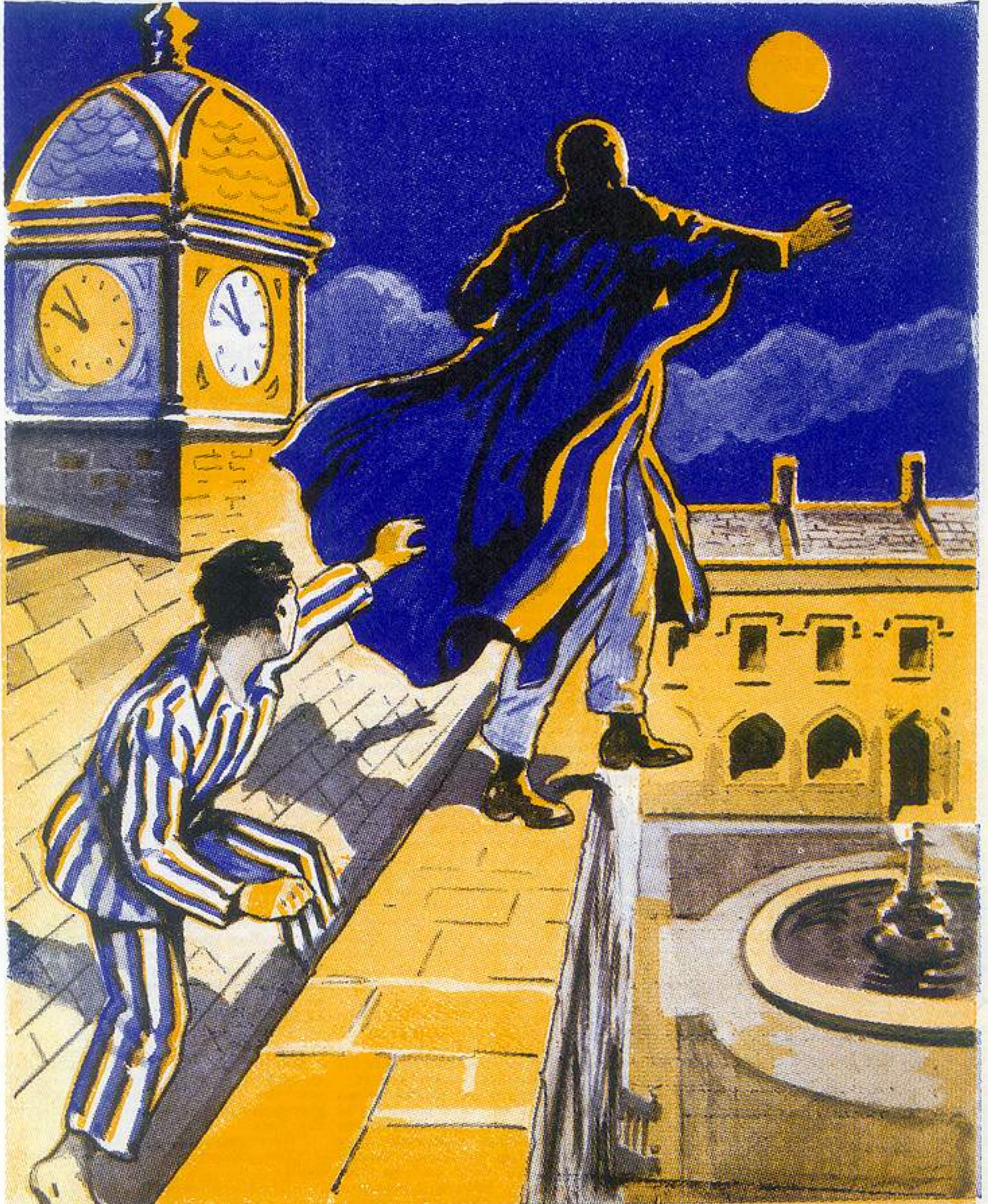


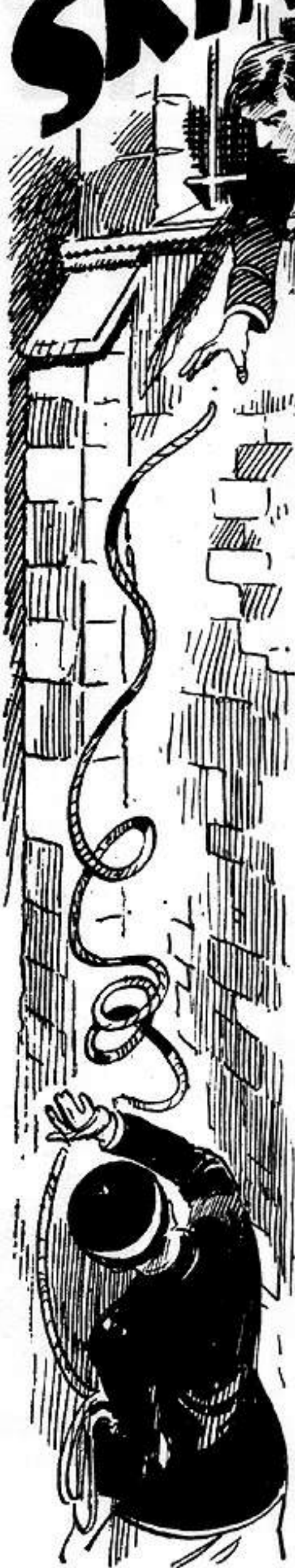
"THE POPULAR BOOK OF BOYS' STORIES!"

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The **MAGNET**²



SKINNER'S NARROW SQUEAK!



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

First Lesson!

BANG, clatter, clatter!
"Bob your head, Franky!"
Munch, munch, munch!
Bang, clatter, thud!

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Ow, my nose!"

These unusual sounds proceeded from the region of the Remove Form room as Mr. Henry Quelch, master of the Lower Fourth at Greyfriars, rustled along the passage.

Mr. Quelch frowned and pursed his thin lips.

First lesson should have started at least twelve minutes ago, and Mr. Quelch, usually a very punctilious gentleman, was late. He hated to admit it to himself, but he had, in fact, forgotten the time. Usually Mr. Quelch held a very poor opinion of those unfortunates who are in the habit of forgetting the time. Now he was of their number, so to speak. That alone was a circumstance which irritated him, but as he heard the sounds of strife proceeding from the Remove-room his irritation increased.

Obviously, the Removites had been making hay while the sun shone. In theory they should, of course, have settled down to first lesson despite the absence of their Form master. In theory, they should have devoured twelve minutes of that chapter of English History they were "doing." But theory and practice do not always run in parallel. Certainly they didn't on this occasion.

While Hazeldene had kindly offered to keep "cave" at the door of the Form-room; the juniors had given themselves up to various devices all calculated to while away the time better than would be the case with a chapter of English History. To a man the Remove did not mind in the least whether Mr. Quelch missed the first lesson completely; in fact, they would have preferred him to miss it. That, however, was too much for which to hope.

He had missed twelve minutes of it, and that was something.

So while Hazeldene kept a watchful eye on the passage from the door of the Remove Form room, ready to give the signal when Quelch should appear, his Form fellows made the most of things.

Harry Wharton & Co., better known as the Famous Five, were indulging in a game of leap frog. Lord Mauleverer was nodding off into a doze—his lazy lordship possessing the happy faculty of being able to sleep at any time and in any place. Indeed, it had been observed on more than one occasion that Mauly could sleep on a clothes-

line. Skinner, Snoop, and Stott were talking "gee-gees" with the air of sporty men of the world. Bolsover major was scrapping with Trevor and Ogilvy—with the result that Trevor and Ogilvy's contributions to the general noise took the form of anguished gasps as Bolsover major's burly fists landed with painful frequency.

William George Bunter was making rapid inroads into a bag of toffee he had smuggled into the Form-room, and his podgy face was sticky and shiny and happy.

Peter Todd was deeply immersed in some abstruse legal problem, for Peter hoped to be a solicitor or a barrister some day, and he took his early studies very seriously.

All unconscious of the rapid approach of the master of the Remove the juniors filled in that twelve minutes' respite with great gusto.

"Bob your head, Franky!" sang out Harry Wharton, preparing to take a flying leap over Nugent's back.

Bang, clatter, clatter! Bolsover major and his two opponents tramped up and down, upsetting forms in the process, to say nothing of sundry books and ink-wells.

Munch, munch, munch! William George Bunter's jaws were going great guns.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Squiff, Micky Desmond, and Vernon-Smith were laughing uproariously at some funny story Mark Linley was telling.

"Blue Boy is a cert—I had it straight from Banks!" Harold Skinner's voice emphasised the "cert" for the two o'clock race.

"Ow, my nose!"

Trevor's anguished voice went ceiling-wards as Bolsover's fist caught him flush on the nose.

Tramp, clatter, bang!

"Look out, Bob, you ass—the blackboard!"

Harry Wharton called out the warning as Bob Cherry took a flying leap over Johnny Bull's back. The exuberant Bob had put more energy into that leap than was necessary, with the result that he sailed over Johnny Bull with a couple of feet to spare.

"The blackboard!"

Crash!

Bob heard the repeated warning, but it availed him nothing. He crashed into the blackboard and came down with a thump and sent them back clattering to the floor.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bob.

"You clumsy ass!" hooted Johnny Bull.

"Cave!" Hazeldene, on the watch, had caught sight of Mr. Quelch approaching. "Cave—Quelchy!"

There was buzz and a general stampede on the part of the Removites to get to their places. Really, it was surprising how the noise died away when Hazeldene's warning was received. History books were hastily opened, and the sight that greeted Mr. Quelch's gimlet eyes when he peered round the door of the Form-room was of a model class giving full attention to English history.

"Oh, my hat!" muttered Wharton suddenly. "The blackboard!"

Even as the captain of the Remove whispered the words Mr. Quelch saw the case and blackboard, and his thin lips tightened.

He faced an apprehensive Form with a grim frown.

"I am happy to observe such dutiful attention to first lesson," he said—and there was a noticeable inflection of sarcasm in his voice.

The Remove hung on his words.

"First lesson should have started twelve and a half minutes ago," went on the master of the Fourth in a very precise tone. "I regret that I was not here as usual but I had hopes that you boys could be trusted to behave yourselves during my short absence. The uproar which reached my ears as I hastened here proves, however, that my hopes were ill founded."

The Remove sat as still as marble statues. There was a tenseness in the air that could almost be felt.

Mr. Quelch eyed his class wolfishly. "This puerile attempt to deceive me does not improve my opinion of this Form, for it is obvious that every boy here has taken advantage of my absence."

Harry Wharton & Co. fidgeted uneasily. Put like that, their lively few moments of leapfrog took on an entirely different aspect.

Mr. Quelch's eyes fixed on Harry Wharton.

"Stand up, Wharton!" The captain of the Remove rose to his feet.

"I am surprised that you, my head boy, should be a party to the disturbance that took place during my brief absence, for it is obvious to me that you made no attempt to keep order."

Wharton felt his face crimsoning.

Mr. Quelch reached for his cane.

