citizens of the

great United States wanted some of the dollars, and their methods were even less scrupulous than those of the pork combine.

The name of the old school was in the newspapers now, cheap publicity for which Fishy thought the Head ought to feel thankful. But it was gall and wormwood to the Head.

The sight of Inspector Grimes coming in was exciting to thoughtless school-boys. But it was very painful to the Head to have the police mixed up in Greyfriars affairs.

Reporters who came along for news received very short shrift. If there was one thing the Head detested more than another it was what Fishy called publicity, and what the Head called notoriety.

In the Remove Form-room that day Mr. Quelch had a grim countenance.

He had been knocked over by the kid-

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THE POOR FISH!

The angler had just landed a catch when an inquisitive, interfering woman chanced to be passing.

"Oh!" she exclaimed aghast. "That poor little fish!"

"Poor little fish, be blown!" retorted the angler. "If only he'd kept his mouth shut he wouldn't have got into trouble!"

Don't waste time; get down to business RIGHT AWAY!

napper in his flight, and Mr. Quelch had reached an age when a man was not knocked over without feeling painful effects.

The whole thing was troublesome, irksome, undignified, from the point of view of the Remove master.

It was as if the shadow of the underworld had fallen on the old school, a breath of crime had tainted its atmosphere.

Matters, indeed, were growing intolerable. Only a few days before the Head had been "held up" in his study by one of the kidnappers with a real "gun." It was unbelievable, but it had happened. Slick Flick had been captured, and was now in prison awaiting trial. It might have been expected that his fate would discourage his associates. But the affair of the night showed that Barney McCann was not discouraged.

Police protection seemed the only solution, but the idea of police-constables patrolling Greyfriars was really

too bitter a pill for the Head to swallow.

Some of the Remove looked rather grim, too. There was no doubt that the raid on the Fourth Form dormitory, which had not come off after all, had caused the defeat of the kidnapper. Had the Removites been fast asleep in bed when Barney McCann came, it was certain that McCann would have succeeded in his object, and that Fishy would have been taken away to the car that was waiting near the school.

Nevertheless, dormitory raids were very much against the rules, and the Removites, of course, had had to explain how it was that they were all awake when the kidnapper came.

The result was lines.

Doubtless Mr. Quelch took into consideration the fact that the unruly Removites had defeated the kidnapper. Otherwise it would have meant canings. Still, he could not pass over such an infraction of the rules, and all the raiders had an imposition of two hundred lines. Which was quite enough to make them feel serious.

Bob Cherry declared that Fishy ought to have had all the lines, as he was the cause of all the trouble. Bolsover major declared that Fishy would have to do his lines for him, or else be kicked. After class that day a sound of yelling in the Remove passage announced that Fishy was being kicked.

When night came on, the excitement in the school, instead of calming down, intensified. Fellows wondered whether the kidnapper would come again.

Barney McCann had got clear away. From the moment he had jumped from a window he had vanished. Nobody really expected that he would be traced and caught. It was certain that his headquarters were at a great distance from the school, and that he used a fast car.

The enterprising Barney had vanished into space, and from space he might be expected to make another swoop sooner or later.

Fisher T. Fish declared with contemptuous derision that the police would never touch Barney. Indeed, little as he liked Barney's attentions, it was obvious that Fishy admired Barney a great deal, as a very remarkable product of the great United States. The Yew-nited States, Fishy declared, were ahead of the world in everything, and when it came to crime they beat the whole globe to a frazzle. Fishy wanted to know whether the old country ever produced a crook of Barney's calibre, and the answer was in the negative.

Some of the fellows wished that Fishy would return, without delay, to the wonderful country that produced so remarkable a man as Barney. Skinner & Co. could not forget how they had palpitated with funk while Barney was in the dormitory, and they declared that it was too thick.

But when the Remove went to bed that night they found that Fisher T. Fish had been assigned to fresh quarters. In the circumstances, his Form master had decided that Fish should no longer sleep in the dormitory with the other fellows.

Obviously, he was hardly safe there, and the other fellows were hardly safe with him. Fish was transferred to a room adjoining Mr. Quelch's, with shutters locked on the window, and a strong lock on the door. There, it was hoped, Fishy would be safe from the further attentions of Barney—if Barney came.

Still, as Barney could know nothing about those new arrangements, the

Remove dormitory would be his objective, if he came again, and there was uneasiness in the breasts of some of the Remove. Billy Bunter had slept peacefully through Barney's visit the previous night; but he declared that he would not sleep a wink again. When Wingate came in to put out the light, Billy Bunter squeaked from his bed:

"I say, Wingate!"

"Hallo!" said Wingate.

"I say, you'd better leave the light on!" said Bunter. "If that beast comes back, you know—"

Wingate laughed.

"He won't come back to-night, fat-head! And there's a constable patrolling the place now. You needn't be scared."

"I'm not afraid, of course," said Bunter. "I was really thinking of the other fellows. Wharton looks rather white—"

"Why, you fat ass—" began Wharton indignantly.

"I noticed that Cherry was trembling, and—"

"May I get out of bed and talk to Bunter, Wingate?" inquired Bob Cherry, in a sulphurous voice.

"And Nugent was looking quite sick and—"

"You fat porker—"

"All the fellows are frightfully nervous," went on Bunter. "I wish you'd leave the light on, for their sakes, Wingate."

"They must try to bear it, somehow," said Wingate, laughing, and he turned out the light. "Good-night, kids!"

"Good-night, Wingate!"

The prefect left the dormitory, and the door closed. The Remove were left to darkness and slumber.

"I say, you fellows—" squeaked Bunter dismally.

"You fat villain!" said Harry Wharton. "I've a jolly good mind—"

"I can hear a sound!" gasped Bunter. "D-d-did you fellows hear a footprint—I mean a footstep?"

"You fat funk!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry!"

"Shut up, and go to sleep!" growled Bolsover major.

"I shan't sleep a wink!" said Bunter.

"I think it's too thick! They ought to send Fishy home. I'm jolly well not going to be murdered in my bed to please Fishy! I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Beast!"

Bunter shut up—but only for a few moments. For once, his deep snore was slow to begin. He blinked from his bed along the dark, shadowy room, and in every shadow he saw Barney McCann.

"I say, you fellows! Did you hear that?" he gasped suddenly.

"What, you benighted idiot?" snapped Wharton.

"I—I heard a creak!"

"If you don't shut up, I'll take my pillow to you," said Peter Todd. "You'll make us nervous at this rate!"

"I heard a creak!" groaned Bunter.

"I say, you fellows, suppose that villain is hiding in the dorm at this minute? He may have crept into the school—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I—I heard a creak—"

Bob Cherry sat up in bed.

"My hat! I heard something!" he exclaimed. "It came from Bunter's bed."

"Yarooogh!"

"I wonder if the man's hiding under Bunter's bed—"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Look, you fellows! Is that a man

creeping out from under Bunter's bed?" continued Bob.

"Help!"

Billy Bunter made a wild jump out of bed. He landed in a tangle of bed-clothes, and rolled on the floor with a heavy bump. His voice rang through the dormitory.

"Yaroooh! He's got me! Help!"

"Ha ha, ha!" roared the Removites.

"He's clutching me!" shrieked Bunter. "He's got hold of my leg! Whooop! Help! Yooop! Rescue! Fire! Murder!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Peter Todd turned out of bed and lighted a candle. Bunter, tangled in sheets and blankets, rolled and roared.

"Yoop! He's got me by the leg! Draggimoff!" howled Bunter. "Help!"

"You fat chump!" shrieked Peter. "It's your bedclothes tangled round your silly legs, you benighted idiot!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh," gasped Bunter, blinking in the candle-light. "So—so—so it is! Oh dear! I—I thought— I say, Peter, look under the bed! Bob said he heard something, and it came from my bed!"

"Only your voice, old fat man," said Bob.

"Why, you beast—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Peter Todd had brought his pillow in his hand. He proceeded to smite Bunter with it. The Owl of the Remove roared more loudly than before. The real Peter was more terrifying than the imaginary kidnapper.

"Ow, ow! Wow! Leave off, you beast!" roared Bunter. "Ow! Wow! Help! I—I'll jolly well lick you, Toddy, if you wallop me again! Yarooogh! Ooooh!"

"Now get back to bed, and shut up!" gasped Peter.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

Bunter crawled back into bed. Peter Todd blew out the candle and followed his example.

For ten minutes there was peace in the Remove dormitory, and fellows began to slide into slumber. Then:

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shurrup!" hissed Peter Todd.

"D-d-d-d-did you hear the door open, old chap?" quavered Bunter. "I—I'm certain I heard the door open!"

Whiz!

Crack!

A boot flew through the air, and landed on the terrified head that Billy Bunter had lifted from his pillow.

There was a fiendish yell.

"Yoooooooooop!"

"I've got the other boot here!" hissed Peter. "Another word from you and you get it!"

There were no more alarms from Bunter. He closed his eyes and drew the blanket over his head to shut out imaginary dangers. In a few minutes more he forgot his terrors in sleep, and the Remove dormitory echoed to his old familiar snore.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Man from New York!

"DEAR me!" said the Head.

Dr. Locke sat and stared at a cablegram that lay on his desk before him.

"Dear me!" he repeated.

Days had passed since the night of the alarm. Greyfriars had settled down to the even tenor of its way.

There were plenty of other matters, especially cricket, to occupy the attention of the Greyfriars fellows. In a week the kidnapper, as he had made no

further demonstration, was almost forgotten.

Many fellows opined that Barney McCann was fed up with failure and had gone back to the United States, where there was more scope for a professional kidnapper.

Fisher T. Fish derided that idea, however. He declared that Barney was only biding his time.

Fishy was a believer in the unlimited resource of American crooks; but perhaps, also, he was not eager to lose his importance, and did not want to get out of the limelight.

Anyhow, Fishy was still gated; he still slept in a room by himself, and a constable from Courtfield patrolled the school precincts at night.

That, most of the fellows thought, was the reason why Barney was giving Greyfriars a wide berth.

To Fishy it seemed comic to suppose that a real live-wire American crook would be scared of a British bobby. He assured the fellows that Barney would think nothing of beating up a British bobby before breakfast every morning. The other fellows, however, were prepared to back a British bobby against all the crooks and gunmen in New York. And certainly it looked as if that bobby had a deterrent effect on Barney.

All the fellows knew that the Head was most frightfully sick, as they expressed it, with the whole business. The Head hoped fervently that Barney had seen the error of his ways, and bolted for safety. But the cablegram that lay on his desk seemed to hint that that was not the opinion of Hiram K. Fish.

"Ah! My dear Quelch!" said the Head, as the Remove master entered his study. "Pray look at this."

"A cable?" said Mr. Quelch.

"Yes."

"From Mr. Fish, I suppose?" said the Remove master, suppressing a sigh. Like the Head, Mr. Quelch was, as Smithy had expressed it, fed-up on a Fish diet.

"That is so. Pray read it."

Mr. Quelch read the message from the new-made millionaire.

"Dr. Locke, Greyfriars, England.

"Sending Detective Cyrus Carter stay Greyfriars watch Fisher.

"FISH."

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Mr. Fish is aware, of course, of the attempts that have been made to kidnap his son," said the Head. "He apparently does not consider Fish safe in the school under present conditions."

"In the circumstances, I thought he might consider it advisable to remove the boy for a time!" remarked Mr. Quelch.

The Head coughed.

"The same thought occurred to me, I confess, my dear Quelch. But it has not, apparently, occurred to Mr. Fish. I scarcely like to suggest it to him."

"I suppose not," assented the Remove master. "But"—he glanced at the cable again—"this message implies that Mr. Fish is sending a detective from America to reside in the school and guard the boy. A—a—a most unusual, a most unprecedented proceeding."

"One must make due allowances for Mr. Fish's natural anxiety for his son," said the Head. "But—"

"But—" said Mr. Quelch.

"After all," said Dr. Locke, more brightly, "it will relieve us of a responsibility which is undoubtedly very heavy."

"There is certainly something in that, sir," assented Mr. Quelch. "But a detective in the school—"

"He will be responsible for the boy's safety. It will enable us to dispense with the constable at present detailed to patrol the precincts of the school."

"True!"

"Possibly the arrangement will be for the best until this rascal McCann is arrested," said Dr. Locke. "In any event, I do not feel that I can refuse to accede to it."

"Oh, quite!" said Mr. Quelch.

"As I gather that the man, this—this Carter—is being sent from New York, it will probably be a week at least before he arrives at Greyfriars," said Dr. Locke. "Perhaps in that time we may hear of McCann's arrest, and the whole troublesome affair will be at an end."

"I certainly hope so, sir."

"To revert to a matter more congenial, my dear Quelch," went on the Head. "If you would care to glance at this passage in the 'Epta epi Thebas—'"

Mr. Quelch brightened.

"With pleasure, sir!"

And the two masters sat down to a happy hour with Aeschylus, and forgot Barney McCann and all his works.

Fisher T. Fish learned that evening of the cable from his popper, Mr. Quelch giving him the information. Fisher T. Fish walked into the Rag to tell the fellows.

Interest in the Fish affair had fallen to a low ebb, which was not gratifying to Fishy. He calculated that this thrilling news would revive it.

"Say, you guys!" said Fishy. "Like to hear the noos?"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Has your popper been cornering something fresh?" yawned Bob Cherry. "Or has he been cornered himself?"

"Anything happened to the Pork Combine?" grinned the Bouncer. "Your popper's been a millionaire for a month, now, Fishy, and that's rather a long allowance for an American financier. It's time he went broke."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish sniffed.

"I guess the combine is going strong," he said. "I calculate the popper could buy up half Wall Street if he liked. Search me, I reckon he could buy Greyfriars and give it to me for a birthday present, and not miss the money! You bet your boots!"

"And he's not run in yet?" asked Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish disdained to answer that question. He had explained till he was tired that the Fish financial operations were quite legal, and that guys could not be run in for bringing off the particular form of coup by which Mr. Hiram K. Fish was raking in dollars.

"He's sending a detective guy over from Noo Yark!" said Fisher T. Fish impressively. "Guy named Carter! That cop is going to locate at Greyfriars and keep tabs on me."

"A detective?" exclaimed a dozen voices.

"Yep!" Fisher T. Fish was quite pleased by this revival of interest. "A live-wire detective from Noo Yark! I guess Barney will have to watch out now! Your home-grown bobbies are no good in handling an American crook."



There was a terrific roar from Fry as Bob Cherry's fist flashed out and sent him toppling backwards. "Whooooop!" Bump! "Cherry!" It was the voice of Mr. Quelch, and it cut the air like a knife.

But I guess a Noo Yark detective will put salt on his tail! Yes, sir."

"When is he coming?" asked Wharton.

"I guess he'd be on the boat when the popper cabled. I reckon he'll hit Greyfriars in about a week."

The news undoubtedly revived the interest in the Fish affair. All the fellows were curious to see a real live American detective. There would be many interested eyes to watch Mr. Cyrus Carter when he arrived.

It was known that a room was being prepared for Mr. Carter the next day. It was an apartment with an adjoining dressing-room, and the latter, it was learned, was to be turned into a bedroom for Fishy. Thus he would be under constant supervision of the detective. Probably, on reflection, the Head was pleased with the arrangement. Certainly it took a great deal of responsibility off his shoulders.

One day the following week Fishy had more news. He told the fellows that Carter had long-distanced the Head from Southampton, which being translated into English meant that Dr.

Locke had had a trunk call from that port. The next morning he was to arrive at the school.

It was considered lucky that morning break was on, when a taxi drove from Courtfield to Greyfriars and arrived with Mr. Carter.

When the news spread that he was coming, quite an army of Greyfriars fellows gathered to see him.

An ocean of eyes fixed on Mr. Carter as he stepped from the taxi.

He was not specially impressive to look at.

He was a sparely built man, with a prominent nose, a greyish goatee beard, an untidy moustache, and gold-rimmed glasses. He looked at least fifty years of age, and to most of the Greyfriars fellows fifty seemed frightfully old. They had somehow expected to see a young, bright, snappy, and natty man, bursting with hustle and pep. Mr. Carter, except that he looked like an American, might have been the man who came to tune the piano.

Fisher T. Fish met him as he alighted. Fishy was not likely to be

off in that scene. Fishy was certainly disappointed in Mr. Carter's looks. He, too, had expected something young.

"You Mr. Carter?" he asked.
"You've said it!" answered the newcomer.

"I'm Fish!"
Mr. Carter gave him a blink through his gold-rimmed glasses.

"Oh! You're Fish? Fisher T.?"
"Yep!"

Mr. Carter shook hands with Fisher T.

"Glad to meet up with you!" he said. "I sure was afraid I should find you gone when I arrove. I'll say I was oneasy!" Mr. Carter spoke with an American accent, in a rather high-pitched, squeaky voice, which gave an impression of middle-age in consonance with his looks. "You're safe now, sir! I'm telling you so! I guess I'm keeping tabs on you from now on."