"Stand out before the Form, Wharton!" he snapped. "I shall endeavour to impress upon you that a head boy has responsibilities."

The captain of the Remove walked out to the front of the class.

"Hold out your hand!"

Swish, swish!

Mr. Quelch put considerable vigour into those two strokes, and Wharton bit his lip to keep back a cry. Mr. Quelch was not an athletic gentleman, but he was very efficient in the use of the cane.

Wharton went back to his place. Once more the Remove Form master addressed his class.

"I shall now endeavour to teach every other boy here that it is not profitable to take advantage of my absence from the Form-room. Each boy, with the exception of Wharton, will file past me."

Mr. Quelch swished his cane suggestively.

"Oh lor'!" groaned Bunter.

And Bunter's groan was echoed by more than one Removite. One by one, like the animals that entered the celebrated Ark, as Bob Cherry humorously observed, sotto voce, the entire Form, with two exceptions—Wharton and Lord

Mauleverer—filed past their Form master and received a single biting swipe of the cane.

Lord Mauleverer was blissfully unconscious of this wholesale caning, for the simple reason that he was fast asleep. Indeed, Mauly was not even yet aware that Mr. Quelch had arrived. There was a contented smile on the handsome face of the slacker of the Remove, and he dozed on. And even the yelps and groans of the luckless victims of Quelch's wrath failed to wake him.

Mr. Quelch was just about to lay down his cane when he caught sight of the sleeping junior.

Snore!
The Form master nearly jumped from the floor.

"Bless my soul!" he gasped. "This is disgraceful! Mauleverer! Boy!"

Snore!
Even fellows like Bunter and Skinner & Co. forgot their own little woes when it was seen that Lord Mauleverer was actually asleep.

"Boy!" bellowed Mr. Quelch.

Snore!
"Really, this is disgraceful!" stormed the master of the Remove. "Kindly awake Mauleverer, Desmond."

"Faith, an' I will, sir!" replied the Irish junior readily; and being next to the schoolboy earl, he awakened him by the simple expedient of pinching his arm.

"Yoooooop! Oh gad!" Mauleverer shot up into wakefulness like a Jack-in-the-box. "Wow!"

"REVENGE is sweet," says Harold Skinner. But a fateful turn of the wheel changes his implacable enmity towards his Form master into REMORSE!

Then he caught sight of Mr. Quelch's stern glance bent upon him.

"Oh gad!" groaned Mauly.

Mr. Quelch took a firm grasp of his cane.

"Boy," he exclaimed in a deep voice, "how dare you have the audacity to slumber in the Form-room! Stand out!"

Lord Mauleverer suppressed another groan and ambled out before the class.

"Hold out your hand, boy!"

Swish! Swish!

"Oh gad!" gasped the slacker of the Remove.

"Now go back to your place, Mauleverer," barked Mr. Quelch; "and if I find you sleeping in class again I shall take you to the Head for a flogging!"

"Oh lor'—I mean, yaa's, sir!"

His lazy lordship was not likely to fall asleep in class again if the penalty were to be a Head's flogging.

There was a murmur in the Form-room. A Head's flogging! Mr. Quelch was not erring on the side of leniency—in fact, the master of the Remove had been in a very tartaric mood for the past three days, and lines and lickings had fallen amongst the juniors like leaves in Vallombrosa.

Mr. Quelch faced his class again.

"The lesson is exactly twenty-three minutes late in starting," he snapped, "and so as you boys will not waste the time and the money that is given to your education, I will cancel morning break to make up for the minutes wasted!"

"Oh crumbs!"

There was a combined murmur of dismay.

"Silence!" snapped Mr. Quelch; and

instantly there was a dead silence. "We will now proceed with the lesson!"

But that was where Mr. Quelch was wrong.

With majestic tread he reached his desk and sat down. Then he lifted the lid of the desk, and—

Pop!

Something sprang up from the interior of the desk as he leaned over it and caught him a tap on the nose. It was not a painful tap in itself, but the results were, for Mr. Quelch leaped back in his chair, wobbled perilously on it for the space of a few seconds, and then shot backwards, to land in a heap on the floor of the Form-room.

Crash!
Chair and Mr. Quelch met the hard floor of the Form-room with painful concussion.

The juniors stared at the strange sight in amazement. Then instinctively their glances travelled to that something which had caused the fall in the first place.

It was a weird and grotesque doll, with a black, grinning face and a mop of black, curly hair, supported on a coiled spring.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

"He Who Laughs Last—"

"GROOOOOUGH!"
Mr. Quelch gasped and spluttered as he tried to extricate his gown from the fallen chair.

"Groooooogh! Oh! Ah! Yoooooooh!"

It wasn't often that the learned master of the Remove indulged in unintelligible ejaculations, but in the present circumstances perhaps they were permissible. The shock of meeting that hideous, black face as he opened the lid of his

desk and the subsequent fall had, naturally, thrown him out of his usual calm. He had hit the floor of the Form-room, too, with considerable force, and Mr. Quelch had long passed that stage of life where he could fall about with impunity.

Five or six Removites immediately rushed to his assistance.

"You're not hurt, sir?" asked Wharton anxiously.

"Oh! Ah! I am not sure!" panted Mr. Quelch, taking the ready hands outstretched to him, and assuming a more natural position. "I—I— Thank you, my boys!"

There was a dead silence in the Form-room as Mr. Quelch eyed that strange figure in his desk. The coiled spring was still vibrating, and the hideous face supported on it grinned and nodded at the master of the Remove in a stupid fashion.

Mr. Quelch's face set grimly as, turning from the wagging doll, he faced the Removites again.

"I presume that this is someone's idea of a joke!" he said in biting accents.

His eyes, often compared to gimlets by reason of their penetrating power, seemed to search through every junior in the Form, and Harold Skinner, for reasons best known to himself, felt unable to meet that penetrating scrutiny. He heaved an inward sigh of relief when those two gimlet eyes passed on.

The Removites waited uncomfortably.

"I call upon the boy with the misguided sense of humour to stand forth!" said Mr. Quelch at length. "I shall

punish him most severely for this outrage."

No one stirred.

The Remove master's face hardened. "For the second and last time, I command the boy responsible for placing that—that ridiculous figure in my desk to stand out before the class!"

Still no one moved.

Mr. Quelch pursed his thin lips.

"Very well!" he said bitingly. "I have no other alternative but to punish the whole Form! Every boy here will be detained for the next three half-holidays!"

There was a subdued murmur that even Mr. Quelch's grim presence could not restrain.

"Silence!"

The murmuring went on, and Mr. Quelch suddenly wheeled on Vernon-Smith.

"Vernon-Smith, you were talking!"

"Yes, sir," answered the Bounder coolly.

"And what was it you had to say to Redwing, Vernon-Smith?"

The Bounder smiled insolently.

"I merely remarked that it was unfair to punish the whole Form, sir."

"Indeed!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "How dare you question the commands of your Form master!"

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders.

"For all you know, sir," he said insolently, "that blessed doll might have been shoved—"

"Might have been what—?"

"Shoved," said Vernon-Smith easily.

Mr. Quelch's brow grew blacker than ever.

"Kindly speak King's English, Vernon-Smith!" he barked.

"I merely said that the blessed doll might have been shoved there by a chap in another Form, sir," continued the Bounder, unperturbed.

Mr. Quelch started. In Vernon-Smith's cheeky remark there lay a possibility of truth. The master of the Remove was a stern man, but he was certainly just. It was barely possible that a practical joker from another Form was responsible for that Jack-in-the-box.

There was a silence. The Remove waited expectantly.

"I will overlook your insolence, Vernon-Smith," said Mr. Quelch at last.

"Thank you, sir!"

"And for the moment," continued the Form master, "I will rescind the punishment I gave this class. I shall, however, make strict inquiries to discover the culprit responsible for this disgraceful affair. Doubtless a visit to the local toyshop will make me familiar with the boy who purchased this contraption."

Harold Skinner stifled a groan. His face paled, and Mr. Quelch's keen eyes did not fail to observe his discomfiture.

"Doubtless the shopkeeper will remember who purchased this hideous thing from him," went on the master of the Remove, "and if I succeed in proving his identity he will be taken before the Head for a flogging!"

Skinner's face paled still more.

When the cad of the Remove had bought that Jack-in-the-box in the toyshop at Friardale he had considered himself very astute. He considered, in his own mean way, that he owed Mr. Quelch several grudges, and the doll was a means to levelling things up. Not a soul knew of his purchase except the toyshop proprietor himself; not a soul had been let into his confidence when, half an hour before classes, Skinner had secretly placed the doll inside the Form master's desk. At the time Skinner had

congratulated himself on his smartness. Now he was beginning to wish that he hadn't been quite so smart.

A Head's flogging!

The thought alone sent a shiver down the spine of the cad of the Remove.

Quelch was bad enough, but a Head's flogging was unthinkable. Skinner's brain did some quick thinking. If Mr. Quelch pursued the line of investigation he had indicated Skinner's guilt was absolutely certain to come to light. There was a chance, Skinner reckoned, of getting out of a Head's flogging at the expense of a caning from Mr. Quelch if he played his cards carefully.

Once again Mr. Quelch's eyes rested shrewdly on Harold Skinner's pale face. Skinner licked his dry lips.

"If you please, sir—"

"Well, Skinner?" said Mr. Quelch coldly.

And all eyes turned in the direction of the cad of the Remove.

"If you please, sir—"

Mr. Quelch waited. The Remove to a man waited.

Skinner licked his lips again.

"It—it—I—I—I—"

Mr. Quelch smiled grimly.

"Very lucid, I must say. Boy, speak up!"

Skinner took the plunge with a rush.

"I—I—I— It was a j-joke, sir!" he blurted out at length.

There was a stir in the Form-room.

"Are you attempting to tell me, Skinner, that you are responsible for this outrage?" Mr. Quelch's voice was deep and stern, and the hapless Skinner shivered.

"Ye-es, sir. It was only a j-joke, sir."

Mr. Quelch reached for his cane.

"Stand out, Skinner!"

Skinner crawled from his place, wishing now that he had taken a long shot, as they say in racing circles, and waited for Mr. Quelch to prove the ownership of the jack-in-the-box.

"I am glad you have had the sense to own up, Skinner, before this matter assumed a more serious aspect!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

The gladness was all on Mr. Quelch's side.

"Yes—yes, sir!" stammered Skinner.

"I didn't mean any real harm, sir—"

"You might have caused me serious injury!" barked Mr. Quelch. "In any case, I shall punish you severely for playing a practical joke in the Form-room. Of my own painful experience I will say nothing. Touch your toes."

With many misgivings Skinner did so.

The Form looked on interestedly.

Mr. Quelch might not have said anything of his own "painful experience," but the vigour he put into the "six" he gave Skinner suggested that the Form master had not forgotten it.

And Skinner's howls, echoing throughout the Form-room, spoke eloquently of his painful experience.

Mr. Quelch was breathing hard when he had finished and Skinner was wriggling and gasping like a newly-landed fish.

"Now go to your place, boy!" snapped the master of the Fourth. "I trust this has been a lesson to you!"

"Groooooogh! Ow! Wow!" gasped Skinner.

"Cease making those ridiculous ejaculations!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Wow! Yes, sir! Ow!"

And Skinner limped back to his place, feeling anything but a practical joker. From the bottom of his heart he wished now that he had never conceived the idea of giving "Quelch" a shock. But it was not the repentance of a healthy character, for throughout

the remainder of the lesson Skinner's mind was black with thoughts of revenge, which was typical of his mean and spiteful nature.

After the jack-in-the-box episode the Remove were careful not to give Mr. Quelch any further cause for displeasure. But their Form master was in a more tartaric mood than ever, and lines and lickings were frequent and painful and free.

Morning break came round, but the Remove were kept in; and it seemed to the juniors that classes would never come to an end. They did at last, however, and the juniors heaved sighs of relief as they streamed out into the passage.

"Phew!" breathed Bob Cherry.

"What a morning!"

"The phewfulness of the ridiculous morning is terrific!" purred Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh. "I thought the endfulness would never come!"

And the rest of the Famous Five were in entire agreement.

"Old Quelch fairly had his rag out," said Peter Todd, joining the group. "I've never known the old bird so waxy."

"Skinner got it hot," said Wharton.

"Serve him right!" said Peter cheerfully. "That rotter ought to be licked every day; would do him good!"

"Oh, would it?" Harold Skinner came along at that moment in time to overhear Todd's charitable suggestion.

He scowled blackly at the Famous Five.

"I'll make that spiteful rotter sit up, mark my words," he said venomously.

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Wharton. "You asked for it, old bean!"

"What beats me is why you owned up," said Bob Cherry. "That isn't like the Skinner bird we know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, shut up!" snapped Skinner.

"I reckon I know why Skinner owned up," remarked Johnny Bull, in his slow, thoughtful way. "He took the lesser of two evils—Quelch's cane rather than a Head's flogging. You see, he knew Quelch would be able to trace the giddy culprit if he made inquiries at the toyshop."

"You've hit the bullseye, Johnny!" grinned Wharton.

"Bang on the target!"

"Rather!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner scowled.

"You can cackle. You wait; I'll make the rotter sit up yet. He who laughs last laughs longest!"

But in this case the last laugh was with Harry Wharton & Co., for as Skinner slouched off down the passage a roar of laughter followed him. Yet at a not far distant date Skinner's words were to be remembered in dramatic and startling circumstances.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bunter Does the Trick!

"THE suspicious rotter!"

William George Bunter uttered that ejaculation in a very aggrieved tone.

"Suspicious beast!"

And the fat Owl of the Remove blinked and shook a podgy fist at the panels of an inoffensive study cupboard.

It was an hour before tea that same day, and William George Bunter was on the trail of a cake. True, the cake belonged to Sidney James Snoop, but that was a trifling matter to William.

He was hungry, very hungry, and he

had trailed that cake for half an hour. He had seen Sidney James Snoop purchase it at Dame Mimble's tuckshop — a surprising circumstance in itself, for Snoop seldom "did" himself well for reasons that were explained in his scanty weekly allowance of pocket-money. But on this occasion a distant uncle of Snoop's had sent his nephew a ten-shilling note, and, in honour of the occasion, Sidney James had proceeded to stand his study-mates Stott and Skinner a handsome cake.

It was a large cake, freshly made, and Bunter's mouth had watered as he had witnessed Mrs. Mimble pack it up. By hook or by crook the fat Owl of the Remove had determined to partake of some or all of that handsome cake. An invitation to join the tea-party was out of the question. Fascinating as William George Bunter's company was, Snoop was not likely to ask him to tea. Bunter, with all his obtuseness, realised that.

Still, there were other ways and means.

Like a fat deer-stalker Bunter had trailed Skinner, Snoop, and Stott, and the cake from the tuckshop to the School House. He had rolled along the passage unconcernedly, or so he imagined, behind the black sheep of the Remove. With watering mouth he had watched the trio enter Study No. 11. With an ache in his inner man he had hung about the corridor, waiting for Skinner & Co. to depart from the study.

Little did the fat junior know, however, that Skinner & Co. had anticipated his interest in that handsome cake, and had taken the simple precaution of locking their study cupboard.

With careless glances at the fat junior loitering at the end of the passage, Snoop and his chums had sauntered on to the Common-room. Then Bunter had bestirred himself. With remarkable celerity, considering his excessive avoirdupois, he had transported himself to Study No. 11.

Breathing hard he had closed the study door behind him and advanced towards the study cupboard.

Then William George Bunter received a setback. The cupboard was locked!

"The suspicious rotter," he muttered indignantly. "One would think that there were rotten thieves about, the way some fellows lock their cupboards. Yah!"

With rising wrath he stood and glared at the cupboard, as if by doing so he expected the door to swing open and disgorge its contents.

And Skinner & Co., meantime, safe in the knowledge that their cake was out of Bunter's fat paws, forgot his existence in the exciting subject of discussing "winners."

For quite five minutes the Owl of the Remove eyed the cupboard wolfishly, sorely tempted to seize hold of the poker in the grate and smash in the lock. But the thought passed. Even Bunter jibbed at deliberate "burglary."

He was reminded of his danger in another fellow's study and the possible consequences of being discovered there when footsteps sounded along the corridor.

"Oh lor'!" Bunter recognised in those footsteps the approach of Harold Skinner & Co.

Evidently the black sheep of the Remove had finished their discussion on sporting topics, and were sauntering back to the study to prepare tea. To be found in their study meant a ragging for William George Bunter, which was something in Bunter's view to be avoided at all costs.

He was tempted to make a sudden bolt for it. It was said of old that he who hesitates is lost. Bunter hesitated. Next moment Snoop's hand was on the door knob.

With a stifled grunt, Bunter made a sudden dive for the table. A voluminous cloth, whose folds came within a few

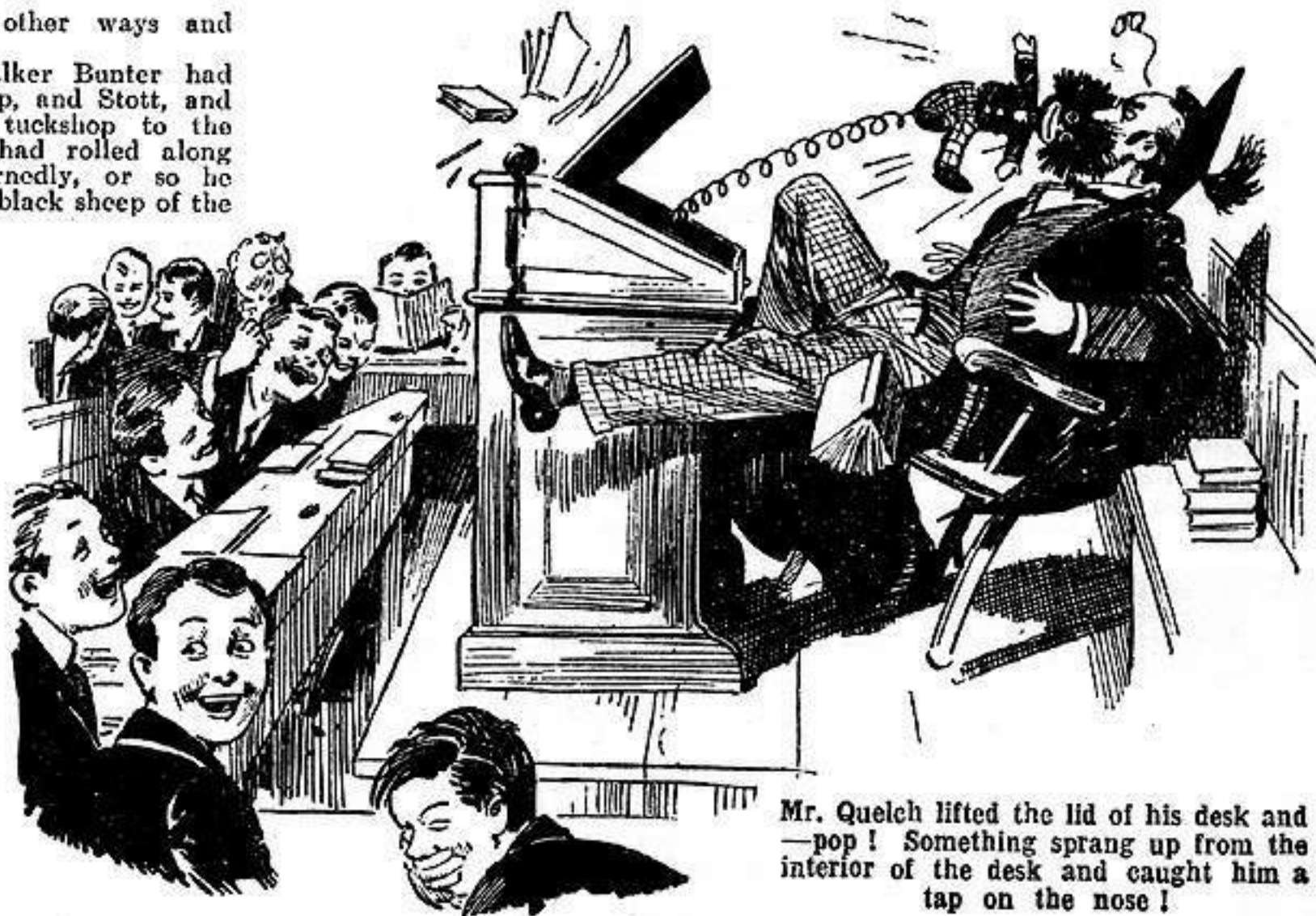
"That fat, thieving rotter ought to be ragged baldheaded," he said. "I'll make him wish he'd never been born if I catch him pinching any of my tuck. Those goody-goody merchants in Study No. 1 are too soft with him."

Snoop and Stott concurred with their leader's point of view. Anything "up against" Wharton and his "set" always met with their approval.

Beneath the table Bunter writhed. He wished from the bottom of his heart that he had given that cake a miss. But it was too late now.

The tea was ready at last. "Better lock that door," advised Skinner, as he drew up to the table. "We don't want any of the Beaks butting in." He made a significant movement with his cigarette, and Stott obligingly turned the key in the lock.

Then the three young scamps settled down to enjoy their tea. The cake disappeared at a great rate, much to Bunter's dismay. Then Skinner & Co.



Mr. Quelch lifted the lid of his desk and — pop! Something sprang up from the interior of the desk and caught him a tap on the nose!

inches of the floor, might serve him as a hiding-place.

And as Skinner & Co., strode into the study, Billy Bunter, quaking like a fat jellyfish, crouched under the table, fervently hoping that his presence would not be discovered.

"Shove the kettle on, Snoopey," said Skinner.

"Right-ho!"

"You lay the cloth, Stott!" added Skinner, with the air of a general giving his orders, and Stott hastened to obey, what time Skinner seated himself in the only armchair and coolly lit a cigarette.