And Mr. Carter passed into the House, and was shown into the Head's study, where he interviewed that gentleman and showed his credentials, and was introduced to Mr. Quelch. The Greyfriars fellows were left discussing him.

"So that's the jolly old 'tec!" said Bob Cherry. "He don't look a lot like an American sleuth on the films."

"I guess he's O.K." said Fisher T. Fish. Fishy was rather disappointed himself, but he was not going to admit that anything from the United States could possibly be an inferior article.

"I dare say he's all right," said Bob. "But I'd rather put my money on a British bobby myself."

"Aw, forget it!" said Fisher T. Fish derisively.

"I say, you fellows—"
"I guess the next time Barney comes monkeying around, that guy will get him by the short hairs," said Fishy impressively.

"I say, you fellows, he's got a nose just like McCann—"

"I'll guess he'll use it to nose out McCann with!" said Fisher T. Fish. "You watch out, you galoots! I guess it'll be an education to you to see a real live American at work."

And there was no doubt that the Remove fellows were interested to see the New York detective at work. It was possible that there was more in him than met the eye, but most of the fellows felt that they would rather pin their faith to a Courtfield constable. They were destined to learn, at a later date, that there was a very great deal more in Mr. Cyrus Carter than met the eye.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Carter Asks Questions!

"**B**UNTER!"
"It wasn't me!"
"What?"
"It wasn't me, Wingate!"
said Billy Bunter earnestly. "I haven't been anywhere near the kitchen. If the cook says anybody's been in the kitchen, Wingate, you just tell her it wasn't me. I—"

"You young sweep!" said Wingate. "Take a hundred lines for going into the kitchen."

"But I didn't—I wasn't!" gasped Bunter. "I never even knew the cook had been making a cake—"

"Take another hundred for telling fibs."

"Oh crikey!"
"And now," added Wingate, "I'll tel. you what I called for."

"Oh crumbs! I—I thought—"

"Mr. Carter wishes to see you. Go to his room." And Wingate walked away, leaving William George Bunter blinking with dismay, and the other fellows chuckling.

"Oh, the beast!" gasped Bunter. "I—I thought he was after me about that cake—not that I had it, you know. I know nothing about it. I say, you fellows, I've a jolly good mind to complain to Quelch about Wingate giving me lines for nothing."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at. I never had the cake. Besides, I thought it was a plum cake, and it turned out to be only a seedy cake after all—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"I guess you'd better hump it along to Carter, if he wants to see you, bo," said Fisher T. Fish. "Time's dollars to a live man."

"Blow Carter!" grumbled Bunter. "I don't want to see Carter. Still, if he wants my help, I don't mind," added the Owl of the Remove considerately. "I dare say he feels rather puzzled, and may want help. I don't mind giving him my advice."

And Bunter rolled away, generously prepared to place his vast intellectual powers at the service of the detective.

"What the thump does the johnny want to see Bunter for?" asked Nugent.

"Not to ask his advice, I fancy!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"I guess he wants to ask Bunter about the time he was with McCann," said Fisher T. Fish. "They had Bunter for some days, and if he was anything but an ornery jay, he would be able to put Carter wise about the place he was stowed in."

"That's it," agreed Bob. "But Carter won't get much out of him; Inspector Grimes couldn't."

"Aw, Carter knows more with his left ear than Grimes knows with what he calls his brain," answered Fisher T. Fish disdainfully. "You leave it to Carter. You watch Carter."

Fisher T. Fish regarded it as extremely probable that in a short time, Cyrus Carter would have "tabs" on Barney McCann. In spite of his middle-aged looks and goatee beard and gold-rimmed glasses, Fishy clung to the belief that Carter was the "goods." Fishy declined to doubt the excellence of any article exported from the great Yew-nited States.

Billy Bunter rolled away quite cheerfully to Mr. Carter's room. He found the American detective there, sitting by the open window with a cigar in his mouth. Mr. Carter had been given a very pleasant room, looking on the quadrangle. On one side of it was his bed-room, which was adjoined by the bed-room assigned to Fisher T. Fish. Mr. Carter had already given directions for Fishy's door on the corridor to be screwed up, and his directions had been carried out. So at night, nobody would be able to approach Fishy except by going through Mr. Carter's room. That, certainly, seemed to secure Fishy from any fresh nocturnal attempt on the part of the enterprising kidnapper.

Bunter tapped at Mr. Carter's door and entered.

The detective turned from the window and remained seated, with the back of his head to the light.

"You wanted to see me, Mr. Carter?" asked the Owl of the Remove.

"Yep!"
Mr. Carter's eyes, which were very keen, looked at the fat junior over his glasses, which slid down his prominent nose a little. The setting sun glowed

in at the window, and showed up Bunter's fat face, leaving Mr. Carter's in shadow.

"You're Bunter?"
"Yes," said the fat junior.
"Take a pew."

Bunter sat down.
"You're the guy that was cinched by them firebugs in mistake for young Fish, I hear?" said Mr. Carter.

"That's it," said Bunter. "You see, I happened, quite by chance, to have a letter belonging to Fishy on me, and they saw it, and the silly asses thought I was Fishy, awful duffers, you know."

"I guess, when it comes to brains, you've got Barney McCann all flattened out!" said Mr. Carter, in a tone of sarcasm.

Sarcasm was a sheer waste on Bunter.

"Well, I'm rather a brainy chap," he admitted. "As for that fellow, McCann, I think he's just a silly fat-head."

"Sho!" said Mr. Carter.
"I wish I'd been awake the night he came here," said Bunter. "He wouldn't have got away so easily, I can tell you."

"I guess he would have been all of a tremble!" said Mr. Carter, still sarcastic. "Say, you was shut up somewhere when those guys had you. What sort of a description can you give of the place?"

Bunter shook his head.
"All I can say is that it was a bungalow, standing in its own grounds," he answered. "There was a high fence round it, and poplar trees inside the fence, and a corrugated iron garage close by the house."

"I guess there's some thousands of such!" grunted Mr. Carter. "Ain't you a notion where it is?"

"At least fifty miles from the school," said Bunter.

"You figure that out from the time it took them to get you there in a car?"

"That's it!"
"What direction?"
"I don't know."

"Aw, think!" adjured Mr. Carter. "You've got eyes!"

"I've been through all that with Inspector Grimes," said Bunter. "You see, when they took me there, I was rolled up in a rug. When I got away, I hid in the car under the same rug, and never put my nose out till the car stopped on Courtfield Common. So I never saw anything at all!"

"You're a lot of use to a detective, ain't you?" snapped Mr. Carter. "Then it comes to this, that you don't know any more about the place than if you hadn't been there?"

"Well, yes! But—"
"You can give a description of McCann, at least, I s'pose!" said Mr. Carter discontentedly.

"Oh, yes! I'm rather an observant chap," said Bunter. "I'd know that scoundrel again anywhere!"

"Waal, I want to know him, too. What's he like?"

"Clean-shaven," said Bunter, "and thin in the face—rather ugly and bony, in fact. About your height—"

"Is that all?"
"He's got a nose rather like yours—a very ugly nose—"

"What?"
"Like a beak!" said Bunter. "I can't say any more about him, except that he was a frightful beast. I'd know him again anywhere."

"Sure of that?"
"Oh, quite sure!" answered Bunter confidently.

(Continued on page 12.)

THE FIEND in the CONGO SWAMP!

Each week the members of the Famous "Thrill Club" meet, and many are the sensational stories they have to tell. This week the "chair" is taken by one of a small band of travellers in the Congo.

A WEIRD, muffled figure shuffled slowly into a chair at the back of the room as his companion mounted the low platform of the "Thrill Club" to recount the evening's story. For a long minute the speaker stared fixedly at his audience, then in deep bass tones captured their interest with the following tale:

Less than a year ago I was one of a small band of collectors travelling in the Congo for a British firm who deal in rare and valuable orchids. We had pitched camp on the edge of a vast swamp of evil-smelling mud and forbidding looking trees.

We intended to clear out at the earliest possible moment in the morning and, with native porters carrying cases packed with a wealth of strange orchids, make our way back to the coast. I was on watch and trying hard to fight back numbing sleep when, without warning, I was swung off my feet from behind and my ribs started to crush in. I hadn't the ghost of a chance to shout a warning to my sleeping comrades before I lost consciousness.

When I opened my eyes again I met as terrifying a sight as any mortal has survived. I was trussed like a dead chicken, there was an awful reek of chloroform everywhere, and glaring, red-rimmed eyes, a dozen pairs of them, all stared at me from various points. I was prone on my back, bound hand and foot. Above was a blinding light, suspended from the roof of what I afterwards learned was a hut constructed of branches and tropical vines. As the effects of the paralysing glare passed I saw something else—a perfectly demoniacal face within two feet of my own. Then white hands became visible, and in one of them was a surgeon's knife.

Involuntarily my eyes flickered around from that savage blade. Those same glaring, red-rimmed eyes were focused from a dozen different points upon the rough operating table on which I lay. Savage and blood-curdling sounds came from their unseen owners. Their bodies, outside the radius of the blinding light, were invisible.

The fiend with the knife shouted something unintelligible, and there came in response the sound of crippled feet dragged hastily along. This newcomer had eyes that glowed like those in the surrounding cages, and the look they cast at the man bending over me made me shudder.

Muttered words passed between the two, and if anything were needed to increase my intense horror it was to hear the shuffler making sounds like a wild beast trying to imitate human language. The shuffler turned to the nearest of the cages. His fist shot out, and evidently landed fair and square between a pair of those red-rimmed, glaring eyes, for there came a screaming snarl and a hurricane of smashing blows at timber which refused to yield.

Unconscious, apparently, of the renewed babel, the fiend with the knife was bringing the blade nearer and nearer to my scalp again. Then, in the twinkling of a star, two arms shot around him. The shuffler had pinioned him, and, in the struggle that ensued, the table on which I lay helpless was violently capsized. Sharp talons shot out on the instant, and a searing pain traversed my face and scalp. Something hot flooded down my cheeks, and I realised that my fall had brought me within reach of a glaring-eyed terror in one of the cages.

In another second the life would have been clawed completely out of me. But before that instant came the shuffler was at my side, the thongs which bound me were slashed through, and I found myself on his back, and we were making for the doorway.

It was pandemonium now. Horrible cries were rending the night and before we reached the door of the hut the smashing of timber told me that those unknown horrors with the glaring eyes were breaking their way to freedom. Then I was down again, and great hairy arms were gripping my ribs as they had gripped before—when I had been



captured from the camp. It was a gorilla, with its horrible head in bandages, and in its crimson eyes a look that was nearly human. The man who had subdued this enormous beast to the extent of making it obey commands—as it had evidently done in capturing me—must, I thought, be a very fiend incarnate.

Just as I was being swung up in those hairy paws there came a choking gurgle, and the creature thudded in a heap across my legs. With a scream it bounded up almost at once and leapt on the shuffler who had tried to rescue me.

As I rolled unsteadily to my feet a rush of mad creatures from the cages that lined the walls of the hut swept over me—jaguars and panthers and colossal monkeys, rushing to the aid of the giant gorilla tearing at my would-be rescuer, two of them halting to attend to the fallen fiend who had possessed the knife. My outflung hand hit against the knife's haft, and in a flash I was on my feet, slashing at hairy bodies like a madman. Then an awful thud seemed to split my head, and blackness veiled everything.

Wet breeze blowing through my matted hair brought back consciousness. I was clinging to the shoulders of the shuffler, who, with huge flat boards strapped to his feet, was carrying me over the swamp-mud in the direction of a camp-fire three-quarters of a mile away.

A confused sound of voices, and a jarring bump as I was lowered to the ground by the side of the fire, ended my knowledge of further happenings for an hour or more. Then I found that it was my own camp-fire, and surrounding me were the comrades from whose side I had been snatched.

My rescuer was swathed in bandages, and not until we reached the coast and he had been safely deposited in hospital was any hope anticipated of his recovery. Meanwhile, with two of my comrades left in charge of us, the party had crossed that awful swamp, where they found the surgeon at his last gasp. The captive animals—upon whom for many months he had been experimenting, endeavouring by a series of clever but dastardly operations to transform them into nearly human creatures—had dealt severely with him indeed, but had been afraid to finish him off, so deep was their terror of him.

The animals crouched back threateningly as my comrades bent over the dying man. Then suddenly the gorilla leapt forward and tore from the hands of one of the party the flaming torch which was lighting up the unforgettable scene and sent it hurtling up to the roof. In less than a minute the place was a raging inferno, from which my comrades escaped by a miracle. From the camp side of the swamp they watched that scene of horror.

The dying surgeon had told my comrades of how he had come out to the Congo with a young medical student on a hunting trip, and how fever had unsettled his mind and prompted him to this series of appalling experiments. The first experiment was conducted on the young student, who has accompanied me here to-night, and who was my rescuer!

(Watch out for another of these "thrillers" next week.)

"CATCHING FISH!"

(Continued from page 10.)

"And you can't help me to find the place where you was kept when that bunch had you?"

"No. You see if I'd got away any other way, I should have been able to take the police there; but as I was hidden under the rug in the car, I never saw anything. The place may be in Kent or Surrey or Sussex, or anywhere."

"You're a bright lad, you are!" said Mr. Carter. "I guess your schoolmasters must be proud of you, and you'll make your mark some day, if that big brain of yours don't burst. Well, I'm through. Shut the door after you!"

"Oh!" said Bunter. "I—I thought that—"

"I've said I'm through," said Mr. Carter. "That means that you beat it! Shut the door!"

Billy Bunter grunted, and retired and shut the door. Apparently it was not advice and intellectual aid that Cyrus Carter wanted.

Mr. Carter lighted a fresh cigar when Bunter was gone, and turned to the window again. There was a faint grin on his face. He had ascertained that the kidnapping "bunch" had nothing to fear from the prisoner who had been in their hands. That had been a disappointment to Inspector Grimes when he had questioned the Owl of the Remove. But, for some inexplicable reason, it seemed to afford Mr. Carter satisfaction.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bob Cherry Asks for It!

"YOU daren't!"

"What?" roared Bob Cherry.

"Daren't!" said Cecil Reginald Temple, languidly but cheerfully, and with a cheery smile on his rather good-looking face.

Fry and Dabney of the Fourth, who were with their chief, nodded. They seemed in full agreement with the elegant and ineffable captain of the Fourth Form.

Bob Cherry breathed hard and deep. Probably Cecil Reginald Temple would have been slain on the spot, but for the fact that he was in open quad under the full view of a dozen windows—his Form master's and Bob's Form master's among them.

In such circumstances, the dandy of the Fourth was safe from slaying.

"You—you—you smug tick!" said Bob, breathing hard.

Bob's rugged face was crimson with wrath.

"D-a-r-e-n-o-t!" said Temple, spelling it out for the Remove's benefit. "Got that?"

"Oh, rather!" grinned Dabney.

"You see," said Fry, in a conversational tone. "You Remove kids are all such jolly funks."

"Funks!" gasped Bob.

"That's the word!" agreed Temple. "We raided your dormitory more than a week ago. We mopped you up right and left. You never put up much in the way of a fight!"

"Nothing to speak of!" said Fry.

"You caught us asleep," roared Bob, "and you wouldn't have dared to come into our dorm at all if we'd been awake."

"Well, you don't dare come into ours, whether we're asleep or awake!" said Temple. "You haven't come, anyhow."

"Cold feet!" said Fry, shaking his head.

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"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

Bob's face grew redder and redder, till it was in hue like unto a newly-boiled beetroot. The three Fourth-Formers grinned. They found it rather amusing to get Bob's rag out in this way.

"You know we jolly well started the next night," said Bob, "and we'd have mopped you up, only for what happened—"

"What happened?" yawned Temple. "You got a fright or somethin'?"

"Frightened in the dark!" said Fry, shaking his head. "Some kids are so nervous!"

It was just as well for Edward Fry, of the Fourth Form, that Mr. Quelch was standing at his study window, admiring the beauties of Nature from that coign of vantage.

Otherwise, Bob Cherry's knuckles and Edward Fry's nose would indubitably have established contact.

"You jolly well know what happened," gasped Bob. "That kidnapper man happened, and we had to stop—and we got scalped the next day for having been out of our dorm—"

"Well, the kidnapper hasn't happened since!" bantered Temple. "That was over a week ago. Have you been spending the time since tryin' to screw up your courage to the stickin' point?"

"Quelch was frightfully ratty—"

Temple yawned elaborately. "Quelch isn't an easy-going ass like your Form master!" snapped Bob. "You can feed Capper on milk! Quelch is a Tartar."

"My dear man," said Temple breezily, "I know that any excuse is better than none; but why not own up that you funk it? We walloped you in your dorm; and you daren't come along to ours, for love or money. What's the good of beatin' about the bush?"