From a hole in the table-cover Bunter watched the preparations for tea. His eyes glistened and his mouth watered as he saw Snoop fetch that handsome cake from the study cupboard.

"Jolly good job I locked the cupboard door," remarked Snoop. "That fat rotter Bunter saw me buy this cake."

"It would have been gone by now if Bunter could have got his fat paws on it," added Stott.

And Skinner, blowing smoke rings ceilingwards, nodded.

leaned back in their chairs and made a pretence of enjoying a cigarette apiece. Soon the room was filled with smoke, and Bunter, still in hiding, was hard put to it to refrain from coughing or sneezing, or both.

"Groooough!" he reflected. "This is awful!"

And in that word he really summed up the true feelings of the three young blades, for none of them was enjoying his cigarette, although such an admittance would never have proceeded from any one of them.

"These cigs are prime," said Skinner, with a feeble attempt at posing like a man of the world.

"R-rather!" stammered Snoop, whose face was a sickly colour already.

"Tophole!" conceded Stott.

"Groooough! H'm! First class!" Snoop, who felt that he had had enough of his cigarette, pitched it into the grate.

"I say, Skinner, old Quelch gave it to you hot this morning," he said, in an attempt to cover up his action.

Skinner's brow grew black.

"The rotter!" he growled. "Jove,

"I'd give anything to make the beast really sit up! I think I've hit on a wheeze, too."

Stott and Snoop did not look too interested. Many and various were the wheezes Harold Skinner had put into operation against Mr. Henry Samuel Quelch, but somehow or another these wheezes, brilliant in their conception, had invariably come unstuck, with the result that their perpetrator had come out at the little end of the horn, so to speak. Skinner's wheezes, too, often needed help. And although Snoop and Stott were ready to back up their leader in theory, it was a horse of another colour when it came to practice.

Skinner read the thoughts that flickered in the expressions of his cronies.

"Oh, you needn't get the wind up!" he said unpleasantly. "I can do this little job myself."

Snoop and Stott heaved a sigh of relief and smiled more cordially.

"What's the giddy wheeze, old scout?" grinned Snoop.

"Yes, let us into the secret, Skinney!" added Stott.

Harold Skinner's eyes narrowed, then he grinned.

"The best way to get at old Quelch is through his rotten, piffing 'History of Greyfriars—'"

Snoop and Stott looked a trifle alarmed. They, like everyone else in Greyfriars, knew that Mr. Quelch's abiding passion was compiling a history of Greyfriars from the earliest days of its foundation. Indeed, he had already spent years at the task of collecting and "writing up" data.

"Got the idea?" said Skinner, puffing out a cloud of smoke.

Snoop and Stott did not answer, but their expressions told Skinner plainly

enough that they were not too enamoured of the idea.

"The old fool looks upon that silly rot as the giddy apple of his eye," drawled Skinner. "The dear man will get the pip in a full sense when he finds half his blessed copy missing."

"I say," muttered Snoop. "I shouldn't tamper with his 'History of Greyfriars,' old chap. If—if—if he found out he'd skin you alive."

"It's far too risky," added Stott, taking his cue from Snoop.

But Skinner only grinned. "He'll never know that I had any hand in it," he said, "unless you fellows give me away, of course!"

"Oh, we wouldn't do that!" said Snoop hastily. "But if you'll take a tip from me, you'll leave that wheeze alone."

"Thanks!" said Skinner laconically. "I'll ask for your advice when I want it!"

There was a silence.

Under the table Billy Bunter felt on the point of sneezing violently. In attempting to keep back that sneeze, which would make known his presence to the shady trio, the Owl of the Remove paid but little importance to Skinner's threat.

"Groooooogh!" muttered Bunter.

And then a brainwave struck him.

When Nature had served out her priceless gifts, William George Bunter had been at the wrong end of the cue, so to speak; but there was one undeniable gift he possessed, and that was ventriloquism. He could imitate voices with such sincerity as to deceive almost the people he imitated, and he could "throw" his voice with a skill that many a professional ventriloquist would have envied.

The silence was broken by a voice

from the passage—or, at least, it seemed to proceed from the passage.

"Skinner! Snoop! Stott!"

The three black sheep started guiltily as they recognised the voice of George Wingate, the captain of the school.

"Wingate!" breathed Skinner, and he leaped to his feet and crossed swiftly to the window, and quietly raised the sash.

"Oh, my hat!" whispered Stott, and he waved a newspaper about frantically in order to disperse the clouds of smoke in the study.

"Skinner! Open this door at once!" The voice was Wingate's again, or appeared to be, and there was a note of irritation in it. Then followed the sound of a door-handle being rattled violently.

"C-coming, Wingate," stammered Skinner.

"Look sharp!" snapped Wingate. "I can't wait all day! I want you and Snoop and Stott in my study at once!"

"Ye-es, Wingate!"

Then there was silence.

"Buck up and open the door," whispered Snoop. "The room's clear now."

Skinner leisurely strolled towards the door of the study and turned the key. Then he looked out into the passage, fully expecting to see George Wingate.

But the passage was deserted.

"Why, he's not here!"

Snoop and Stott saw that for themselves.

"He must have gone on to his study," said Snoop. "I say, we'd better trot along at once. He sounded as if he were in a wax."

And Stott nodded uneasily.

"What does the rotter want to see us about?" snarled Skinner.

"Blessed if I know!"

"Oh, let's get along!" said Snoop uneasily. "It won't do to keep him waiting!"

And, with a bad grace the black sheep of the Remove made tracks for George Wingate's study. Their footsteps had scarcely died away when the fat figure of Bunter emerged from beneath the table.

"He, he, he!" cackled the fat junior. "That did the trick!"

He cast one longing glance at the cake-dish which had once held the handsome cake, and then he rolled from the study. Meantime the victims of his ventriloquism were presenting themselves to George Wingate.

The captain of Greyfriars was busy. On the table before him was a sheet of paper with a number of names scrawled thereon; on Wingate's handsome face was a thoughtful frown. Being captain of games had its drawbacks, especially when it came to selecting the eleven best footballers to represent Greyfriars in the First Eleven match with St. Jim's; and Wingate's choice of players for this important fixture was causing him much worried thought.

"Blundell or Wilkinson," he was saying. "Blundell's jolly good, but—"

Tap!

Skinner & Co. had arrived. Wingate's frown deepened.

"Come in!" he growled.

Skinner & Co., looking a trifle apprehensive, walked in. Wingate's frown deepened.

"Oh, don't bother me now!" he said rather testily. "I'm extremely busy and—"

"Eh?" gasped the three Removites in unison.

"Don't bother," said Wingate, not quite so gruffly. "I'm up to my eyes in it. Come along some other time—"

"Some other time?" gabbled Skinner.



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"Or else go to some other prefect," added Wingate, and he bent over his task, apparently oblivious of the three astonished Removites who stood before him.

Skinner jerked his head towards Snoop and Stott and signalled a retreat. Wingate's door was closed very softly, and then the black sheep of the Remove gave vent to their surprise.

"Woll, I'm blessed!" ejaculated Skinner. "Ho's forgotten that he told us to come to his study."

Snoop and Stott looked relieved.

"Phew!" ejaculated the former. "I was wondering whether he was going to question us about being out of bounds last night. I heard Coker of the Fifth saying to-day that the beaks had been informed by a villager that Greyfriars juniors were breaking bounds at night."

"So did I," said Stott. "Look here, Skinner, I'm not going to the Cross Keys for a day or two. It's too risky."

Skinner's lips curled.

"Oh, if you're funky stay away!" he sneered. "I'm going along for a flutter to-night, anyway. But never mind about that. Why did that silly ass order us along and then tell us to buzz off?"

"Ask me another," said Snoop. "But I'm jolly glad he did."

"Oh, rather!" added Stott.

And Skinner & Co., not suspecting for a moment the true nature of things, returned to their study, having arrived at the conclusion that Wingate was a trifle "potty." Not for a second did any of them connect William George Bunter with that peculiar summons, which, perhaps, was very fortunate for the fat Owl of the Remove.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Lost—a Manuscript!

BOB CHERRY woke up with a start.

A pale flicker of light crept in at the windows of the Remove dormitory, outlining very indistinctly the slumbering forms of the juniors.

From the ivy-clad clock-tower the last notes of midnight were booming their sonorous refrain.

Then came silence, save for the regular breathing of the Remove juniors and the unmusical snore peculiar to William George Bunter.

Bob sat up in bed and rubbed his eyes.

He had been dreaming. Deep in the arms of Morpheus Bob Cherry had been living over again the battle of the previous week when, in company with the rest of the Remove Eleven, he had played against Highcliffe in a ding-dong struggle on the footer field. On that occasion Bob had scored the winning goal. It was with the cheers of the spectators ringing in his ears that Bob had awakened from sleep.

"I've been dreaming," he said ruefully, and was about to turn over and compose himself afresh when there came to his ears the faint crunch of footsteps on the gravel path of the drive below the Remove dormitory.

Curiosity, and nothing more, prompted Bob to spring from his bed and cross to the window.

Peering out, he saw nothing but the shadowy outlines of the stately elms and the school buildings.

"Must have been mistaken," he muttered, shivering a trifle as the night air smote him.

And then his attention was drawn to a window which was suddenly flooded with light.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" he muttered. "Old Quelch's still up."

One more glance he gave to the Remove Form master's study window, and then Bob sprang back into bed. Sleep, however, did not come easily to him, doubtless due to the fact that the November night air had thoroughly awakened him. From one side of the bed to the other he tossed in a fruitless effort to court slumber. Then just as he was falling off into a doze there came a creak from the region of the dormitory door. On the instant Bob Cherry was fully awake again.

The door opened stealthily, and Bob's muscles tensed.

A shadowy form merged in the gloom and moved towards one of the beds.

"Who's that?" Bob's voice, tense with excitement, echoed through the dormitory.

"Shut up!" The reply came in the unmistakable tones of Skinner. "Do you want to wake up the whole dorm?"

"Oh, it's you, Skinner!" said Bob contemptuously. "Been on the giddy tiles again?"

"Oh, ring off!" snarled the cad of the

juniors became deeper, and the unmusical snore of William George Bunter rang out louder than ever.

It seemed but a few moments to Bob Cherry, however, before rising-bell clanged out, but despite his restless night Bob was the first out of bed.

He had almost finished dressing before Skinner turned out. The cad of the Remove looked pale and listless, and dark rings under his eyes told of lack of sleep. He scowled in response to Bob's exuberant greeting.

"Feeling liverish, what?" sang out Bob. "I'm not surprised. You shouldn't miss your beauty sleep, you know."

"Shut up!" snarled Skinner.

"What's up with Skinner, Bob?" asked Harry Wharton. "Been breaking bounds again?"

Bob grinned.

"He woke me up creeping in last night," he said. "But I don't know whether he had been breaking bounds. Perhaps he was putting in a quiet hour or two's study."

"Oh, my hat!" chuckled Nugent. "I can imagine Skinner doing that—I don't think!"

"The don't thinkfulness is terrific," said Hurrce Jamset Ram Singh, with a dusky smile.

The Famous Five trooped downstairs for a run in the quad before breakfast, and in the keen morning air Skinner's nocturnal ramblings were forgotten. But Harry Wharton & Co. were to recall his habit of stealing out of the dormitory at night in a very startling fashion.

It started at breakfast-time, when Mr. Quelch took his place at the head of the table. The Form master looked pale and worried and irritable, and the Remove to a man groaned inwardly at the prospect of another day with "Quelch" in a tartaric mood.

The master of the Remove had been at the breakfast table barely five minutes when the fur began to fly.

"Bunter!" Mr. Quelch's voice was acidity itself.

"Mummmmm!" Bunter's reply was unintelligible, for his mouth was full.

"Bunter, you are a disgusting boy!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "You should learn to restrain your greediness!"

"Mummmmm!"

"Positively disgusting!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "Kindly leave the breakfast-table at once, and do not return."

"Mummm! Oh crumbs!" Bunter's fat face fell.

"You heard me, Bunter?"

"Ye-es, sir," said Bunter, blinking at his Form master. "But I've only just started, sir."

"Leave the Hall at once!" barked Mr. Quelch.

"But I'm famished, sir," said Bunter plaintively. "I've got a delicate constitution that requires constant nourishment, and—I'm going, sir—"

He shuffled to his feet and rolled hastily away as thunderclouds gathered on Mr. Quelch's brow.

The Remove were dumbfounded. Never before had their Form master objected to William George Bunter's table manners so forcibly. Really, it seemed that Mr. Quelch was growing more unbearable every day.

"It's time old Quelch retired," whispered Bolsover major to Squiff, but the whisper, quiet as it was, reached the Form master's ears.

"Take a hundred lines, Bolsover!" he snapped curtly.

"What for, sir?"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,189.

EVERYBODY'S DOING IT! DOING WHAT?

Why, making up Greyfriars
Limericks!

For the following effort, Alec.
Hessall, of Allbuts Road, Brown-
hills, nr. Walsall, has been awarded
one of this week's

USEFUL LEATHER POCKET WALLETS:

Said Bunter, with great satis-
faction:

"I've no more room left for a
fraction.

That pork pie was prime,
Those cakes were sublime.
I think I'll retire out of action!"

Why don't you set to work and
win one?

Remove. "And mind your own business, anyway!"

Bob chuckled. By Skinner's ungracious manner he concluded that the cad of the Remove had been out on one of his nocturnal jaunts to the Cross Keys. Bob, like the rest of the Remove, knew that Skinner, when he was in funds, was lured to the disreputable tavern like a moth is attracted to a lighted candle. And it was common knowledge, too, that Skinner invariably came away lighter in pocket than when he set out. That such wholesale disregard of the school rules would bring down certain expulsion from Greyfriars should the news of these nocturnal ramblings reach the ears of authority. Skinner realised full well. But like many another weak character Skinner blinded himself to the risks and continued to tempt fortune.

"Lost all your money," whispered Bob, with a chuckle, as he saw Skinner climb into bed. "Serve you jolly well right, you ass!"

But beyond a growl Skinner did not deign to reply.

Bob turned over once again, and this time was soon fast asleep.

The pale moonbeams flickered to another quarter; the breathing of the

"Talking at the table," said the master of the Remove shortly.

"Oh crumbs! I mean, yes, sir," stammered Bolsover.

Breakfast proceeded in stony silence, the juniors being almost afraid to ask for anything to be passed to them.

Catching Mr. Quelch's eye Vernon-Smith deliberately nudged Redwing in the ribs and jerked a finger towards the cruet.

"Vernon-Smith, what are you doing?"

"I want Redwing to pass me the cruet, sir," replied the Bounder coolly.

Mr. Quelch's eyebrows elevated.

"And since when, Vernon-Smith, has it been the rule to ask for the cruet by digging your neighbour in the ribs?"

"Since you gave Bolsover major lines for talking at table," answered Vernon-Smith sarcastically.

"What? What?" Mr. Quelch seemed almost speechless.

"I didn't want a hundred lines for talking, sir," said the Bounder cheerfully, "so I nudged Redwing, see?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Even Mr. Quelch's stern countenance could not stifle that outburst of laughter, and Mr. Prout frowned his displeasure from the head of the Fifth Form table in an expression which said eloquently enough that such behaviour would never be countenanced in the Fifth Form.

Mr. Quelch caught that expressive look from Mr. Prout and he crimsoned angrily.

"Vernon-Smith, you are impertinent!"

"Am I, sir?"

"You will take five hundred lines." The Bounder smiled.

"Yes, sir. Certainly, sir. Where shall I take them?" he asked.

"Boy! Boy!" boomed Mr. Quelch red with anger. "Your imposition is doubled."

"Thank you, sir," said the Bounder, who enjoyed the risky proceeding of baiting "old Quelch." "May I ask Redwing to pass the cruet now, sir?"

There was another titter of laughter from the Removites. Really the situation was absurd. Normally Mr. Quelch would have been able to handle such a situation with ease and dignity, but of late the Remove Form master seemed a different being. He glared furiously at the grinning Removites and the laughter died away.

"Every boy in the Form will write a hundred lines of Virgil!" he said grimly, "and if there is any recurrence of this nonsense I will cane the whole Form."

There was no repetition of the "nonsense." A licking from Mr. Quelch in his present mood was not to be thought of.

The juniors were glad of the opportunity to leave the Hall. In a noisy stream they poured out into the passage discussing Quelch's latest fit of tantrums.

"I don't know what's come over the old bird lately," said Nugent to his chums. "He seems to go out of his way to look for trouble!"

"It's a touch of rheumatism, I expect," said Harry Wharton tolerantly. "Does get a man down. My uncle suffers with it occasionally, so I know."

"Well, let's hope the bout passes off

quickly," said Johnny Bull. "I'm getting fed-up with Quelch's pettiness."

"Hear, hear!"

"The-hear-hearfulness is terrific, my worthy chums," said Inky.

"He'll be all right by morning classes," said the captain of the Remove with a smile.

"H'm!" Wharton's chums did not share in that optimistic outlook, but they hoped for the best.

When the bell went for first lesson the Remove to a man arrived on the stroke of time. No one apparently was taking a chance of ruffling Mr. Quelch in his present grim humour.

Yet ten minutes went by before the master of the Remove put in an appearance, and to the wonder of the juniors Dr. Locke accompanied him.

The handsome, learned face of the Head of Greyfriars wore a deep frown. Mr. Quelch was pale and there was a peculiar glitter in his eyes that gave rise to much silent comment in the minds of the Removites.

The Head rustled to the desk and cleared his throat.

"My boys," he commenced in deep tones. "I have an unpleasant duty before me."

The juniors thrilled. "Mr. Quelch reports to me the loss of at least half of his manuscript of Greyfriars—"

There was a buzz which was instantly quelled by the Head's stern expression.

"All of you boys are doubtless aware that Mr. Quelch has devoted the major portion of his leisure time for a number of years to the compilation of the history of this ancient school—"

The Head paused, and his keen eyes swept through the ranks of the Remove. Mr. Quelch, pale of countenance, looked steadfastly before him.

"Such a task as Mr. Quelch has set himself has been an exceedingly laborious one," went on the Head, "and one that I have viewed with great favour and encouragement. And now, when the greater portion of that noble task has been accomplished some misguided person has abstracted quite half of Mr. Quelch's precious manuscript—"

Again there was a buzz in the ranks of the Remove. Every junior knew in what regard Mr. Quelch held his "History of Greyfriars"; it was common knowledge that he worked long and late on that inexhaustible task.

"I myself have assisted Mr. Quelch in a search for this missing section of the manuscript," resumed Dr. Locke. "But the undoubted fact remains that it has been taken from his desk. Your Form master informs me that you boys have been troublesome of late and that he has had occasion to punish many of you—"

There was a low murmur. There was not a fellow in the Remove who had not been punished of late for some trifling offence or other; but the Remove as a whole did not agree that they had been troublesome, certainly not more troublesome than usual.

The Head held up his hand for silence.

"It occurs to me," he continued, "that some boy in this Form, not fully realising the enormity of his offence, has abstracted this manuscript and hidden it. At the moment I am prepared to believe that no Greyfriars boy would take it with any real malicious intent. I therefore call upon the boy or boys responsible to stand out before the class."

There was no movement in the Remove ranks.

Dr. Locke's kindly face assumed a very severe expression.

"If it is the fear of punishment that keeps the culprit or culprits silent," he said sternly, "you have my word that if the manuscript is restored intact I will inflict no further punishment than detention. Once more I ask the culprit to stand forth."

Still there was no movement in the Remove Form room.

Every fellow looked straight before him, and if guilt dwelt in any junior there he was a consummate actor to conceal it.

Dr. Locke's expression grew more severe.

"I have dealt patiently with this matter so far," he said in deep tones, "as I feel Mr. Quelch's loss as if it were my own. To you youngsters such a loss is doubtless little enough, for you have not reached the age to appreciate the magnitude and the worthiness of your Form master's task. I ask the culprit, for the last time, to own up like a man and right the wrong he has done."

It was an eloquent appeal and one that was scarcely expected from such an important and all powerful personage as the Head of Greyfriars, and it moved most of the juniors. Yet it drew no material response. The culprit did not own up.

The Head waited for fully two minutes before he spoke again. Then his voice was vibrant with anger.

"Very well," he said. "Every investigation will be made to discover the identity of the miscreant and he may expect no leniency from me. When he is found he will be publicly flogged and expelled in disgrace from this school. Mr. Quelch," he added, turning to the master of the Remove, "I shall leave no stone unturned to discover the young rascal who has committed this abominable outrage."

And with a sympathetic nod to the Remove Form master and a steely glance at the class Dr. Locke rustled majestically out of the room.

There was a strained silence.

"I am sorry that there is a boy in this Form who would maliciously injure me to this extent," said Mr. Quelch quietly. "I was not aware that I harboured such feelings of enmity in this class, and the loss of my manuscript is not as much to me as the thought that one of you would descend to such depths of baseness."

The Removites fidgeted uncomfortably, not a little moved by Mr. Quelch's scathing words.

"You may take your seats!" Mr. Quelch, the Form master, was revealed the next moment. "We will begin First Lesson."

There was an air of tenseness in the Remove Form room that morning, unbearable to master and pupils alike. The loss of Mr. Quelch's manuscript filled all minds, and no one was more thankful than the Remove master himself when lessons came to an end. His face was haggard and drawn, and more than once he passed his hand across his forehead dazedly.

Mr. Quelch, in the view of the Removites, had taken his loss very deeply to heart, and the more decent-minded juniors felt sincerely sorry for him. The culprit, whoever he was, would receive scant mercy at their hands.

But the identity of the culprit was as much a mystery as the present whereabouts of the manuscript which represented years and years of arduous toil, and was destined to remain so for some considerable time.

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THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Price of Silence!

GREAT SCOTT!

Thus Bob Cherry. The Famous Five were seated in Study No. 1 that afternoon discussing the strange affair of the missing manuscript when Bob Cherry uttered that ejaculation.