"If it wasn't for Quelch—" breathed Bob. "Quelch has warned us that it will be a flogging if we get out of the dorm for a raid again."

"Poor little kids!" said Temple sadly.

"Diddums nasty Form master whackums?" said Fry soothingly, as if he were speaking to a baby. "Diddums, den?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Dabney.

It was too much for Bob! He forgot that Mr. Quelch was standing at his study window admiring Nature. He forgot everything but an intense desire to punch Fry's nose.

He gratified that desire immediately; and there was a terrific roar from Fry as he went over.

"Whoooooop!"

Bump!

Fry sat on the hard, unsympathetic quadrangle, and roared, with his hands to his nose. Temple and Dabney jumped back.

Temple & Co., as a matter of fact, had been counting on the fact that they were standing in front of Masters' Windows. They had expected Bob to bear in mind the well-known fact that discretion was the better part of valour. But Bob had forgotten it, with disastrous results to Fry's nose.

"Now come on, the three of you, and we'll see who's a funk!" roared Bob, with reckless defiance.

"Cherry!"

Mr. Quelch's voice cut the air, like a knife.

"Oh!" gasped Bob, recalled to himself.

"Ow!" roared Fry. "Ow! Oh, my nose! Wow! My boko! Ow!"

"Cherry!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Bob. He started for Mr. Quelch's window.

Fry picked himself up, and, still clasping his damaged "boko," walked away with Temple and Dabney.

Bob, unhappily, could not walk away. He walked up to Masters' Windows, with a very red face and an apprehensive expression on it. Brawling in the quadrangle was much frowned upon; and this was the sort of thing that Quelch would call brawling in the quadrangle.

From the next study window Capper, the master of the Fourth, was glaring at Bob as he came up. Capper was indignant. He had seen—at least, he fancied so—an unprovoked assault upon a boy of his Form. The juniors had been talking, and the Fourth Form trio actually smiling—Capper had seen them smiling—when the Remove fellow suddenly hit out and knocked Fry down. It was a shocking occurrence.

Mr. Capper leaned out of his window, and glanced along at Quelch, leaning out of his.

"Quelch!" he said. "You saw—"

"I saw!" answered Mr. Quelch acidly.

"An unprovoked assault!" snorted Mr. Capper. "A brutal attack! I am quite pained!"

"Cherry!"

"Yes, sir!" groaned Bob.

"Come round to my study, Cherry! I shall cane you severely for brawling in the quadrangle!"

There was nothing to be said. Bob walked away to the door, and went into the House. He made his way to Mr. Quelch's study.

That gentleman had already selected his stoutest cane. He swished it in the air as Bob entered, with a most unpleasant swish.

"Cherry! You will bend over that chair!"

Bob Cherry bent over the chair. What followed was painful. Mr. Quelch evidently thought that it was not an occasion for sparing the rod. He did not spare it. He gave Bob only six; but those six were mighty swipes. Anybody looking at Quelch would never have guessed where he packed the muscle.

Whack, whack, whack, whack, whack, whack!

Bob was determined that he would make no sound. He knew how to take a licking; he had taken many in his time. But he had not counted on Quelch understudying a patent carpet-beater in this fashion.

In spite of himself, the fifth whack brought a yelp from him, and the sixth a resounding yell.

Perhaps it was just as well, for Mr. Quelch looked like going on. He stopped, however, as Bob let out a yell that was worthy of Chingachgook on the warpath. He laid down the cane.

"You may go, Cherry! And remember, if there is any further brawling in the quadrangle—"

Bob Cherry went. He wriggled his way down Masters' Passage. At the corner he came on Temple & Co. Now, as a matter of absolute fact, Temple & Co. had come along to tell Bob that they were sorry he had landed in a row with his Beak.

But that good intention was never carried out. For Bob, wriggling along the passage like a contortionist, had a certain comicality of aspect that caused Temple & Co. to smile.

Bob gave them a glare, and shoved through them.

"You beastly rotters!" he gasped. "You—you sniggering ticks!"

All thoughts of apology and condolence vanished from Temple, Dabney & Co. at once. Bob had a hefty shove,

"Mind where you're shovin' you hooligan?" snapped Temple.

An elbow jammed in his ribs, and he staggered against the wall.

Bob strode on, glaring.

"Diddums!" called out Fry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob turned for a moment, with a perfectly ferocious glare. For a moment he was on the point of charging the enemy. But the infliction in his Form master's study was too recent and painful. He strode on again, and a chuckle from Temple, Dabney & Co. followed him.

And as he went up the stairs Fry yelled after him again, "Diddums!" And Bob stamped into the Remove passage in a state of wrath, compared with which the celebrated wrath of Achilles was a mere jest.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

To Raid or Not to Raid!

"O H, here you are!"

"Late, old bean!"

"Tea's ready!"

Four members of the famous Co. were in Study No. 1 when Bob Cherry came in. Tea was ready in that apartment, and the Co. were beginning when Bob arrived.

Nugent pulled out a chair for him, and Bob was sitting down, when he suddenly changed his mind and stood up again.

"Thanks; I'll stand!" he said.

"What the thump—" asked Harry. Then, as he glanced at Bob's flushed face, he added: "What's up?"

"Licked?" asked Johnny Bull.

Bob Cherry nodded.

He stood to his tea, and his comrades helped him to the best things on the table, by way of sympathy.

Fortunately, the licking had not affected his appetite, which was always healthy.

"We've got to raid the Fourth to-night, you men!" said Bob abruptly.

There was a shaking of heads in Study No. 1.

Generally, all the members of the famous Co. were ready for a rag. But for the present dormitory raids were barred.

"That nincompoop Temple has been chipping me that we daren't raid them after they raided us!" said Bob savagely.

"Gas!" said Wharton. "Let Temple talk out of the back of his neck if he likes! He can't talk any other way!"

"I've had six for punching Fry's nose!" growled Bob. "I had to punch it! Quelch called it brawling in the quad!"

"He would!" said Johnny Bull, with a sniff.

"Well, I'm not having those Fourth Form cads calling us funks!" declared Bob. "Look here, what's the matter with a dorm raid to-night, and knocking the Fourth into a cocked hat?"

Wharton shook his head again.

"Can't be did, old son! Quelch was frightfully ratty last time, though it turned out so lucky for Fishy. He's said quite plain that if we break dorm bounds again we're to be reported to the Head. We don't want a row with the Beak."

"Besides, there's a stranger staying in the House now," said Frank Nugent. "That man Carter came to-day, you know—"

"Blow Carter!"

"Well, they've given him that room at the corner of the landing, on the same floor as the dormitories," said



Bob Cherry's pillow swept up and then down. Biff! "Ow-wow!" A startled howl broke from the kidnapper as the pillow landed in the middle of his back.

Nugent. "Very likely a row would wake him up."

"He wouldn't be likely to sneak to Quelch, I suppose."

"He would jolly well mention it, I think, if he was woke up by a hullabaloo at night. Quelch would be madder than ever if a visitor saw anything of what he calls brawling. We'll beat Temple & Co. at cricket!" said Frank soothingly.

"Are we going to have them shouting all over Greyfriars that they've raided our dorm, and that we're afraid to raid theirs?" bawled Bob.

"It's not good enough, old chap! We'll take it out of the ticks some other way," said Harry.

Bob Cherry gave a snort. Six—and a very painful six—had rather dashed his usual good temper; added to the effect of that exasperating "diddums!" from Fry.

"Looks to me as if they're right, and as if some fellows do funk raiding their dorm!" he snapped.

"You're stuffy now, old bean!" said Johnny Bull.

"Who's stuffy?"

"You are, old chap! You'll agree with us when you're calm again."

"Who's not calm?" roared Bob, looking anything but calm.

"My esteemed and preposterous Bob!" murmured Hurree Janset Ram

Singh. "The calmfulness of your ludicrous self is not terrific."

"Oh, rats!"

"Be sensible, old chap!" urged Wharton. "The other fellows would kick—they know it's not good enough."

"Blow the other fellows! We can raid the Fourth on our own."

"Well, we're rather useful in a scrap, but I can't quite see five fellows mopping up a whole Form."

"Br-r-r-r-r!" growled Bob Cherry. "If you won't, you won't, and it's no good talking! Let's settle down to hearing those Fourth Form cads call us funks, then, as you fellows seem to like it!"

To this remark the Co. made no reply; even Johnny Bull realised that when a usually good-tempered fellow was ratty, silence was golden.

As a matter of fact, Bob Cherry was not, for once, displaying his usual sweet reasonableness.

Mr. Quelch's warning to his Form after the last affair had been solemn and serious, and Henry Samuel Quelch really was not a man to be trifled with.

And there was no doubt that if the stranger within the gates should be disturbed at night by a row among the juniors, Henry Samuel Quelch would develop absolute ferocity.

It was, in fact, not good enough.

(Continued on page 16.)



(Continued from page 13.)

Bob would have realised had he not been suffering from the combined effects of Temple & Co's jeers, and Mr. Quelch's stoutest cane.

He left Study No. 1 after a very brief tea. The juniors glanced at him as he went, and looked at one another.

"The esteemed and ridiculous Bob has his absurd back up!" remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh distressfully.

"Silly ass!" grunted Johnny Bull. "It's the licking!" said Wharton tolerantly. "Bob will be all right when it's worn off."

Prep was very uncomfortable for Bob that evening. He could not sit down to it, and he wriggled painfully as he stood to it. There was no doubt that Mr. Quelch had laid on that "six" not wisely, but too well.

After prep Bob was still looking rather gloomy when he came down to the Rag. Had Temple, Dabney & Co. been in the Rag, probably trouble would have occurred; but the heroes of the Fourth were not there.

"My esteemed Bob," murmured Hurree Singh as Bob stood staring out of the window of the Rag into the dusky quad. "The light of your ridiculous countenance is overcast; but the trustfulness is great that you are not infuriated with your atrocious friends."

Bob's glum face broke into a grin. Even a cross-tempered fellow could hardly have resisted an appeal couched in such wonderful language.

"All serene, Inky!" he answered. The nabob of Bhanipur smiled.

"The gladfulness is great that the esteemed clouds have rolled by," he said. "The packfulness of the troubles in the excellent and ancient kit-bag is the proper caper, and the smilefulness, my esteemed chum."

Bob was smiling, though he was still suffering from severe twinges, when the Remove went to their dormitory.

"You fellows were right!" he said to the Co. on the way. "It would be rather fatheaded to beg for trouble from Quelch. We don't want a Head's flogging all round. Let it drop."

"Right," said Harry. "After all, what does it matter what that ass Temple says? We beat them at cricket, we beat them in rags, and we beat them all along the line. Let them gas if they like."

Bob Cherry nodded; but he did not state what was in his thoughts. On reflection, he had decided that it was not good enough, and that he did not want to drag his comrades into a row with Quelch. But Temple's jeers were fresh in his mind, and he was quite resolved to prove to the ineffable Cecil Reginald that he did not "funk" a raid on the Fourth Form dormitory. He had made up his mind to go on his own, taking a pillow with him, and give Cecil Reginald a surprise. But of that intention he said no word to his comrades. Had they been aware of it, they

certainly would not have let him go alone.

Fisher T. Fish parted from the rest of the Form on the landing.

He went across to Mr. Carter's room at the corner of the landing and passed through it to his own room.

The rest of the Remove went along the passage to their dormitory.

Mr. Quelch came to see lights out for his Form. One of the prefects generally had that duty; but of late Mr. Quelch had undertaken it several times. If the Famous Five had been thinking of paying off old scores against the rivals of the Fourth, the expression on Mr. Quelch's face would have discouraged them.

Quelch was obviously suspicious and tart, and his gimlet-eye lingered on the Co. in rather a scrutinizing way. He did not refer to the subject; but it was clear that he had not forgotten the affair of the night raid. Considering how the raid had turned out, the juniors thought this rather rotten of Quelch; but a Form master never could be expected to see eye to eye with his Form.

"Quelch's got his gimlet-eye open!" Johnny Bull remarked after lights out. "He seems to fancy somebody's up to something. No more dorm raids this term for me."

"Blow him and his gimlet-eye!" grunted Bob.

When the Remove dropped off to sleep, Bob remained awake. That was not difficult, for the lingering effects of the "six" made him anything but sleepy. He would have found it rather difficult to sleep, so it was easy enough to remain awake.

When eleven boomed through the night from the clock-tower, Bob Cherry turned quietly out of bed.

He slipped on his trousers and socks, took his pillow and tiptoed to the door. Softly he opened the door.

"Oh, my hat!" he muttered as he stared along the dark passage towards the landing at the end.

A glimmer of light appeared there, and he had a glimpse of Mr. Quelch, candle-stick in hand.

He popped back into the dormitory and closed the door quietly.

"Prowling!" grunted Bob.

Mr. Quelch, evidently, was taking a last look round before going to bed. Bob Cherry returned to his bed and sat down to wait till Quelch was safe off the scene.

He decided to give him half an hour, and he lay down on the bed to wait for that interval to elapse.

Then he found that he was getting sleepy.

That was not surprising as it was approaching midnight. He resolved, however, to remain awake; and he was still resolving when he fell asleep.

It was, however, an uneasy slumber, and he awoke presently. He sat up on the bed and blinked round him, wondering what the time was. Faintly through the night came a single stroke from the clock-tower.

It was one o'clock!

"Oh scissors!" murmured Bob.

He had left it later than he had intended. Anyway, it was certain that by this time Mr. Quelch would be fast asleep; the most watchful and suspicious Form master was not likely to "prowl" at that hour. Bob Cherry picked up his pillow again and left the dormitory.

He was as determined as ever to prove to Temple, Dabney & Co. that he was no funk, and make them sit up for getting him six from Quelch.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

A Mystery of the Night!

BOB CHERRY crept silently and softly down the dark passage. All was dark and silent, and in his socks, his footsteps made no sound on the floor.

He reached the landing.

There was a faint grin on Bob's face in the gloom. Temple, Dabney & Co. were sleeping the sleep of the just in their dormitory, and certainly not dreaming of what was to come. By the time Bob got busy with his pillow, he had no doubt that Cecil Reginald Temple would repent of having dared him to raid the Fourth Form quarters.

Bob moved quietly along the wall on tiptoe. He naturally did not want to awaken Mr. Carter in his room at the further end of the big landing. He hoped that Mr. Carter was a sound sleeper, and would not hear the row that would shortly be going on in the Fourth Form dormitory.

But all of a sudden Bob halted.

The summer night was calm and clear, and a myriad of stars glittered in a sky of dark blue. A soft and silvery light fell in at the high windows on the landing and over the staircase. A fresh breeze, laden with ozone from the sea, made itself felt.

"What the thump—" murmured Bob.

Near the door of Mr. Carter's room was a window on the landing which had an iron-railed balcony outside overlooking the quad.

That window was open.

Bob stared at it blankly. All windows in the house were, of course, closed and fastened at night; especially since the alarming state of affairs brought about by the activities of Barney McCann and his "bunch."

That window, it was certain, had been closed and secured when the House went to bed. Mr. Quelch would undoubtedly have noticed had it been open when he "prowled" round at eleven o'clock.

It was wide open now. Bob felt his heart thump.

The whole House was sleeping. Not a sound broke the silence, save a faint creak now and then of the ancient oak wainscot.

Who had opened the window?

The fresh breeze from the sea blew in. Silvery starlight fell in a bright patch just within the window.

"Oh crumbs!" breathed Bob.

The thought of the kidnapper flashed into his mind instantly.

On Mr. Carter's very first night at Greyfriars, the detective was to be put to the test. It was a strange coincidence that Barney McCann should have chosen that night for his attempt.

Bob stood back against the wall, in deep shadow at that distance from the window, his heart beating.

He had forgotten Temple, Dabney & Co. now.

The fact that the window was open, could only mean that the kidnapper was in the House. It could not be a case of an ordinary burglar; there were no valuables in that part of the House.

But if McCann had come, he certainly had not come to the Remove dormitory after Fisher T. Fish. That must mean that the kidnapper knew of Fishy's change of quarters. Bob realised that it could mean nothing else.

Was he in Carter's room at that very moment? He could not reach Fishy without passing Carter.

Bob's eyes turned on Carter's door. It was open!

He felt a thrill.

Obviously, the kidnapper knew where Fishy was. But what was the detective doing?

There was no sound—no stirring! Was Carter lying fast asleep, ignorant that the kidnapper was at work, his very first night on guard?

Bob could hardly help grinning at that thought. It looked as if the heir of the Fish dollars would have been safer without the care of the man from New York.

Bob listened intently. There was no sound.

"My hat!" murmured Bob. "The giddy kidnapper must be there—and Carter's fast asleep all the time! My hat!"

He thought quickly.

He realised that moments might be precious. To awaken Mr. Carter—quietly, if possible—was evidently the best thing to be done. It was Mr. Carter's business to tackle the kidnapper, though Bob was more than ready to help. Bob decided quickly, and he tiptoed along the landing to Mr. Carter's door.