"Great Scott!" repeated Bob. "What's biting you, old scout?" asked Wharton, but Bob seemed oblivious of the question.

"I wonder," he said reflectively. "I wonder—"

"Eh?"

"What?"

"I wonder—"

"You wonder what, fathead?" roared Wharton.

"Skinner!" said Bob excitedly. "I wonder—"

Harry Wharton grimaced.

"Oh, don't let us have that all over again for goodness' sake. What are you burbling Skinner's name for?"

Bob came back to earth, so to speak, and turned excitedly to his chums.

"You know Quelchy's manuscript's missing—" he began.

"And that Queen Anno's dead," said Johnny Bull dryly.

"And that Christmas comes once a year," contributed Nugent.

Bob glared.

"Oh, don't be a lot of asses," he remonstrated. "You chaps remember I told you Skinner was out of the dorm last night?"

The rest of the Co. nodded.

"Well, just before he came in I hopped out of bed and looked into the quad," explained Bob earnestly. "I thought I heard someone about, but I was mistaken. But what I did see was the light on in Quelchy's study—"

"Phew!" whistled Wharton, to whom returned in a flood of recollection Skinner's vengeful words of the day before.

Bob Cherry's sunny face creased into a worried frown.

"I suppose—I suppose," he said slowly, "Skinner wouldn't be such a rotten cad as to bag old Quelchy's blessed manuscript. And yet—"

"You say he came into the dorm just after you saw the light in Quelchy's study?" said Johnny Bull.

"About five or ten minutes after, anyway," said Bob. "Wasn't more, I know."

"Time enough for anyone to lift a wad of manuscript and make off with it," said Johnny Bull.

The Co. nodded, and their faces assumed serious expressions. Back into the minds of each one of them came Skinner's words of revenge uttered the day before. Was it possible that Skinner had burgled the precious manuscript in order to level accounts with his Form master. No one but a cad would stoop so low, but Skinner in that category stood self convicted. Already suspicion was beginning to grow in the minds of the Famous Five. More than once they had witnessed instances of Skinner's meanness and spitefulness; more than once they had been the victims of it.

There was a silence in the study, and five faces grew grimly thoughtful.

"Didn't you say anything to Skinner when he came into the dorm," asked Nugent at last.

Bob nodded.

"I made some silly remark about being on the tiles and having lost all his money," he said. "But the chap

made no reply. He seemed in a bad temper."

"H'm!"

"Look here, you chaps," said the captain of the Remove at last, "I think we'd better trot along and see Skinner."

"Good egg!"

And without a further word on the subject the Famous Five walked out of the study and made inquiries for Skinner. He was run to earth at last in the Common-room, talking to Snoop and Stott.

"We've been looking for you, Skinner," said Wharton, coming to the point. "We want a word with you."

Skinner's lip curled.

"The want is all on your side."

"Oh, cut that stuff out," exclaimed Bob Cherry impatiently.

Snoop and Stott who looked very pale and apprehensive moved off hurriedly.

"Well, what the thump do you want," asked Skinner unpleasantly. "Why are you all standing there looking like a lot of moulting owls."

"Look here, Skinner," said the captain of the Remove bluntly. "Bob tells

And by what right do you cross-question me. Since when have they made you a master's prefect?"

Wharton bit his lip. At times he felt that Skinner tried his patience to the full, and this was one of the occasions.

"I have no right except that of a fellow who would not like to see his Form master suffer unnecessarily—"

"Except as a fellow who doesn't believe in playing a dirty trick like that," added Johnny Bull.

Skinner sneered.

"Well, you can look in another quarter," he said. "I know nothing about the blessed manuscript. If Quelchy lost it it serves him right."

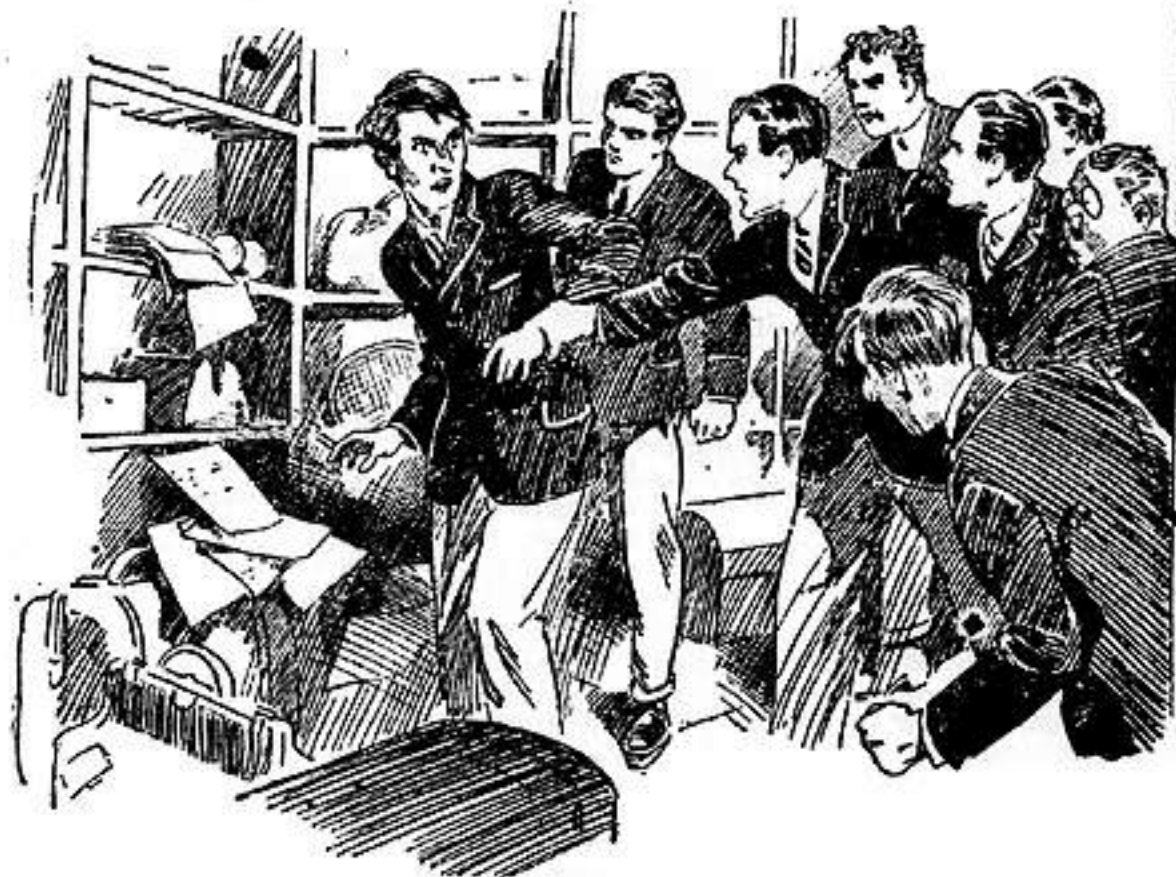
Wharton gritted his teeth, and was sorely tempted to bang Skinner's sleek head against the wall.

"Look here, Skinner, we've not forgotten what you said yesterday."

"And what was it that I said yesterday which your magnificence chooses to remember against me?"

"You were swearing that you'd get even with Quelchy," said Wharton, restraining his rising temper.

Skinner laughed.



As Skinner turned a startled face towards Harry Wharton & Co., he joggled a pile of papers on the shelf, causing them to flutter to the floor. It was the missing manuscript. "You rotter!" exclaimed Wharton. "Caught!"

us that you were out of the dorm last night."

"Indeed?" sneered Skinner. "And what about it?"

"It's true, of course?"

Skinner shrugged his shoulders, and made as if to saunter away, but Bob Cherry's strong grip fastened on his shoulder and swung him round again.

"That won't do, Skinner," said Wharton. "Unless you can explain yourself suspicion is likely to fall on you as the chap who pinched Quelchy's manuscript."

The cad of the Remove started, and a lot of his sang-froid deserted him.

"What do you mean?"

"Simply this," said Wharton grimly. "Bob saw a light flash on in Quelchy's study a few minutes before you came into the dorm."

"Well, what about it?"

"I suppose—I suppose you weren't in that study, were you?" said the captain of the Remove bluntly.

Skinner's composure returned.

"You can suppose what you like," he drawled. "You're too high and mighty Mr. Magnificent Wharton.

"So I did," he admitted. "Good gad, Wharton, you're developing a Pelman brain."

"Don't rot," said the captain of the Remove tersely. "I ask you Skinner to tell us whether you had a hand in pinching Quelchy's manuscript?"

"You can ask what you like," drawled Skinner, "but it doesn't mean that I'm going to answer. I've got other matters of more importance than standing here listening to your conversation, delightful as it is."

"Oh, bump the rotter!" growled Johnny Bull.

But Skinner decided that it was time he did the disappearing trick. He gently withdrew Bob Cherry's grip from his collar, and, with an insolent smile, stalked off.

The Famous Five breathed hard.

"That chap makes me want to kick him every time I see him," exclaimed Bob Cherry disgustedly.

"The kickfulness would be the proper caper," added Inky.

Harry Wharton frowned.

"Well, if he's guilty, he's a pretty

cool card," he said thoughtfully. "And yet—" He shook his head. Circumstances pointed to Skinner as being the culprit, but circumstantial evidence was not proof of guilt.

"Oh, come on, you men," said Bob Cherry boisterously. "Let's punt a footer about."

Five faces brightened up considerably and at once. Punting a footer about was more to the liking of Harry Wharton & Co. than theorising over Mr. Quelch's missing manuscript, important as that matter undoubtedly was.

But if Wharton & Co. had temporarily dismissed the matter from their minds Skinner hadn't. He was not allowed to; for scarcely had he left the Famous Five when a fat and unwieldy figure bore down upon him.

Skinner stared angrily at Bunter as that cheerful youth drew level with him and gave him a knowing wink.

"What are you blinking about, you fat idiot?" asked Skinner surlily.

Billy Bunter went through the same optical exercise again. Then he chuckled:

"He, he, he!"

But Harold Skinner was not in the mood to appreciate either Bunter's strange optical exercises or his unmusical cachinnations. His right foot swept back and then forward, and Bunter's fat chuckle changed to a roar.

"Yaroooooooh!"

Skinner strolled on under the impression that he had got rid of William George Bunter. There, however, he was mistaken.

"I say, Skinner, old chap—"

Skinner came to a halt again and faced round.

"Do you want another sample of my boot?" he asked.

"Oh, really, Skinner!" said Bunter peevishly. "If that's the way you treat a pal—"

"You fat worm!" exclaimed Skinner, in anything but a "pally" fashion. "Buzz off!"

Billy Bunter glared, and changed his tactics.

"Look here, you rotter!" he hooted. "If you're not jolly civil I shall tell Quelch what I know—"

And there was something in Bunter's tone that impelled Skinner to change his tactics, too.

"What are you talking about?" he said.

Billy Bunter snorted.