The room within was dark, save for a pale glimmer of starlight at the curtained window.

Bob peered in, in the darkness.

There was not the faintest sound, and he could see that the door on the further side, that led into Fishy's room, was shut.

He crept into Mr. Carter's room.

In the glimmer from the window he could make out the bed. No one was in the room; if the kidnapper was present, he was in Fishy's room. From that room, through the closed door, Bob heard a faint sound. Someone was stirring there.

He reached Mr. Carter's bed.

The glimmer from the window fell upon it, and showed it empty, and Bob almost staggered in his astonishment.

The bed was not only empty, but had not been occupied. The pillow had not been pressed by a head, the bed-clothes were smooth and undisturbed. Mr. Carter had not been to bed that night at all.

Where was he?

He was not in his bed, and not in his room. Was he in Fishy's room? Why? Or had he left his quarters to prowl round the house and ascertain that all was safe? If so, why had he failed to observe the open window on the landing?

Bob felt quite dazed.

What could the open window mean, if not that the kidnapper had come? It could not mean that Mr. Carter had, for some mysterious reason, gone out on the balcony at one o'clock in the morning, for Bob had had a clear view of the balcony in the starlight, and no one had been there. What the dickens did the whole thing mean?

As he stood, dazed with astonishment, Bob became aware of a faint murmur from the adjoining room—Fishy's room.

It was a low murmur of voices.

"My only hat!" breathed the astonished junior.

Carter might, conceivably, have gone into Fishy's room to make sure that he was safe there. But that did not account for the open window on the landing.

What could it all mean?

Bob Cherry could not begin to guess what it all meant, but he was going to know.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Catching Fish!

FISHER TARLETON FISH awoke suddenly.

He awoke with quite a jump. Fishy had been dreaming—of cornered pork and rolling dollars—a happy dream. Generally, when Fishy dreamed, money figured in his dreams in some shape or form. As it occupied most of his waking thoughts, it was not likely to be absent from the visions of slumber.

Such delightful visions naturally brought a smile to the sleeping, bony face of Fisher T. Fish.

But the dream was shattered, the smile vanished, and Fishy gave a start and a jump, as he was shaken by the shoulder.

His sharp eyes opened.

Sharp as they were, they discerned nothing, for it was intensely dark in his room. The blind was drawn over the window, and barely a glimmer of starlight crept in.

"Say!" ejaculated Fishy.

He was startled, but not alarmed. With the detective in the next room, the room through which an assailant would have to pass to reach him, there was nothing to be alarmed about. Fish's trust in the watchfulness and perspicacity

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of a real live-wire detective from New York was absolute.

He sat up and reached out for the electric switch beside his bed.

Click!

But the click of the switch was not followed by light.

"Can it!" said a quiet voice.

Fisher T. Fish gave a convulsive jump.

He had taken it for granted that the man who shook him, to waken him, was Carter, for who else could it possibly be? But the voice that spoke in low intense tones in the darkness was not the squeaky, high-pitched voice of Cyrus Carter. It was a voice Fishy knew—the voice of Barney McCann!

"Great gophers!" gasped Fishy.

He stared wildly through the gloom, but could make out nothing but a dim shadow beside his bed.

"You!" he gasped.

There was a soft chuckle.

"Sure! Don't shout—you'll get damaged if you do! There's a gas-pipe club only a foot from your head." Fishy shivered.

"I sure ain't shouting," he answered, with a shiver in his voice. "Say, how'd you get here? Where's Carter?"

There was another chuckle.

"I guess Carter ain't giving any trouble, bub! I ain't worrying a whole lot about Carter."

Fishy blinked at the dim shadow, in wonder and alarm. If Carter was in the next room, as he should have been, surely the whispering voices would awaken him. On the night McCann had penetrated to the Remove dormitory for Fish, he had not allowed him to utter even a whisper. Now he did not seem to care.

"Jerusalem!" breathed Fisher T. Fish. "You've squared Carter?"

That was a natural suspicion, and it occurred at once to Fishy's mind. He came from a happy land where squaring was as natural as breathing, and almost anybody could be squared.

"Never mind Carter! I guess I'm here for you, bub! You reckon I'd be letting you chew the rag, if there was anybody to hear?"

"But—" gasped Fishy. "But—" "That's about enough from you, I guess. Turn out and dress, and don't forget the lead pipe!"

"Oh, great snakes!" groaned Fisher T. Fish.

He had felt safe—absolutely safe—in his new quarters, with the man from New York on guard. He realised now that he would have been safer in his old quarters.

In the Remove dormitory, there would have been a chance, at least, of other fellows awakening, and coming to his help, a chance that Quelch might have been on the prowl, and there would have been the constable from Courtfield patrolling the quadrangle, if Mr. Carter had not come.

Now he was helplessly at the mercy of the kidnapper. Even a call for help would hardly have been heard, unless it was very loud. And since the arrival of Mr. Carter, the constable no longer patrolled Greyfriars at night.

Either Carter had been squared, or disposed of in some other way. It was plain that McCann did not fear interference from him.

Fishy had placed complete trust in the man from New York! Evidently, he had been let down; and his last state was worse than his first.

He slipped obediently from his bed, and hurried on his clothes in the dark. No dream of resistance crossed his mind. He did not want the lead piping to rap on his bony head.

This time it looked as if the kidnapper would "get by" with it! This was going to cost Hiram K. Fish thirty thousand dollars! But there was no need for it to cost Fishy a broken head into the bargain.

"Take your time!" came the low, chuckling voice from the darkness. "You can put on all your rags, bub, this time. I guess I ain't pressed for time; the night's young yet."

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

He found his things in the dark, and dressed. The bedside lamp had, he guessed now, been disconnected while he was asleep. Barney McCann seemed to know his way about Fishy's quarters—though how he knew was a mystery.

He was dressed at last.

"You ready, bub?"

"Yep!" muttered Fisher T. Fish.

"Now listen here!" McCann's voice came quietly and evenly "I've fixed it up to let you out of a window on the landing. I guess you know that window with a balcony outside. There's a guy standing down under to catch you. I'm letting you down on a rope. You get me?"

"Say, I guess—"

"That's more'n enough. You listen! You know you ain't going to be hurt—there's no call for you to be scared. I

got the window open, and the rope ready, and a guy down under waiting. I'm telling you so's you won't be scared."

"I—I guess it's forty feet to the ground!" breathed Fisher T. Fish. "Say, you gink—"

"Can it, I'm telling you! I got a good rope, and you'll go down safe, and I guess Mike will see you don't bump! I guess I'm going to stick a gag in your jaw so's you won't squeal if you get scared! Open up!"

"I—I say—" gasped Fisher T. Fish, dismayed at the prospect of being lowered forty feet to the ground on the end of a rope. "I—I guess I'd rather walk downstairs—"

"Mebbe you would; and mebbe we might run into somebody prowling around, and mebbe that's what you'd like!" jeered McCann. "Drop it! I'm telling you I got it all cut and dried! Why, dog-gone you, you figure I'd run any risks with a gold-bug that Hiram Fish is going to pay thirty thousand dollars for? Nope! Open that jaw of yourn."

Hands groped over Fishy's face; and he obediently "opened up" his lantern jaw. A wedge was pushed in between his teeth, and fastened there with a cord tied round his head. Evidently the kidnapper had come provided with the tools of his curious trade.

"Now you want to walk!" remarked McCann.

His hand gripped Fishy's shoulder. They moved towards the communicating door into Carter's room.

"Step, soft!" whispered McCann. "You kick up a rookus and you won't know what you're going to get! If I have to carry you, bub, you won't know what's happening."

Fisher T. Fish trod very softly. The unseen kidnapper, keeping his right hand gripping like a steel vice on the junior's shoulder, opened the communicating door with his left.

They passed together into Mr. Carter's room.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bad for Barney!

BOB CHERRY caught his breath. Standing beside Mr. Carter's empty bed, in the pale glimmer of starlight, Bob was wondering what to do. Faintly, to his ears, came the low murmur of voices from Fishy's room.

The murmur ceased. Bob stood quite still. That something was wrong, was clear enough; but Bob could not make it out.

If it was Carter in Fishy's room, talking to Fish, what did the open window mean? Could there be any doubt that that window had been placed open in readiness for the kidnapper and his prisoner to pass out that way? By that window the man could not have entered. There was a sheer drop of at least forty feet to the ground. The window, therefore, had been opened from within—after the man had entered some other way. No doubt it would be easier and quicker to lower the kidnapped junior on a rope from the balcony than to take him downstairs by passages and staircases, and run the risk of an alarm. That was clear enough. What was not clear was why Carter should be missing from his room just when the kidnapper was on the scene. The kidnapper must be in the house, or the window could not have been opened. If it was Carter in

Fishy's room now, where was the kidnapper? If it was the kidnapper, where was Carter?

Bob felt his brain almost in a whirl. But on one point he was quite resolved; he was going to know. Before he left Carter's room he was going to make sure that Fish was safe.

He was trying to think it out when the door from Fishy's room opened quietly, and Bob caught his breath.

Two figures emerged from the darkness of Fishy's room, into the dimness of the room where Bob stood.

Bob saw them, but he could see nothing but the shadowy figures—and only from their respective heights could he discern that one was a man and the other a boy.

The boy, of course, was Fisher T. Fish.

But whether the man was Carter or McCann, Bob could not tell—for the moment. If he was Carter, it was inexplicable why he was leading Fishy from his room. But if he was McCann—where in the name of all that was mysterious was Carter?

Bob caught his breath; but for the moment he did not move. The two figures were crossing the room from Fishy's door to Carter's door on the landing. Neither glanced in the direction of Carter's bed, or they must infallibly have seen Bob standing there, dim as it was where he stood.

They passed through the outer doorway to the landing.

Bob breathed hard. It was scarcely possible to doubt who it was that was walking Fishy along, with a grasp on his shoulder.

Yet the absence of Carter was so strange that Bob hesitated to act. If it was, after all, the New York detective acting in this mysterious way for reasons unknown to Bob, interference was uncalled for, and might be disastrous.

Bob stepped quickly towards the door after them. He could not feel certain yet; but he was going to be certain.

The two figures, silent, dim, shadowy, ghost-like, moved along the wall towards the open window.

Bob, keeping close in the shadow of the wall, silent in his socks, glided after them.

It was a french window that opened on the balcony. Usually it was fastened with two bolts, one at the top and one at the bottom, as well as a lock. One side of it was wide open.

The two figures reached the opening, and the man pushed the boy out before him to the balcony.

Fisher T. Fish stumbled on something that lay on the little balcony, and there was a hissing whisper.

"Quiet, you gink!" Bob's heart thumped faster. That hissing whisper bore no resemblance to the squeaky, high-pitched voice of Cyrus Carter.

And there could be no doubt now. Cyrus Carter could have no imaginable motive for taking Fish out on to the balcony. And Bob discerned what it was that Fishy had stumbled over, as the man stooped and picked it up. It was a large coil of rope.

All was clear now, beyond the shadow of a doubt. The man was the kidnapper, and Fishy was in his hands, and Barney McCann was going to lower him from the balcony.

If Bob wanted further proof, he had it the next moment. The man leaned over the iron railing of the balcony, and gave a faint low whistle. It was answered by a whistle, equally faint, from below.

Another man was waiting at the foot of the wall. Obviously, it was a confederate of the kidnapper.

Bob was still puzzled and perplexed, for the absence of Carter, the detective, was utterly inexplicable. But wherever Carter was, there was no doubt now of what was going on.

Bob crept closer to the open french window.

The man, with the end of the rope in his hands, passed it round Fisher T. Fish, under his armpits.

He had his back to the window as he did so. Bob Cherry stepped into the opening of the french window, and the pillow, intended for Temple of the Fourth, was grasped in his hands. It swept up—and swept down.

A startled howl broke from the kidnapper as the pillow, crashing down with all Bob's strength in the swipe, smashed in the middle of his back.

He pitched helplessly forward, taken utterly by surprise by the attack, and plunged down on his hands and knees on the balcony.

"Oh!" he gasped. "Oh! Great gophers! Oh!"

Fisher T. Fish, as startled as the kidnapper by the sudden and unexpected intervention, gave a jump, and a faint gurgle came from behind his gag. In the dimness, Bob had not seen that the American junior was gagged.

"Mmmmm!" came from Fishy.

"Hook it, Fishy!" panted Bob.

He grasped the American schoolboy by the arm and dragged him back through the french window as the kidnapper sprawled and spluttered.

"Mmmmm!"

"Quick!" panted Bob.

He tore across the landing, dragging Fishy by the arm. The kidnapper, on the balcony, twisted over and scrambled to his feet. He came plunging in again by the open window.

But though it was only a matter of seconds, he had no chance of getting near Fish again.

Fishy did not need urging. He fairly flew across the landing and up the dormitory passage. Bob, who had no desire to tackle the kidnapper single-handed, ran with him; but, good runner as Bob was, Fisher T. Fish beat him this time. The same thought was in both their minds—to get to the Remove dormitory.

They raced up the passage.

Fishy reached the Remove dormitory first, hurled the door open, and rushed in. He was slamming the door, to lock it, when Bob bumped on it.

"Hold on, you ass!" gasped Bob.

Fishy had apparently forgotten, in the excitement of the moment, that Bob wanted a refuge, too.

"Quick!" panted Fishy. He had torn the gag from his mouth now. "Quick, you gink, he'll be after us!"

Bob leaped in and the door slammed. The next moment Fisher T. Fish had turned the key in the lock.

"Oh, Jerusalem crickets!" he gasped.

Bob switched on the light.

"Oh crumbs!" he gasped breathlessly.

"What on earth's the row?" came Harry Wharton's voice. The slam of the door had awakened all the Remove.

Fellows were sitting up in bed all along the dormitory, blinking in the light and staring at the two juniors by the door.

"Bob! What—"

"My esteemed Bob—"

"It's the kidnapper again!" gasped Bob.

"Oh, my hat!"

"I guess it's McCann!" panted

Fishy. "Listen! Listen, you gink! Is he coming after us?"

Fisher T. Fish listened at the dormitory door with painful intentness. But there was no sound of footsteps in the passage outside. If the kidnapper had pursued he had thought better of it.

"The door's locked, anyhow," said Bob. "We're safe as houses."

"I guess he may have a gun!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "I know he's got a gas-pipe club! Oh, Jerusalem crickets!"

"Let him come, if he likes!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, leaping out of bed. "We'll handle him fast enough, if he does."

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

"Don't you unlock that door!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "You keep that door locked! I've had enough of Barney McCann, and I'm telling you so."

"Yes, keep it locked!" squeaked Bunter. The noise had disturbed even the Owl of the Remove, and he now sat up in bed. "We don't want that beast McCann to come in here!"

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Carter is Annoyed!

MR. QUELCH'S face was grim. He was in dressing-gown and slippers, and evidently had turned very hurriedly out of bed.

He glanced at the long row of juniors sitting up and staring, and then fixed his eyes on Fisher T. Fish and Bob.

"What does this mean?" he asked acidly.

"The—kidnapper, sir!" stammered Bob.

"I guess that guy got after me, sir," said Fisher T. Fish. "He cinched me in my room next to Carter's, sir."

have saved him from falling into the hands of the kidnappers. How does it happen that you were there?"

"I—I—I—"

"I am waiting for your answer, Cherry."

"I—I was out of the dorm, sir—"

"Evidently," said Mr. Quelch dryly. "And why were you out of your dormitory, Cherry, at one o'clock in the morning?"

"I—I say, sir," put in Fisher T. Fish, "those guys would have got me sure, sir, if Cherry hadn't been there—"

"You need not speak, Fish! Answer my question, Cherry."

"I—I was going to—to the Fourth Form dormitory, sir," stammered Bob.



"I don't believe a word Mr. Carter says," said Bob Cherry quietly. "He's making this out to cover up his carelessness. He ought to have been on the watch, and he wasn't!" "Wh-a-a-at!" Mr. Quelch fairly spluttered.

"Rot!" snorted Bolsover major. "Let's go out and mop him up."

"You bone-headed jay! This door's staying locked!"

"Keep it locked!" said Skinner. "We don't want the man in here. Keep that blessed door locked."

There was no doubt that Fisher T. Fish would keep the door locked. He kept his hand on the key, to make sure of it.

A few minutes later there were footsteps in the passage outside. Fisher T. Fish gave a gasp.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, somebody's coming!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Keep him out!" panted Fisher T. Fish.

The Removites listened. Footsteps came up the passage to the door of the dormitory. They stopped, and the handle was turned.

"Open this door!"

It was the voice of Mr. Quelch.

And at the sound of the Form master's voice the door was opened at once and Mr. Quelch stepped into the dormitory.

"Where is Mr. Carter, then?"

"You've got me, sir."

"What? What do you mean, Fish?"

"I mean I don't know, sir."

"Kindly say what you mean, Fish! I heard a disturbance," said Mr. Quelch, with a glare. "Do you mean to tell me, Fish, that you were attacked in your room, although Mr. Carter was in the next room, watching over you?"

"Jest that, sir!"

"Tell me at once what has happened."

The Removites, as well as Mr. Quelch, listened with keen interest to the junior's breathless explanation. Mr. Quelch's frowning brow grew darker and darker as he listened.

"I guess I'd be far away now, sir, if Cherry hadn't horned in," Fisher T. Fish concluded. "He had me dead to rights, sir! Barney had me ready to drop down on a rope, and there was another guy waiting below to take me, and I allow they had a car handy—"

"Cherry!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"From Fish's account, you appear to

"Then I saw the landing window open—and—"

"After my serious warning, of a few days ago, you have ventured to break dormitory bounds, Cherry."

Bob was silent. Really, there was no need of an answer.

"I will deal with that later," said Mr. Quelch. "Did you see nothing of Mr. Carter?"

"Nothing, sir."

"It is very singular," said Mr. Quelch, pursing his lips. "Have you seen nothing of him, Fish?"

"Nix—I mean no, sir!"

"I—I say, you fellows, somebody's coming!" squeaked Billy Bunter.

There were footsteps in the passage again.

A thrill ran through all the fellows. Mr. Quelch, with perfect calmness, put his head out of the doorway and glanced along the passage.

"You need not be alarmed," he said coldly. "It is Mr. Carter."

The man from New York appeared in the doorway. He was fully dressed,

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even to his hat. His eyes glinted over his gold-rimmed glasses. He looked excited, and far from good-tempered.

"Say, what's this stunt?" he exclaimed. "I guess I want to know the meaning of this."

"I guess so, too," snapped Fisher T. Fish, before Mr. Quelch could speak. "You figure that my popper sent you over here to let that kidnapping guy get a cinch on me."

"Silence, Fish!" said Mr. Quelch. "Mr. Carter, an explanation is due from you. This boy Fish has had a narrow escape, and was only saved by the accident of a Remove boy being out of the dormitory. It appears that you were not in your room, and that the kidnapper, McCann, found no one to interfere with him when he came."

Mr. Cyrus Carter gave an angry snort.

"Forgot it!" he grunted. "If I hadn't been meddled with, I'd have had the bracelets on Barney now. Yes, sir. My game's been knocked sky-high by a schoolboy butting in. I'll say, sir, that this here won't do. I shall complain to Dr. Locke. I shall cable to Mr. Fish and resign. If a man can't be allowed to get his job done without being meddled with and fooled around—"

"I fail to understand you, sir," said Mr. Quelch icily. "I repeat that Fish was actually in the hands of the kidnapper."

"And you figure that I wasn't on the watch?" snorted Mr. Carter. "You figure that I was fast asleep all the time?"

"Cherry states that you were not in your room."

"How much ice does that cut?" growled Mr. Carter. "I'm telling you I knew Barney was here, and had it cut and dried to catch him in the act. I'd been watching ever since Barney put his foot over the wall. I was giving him rope, sir, to hang himself."

Evidently the detective was very angry.

"I had the whole thing fixed up!" he snapped. "I was keeping tabs on them all the time. Of course, I wasn't in my room. I could have got Barney easy, but I wanted the other man as

well. There was another guy waiting outside to take the kid when he was let down on the rope. In another minute I'd have had the two of them together, and with my gun looking at them, I reckon they'd have put up their hands fast enough. Now they've both got clear."

"Oh!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob.

"You was on the watch?" exclaimed Fisher T. Fish.

"Wasn't I sent here to watch?" exclaimed Cyrus Carter indignantly. "What you think I was doing? I knew the game they was at, and I aimed to catch them together. I tell you I was only a yard away from the guy that was waiting below, and as soon as Barney'd come down the rope, I'd have had the two of them with the goods on them. It would have been a clear case. Now where is it? Knocked sky-high."

And Mr. Carter snorted.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Quelch, very much taken aback.

"What's the good of a man trying to do his job if he's meddled with like this?" demanded Mr. Carter. "Me waiting and watching all night, getting the whole thing fixed, and then this to happen. Barney was going to let the kid down, and follow him down the rope, and me waiting to cinch him with a gun in my hand. Then there was a rookus of some sort, and the man below bolted, and I come back into the house and find that Barney's bolted, too, and I guess I want to know the meaning of it. Somebody horned in and spoiled the whole thing."

"Dear me!" repeated Mr. Quelch blankly.

"I guess it won't do, sir!" snapped Mr. Carter. "I'll say it won't do! You get me, sir? It won't do!"

"I guess I thought Barney must have squared you, Carter," said Fisher T. Fish.

"Aw, forgot it!" snapped Mr. Carter.

"Look here—" began Bob.

"Silence, Cherry! Mr. Carter, this seems to have been very unfortunate," said Mr. Quelch. "If you were indeed on the watch below—"

"If!" snorted Mr. Carter. "Ain't I telling you?"

"Quite so—quite so! But surely you ran a very great risk in allowing the kidnapper to get the boy actually into his hands—"

"Where was the risk, when I was jest going to clap my gun to Barney's head as soon as he set foot on the ground? I'd have got the two of them, and the boy would have been safe. You going to teach a detective his business, sir?" almost shouted Mr. Carter.

"Certainly not; but—"

"From what I make out this kid horned in and gave the alarm," said Mr. Carter, with a glare at Bob. "Is that it?"

"That is it, certainly. But Cherry saw Fish in the hands of the kidnapper, so he naturally—"

"Naturally be dog-goned, sir! What was he doing there at all; I ask you that? Why wasn't he in bed and minding his own business?" roared Mr. Carter. "Have I asked the kids in this school to help me with my job? Did Mr. Fish instruct me to get help from schoolboys in looking after his son? No, sir, he did not!"

Mr. Quelch coloured with vexation. If the matter was as the detective stated, certainly Bob's intervention had been very unfortunate for his plans.

Bob drew a deep breath.

"Here I am, beaten to a frazzle by a meddling fool of a schoolboy, when the whole game was in my hands!" exclaimed Mr. Carter. "I had them both fixed for the bracelets—and now where are they? Beating it in a car at sixty an hour, I reckon. The whole game up! And when will I get a chance at Barney again? This sure gets my goat, sir."

Mr. Quelch bit his lip hard.

"I do not wonder at your annoyance, Mr. Carter," he said. "I can only say that I am very sorry."

"Fat lot of good that is now Barney's cleared off, ain't it?" snorted Mr. Carter angrily.

Mr. Quelch turned a glinting eye on the unfortunate Bob.

"Cherry, you realise now, I presume, the harm you have done by breaking dormitory bounds to-night?"

"No, sir," said Bob steadily. "I know I've saved Fishy from being kidnapped."

"What? You have heard what Mr. Carter has said, and you are aware that your interference has prevented him from—"

"I don't believe a word of it, sir," answered Bob steadily.

"What?" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"What's that?" howled Mr. Carter.

"Say, you gink!" ejaculated Fisher T. Fish.

"Not a single word," said Bob quietly. "I believe Mr. Carter is making this out to cover up his carelessness. He ought to have been on the watch, and he wasn't and now he's got to make excuses."

"Cherry, how dare you?" Mr. Quelch fairly spluttered. "How dare you insult Mr. Carter? Have you taken leave of your senses?"

"By the great horned toad," articulated Mr. Carter, "this is the limit—this here is! This here is the bee's knee. I'm telling you."

"Cherry, I will deal with you in the morning. Go to your bed at once. Mr. Carter, I can only apologise—"

"I'm putting this up to Dr. Locke tomorrow, sir," snorted Mr. Carter. "If you figure that I'm standing this, sir, you're missing your guess."

He turned to Fisher T. Fish.

"You come and get back to your

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room, sir. I'm cabling to Mr. Fish to-morrow to ask for instructions. If schoolboys are going to horn in and spoil my game, I ain't no use here, and I may as well get back to Noo Yark."

And Mr. Carter stamped angrily out of the dormitory.

Fisher T. Fish glanced at Bob. "Say, I reckon you meant well, Cherry," he said. "But you sure do seem to have done a lot of harm. I guess you better stick to your bed o' nights, and leave Mr. Carter to get on with it his own way."

And Fisher T. Fish followed Mr. Carter.

Bob Cherry, without a word, turned into bed. Mr. Quelch's gimlet-eye glinted at him.

"I shall deal with you to-morrow, Cherry," he said. "Good-night, my boys!"

And he turned out the light and left the dormitory.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Beastly for Bob!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. had very serious faces the following morning.

Most serious of all was Bob Cherry's.

Bob was "for it," there was no doubt about that.

It was a sufficiently serious matter to have broken dormitory bounds, after the solemn warning Mr. Quelch had given the Remove on that subject. But the fact that his intervention had upset the plans of Mr. Carter, and apparently prevented the capture of the kid-nappers put the lid on, so to speak.

According to Mr. Carter, the whole troublesome affair would have come to an end that night but for Bob Cherry. Barney McCann and his confederate would have been under lock and key, and Fisher T. Fish safe from the "bunch"—the whole case satisfactorily wound up. And the detective from New York had to be supposed to know his own business.

At breakfast that morning Mr. Quelch wore his most unpleasant expression.

Nocturnal disturbances did not agree with an elderly gentleman's health. Moreover, Mr. Quelch had sat up till daylight. He had had to telephone to the police, and Inspector Grimes had come to the school in the small hours. Mr. Carter had told him that it was not at all necessary; but as the Courtfield inspector was in official charge of the matter, the Remove master felt it his duty to keep Mr. Grimes informed.

Other masters had been disturbed. Mr. Prout had come out of his room and wanted to know what the matter was. Mr. Capper and Mr. Twigg had turned up, and all of them had displayed considerable acerbity. It had not been a pleasant night for Mr. Quelch.

So it was no wonder that he looked rather worn and exceedingly cross in the morning.

The Remove, when they saw his face at the breakfast-table, knew that they had to be on their very best behaviour that day. The glint in Quelch's eye was a warning.

When the Remove rose from the breakfast-table, Mr. Quelch had a word for Bob.

"Cherry!"

His voice was like ice.

"Yes, sir."

"You will go to Dr. Locke's study after third school."

"Very well, sir."

Bob's usually cheery face was glum as he went out into the quad with his friends. His friends were sympathetic, but they could do nothing but sympathise.

"Hard cheese, old bean," said Frank Nugent.

GREYFRIARS CELEBRITIES.

This week our clever Greyfriars rhymester produces a rousing poem about Oliver Kipps, the schoolboy conjurer.



HHEY presto! By some sleight of hand
And well-acquired dexterity,
I draw from Greyfriars
motley band,

A conjuring celebrity.
Young Kipps—with first name—Oliver,
Deserves some special mention:
To be as great as Maskelyne,
Is his avowed intention.

He shares the Study Number Five,
With one, poor Richard Hillary,
Who, strange to say, can still survive
A life that's oft-times pillory.
For Kipps oft tries the jugglers' art,
With breakages resultant;
And Richard bears, in all good part,
His efforts—non-exultant!

You may be sure our Kipps does not
Break things of his possession;
It's just a sort of way he's got,
In fact, it's an obsession!
But when to conjuring he turns—
Ah, then we see his wonder!
A volley of applause he earns,
Which bellows forth like thunder.

When rabbits out of hats appear,
And watches from your pocket,
Then take your cash and disappear,
And in a strong room lock it.
When Kipps has started conjuring,
All sorts of things mysterious
Are possible; the very thing
To drive you quite delirious.

You'll lose your head, and lose your wits,
You'll lose what else you treasure,
For Kipps can conjure any bits;
The habit gives him pleasure.
But though he's tried till he's a wreck,
You'll find he's not quite clever
To conjure Bunter's looked-for cheque.
D'you think he'll do it? NEVER!

He's medium at lessons; and
His swimming is his forte;
But with his brilliant sleight of hand,
He's popular and sporty.
So let us conjure up a spot
Of "POP" in which to praise him;
Perhaps he'll turn it to a lot!
Well, that would be amazing!

"The hardness of the cheese is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Bob gave a grunt.

"Can't be helped," he said.

"What the thump did you want to raid the Fourth on your own for, you fathead?" said Johnny Bull. "If we'd known—"

"You shouldn't have gone alone, Bob," said Harry. "If we'd known you were going we should have come along; though it was a fatheaded idea, as we told you."

"Well, you men would be up for a flogging, too, if you'd come," said Bob. "That wouldn't be very useful, would it?"

"Still, you shouldn't have gone," said Johnny Bull. "It's not only getting out of dorm, but mucking up Carter's game, that's made Quelch so wild. The man talked to him jolly straight. Can't wonder at his being ratty."

Bob gave a snort.

"I tell you he was gammoning," he answered. "If I hadn't chipped in they would have had Fishy. I don't know where Carter was, but I'm jolly certain he wasn't on the scene as he says."

"My dear chap!" murmured Nugent.

"I dare say he was rooting about somewhere, as he wasn't in his room," said Bob. "But I don't believe he would have got the kidnapers. I believe they'd have got Fishy."

"Well, Carter says—"

"I don't care what he says. He has to make some excuse, and that was the best he could think of!" growled Bob. "I shouldn't wonder if the kidnapers had squared him to keep out of the way. Fishy thought so himself at first."

"That's rather thick," said Wharton, with a smile.

"The thickfulness is terrific, my esteemed Bob."

"Well, that's what I think," said Bob. "Not that it makes any difference. I've got to go through with it now. But if Fishy trusts that man from New York to look after him, he's a fool! He would be safer in the Remove dorm."

"Aw, forget it!" broke in the nasal voice of Fisher T. Fish. "Say, you gink, Carter's awfully mad with you. He's threatening to cable to the popper and chuck up the job."

"Oh, go and eat coke!" snapped Bob. He was in no mood for Fisher T. Fish.

"I guess—"

"Rats!"

Bob Cherry stalked on. Fisher T. Fish grinned after him, and turned to the other fellows.

"Say, I guess that guy feels some geck!" he remarked. "Carter's been talking to me, and he's sure plumb mad. He had it all cut and dried to cinch them rubies, when Cherry horned in and spoiled it all. I'll say Cherry meant well, but he sure has put Carter in the cart."

"You think Carter really was on the alert, as he says?" asked Harry.

"Ain't that what the popper's paying him for?" asked Fisher T. Fish. "He's told me that the popper's coughing up a reward of five thousand dollars if he cinches Barney! Now he's lost it, all through Bob Cherry! 'Nuff to make a man hopping mad—what?"

"Well, yes; but he was running a risk, as Quelch told him, in letting the kidnapper get his hands on you," said Harry. "If anything had gone wrong with his plans—"

"A Noo Yark detective's plans don't go wrong," explained Fisher T. Fish.

"You're thinking of the home-grown article."

"Fathead!"

"You leave it to Carter and watch out," said Fisher T. Fish confidently. "Carter's come all the way from little ole Noo Yark to cinch Barney. He nearly had him last night. He will get him. You watch out!"

Evidently Fishy's faith in the man from New York was as strong as ever.

That, however, was plainly because Carter came from the great and wonderful city of "Noo Yark," and Fishy simply could not believe that any article produced by that wonderful city was not infinitely superior to anything produced elsewhere.

"I'll say I felt rather a small size in guys," Fishy went on, "when that galoot had me last night. But it would have been O.K. if that geek Cherry hadn't horned in! I'll say he meant well, but—" Fishy shook his head. "It can't be helped now; and Barney sure will try again, and Carter will cinch him. You watch out, and Carter will open your eyes! I'm telling you, it's an education for you boneheaded John Bulls to see a real live American getting things done."

"You don't think he was hiding somewhere in a blue funk when he heard the kidnapper coming?" asked Nugent blandly.

"Why, you—you—you—" gasped Fisher T. Fish.

And the chums of the Remove walked on grinning, and left Fisher T. Fish gasping.

In the Form-room that morning there was rather an electric atmosphere. Mr. Quelch most decidedly was not in a good humour. Anybody observing the Remove at work that morning would have supposed that they were a model Form. Even Bob Cherry did not shuffle his feet—even Lord Mauleverer was wide-awake and attentive—even Billy Bunter did not venture to suck a lozenge or an aniseed ball. By sheer good behaviour the Remove pulled through first and second lesson without trouble.

But it was rather a strain, and they were glad to be dismissed for break.

The Fourth were already out, and Temple, Dabney, & Co. greeted the Famous Five with smiling faces when they appeared. All the school, by this time, knew of the happenings of the night, and Cecil Reginald Temple and his comrades seemed much entertained.

"I hear you started for our dorm last night, Cherry!" smiled Temple.

"I jolly well did!" growled Bob.

"Lucky for you you never got there, wasn't it?" smiled Temple.