"I'm not so sure that I ought not to go to Quelch straight away and tell him what I know about you and your rotten scheming—"

Skinner's face expressed his surprise and his curiosity in two quick flashes.

"What do you mean?"

"I know what I know," said Bunter airily. "And if I told Quelch what I know it would mean a flogging for you, and expulsion thrown in. See?"

Skinner did not see exactly, but he was mighty curious.

"So you had better be a little more civil," continued Bunter, feeling that he had made an impression.

"What on earth are you burbling about?"

Bunter sniffed.

"Pretty low, I call it, for a chap to pinch a man's manuscript," he said disdainfully.

Skinner looked relieved.

"Oh, that's it, is it?"

"You see, I know," smirked Billy Bunter. "You'd look pretty blue if I told Quelch that I heard you plotting to pinch his manuscript, wouldn't you, and—"

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Skinner started. Into his mind came his own words, uttered the day before, in the presence of Snoop and Stott. How Bunter had fastened on to them, so to speak, was, for the moment, beyond him.

"I don't understand you," he said, rather lamely.

The Owl of the Remove grinned craftily.

"I heard every word you said yesterday to Snoop and Stott," he explained brightly.

Skinner's face darkened, and his fists clenched. Bunter did not observe these danger signals.

"You fat cavedropper!" hissed Skinner; and he made a threatening move forward.

Bunter jumped back, like a fat, startled rabbit.

"Keep off!" he roared. "Keep off, or I'll go and see Quelch—I'll go and see the Head—"

Skinner controlled himself with an effort.

"That's better!" said Bunter, his courage returning. "He, he, he! You didn't know I was underneath the table, did you?"

"Wha-at?"

"I heard you tell Snoop and Stott that you were going to pinch Quelch's manuscript," went on Bunter cheerfully.

Skinner paled visibly, and Bunter, seeing that he had gained a point, cackled afresh.

"He, he, he!" he cachinnated. "Rather cute of me to hide under the table, wasn't it?"

"You fat barrel!" exclaimed Skinner savagely. "I'll—"

"Don't you threaten me, Skinner!" said Bunter. "You treat me as a pal and I'll keep what I know to myself. See?"

"But you don't think I pinched Quelch's manuscript, do you?" said Skinner.

Bunter winked.

"Of course not!" he said, in a tone that implied the contrary.

And Skinner, so cocksure of himself up to now, began to realise that his words of revenge, uttered yesterday in more than one direction, were likely to come home to roost, as it were, with a vengeance.

"I say, old chap," said Bunter, with a sudden burst of friendship, "I've been disappointed about a postal order, you know. I expect it will be for a pound. If you could tide me over with a small loan until the post arrives I'll be obliged."

And he held out a podgy hand expectantly.

Skinner suppressed a groan. For the moment it would be diplomatic to humour Bunter. There was a flogging and expulsion awaiting the fellow who had boned Quelch's manuscript.

"Thanks, old chap!" said Bunter, pocketing the half-crown the cad of the Remove handed to him. "I'll let you have this back as soon as my postal order arrives."

Skinner ground his teeth. He had parted with half-a-crown to keep Bunter's busy tongue from tattling, but he knew in his heart of hearts that it was but a temporary respite, at best.

With feelings too deep for words he lounged off, unconscious of the fact that Peter Todd, Billy Bunter's study-mate, had witnessed the whole scene—had seen the half-crown change ownership.

Peter's face screwed up into a perplexed frown.

"Now, what's on here?" he muttered. "It isn't like Skinner to whack out

money to Bunter. And by his face he looked as if he'd much rather boot the fat duffer. There's something worth investigating here."

And with the reflection, Peter Todd followed in the footsteps of his fat study-mate—a route which led him, as was to be expected, directly to Dame Mible's tuckshop.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Finding the Culprit I

HAROLD SKINNER scowled.

He had entered Study No. 11, which he shared with Snoop and Stott, and as the conversation came to an abrupt halt at his entry it was not difficult for him to see that he had been the subject of it.

"What are you two looking so dashed solemn over?"

Snoop and Stott did not reply to that. Instead, the former reached for his cap and smiled rather sickly at Skinner.

"Snoopey and I were—were just talking about a stroll down to the village, weren't we, Snoopey?"

And Snoop, also with a sickly grin, replied in the affirmative.

"I'm ready, old chap," he added. "See you later, Skinner!"

"Don't trouble," sneered Skinner. "I suppose you think, like the rest of the silly asses, that I boned Quelch's blessed manuscript."

Snoop and Stott did not reply to that, but their silence spoke volumes.

The scowl deepened on Skinner's face as his two study-mates tramped off down the passage. Then, muttering to himself, the cad of the Remove crossed to the bookcase and opened one of the drawers.

He produced a square wooden box, which, from its label, showed that it was originally designed to contain chessmen. But Skinner had other uses for it—namely, a safe hiding-place for cigarettes. Cigarette in hand, Skinner crossed to the window and stared out for some minutes. He saw Sidney James Snoop and Stott pass out of the gates. Then his attention was drawn to the tuckshop. From it emerged Billy Bunter, writhing in the grasp of Peter Todd, who held the fat junior under control by pressure on his podgy ear.

Skinner's face darkened.

As he watched he saw Peter Todd and his fat captive stop and speak a few words to the Famous Five. Punting a footer about became of secondary importance when Peter had said his say, for Skinner, from the study window, saw Harry Wharton & Co. join up with Peter Todd and Bunter and march towards the School House. Some instinct told the cad of the Remove that they were looking for him. With a muttered ejaculation he swung away from the window and left the study.

Skinner was prepared to spend the greater portion of that afternoon indulging in the fragrant weed. If Harry Wharton & Co. were looking for him, for some reason or other, they were not likely to look for him in the box-room, and thither Skinner turned his steps in order to carry out his original intention of a "quiet smoke."

There was an unpleasant grin on his face as he entered the box-room and closed the door. A few seconds later the cigarette was between his thin lips and the cad of the Remove, reclining against a "settee" of trunks, gave himself up to the full enjoyment—if any—of a cigarette.

And while the cad of the Remove puffed clouds of hazy smoke ceilingwards

(Continued on page 12.)

Half-Time "Gossip!"



Strange things are always happening on the football field—incidents which cause a great deal of comment when the match is over. "Old Ref" is here to settle these arguments. Send your queries along to him, chums—the more the merrier.

THE other day," writes one of my readers who lives at Bristol, "I happened to be present at a match, and as one of the linesmen did not turn up, I was asked if I would take on the job. In a weak moment I agreed, but as the game progressed I realised that I knew very little about what a linesman at a football match is expected to do, and I got into trouble once or twice with the few spectators who were present. As other readers of the MAGNET may have been placed in a similar position, perhaps you could give us some instructions concerning the linesman's job."

Willingly I acceded to this request, and by way of consoling my correspondent, who felt at the end of the game that he did not do the linesman's job as well as he might have done, I can assure him that there are plenty of so-called first-class linesmen who are not as efficient concerning the duties of the post as they might be.

The first thing to remember is that a linesman is not a referee. That may sound unnecessary, and a bit Irish, perhaps, but I have come across plenty of linesmen who seemed to think that they, and not the fellow with the whistle, were controlling the game.

It is the duty of the linesman to help the referee, not rule him. The linesman should be "on the spot," that is, keeping up with the play as much as possible. Obviously it is his job to signal to the referee when the ball goes out of play, and in this connection there is one important point which should be stressed. Remember that the ball is not out of play until the whole of it has passed over the line.

If the linesman, quite near to the play, notices an infringement of the rules which he does not think the referee is in a position to see, then it is the job of the linesman to signal to the referee, and good referees accept such a signal, stop the play, and make an award to one side or the other in accord with the linesman's verdict.

It is not, however, the linesman's job to signal for happenings under the nose of the referee, and which the referee himself can see. Many linesmen overstep their duties in this respect, and get the referee into trouble in consequence.

THE efficient linesman must keep his eyes open all the time, because he never knows when he will be called upon by the referee to give his version of some particular incident. The linesman being called upon should give the referee a clear-cut verdict of the incident as he has seen it.

Whether the referee acts upon the version of the linesman doesn't matter. The man with the whistle is the real master of ceremonies, and on him rests the final decision.

It will probably have been noticed by some of my readers that certain referees appear to consult their linesmen much more frequently than others. Let me say at once that I have no admiration at all for the referee who consults the linesman, merely because he is pressed to do so, concerning incidents which the referee himself was in a good position to see. Referees who can't make up their own minds when they have seen things are not worthy of the trust given to them.

There is, however, another reason why some referees appear to consult with their linesmen more frequently than others. Many referees have a working arrangement with their linesmen, made beforehand, by which they can get the views of the linesman on particular incidents without actually going across the field to hold a confab with them. Such an arrangement can easily be made, and in my view is wholly desirable.

Suppose the referee awards a goal, but in view of the protests

of the players is not quite sure that something did not happen which he failed to see. If he has an arrangement with his linesmen, made previous to the match, it will be sufficient if he just looks in their direction and receives from them a signal as to whether, in the view of the linesmen, the referee was right or wrong.

Another point.

It is not the duty of the linesmen to go dashing on to the field, as many of them do, to place the ball when a free kick is given. Indeed, the official instructions say that the linesmen should keep off the field as much as possible.

If a free kick is given near the touchline, and the referee signals to the linesman to see that the kick is taken from the proper place, then the man with the flag should do it. But in this, as in practically every other detail, the linesman should only act when requested to do so. He is the junior officer.

DRASTIC action is sometimes necessary during a football match, but I have seldom heard of a referee going to the lengths of a Scottish official recently. My attention has been drawn to the incident by a reader who wants to know whether the referee was wise.

It was a Scottish junior match, and for some reason or other the players on both sides got a bit ruffled, and tempers became more or less frayed. In vain the referee tried to put a stop to the rough play, and even went to the length of ordering a player from the field. Still the tempers were not cooled. So the referee stopped the game and ordered both lots of players to the dressing-room. There he gave the players of first one side and then the other a lecture, and after a delay of a quarter of an hour or so, to enable the players to cool down, he went on with the game again, and it was finished with the players in a much more sporting mood.

If the referee of this particular match was convinced that the only way to bring the players to a reasonable attitude was to take them all off, then I should say that he was justified. As I have explained above, the referee is the "boss" and I think the people who appointed him would support his action.

I THINK I should like to be manager of a football team when I have finished playing," writes a Sunderland reader, "as I understand they get well paid for what looks like a nice job." This reader is certainly aiming high, and I am not going to chide him on that account. He is also right in saying that managerships—or some of them—are considered the plums of the football world so far as salaries go. I know of at least two managers of first-class football clubs who get thirty pounds a week all the year round.

These, however, are the fellows at the top of their profession, and there are plenty of managers who receive less than a third of that amount as salary. Nor is it such an easy job as my Sunderland friend seems to imagine. In the first place, many qualifications are necessary to success, and in the second place it is a job with plenty of hard work attached. It is no unusual thing for a manager to travel fifty thousand miles in the course of a football season looking for players. This means very little rest. The manager gets a lot of the praise, of course, when the team does well, but he is the fellow at whom the bricks are thrown when the team fails.