"Oh, rather!" chuckled Dabney.

"Somethin's always happenin' to stop you!" said Fry blandly. "You don't seem to have any luck with your giddy raids."

"I think he had a lot of luck," remarked Temple. "He was jolly lucky not to get as far as our dorm. We should have made rather an example of him."

"Oh, rather!"

Bob Cherry glanced round. There was no master in sight, and no prefect in the offing. Temple & Co. were asking for it!

"What do you suppose you'd have done if you'd got to our dorm, after all?" continued Cecil Reginald, apparently much amused.

"Something like this!" said Bob; and, with a sudden jump, he grasped Temple by the collar with one hand, and Fry by the collar with the other.

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Crack!

There was a loud concussion as two heads were banged together. Two fearful yells sounded as one.

"Ooooooooooooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Dabney made a jump to help his comrades, and tripped over a prompt foot put out by Johnny Bull, and landed on his hands and knees. The next moment Temple was sprawling across him, and Fry was sprawling across Temple.

"Something like that, you know!" gasped Bob.

"Ow! Oh! Ow!"

"Yow-ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Famous Five; and they walked on, leaving Temple & Co. to sort themselves out.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Barney Shows His Hand!

FISHER T. FISH tapped at the door of Mr. Carter's room, and opened it.

"Mosey in!" said Mr. Carter's voice, over his shoulder.

Fisher T. Fish "moseyed" in.

Mr. Carter was rather busily occupied. He was surrounded by various articles, apparently in the process of packing, a half-packed suitcase and a large Saratoga trunk, which was, so far, empty.

Fish glanced at him curiously.

"Say, you're not packing to go?" he exclaimed.

"Jest that!" snapped Mr. Carter. "After what's happened here, I'm chuckin' the job! I've told Dr. Locke so! I guess I'm fed up."

"But I say—" said Fishy, in dismay.

"I ain't a lot of time for talk!" said Cyrus Carter gruffly. "The taxi's coming now."

"Say, the popper will be mad, you letting him down like this!" said Fisher T. Fish.

"That cuts no ice! I've told your headmaster I'm through; and I guess I mean it!" grunted Mr. Carter.

"Is that why you asked me to come here in break—to tell me this, Mr. Carter?" demanded Fisher T. Fish.

"I guess I got some things to say to you before I go," said Mr. Carter. "Shut the door! I'm going, as I've told you—a detective can't work if he's going to be meddled with by school-boys. But I'm going to put you wise about some things before I absquatulate. Shut the door and sit down, sir—I ain't got a lot of time."

Fisher T. Fish shut the door, and sat down. Mr. Carter leaned his back on the door, with his eyes fixed on Fisher T. Fish over his gold-rimmed glasses.

"I asked you to come here as soon as you was out of class this morning," said Mr. Carter. "I told you it was something private and important, and not to mention it."

"Sure!" assented Fisher T. Fish.

"Well, you been chewing the rag, or have you done like I said?" grunted Mr. Carter.

"I ain't said a word," answered Fisher T. Fish. "I guess I don't see how it matters; but I ain't mentioned it to any galoot."

"So long as I'm here, I'm responsible for you," said Mr. Carter. "It matters this much—that Barney McCann's after you again."

"How d'you know that?" asked Fisher T. Fish.

"Ain't it my business to know?" snapped Mr. Carter.

"Yep!" assented Fishy.

"You ain't mentioned to any guy that you was coming up here to speak to me in break, as you call it?"

"Nope."

"Good!" said Mr. Carter. "Now, how long does this break of yours last?"

"A quarter of an hour."

"After that you'll be expected back in your class-room?"

"Yep."

"Then we got near fifteen minutes," said Mr. Carter.

"That's so!" assented Fisher T. Fish, more and more puzzled. "But I sure don't see—"

"You will!" answered Mr. Carter.

He turned, and snapped the key in the lock. Fisher T. Fish gazed at him, more and more surprised.

"Say, is Barney McCann around?" he gasped. "What you locking the door for, Mr. Carter?"

"Barney McCann is sure around," answered the man from New York. "I'll say that he ain't ten yards from you."

"Oh, Jerusalem crickets!" ejaculated Fishy. "You—you mean to say that Barney's in the school—in broad daylight?"

"You get me!"

Fisher T. Fish rose to his feet, vaguely alarmed. The expression on Mr. Carter's face was strange and curious; and the glitter in the eyes over the gold-rimmed glasses very peculiar.

"Say, look at that Saratoga!" said Mr. Carter.

Fishy glanced at the trunk.

"That's a good size in trunks," said Mr. Carter. "Saratoga trunks run large—and that's a sockdolager of a trunk. That's big enough for you to go to sleep in, if you want."

"I guess I don't want!" said the astonished Fishy.

"Nope!" agreed Mr. Carter. "I guess you'll stay awake." He made a step towards Fisher T. Fish, and lowered his voice. "Don't call out!"

"Wha-a-a-t?"

"If you give one yaup," said Mr. Carter, in a low tone of deadly menace, "the gas-pipe's ready for you. Keep your mouth shut!"

Fisher T. Fish gazed at him blankly. He was so astounded that he could scarcely take in the meaning of the words. Mr. Carter was not speaking now in the queer, high-pitched voice he had hitherto used. He was speaking in low, tense tones that were strangely familiar to Fishy's ears.

"Listen to me—and keep quiet!" said Mr. Carter. A length of leaden pipe, wrapped in leather, appeared in his hand as if by magic—the weapon of the Bowery "tough." "Jest one yaup, and you won't know what happens afterwards. You get me?"

Fisher T. Fish "got him."

The dreadful truth was dawning on his brain now; and he stood quite still, gazing at "Mr. Carter" in terror.

"You're going in that trunk!" said Mr. Carter. "You're going to be tied and gagged! You won't be hurt; but I got to take care! If that dog-goned schoolboy hadn't horned in last night it would have been easy for me. But I guess I had a second string to my bow, bub, and that trunk's the second string. You're going as baggage."

"Oh, great gophers!" said Fishy faintly.

"You won't be long in the Saratoga—I guess Mike'll be waiting for me with the car to change over from the taxi!" said Mr. Carter coolly. "But that's



"I've been interfered with, and prevented from doing my work!" said Mr. Carter curtly. "I refuse to stay here any longer."
 "But—" began Mr. Quelch. Mr. Carter banged the door, and the Remove master stepped back, reddening with vexation.

the only way left of getting you out of the school after that geck horned in and spoiled my game last night."

"Oh!" gasped Fishy.
 "You get me?" grinned Mr. Carter. "Yep, I'll say Barney McCann ain't fur off, bub! I'll say he ain't! I'll say if he took these here whiskers off and these dog-goned glasses, you'd see him standing in front of you! Yep! I'll say you sure would!"

"Oh!" gasped Fishy again.
 "If we hadn't been in the dark last night I guess my game here would have been up. And if I wasn't dealing with the world's prize boobs I guess they'd have tumbled, anyhow! Yep! But I pulled through all right!" said Mr. Carter cheerfully. "I'll say I fooled them a few! But I couldn't keep this game up long—I guess the old fossil might get wise to it any day that that cable never came from Hiram, but from a pal of mine in Noo Yark. Now, you keep mum!"

There was no danger of Fisher T. Fish not keeping "mum." One tap of the lead-piping would have stunned him; and Barney McCann would have administered that tap without the slightest scruple had the schoolboy given him trouble.

Fisher T. Fish sagely gave no trouble. If he was leaving Greyfriars as "baggage" it was wiser to go untapped, as it were.

The kidnapper wasted no time in words.

A wooden gag was fastened in Fishy's mouth; and his hands and ankles securely bound with a strong cord.

Then the man from New York lifted him into the huge trunk.

There was ample room for Fisher T. Fish in the big Saratoga. "Mr. Carter" grinned down at him.

"You're all right!" he said. "You're O.K., you are! You don't want to wriggle or squirm! It will be bad for your health if you do!"

Fisher T. Fish could not speak. He could only blink in dismay at the grinning kidnapper. There was not much chance of his wriggling and squirming; he was bound too securely for that.

"You won't suffocate!" grinned Barney McCann. "There's holes bored in the trunk, all ready—and I'll say you ain't the first that's been in that Saratoga, bub! Keep cool!"

Fisher T. Fish felt anything but cool; still there was no alternative. He was fairly caught!

The lid closed down.
 There was a click as the trunk was locked. Then Mr. Carter fastened the straps round it carefully.

Within the Saratoga, Fisher T. Fish lay still and silent. He was in the hands of the kidnapper at last, and this time there was no one to intervene. Barney McCann, at long last, was "getting by" with it!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Cinched!

"I SAY, you fellows!"
 Billy Bunter squeaked with excitement.

"I say! He's going!" yelled Bunter.

"Who's going, fathead?"
 "Carter!"

"Carter going!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Gosling's putting his luggage on a taxi now! All your fault, Cherry, you know. He's got his back up!" chuckled Bunter. "I say, the Head will give you some extra for this. He, he, he!"

"Fathead!" growled Bob.
 "But—the man can't be going for good!" exclaimed Frank Nugent.

"Ho jolly well is!" said Bunter. "I say, where's Fishy? Anybody seen Fishy? Somebody ought to tell Fishy that he's going!"

But Fishy was not on view.
 Harry Wharton & Co scudded towards the House. The news that Mr. Carter was leaving was surprising enough.

Certainly, the man from New York had seemed very angry and annoyed, but that seemed scarcely a sufficient reason for throwing up his job.

But when they reached the House they could see that it was true. A taxi was standing on the drive, and Mr. Carter's suit-case was already inside. Gosling and Trotter were handling a

big Saratoga trunk, and Mr. Carter himself was lending them a hand with it. Mr. Carter seemed very particular about that trunk. Gosling, Trotter, Mr. Carter, and the taximan together, heaved it on board.

Mr. Quelch was standing on the steps, with a frown on his brow. The Remove master was deeply and bitterly annoyed.

Mr. Carter's departure had been attributed, by Mr. Carter himself, to the interference of a member of Mr. Quelch's Form. The Head had asked him to reconsider his decision, and Mr. Carter had definitely refused.

It was irritating enough for the Remove master. A glint came into his eyes as the Famous Five arrived on the scene. Bob Cherry was the recipient of a very black look from his Form master.

Bob coloured very uncomfortably. Certainly, he wished that he had not left his dormitory the night before. Yet, in the same circumstances, he knew that he would have acted in the same way again. But he realised that matters, which were bad enough for him already, were made much worse by the detective's angry departure from the school. Mr. Quelch was not likely to forget that the fault was laid on a Remove boy.

The big Saratoga was landed on the taxi at last, and the driver resumed his seat. Then Mr. Quelch—very much against the grain—stepped towards the man from New York as the latter was about to enter the taxi.

"One moment, Mr. Carter!" he said stiffly.

"I guess I got a train to catch, sir!" answered Mr. Carter briefly.

"I must speak one word, sir!" said Mr. Quelch. "I am bound to say that your action is wholly unjustified. The interference from a boy of my Form, of which you have justly complained, would certainly never recur. The boy will be severely punished—you are assured of that—"

"I guess it cuts no ice, sir!" answered Mr. Carter curtly. "I been interfered with, and prevented from doing my work. I refuse to stay longer. I've said so to Dr. Locke. I say so again. That's the lot!"

"Mr. Fish will naturally be disappointed—"

Mr. Carter stepped into the cab. "And I repeat—" said Mr. Quelch. Mr. Carter banged the door.

The Remove master stepped back, reddening with vexation. Never had he been so severely snubbed. Evidently Mr. Carter was determined to shake the dust of Greyfriars from his feet, and without delay.

The taxi drove off.

A crowd of fellows watched it out of sight.

Mr. Quelch turned and went back into the House. Mr. Carter and his baggage disappeared.

"Oh crikey!" said Bob Cherry.

"You're for it now, old bean!" said the Bounder. "But, I say, the man must be a fool to get his back up like that and bunk."

"A silly ass!" grunted Johnny Bull. "An absolutely silly ass! It's not Bob's fault! Any fellow would have done the same in Bob's place."

"The silliness of the esteemed ass is terrific!" said Hurrec Jamset Ram Singh. "The Head will be in a preposterous wax!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, shut up, Bunter!"

"But, I say, where's Fishy? Fishy ought to know that his jolly old detective has cleared off!"

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"Blow Fishy!" snapped Harry Wharton.

"Bother Fishy!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Still, I wonder he didn't come to see the man off!" said Bunter. "I say, any of you fellows seen Fishy?"

Bully Bunter rolled up and down and round about, looking for Fisher T. Fish, to impart to him the startling news that Mr. Carter had got his back up to such an extent that he had thrown up his job and left the school. But Fisher T. Fish was not to be found.

Harry Wharton & Co. were not thinking about Fishy. The Co. were worried about Bob.

They understood very clearly how deeply annoyed the Head and Mr. Quelch would be by Carter's action. It was extraordinary that the man should have taken offence to such an extent. But there it was. He had "chucked up" his job and departed, and the blame was laid on Bob.

Bob's interview with his headmaster after third school was certain to be a very unpleasant one. It was all very well to take the view that anyone in Bob's place would have thought as he did, and probably acted as he did. But it was certain that if Bob had not broken dormitory bounds, the occurrence would not have occurred. Bob was likely to have to pay not only for his own recklessness, but for Mr. Carter's display of unreasonable temper also.

The bell rang for third school, and the Remove went into their Form-room. All the fellows noticed Mr. Quelch's grim look at Bob as that hapless youth came in. But Mr. Quelch's attention was quickly turned from Bob Cherry, by the discovery that Fisher T. Fish had not come in with the rest of the Form.

"Wharton! Why is not Fish here?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"I don't know, sir." Wharton was head boy of the Remove; but really he felt that he ought not to be expected to keep Fisher T. Fish in his waistcoat-pocket.

"Does anyone know why Fish is not here?"

Nobody, apparently, knew.

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips. He was already rather "fed" with the whole Fish affair, and Mr. Carter's conduct had given the finishing touch. He was in no mood to be worried by unpunctuality from Fishy.

"Has anyone seen Fish?" snapped the Form master.

"I saw him going upstairs when we came out for break, sir," said Skinner. "I haven't seen him since."

Third lesson began. But after five or six minutes, as Fish did not come in, Mr. Quelch went to the door and looked along the corridor. Evidently he was worried. Fellows had been late for class before; but in the peculiar circumstances any unpunctuality on the part of Fisher T. Fish was liable to cause uneasiness.

"Wharton, I leave you in charge of the Form!" snapped Mr. Quelch; and he left the Form-room.

"Oh, my hat! Where on earth is Fishy?" exclaimed Nugent. "The silly owl can't have gone and got himself kidnapped in break, I suppose?"

"Goodness knows!" said Harry.

The juniors waited. They did not venture to "rag" in the absence of their Form master. But there was a buzz of talk in the Form-room and the fellows wondered more and more, as Fishy did not come in, and Mr. Quelch did not return.

Half the time devoted to third school

had elapsed when Mr. Quelch reappeared. His face was angry and troubled.

The Remove thrilled with excitement. As Fish did not come in with the Form master, it was pretty clear that he could not be found.

"They've got him at last!" murmured the Bounder.

"But how?" breathed Wharton.

"Goodness knows! But they've got him."

"Fish cannot be found!" said Mr. Quelch abruptly. "He must have gone out of gates. It is inexplicable. Wharton, I shall leave you in charge until twelve o'clock, when the Remove will dismiss."

"Yes, sir."

And Mr. Quelch whisked out of the Form-room again.

The juniors remained in the Form-room till twelve, but no one dreamed of doing any work. The Form-room buzzed with excited discussion.

"They've got him!" said Bolsover major.

And there seemed little doubt of it now; though how Fishy had been "got" in broad daylight was an amazing mystery.

At twelve, the Remove dismissed themselves, as Mr. Quelch had not come back. When they came out, they saw Inspector Grimes coming away from the Head's study. Evidently, the view was taken that the kidnappers had "got" Fisher T. Fish at last, and the inspector had been called in. Other Forms very quickly heard the news, and the quad was in a buzz with excited fellows, all discussing Fisher T. Fish.

It was time now for Bob Cherry to go to the Head, and with slow and reluctant steps, he made his way to Dr. Locke's study. He tapped at the door and entered.

Mr. Quelch was with the Head, and both masters looked deeply disturbed. Both of them glanced impatiently at Bob.

"What is it, Cherry?" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"You told me to come here after third lesson, sir!" said Bob.

"Oh! Quite so!" In the stress of anxiety for the missing Fish, Mr. Quelch had apparently forgotten. "Will you deal with Cherry now, sir?"

Buzzzzzz!

The telephone bell rang sharply.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated the Head. "What—that cannot be Inspector Grimes, he has been gone only a few minutes. Really—"

Dr. Locke lifted the receiver.

"What—" he began.

"That Dr. Locke?" came a voice that the Head had heard on the telephone before.

"Upon my word! It is that detestable ruffian McCann!" exclaimed the Head. "This is too much!"

There was a chuckle over the wires. "Say, I guess you're wise by this time!" said Barney McCann. "You sure know I've got Fish, what?"

"Rascal!" exclaimed the Head. "You have dared to ring up to tell me that—"

"Sure!" said Mr. McCann cheerfully. "I've got the gold-bug, doc, and I guess he won't be seen again till Hiram K. ponies up thirty thousand dollars. He's sure given me a whole lot of trouble, but I cinched him at last. I slipped up on it last night, owing to that young guy horning in, but I sure took him away with me this morning."

"With you?" gasped the Head.

Another chuckle.

"Yep! Next time you hear from Mr. (Continued on page 28.)

THE TEST MATCH HOPE!

By JOHN BREARLEY.

(Introduction on next page.)



Bill's Narrow Escape!

ONE of the men ducked, trying to tackle Bill round the waist; an iron-hard knee nearly knocked his head off. The gunman, groping for his automatic beneath the seat, was ground to the floor by his falling body, after which a savage right and left to the mark rolled the little man helplessly on top of both.

Once more Bill made a dive for the cord, although he realised how futile it was, in a non-corridor train, still only half-way through a long tunnel.

Before he could reach it, a hand shot out and nearly pulled him down. He staggered, recovered, and whirled just in time to beat off another attack as both the younger men jumped at him together.

He had a quick glimpse of their bruised, kicked faces, and knew he was in for it. A long out-thrust leg tripped the gunman and checked the rush, but his companion burst through and crashed a right home between the boy's eyes. Dazed and blinking, Bill fell back against the door, swopping punches as hard as he could go.

Another, and yet another right, caught him. He replied by knocking one of the men endways, then streaked his left for the other's chin.

A shrill cry rang out; the man ducked, and Bill's wrist was seized in a grip of steel. Looking up dizzily, he saw the little man kneeling on the seat, with a bright and gleaming razor flashing in his hand; and then his wrist was savagely straightened out and held flat.

The razor flicked upwards.

In that terrible moment, Bill Murray made the effort of his life. Even as he saw the razor and felt his bowling wrist held, he realised their plan. One slash of that blade through the leaders of his wrist and his cricket career would end there and then. Using all his remaining strength in one last mighty explosion, he wrenched his wrist away—just as the glittering weapon swished downwards!

The stroke missed by a hairbreadth, and a shriek of pain rang out. Letting go Bill's arm altogether, the gunman clapped his hand to his shoulder and staggered back. And then the train ran into daylight once more.

Foaming at the mouth, the little man tried madly for another stroke. But now Bill began to fight like a tiger. A red mist swam vividly before his eyes; he punched, hacked, crashed his weight about like a mad thing, heedless of where or how he struck; until, somehow—he never knew how—he found himself hanging on the communication-cord, while his gasping enemies huddled in the farther corner together.

Almost at once, the hiss of brakes

Luck was with them. The train had pulled up on the top of a high embankment, the slopes of which were crowded with a thick tangle of trees and bushes. Diving down this at frantic speed, they were out of sight in a second, spurred onwards by a sudden burst of startled cries and shouts, as other passengers poked their heads out of carriages and watched them go.

As soon as Bill staggered out after them, he was recognised and surrounded by an excited crowd. He managed to gasp out his story, and a furious party, headed by the guard and fireman, went crashing down through the plantation in pursuit.

They returned ten minutes later, breathless and more wrathful still, but empty-handed. A high road, bordered by the thick woods of a shooting estate, lay at the bottom of the embankment, and the three men had vanished completely.

Nothing more could be done until Severn City was reached. Slowly the passengers climbed back, and the train clanked onwards again.

The Weasel had struck, missed, and got away!

Left-handed breaks are bringing "Smiling" Bill Murray wickets.

Under-handed tricks look like "breaking" him for ever!

ran through the train, the speed slackened, and at last, after what seemed an eternity it stopped altogether.

Croaking with exhaustion, Bill left the cord and flung himself once more at the cowed ruffians. By now, however, Weasel Joe Necker had regained his shaken wits. The game was up; escape was the only thing left.

As Bill lurched towards them, the suitcase was used as a weapon once more. Its heavily-bound corner struck him heavily in the face and knocked him backwards, while one of the men opened the door. The next moment the three men had flung themselves out recklessly.

The Trial Match!

MUCH to the loud disgust of players and crowd alike, the English Trial Match at Lord's a week later made a dismal beginning; for rain held up play before lunch.

To Bill, his first experience of the headquarters of cricket was something like a dream come true. After the little ground on the banks of the river in Severn City, this enormous expanse of turf, surrounded by mighty stands packed with a dense Saturday crowd, was a breath-stopping experience, and as he stood modestly on the players' balcony, staring at the sight, the thought that he would soon be out there bowling under all those eyes sent a little chill of stage fright along his spine.

It was the first time, too, that he had personally spoken to most of the famous
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men, busy changing and laughing in the same room with him, although he had seen them all before. Sutcliffe and Leyland he had met at Headingley, and tall, gentle-voiced Frank Woolley was an old friend already. But although he had played, thought, and almost lived in first-class cricket for the past three years, still it took him some minutes before he realised that the quiet, clever-looking man who shook hands so cordially was the famous Jack Hobbs, that the dark-haired fellow with the smile as boyish as his own was Tate, and the little dumpling of a man who kept the whole room in a roar, none other than the darling of Lord's, Patsy Hendren!

There were others, too, whom he knew, George Geary, little Duckworth, handsome Wally Hammond, and Harold Larwood.

For the first time he realised the size of the task before him. Each of these men were battling for places in the Test sides; it seemed impossible that a raw novice like himself should stand a chance.

The next instant his jaw stiffened and he was himself again. He had got so far—it was up to him to go farther. He had to succeed.

Although he did not know it, he was as much an object of interest to the other players as they were to him. Shrewdly, but unobtrusively, Hobbs was watching him closely, liking the smiling youngster's quiet way; and the others, too, had cheery but curious glances for the lad who had set cricketing England by the ears. Everyone knew how near to a cap Bill was—provided he had the nerve for "big" cricket!

To the relief of all, the sun broke through by noon, and shortly afterwards it was decided that play would begin at 2.30.

Percy Chapman, the England skipper, had already won the toss and elected to bat. Promptly on the stroke of time Arthur Carr led the "Rest" into the field, with Bill bringing up the rear. Half-way to the wickets, the burly Notts captain beckoned Bill forward, and gave the youngster an encouraging pat on the back as he came up.

"How d'you feel, Murray? Bit shaky?"

Bill smiled rather uncertainly.

"Just a bit, sir!" he confessed.

"What is known as 'Lord's wind-up'!" chuckled Carr. "You'll be all right, my son! I shan't put you on yet, so you can settle down quietly!"

As he finished, a mighty roar heralded the appearance of Hobbs and Sutcliffe. They came slowly to the wicket, Carr gave a last glance round at his field, tossed the ball to Clarke of Northants, and the English trial was on!

For the first half-hour play was quiet, Clarke at one end and Voce at the other keeping a length that made even England's great opening pair cautious. But if their batting was respectful, their run-stealing was not, and time and again they brought delighted gasps from the crowd by gently patting the ball to mid-wicket and sprinting like hares.

The trick was done with beautiful ease of long practice; a forward stroke, a delicate push, and then a quick dash down the pitch, all in one movement.

Gradually, the score mounted, but what was more important to the wily pair, the bowling grew unsettled and the fieldsmen rattled. Carr called his men sternly to order after one wild overthrow, but off the next ball, Hobbs

trickled the ball towards cover and ran again.

Then all Lord's sat up as it realised in a blink that, for once in a way, the Surrey man had made an error. Springing almost from nowhere, with the anticipation of a born fieldsmen, Bill had snapped across from backward-point with just that extra second to spare that makes all the difference.

Even as the batsmen crossed, he was within striding distance of the slowly-moving ball. Stretching down to full length he whipped it up left-handed, and with all the force of his elastic wrist flipped it sideways straight into the heart of the stumps an instant before Sutcliffe pounded madly into his crease. Unable to keep his balance, the youngster pitched full length on the turf; but the tremendous shout that split the sky told him that his effort had succeeded. While he sat up again, Sutcliffe was on his way to the pavilion, smiling sadly.

It was just the sort of feat a cricket crowd takes to its heart, and the explosion of applause from every part of Lord's made Bill flush to the roots of his hair. Before the clapping had died away entirely, it swelled again as Patsy Hendren waltzed jauntily out of the pavilion—and Arthur Carr rolled the leather to the young Severnshire bowler!

The crowd buzzed and murmured. There was very little doubt as to whom most of them had come to see. The other players in the Trial were old stories to the cricket public; it was the young giant from the west, with the beaming smile and magic fingers, who was the chief attraction; and forty thousand pairs of eyes followed him as he began to set his field with the already famous leg-trap close in at the batsman's elbow.

If he had felt nervous at first, Bill had forgotten it now. The fact that two of the most famous batsmen of all time were waiting for him left him cold. He felt confident; and Bill Murray in confident mood was a fine sight as he danced into action, his long left arm swinging over once in a glorious free circle.

Straight and high, the ball swung slowly down on Patsy's off stump until, in the very last moment, it twitched in its flight and swung at his legs. Sliding back on lightning toes, the little man

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 everywhere as the hope of all England in the Tests, and promised fifty pounds for every Test match he plays in by a millionaire named Barr. "Smiling" Bill is more than elated at his success, for he has a fixed purpose in life—to earn the money to pay for an operation to cure his paralysed father, who, years before, had been "outed" when about to expose a coining gang, and has been unable to speak since. Fearing the possible consequences should John Murray regain his memory, Luke Thurston and his rascally associate known as the Weasel, who were Murray's assailants, plot to injure Bill. A few days later Bill is making tracks for his home in Desford when he is brutally attacked in the train by three ruffians. Grabbing the handle of his suit-case, the young cricketer brings it crashing down full in the leader's face and then throws himself upon the other two, hitting out with every ounce of his strength.

(Now read on.)

played at it, but mistimed the venomous spin off the turf. A long-drawn hiss went up from the crowd as the leather rose in the air—straight for the crouching leg men. Wyatt at forward leg dived for it, held it, dropped it—

In the groan of disappointment that followed Bill smiled cheerfully at the apologetic fieldsmen.

"Hard luck!" was all he said; and his next ball, breaking from leg like a flick of a whiplash, beat Hendren completely and sprayed his bails high into the air.

"Got him!"

"Well bowled, Murray! Bowled, sir!"

Having missed with his first, Bill had taken a wicket with his second ball.

The crowd was still clapping when Wally Hammond, debonair and confident as ever, sauntered in and took guard. Bill settled down to work once more.

During the next two hours, with a watery sun overhead and a hard-breathing throng packing the stands, Lord's Cricket Ground saw a great bowler come into his own.

Forgetful of time, onlookers, everything save the fact that his arm felt like a flexible wand and that the ball was singing under his long fingers, "Smiling" Bill Murray tore into the England batsmen with every trick and trap he had ever mastered. None was allowed to settle down. He was the attacker, pure and simple; and finding each man's weakness with uncanny instinct, he stormed it with smiling ruthlessness.

Before he had reached double figures Hammond had fallen to the deadly corkscrew ball, just as Hendren had done. A stinging off-break nicked inside Chapman's graceful bat, Duleepsinhji was caught in the leg-trap, and Leyland lured out of his ground by a "Manger" and stumped.

Tate came in, slammed away merrily for five balls, missed the sixth by a mile, and was stumped, too, amid roars of laughter. And then, in the next over, Bill paralysed everyone by dancing leisurely up to the wicket and suddenly uncorking a fast ball worthy of Larwood himself, a ball that dived in from leg at bewildering speed, took the great Jack Hobbs utterly by surprise, and slashed his middle stick clean out of the ground.

The bellow that rewarded this spectacular downfall was the mightiest of the afternoon. As the smiling Surrey man passed Arthur Carr on the way to the pavilion the two exchanged a single significant glance.

"A cricket certainty!" murmured Hobbs; and Carr nodded.

That last exploit finished Bill's bowling for the afternoon. With a hearty clap on the shoulder, his skipper sent him for a rest in the long field, and trotting serenely to his place, he glanced up at the huge score board for the first time. The sight made him whistle. One hundred and ten for eight; he had taken seven and run Sutcliffe out. At that moment Bill Murray certainly lived up to his name!

He spent all day Monday in the pavilion, watching the Rest batsmen pile up a big score steadily. At five o'clock Carr sent him in to bat, and at five-ten he was back again, bowled Tate, 26, leaving a laughing, clapping crowd chortling over two sixes and two fours in succession off the Sussex bowler, and another terrific sixer off Tich Freeman—the maddest, merriest innings of the

match. And on Tuesday afternoon he found himself with another long bowling spell before him—against England batsmen whose backs were to the wall and an innings defeat staring them in the face!

Hobbs and Sutcliffe had gone, bowled by two of Clarke's fastest, while Hammond had been beaten by Voce's in-swinging.

"Slap into 'em, young 'un!" growled Carr. "We can whack 'em now!"

Never before had the finish of a Test Trial been so desperately fought out. Of the Rest bowlers only Bill kept his smile; the others battled, stern-eyed and tight-lipped against batsmen just as determined.

Thrills followed rapidly. Once more Bill's corkscrew was too much for the gallant Patsy, but only after the Middlesex idol had crashed up a triumphant 50. Voce bowled Chapman, Bill tricked Dulepsinhji again, and then Clarke scattered Tate's stumps with a thunder-bolt.

A precious hour went by while Leyland, the stolid Yorkshireman, stemmed the tide with a rigid straight bat; and time drew on. Bill was rested and then brought back. His first over saw Larwood stumped and Jack White prettily caught-and-bowled.

Still Loyland held his ground, and little Duckworth stuck grimly. Bill gave place to Wyatt, and at six o'clock the Warwickshire captain brought one back like greased lightning on to the Lancastrian's bails. Tich Freeman came in slowly, whereupon Carr gave the ball to Bill again.

The silence at Lord's could have been felt. At the bowler's end Leyland stood tense and ready to run for anything, however short, so that he could get the bowling. But Bill realised his chance had come, and he grabbed it.

Without any change of action he slung down his fast ball again. Freeman saw his arm swing over in a sudden dazzling circle, saw what should have been a slow ball hiss towards him at baffling speed, hit out desperately, and heard the sickening smack of a broken wicket behind him.

The Test Trial at Lord's was over. England had lost by an innings.

"Got your ticket for Nottingham, Bill?" asked a slow, friendly voice, as the players walked to the pavilion, and, looking up, "Smiling" Bill Murray saw Frank Woolley smiling down at him. His face reddened at the hint.

But Frank was right. The team was announced next morning; Murray (Sevenshire) stood fifth on the list!

That evening when he arrived home it seemed to Bill that all Severn City had packed itself into the station yard to meet the train.

The cheer they gave him nearly cracked the roof.

Test Match Eve!

DURING the three clear days that remained before the start of the first Test at Trent Bridge the world seemed an amazing place to that very popular young cricketer Bill Murray, of Sevenshire.

In order to give him a rest, the county left him out of the team against Sussex; but the moment he showed himself inside the ground he was heartily pounced upon on all sides.

In the city itself, it was just the same. Try how he might, he could not dodge the groups of admiring schoolboys who dogged his footsteps, and the sight of his sunny face in the streets was the signal for a crowd.

Bill Murray was the first Test player

Sevenshire had had for thirty years. They meant to celebrate accordingly.

A fellow with less balance might well have lost his head under all this enthusiasm. But Bill only grinned, thanked everybody, and bolted as soon as he could.

Not even in the little cottage was he safe, however. From all points of the county, letters, mascots, and autograph albums poured in by every post, until the sight of the postman's bicycle made him groan.

"A few letters for you, Bill!" announced Alec derisively, as he kicked open the door on the afternoon before the great match, and came in with both hands full. "And a parcel!"

Bill was leaving for Nottingham that evening, and was spending the afternoon luxuriously in the rocking-chair. He opened one eye and regarded the letters ruefully.

"Ow! Open 'em, Alec!" he murmured, and closed his eye again.

"Lazy ass!" snorted his brother.

Grabbing the parcel first, he cut the strings briskly, noting from the label that it had been sent from Jakeman's Sports Club in the city, where Bill worked in the winter.

"Golly, batting-gloves!" he cried. "Toppers, too, Bill!"

He pulled them out, and found a letter underneath, which he pitched into Bill's sleepy face. The gloves were real beauties, made of soft leather, with tough, spiked fingers. With a mischievous grin, Alec began to pull them on in lordly fashion.

Bill blinked, yawned mightily, and began to open the letter. His face creased in a grin of pleasure as he read.

"They're from old Jakeman and the others at the shop," he chuckled. "Asking me to use 'em to-morrow! They wish me luck, and hope the gloves'll make me bat better! Fat-heads! Chuck 'em over, Alec!"

"No fear!" retorted the grinning Alec, waving his gloved hands dramatically. "Ha, ha! I feel the magic of the great Bill Murray tingling—"

His voice snapped off in a gasping scream that brought Bill to his feet in a flash.

Alec was reeling against the cottage wall, and his face was ghastly with pain.

A Cowardly Attempt!

IN a single stride Bill had crossed the room and thrown his arm round Alec's swaying, twisting body.

"Alec! What is it? What's the matter?" he cried urgently.

The youngster was speechless, wrenching feverishly at the batting-gloves. Not until his fingers slackened weakly was an answer torn from him.

"Oh, my hands!" he moaned. "Get 'em off, Bill! My hands are on fire!"

Startled and anxious, Bill seized the gloves without a word, and began to draw them off gently.

"Ow—ah!"

Alec sobbed, backed away, and crumpled into a heap on the ground.

Nearly beside himself with fear, Bill whipped out his

pocket-knife and knelt down. Within a few seconds the gloves were lying on the floor in rags, and he was holding his brother's hands to the light. His face went white. From wrist to fingertips each hand was a burning, livid blister.

A can of bat oil stood handy on a corner shelf, and, seizing it, Bill poured the liquid recklessly over his brother's injured hands. Then, hoisting the slim, limpy figure over his own broad shoulder, he went striding down the road to where the doctor's little house stood at the end of the village green.

Fortunately, the old doctor had just come back from his rounds. He, too, took a single glance at the blistered hands, grunted, and went swiftly to work with cooling oils and soft bandages.

It seemed an eternity to Bill, however, before Alec's faint groans ceased and a sweat of relief broke out on the youngster's white forehead.

Old Dr. Daniels adjusted his glasses severely.

"Now, perhaps, you'll tell me what happened!" he said.

Bill told him briefly.

"Ha! Got the gloves?" asked the doctor.

"No, doctor. Forgot 'em!"

"Go and get them, then—at once!"

Bill was back with the tattered gloves in five minutes, and Dr. Daniels took them gingerly. There was a long silence while he examined them closely.

"How did you get these, lad?" he asked at length.

Alec opened his eyes.

"They came in a parcel for Bill, doctor!" he replied shakily. "I opened it, and put 'em on—just to play the fool. Thank goodness I did!" he added fervently, looking at his hands.

Dr. Daniels nodded.

"Thank goodness you did!" he repeated. "If you had put these on, Bill, there'd have been no Test match for you to-morrow—nor any cricket for a fortnight. They're saturated inside with powdered crystals of carbolic acid. Another five minutes and they'd have burnt Alec's hands to the bone!"

"Ah!"

After that, time passed swiftly. Begging some paper and string, Bill fastened up the gloves and the box they had come in carefully.

Catching sight of his face while he did so, the old doctor was wise enough to say no more—for the time being, anyway!

"But I wouldn't be the man who sent 'em for a thousand pounds if young Bill ever finds him!" he thought harshly, putting the final touches to Alec's bandages.

Taking his brother home once more, Bill began to bustle round the village

(Continued on next page.)

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In search of help. He had no difficulty in finding it. As soon as it was known that Alec Murray had met with a bad "accident," a dozen kindly women volunteered to look after the little cottage while Bill was away, for apart from his cricket fame, everyone in Desford was fond of the Murray boys.

By the time James Barr's great Daimler came purring up to the door to run Bill into Severn City, everything had been settled, and Alec's hands were slightly easier. But still Bill was not satisfied.

"Will you be all right, Alec—honest?" he demanded bluntly at the last moment. "Because, if not, I'm going to scratch!"

Alec looked up, with a plucky grin, which faded as he met Bill's smouldering grey eyes.

"Right as rain, Bill!" he answered simply. "Go in and win, old son. We'll find this joker when you come back!"

Bill's big hands clenched till the knuckles stood out white.

"Yes," he grunted savagely, "we will!"

(Once again the "Weasel" has failed in his sinister purpose, and Bill Murray has had the narrowest escape of his cricketering career. Will he ever play in the First Test Match? See next week's moving instalment of this sporting story for the answer, boys!)

"CATCHING FISH!"

(Continued from page 24.)

Fish, I guess you'll hear that he never sent you any cable," said Barney McCann. "You got that cable, doc, from one of my bunch in New York! I don't mind telling you, as you'll hear it from Hiram before long. Say, you fell for it like you was a baby! You want to remember that any guy can sign a galoot's name to a wire, doc! And them credentials I showed you from Hiram, they was sure made to order." Barney McCann chuckled again. "Doc, you will get a powerful cussing from Hiram K. when you tell him that you let Barney McCann into the shebang, thinking he was a detective from New York."

The Head almost tottered.

"What?" he said faintly.

"I guessed that would surprise you some," said the cheerful Mr. McCann. "That was why Mr. Carter got his back up, sir, and absquatulated—because he had Fish packed safe in the Saratoga—"

"What?"

"Tell that guy Queleh that the boy was in the Saratoga he saw loaded on the taxi!" chuckled McCann. "It will sure amuse him. Say, doc, you put Hiram wise that I've got the kid, and that he can have him back for thirty thousand dollars. I guess he can spare

it, out of what he's made on pork! So-long, doc!"

Mr. McCann rang off.

Dr. Locke fairly tottered away from the telephone.

"What—" ejaculated Mr. Queleh.

"It—it—it is incredible!" gasped the Head, passing his hand over his brow. "We—we have been deceived—deceived—bless my soul! The—the man Carter was—was no other than McCann—"

Mr. Queleh jumped.

"He has said so! Did—did you see a—a large Saratoga trunk placed on the taxi when Mr. Carter left—"

"I did! But what—"

"McCann states that the boy Fish was inside it!" said the Head faintly.

"Inside it!" shrieked Mr. Queleh.

"He says so—"

"Good heavens! Under my eyes—"

"Bless my soul!" said the Head feebly. He sank into his chair. Then his eyes fell on Bob. "Oh! You—you may go, Cherry!"

Bob Cherry left the study. He left it with startling news for his chums.

The "bunch" had succeeded at last! Fisher T. Fish had been "cinched." Fishy was in the hands of the kidnapers!

THE END.

(Whatever you do, chums, don't miss the next rattling fine yarn in this series, entitled: "THE MYSTERY OF THE POPLARS!" It's full of thrills and surprises.)

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Larking's Wonderful Wheeze!

WISH! Swish! Swish!

"That will do for you, Smiles!" chuckled Dr. Lamme.

The cheery headmaster of Cayningham College, "Now you, Larking!" Hal Smiles, leader of the Fourth and owner of Cayningham's one-and-only magic ring, stepped back, and Fred Larking, his bosom pal, took his place before the Head, and immediately afterwards, his gruel.

"Yoooop!" roared Fred Larking.

"Learn a lesson from that not to break bounds again, my dear boys!" smiled the Head. "Thank you for calling my attention to the matter, Crossley!"

"It was quite a pleasure, sir," said Mr. Crossley, the master of the Fourth.

"The boys may go now, sir?" "Certainly. But I shall be obliged if you will stay on a few minutes, my dear Crossley. You may dismiss, boys."

"Ow!"

And Hal Smiles and Larking rolled out of the Head's study, still grinning. Outside, they stopped to shake their fists at the door of the amiable Dr. Lamme's sanctum.

"That's the unpropitious time we've been caught this week, Freddy!" remarked Hal Smiles glumly. "About time we did something about it, I think."

"Ow! Hear, hear!" groaned Fred Larking. "Can't we make those two old fogies sit up with the aid of your magic ring? My hat! Got it!"

"What a wheeze?" "The wheeze of the giddy term!" said Larking enthusiastically. "You haven't had to-day's wish yet, have you?"

"Not yet, old scout. So, according to old Ali Gazoomph's rules and regulations, I can wish any one thing in the wide, wide world, and it'll come to pass."

"Then wish that you and I change places with the Head, and old Crossley for a couple of hours, and I'll bet we can make them sit up for weeks on end!"

"My hat! That's an idea!" grinned Hal. "Let's dodge back to the study and consult old Ali."

"They need back to their study, and on Hal's rubbing the ring and uttering the magic words, 'to Bayn,' Ali Gazoomph, the Slave of the Ring, appeared in a cloud of smoke.

"Master! I am here to obey thy wish!" he said, with his usual low obeisance.

"Good old Ali! Look here, old bean, do you think you can cause Freddy and I to change places with the Head and Mr. Crossley for an hour or so?" asked Hal Smiles.

"Such tasks are as a child's play to the Slave of the Ring, master," replied Ali Gazoomph. "How shall thy slave know at what time to change back again?"

"Perhaps if thou utterest the magic phrase 'to Bayn,'" said Hal. "Well, the very idea!" said Hal. "Well, fire away, Ali!"

"Bang!" There was a flash of green fire and a puff of smoke. Then—

Hal and Fred looked at each other and roared with laughter. For Hal had in an instant changed in outward appearance to Dr. Lamme, and Fred had undergone a similarly sudden transformation and become Mr. Crossley.

"Worked the oracle a treat!" "The MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 1,164.

HAL SMILES

AND HIS

MAGIC

RING!



Quick's the word and sharp's the action! One rub of his magic ring and Hal Smiles can wish for—and get—any one thing in the wide, wide world!

chuckled Hal Smiles. "Now for the Head's study to see if they've changed into us!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The two chums hurried out of the study and made once more for the Head's room. As they passed through the House many of their Fourth-Form acquaintances saluted them respectfully, without a suspicion that the grim exterior which they saw concealed the cheery personalities of our two heroes. Hal Smiles threw open the door of the Head's study, and they both entered.

They could hardly repress their laughter at the sight that met their eyes. Two schoolboys, having exactly the same appearance that they themselves had had a couple of minutes before, were staring at each other in open-mouthed amazement. They were, of course, Dr. Lamme and Mr. Crossley, transformed respectively into the replicas of Hal Smiles and Fred Larking.

When they saw the newcomers the panic-stricken pair let out simultaneous yells of fear and amazement.

"Oh! Oh! It's—it's ourselves, Crossley! Look!"

"Oh dear! Are we both suffering from delusions, or what is the matter?" Hal Smiles stalked into the room, and eyed the trembling pair sternly, in my study?" he demanded.

"We—we—this is my study, not yours!" stammered the real Head.

"How dare you prevaricate, Smiles!" "But—but I'm not Smiles—I'm you!"

"That is to say—"

The Head groped for words, and groped for a cane. "Bend over, both of you!" he ordered. "What—what! You ask the head-

master himself to bend over? Are you mad, sir?"

"I am the headmaster of this college!" thundered Hal. "Bend over, I say! Better still, perhaps you had better knock their silly heads together, and bend them over for me, Fred—I mean, Mr. Crossley!"

"Certainly, Dr. Lamme!" grinned Fred. "Kim on, you boys!"

"Crack!"

"Stand in front of 'em and hold 'em down by their necks while I whack 'em!" instructed the gleeful headmaster; and Fred Larking cheerfully did so.

"Whack! Whack! Whack!" roared Dr. Lamme.

"Whooop! Ow-wow-ow!" roared the real Mr. Crossley.

"Now go; and return at your peril," said Hal darkly.

The two bewitched masters scuttled away. As they did so Hal and his pal collapsed into a couple of chairs, yelling with laughter.

"And now for some fun!" exclaimed Hal, when he had had his laugh out.

"Ready for a run down to the town and back, Freddy?"

"Ready for anything!" responded Larking loyally; and the two terrors of Cayningham linked arms and set forth.

II.

Hectic.

INSIDE the Head's study was a flight of stairs that might have been made especially for sliding purposes.

"Very funny, Hawes!" remarked Hal Smiles, wiping the tears of merriment from his eyes. "Well, you have my permission to find them at once and give them both a sound thrashing!"

"Don't spare them, Hawes," advised Fred Larking. "And while you're here accept this penny with my compliments and go and buy yourself a new face— you need it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fred Larking pressed a penny into the palm of the astonished Captain of the School, and the two then went on, leaving him staring after them in blank amazement.

Out of the Hall tramped the transmogrified Fourth-Formers, then down the steps and into the School grounds. Juniors and seniors on all hands raised their caps as they passed—it was quite a triumphal march.

Near the gates they ran into Mr. Boorer, the fat and pompous master of the Third. Mr. Boorer waddled over to them, smiling genially.

"Good-afternoon, gentlemen—"

"Up-end him, Freddy," whispered Hal Smiles; and before Mr. Boorer could say any more he found himself lifted up bodily and placed on his neck beside a tree-trunk, where he remained for several seconds, howling, before collapsing altogether.

Grinning cheerfully, our two chums walked past the porter's lodge, out of the gates, and down the road, leading to the neighbouring town of Warningham.

It didn't take them long to get to Warningham, and once there, they proceeded to set the place alight without any delay whatever.

First, they went into the grocer's shop kept by Mr. Harry Cott, in the old High Street. Mr. Cott hustled forward to the counter very attentively at the arrival of such important customers, but his smile disappeared with surprising suddenness as Hal remarked:

"Afternoon, Mr. Cott! Been putting much sand in the sugar lately?"

"And how many years old are those 'Guaranteed New Lards' in that box?"

"Why, you—you—" roared Mr. Harry Cott. Then he let out a furious yell as Hal reached over the counter and inverted a basin of lard on his head. "Grooosh!"

"Come on, Fred!" grinned Hal; and the two pals slipped out of the shop and ran for it.

Mr. Harry Cott, after flinging the basin of lard across the shop, leaped over the counter and followed them out into the street.

Down the High Street went Hal and Fred.

A few yards away from the grocer's shop they ran into the Reverend Beame, one of Dr. Lamme's great friends. Hal, had a sudden inspiration. As the reverend gentleman paused and raised his hat he leaned forward, and with great deliberation tweaked his prominent nose.

"Ow, by dose!" shrieked the Reverend Beame.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Roaring with laughter, the two adventurers pursued their hectic career. A vivid cheek suit was the next thing that caught their eye. The wearer was bending over to tie up his shoelace, thereby hiding his face; but Hal and Fred didn't need to see his face to recognise Sir Squire Fouracres, the biggest landowner of the district, and a great personal friend of the Head's.

"Catch him bending!" roared Hal, and Fred, who was nearest, lifted his foot and neatly and gently unbalanced the gentleman in the check suit, sending him hurtling into the gutter.

Looking back over their shoulders as they sprinted along, Hal and Fred realised that all their victims had joined in the chase now. Sir Squire Fouracres was leading, and after him, yelling for their blood, came the Reverend Beanie and Mr. Harry Cott.

A merry chase followed. Our cheery chums led their pursuers all round the town, adding to their number as they went. They knocked off the helmet of a dozing policeman, collided with the local bank-manager, with disastrous results to the latter, deposited the Head's tailor in a horse-trough, and had a high old time generally.

Then at last, they led the way back to Cayningham, followed by a crowd that by this time had swollen to huge dimensions.

Up the lane and through the gates they went. As they passed the porter's lodge they recognised in the distance two youthful figures who seemed very familiar.

"There they are!" panted Hal Smiles. "The Head and Mr. Crossley. Shall we change back now?"

"Couldn't choose a better time!" grinned Fred. "Say the giddy magic words, old bean!"

And Hal Smiles, with his fingers pressing the magic ring, murmured: "To Bayn!"

Both Hal and his pal saw a faint puff of smoke and felt themselves whizz through the air.

Then they realised that they were back in their original shape again, standing near the School House, while Dr. Lamme and Mr. Crossley—also themselves again—were standing near the gates, staring first at each other and then at the frenzied crowd which was rushing through the gates.

Possibly Dr. Lamme and Mr. Crossley wondered what on earth such a wild mob wanted at Cayningham. If they did, their doubts were soon put at rest, for in a matter of seconds the crowd had surrounded them and fallen upon them.

A series of terrific crashes and fearful yells rent the air for several minutes after that. The two Cayningham masters could not be seen through the thickness of the crowd, but Hal and his pal gathered that the Head and Mr. Crossley were going through the hoop. "I think this is where we make ourselves scarce!" murmured Hal.

"What-ho!"

And they did so!

Afterwards, our two chums had an urgent summons to Dr. Lamme's study, where the Head cross-examined them at great length, assisted by Mr. Crossley. Both were looking considerably in a worse for wear, and both were in a fearful rage. But all their threats drew nothing from Hal and his pal, who appeared politely incredulous, and in the end the Head, baffled, had to let them go.

And while the Head and Mr. Crossley rubbed their aching limbs and scratched their puzzled heads, and argued and roared in turns, Hal Smiles' study resounded to one long, joyous yell of: "Ha, ha, ha!"

THE END. THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 1,164.