I recall, in this connection, the frank statement of the director of a football club when I asked him why it had suddenly been decided to appoint a manager. "Well," he said, "the directors are tired of having the bricks thrown at them at the general meeting, so we have appointed a manager at whom our disappointed shareholders can throw!" "OLD REF."

SKINNER'S NARROW SQUEAK!

(Continued from page 10.)

Peter Todd, Billy Bunter, and the Famous Five arrived at Study No. 11.

Peter Todd kicked the door open and pushed Bunter in front of him.

"Hallo, he's not here!" said Peter, staring round the study.

"We'll soon find him!" said Harry Wharton. "You stay here, Toddy, with Bunter, while we scout round for Skinner."

"Right-ho!"

The Famous Five dispersed to various portions of the Remove quarters, looking for Skinner. Up and down and round about they tramped, without success, and eventually collected again in Study No. 11.

"Got him?" asked Peter.

"Can't find the rotter anywhere!" replied the captain of the Remove.

"Well, I'm blessed!"

"Look here, Toddy," began Bunter indignantly, "I'm jolly well not going to stay here all the afternoon!"

Peter Todd grinned.

"You jolly well are—at least, until we've found Skinner and questioned him!"

"Oh, really, Peter—"

"Shurrup!" growled Todd, and then his eyes lighted up. "There's Skinner's cap, anyway!" he exclaimed, indicating a cap which lay on one of the chairs.

"Then he's not gone out of the House!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Looks as if the rotter is trying to dodge us."

Peter Todd looked grim.

"Did you search the box-room?"

The Famous Five admitted that they hadn't.

"That's where we'll find the rotter!" said Peter. "I know he often sneaks up there for a smoke! Come on!"

"But, I say, Peter— Yaroooooop!"

Bunter's words ended in a howl as Todd squeezed the fat junior's ear and inclined him towards the door.

With serious faces, the Famous Five followed Peter.

In a body they arrived at the box-room at the end of the Remove landing. With scant ceremony Peter Todd shoved open the door.

There was a startled gasp from within, which Harry Wharton & Co. echoed.

Standing by one of the shelves, a cigarette in mouth, was Harold Skinner. He turned a startled face at the juniors' entry, and in his agitation he joggled a pile of papers on the shelf. The papers floated towards the floor in a shower. One glance at them—one glance at their uniformity of size, of the neat typescript on them—and not one of the Famous Five but knew that here was the missing manuscript.

"You rotter!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Caught!" said Todd grimly.

Skinner, his face as pale as death, stood rooted to the floor, oblivious of the fact even that his cigarette was burning his lips.

"You awful cad!" roared Bob Cherry.

"You worm!"

"You spiteful rotter!"

It was a regular chorus from Peter Todd and the Famous Five.

Nugent darted forward and began to collect the scattered sheets of the MS. Still Skinner stood silent like a stricken being.

"It's the manuscript all right," said Nugent, having collected the sheets together in a neat pile.

And he gave the tongue-tied cad of the Remove a glance of withering scorn. "Now we know why you bribed

Bunter to keep silent—" began Wharton hotly.

"Oh, really, Wharton," said Bunter, "my pal Skinner obliged me with a loan—a temporary loan, you know! And if you—"

"Shut up!" snapped Peter Todd grimly.

Skinner found his tongue at last.

"I—I—I didn't know anything about the manuscript!" he blurted out wildly. "I found it here—"

"What!"

Six voices gave tongue in unison.

"I tell you I found it here just as you came along," said Skinner appealingly. "If you think I pinched Quelch's manuscript—"

He gazed about him wildly and read condemnation in every face. Even Bunter blinked his scorn at the junior who had been caught with the missing manuscript.

"If you think—" began Skinner again.

Peter Todd held up his hand commandingly.

"We don't think, Skinner," he said quietly. "We know! We have seen for ourselves! I'm glad now that I saw your transaction with this fat fool!"

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

Skinner threw out his arms in an appealing gesture.

"You don't understand," he said. "I tell you, honest Injun, that I discovered that manuscript no more than a couple of minutes ago. I hadn't touched it before. On my word of honour—"

The juniors' lips curled. They were well acquainted with Skinner's code and his word of honour!

"Don't tell us any more blessed whoppers!" growled Johnny Bull. "You make me sick!"

"Hear, hear!"

Skinner licked his dry lips.

"But I'm telling you the truth!" he said thickly. "The truth! The truth, I tell you!"

His voice ended in something like a shriek, but it did not move the juniors present. The spiteful, mean-minded culprit responsible for the theft of Mr. Quelch's manuscript had been caught red-handed. He could expect little sympathy from them.

Skinner's terrified face passed from one to the other of the juniors. He read no sympathy in any of them, and, with a moan, he sank down on one of the boxes and buried his head in his hands.

Harry Wharton & Co. regarded him in silence for a few moments. Then Peter Todd turned to the captain of the Remove.

"Well, what's the next move?"

Wharton shrugged his shoulders. His glance went to the miserable, abject form of Skinner, and his expression softened; then his eyes came to rest on the manuscript which Nugent held, and the hard, scornful look returned to Wharton's face.

"Well, the first thing is for the manuscript to be returned," he said slowly. "There is absolutely no reason why poor old Quelch should suffer unnecessarily."

There was a general shaking of heads.

"But where Skinner comes into the picture I don't know," added the captain of the Remove. "There's a public flogging and expulsion awaiting him, as far as I can see."

"The rotter deserves it, anyway!" said Johnny Bull deliberately.

Skinner looked up with haggard face. "I tell you you're doing me an injustice. I swear it! I've never touched that manuscript until I saw it lying there a few moments ago—on my word of honour!"

Wharton's lip curled.

"Oh, stop lying, for goodness' sake!" he said. "You've called the tune, and now you've got to pay the piper!"

"But I'm not lying—"

"Ring off!" said Peter Todd. "I heard you talking to Bunter. I saw you bribe him. And the fat idiot soon blabbed the rest to me—how you threatened to get even with Quelch by pinching his manuscript!"

"Besides," broke in Bob Cherry, "don't we all know that you were out of the dorm the night the manuscript was taken?"

Skinner looked about him wildly.

"But I didn't go near Quelch's study that night!" he said imploringly.

"Where did you go, then?"

The cad of the Remove bit his lip.

"I—I went for a— a flutter at the Cross Keys," he said quietly.

"That won't do!" said Peter Todd scornfully. "Try a fresh whopper!"

Harold Skinner hung his head.

"Look here, Skinner," said Wharton at length, "you'll take my advice and return this manuscript. Own up like a decent chap, and perhaps the Head will let you off with a flogging."

Skinner turned a wild face to the juniors.

"A flogging! I'm not going to be flogged for something I haven't done!" he said hysterically.

"Very well, then!" said Harry Wharton grimly. "We shall deal with you ourselves. We can't very well give you away, rotter as you are. You'll be tried by the Form."

"But I'm innocent!"

Wharton waved a hand contemptuously.

"And, in the meantime, you chaps, I'll scud round to Quelch's study and put the manuscript on his desk," he said.

"But the old bird will be there—"

began Nugent, in alarm.

"He's jawing with Prout," said Wharton slowly. "I saw both of them at the window of Prouty's study."

"Oh!"

"You keep an eye on Skinner," went on the captain of the Remove, "and one of you call a Form meeting. The chaps will be coming in to tea in a few minutes."

"Right-ho!"

With a nod to the juniors, Wharton walked out of the box-room with the manuscript under his arm.

"Come on, you worm!" said Johnny Bull, jerking Skinner to his feet. "You're going to be tried and sentenced by the Form!"

"I'm not!" roared Skinner. "I've done nothing! I'm not coming!"

"Your little mistake—you are!" snapped Johnny. "Lend a hand, you men, and help me drag this funky worm to the Common-room!"

"I tell you I'm innocent!"

"Tell us another!"

"The liefulness of the ludicrous Skinner is terrific!"

The juniors grasped the wretched Skinner on all sides.

"Let go, you rotters!" cried the black sheep. "I tell you I've done nothing!"

Skinner struggled desperately, punctuating his movements with protestations of innocence.

But neither availed him. Escorted by the juniors, he was dragged from the box-room to the Common-room, what time Billy Bunter rolled away, with glittering eyes, eager to spread the news amongst the Removites that the culprit had been found and was to stand a Form trial.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Proved Guilty!

THE Remove was in a buzz of excitement.

Billy Bunter was in his element.

A score of times at least the fat Owl of the Remove had poured out his story to unbelieving listeners; and a score of times, at least, the fat junior had been saved the painful ordeal of a kicking from his unbelieving audience by the timely arrival of Bob Cherry.

Bob had swiftly given support to Bunter's story, and requested the Removites to attend the meeting.

In excited groups the Removites swarmed towards the Common-room. If any lingering doubts remained in their minds as to the veracity of the story they were speedily dispelled at sight of Skinner's white, haggard face and the grim expressions of Harry Wharton & Co. and Peter Todd.

"Don't make a row," said Wharton, as the juniors poured in. "We don't want the prefects or the beaks down on us!"

A grim silence settled on the growing crowd.

At last Bob Cherry returned, escorting Sidney James Snoop and Stott. Both of Skinner's cronies looked apprehensive.

"That's the lot!" sang out Bob, and he closed the door.

Harry Wharton rose to his feet.

Skinner gave Snoop and Stott an appealing glance, but neither of his chums affected to see him. They turned their heads.

"Gentlemen of the Remove," began Wharton quietly, and this time there was none of the usual interruptions that attended a Form meeting; the business on hand was too serious for that. "Gentlemen of the Remove, you will be pleased to learn that Mr. Quelch's 'History of Greyfriars' has been found—"

There was a buzz.

"It was found in the possession of Skinner by seven members of this Form.

Grim looks were levelled at the ead of the Remove.

"To continue," said Wharton quietly, "the manuscript has been returned to its rightful owner, and the fellow responsible for all the trouble will now be tried by the Form."

The captain of the Remove sat down.

Peter Todd jumped up.

"Will some fellow—ahem!—gentleman here be kind enough to act as counsel for the accused?"

Skinner's pale face twisted into a snarl.

"I don't want any footling counsel!" he hissed. "I'm innocent, I tell you! You've got the wrong chap!"

"Silence!" commanded Peter Todd.

"Accused is not allowed to address the court at this juncture."

Some of the fellows grinned, despite the gravity of the situation, for Peter Todd, whose ambitions lay in the direction of the Law, took his duties very seriously.

"Will some kind gentleman act for the accused?"

Herbert Vernon-Smith lounged forward.

"Oh, I don't mind!" he said; and the Bounder, who had on more than one occasion stood in the Remove "dock,"

endeavoured to give Skinner an encouraging smile.

"Thank you, Mr. Smith!" said Peter smoothly. "I shall act in the capacity of prosecuting counsel—"

Vernon-Smith grunted.

"But I understand you are one of the members of this Form, mentioned by Wharton a few moments ago, who discovered the missing manuscript. Can you legally act as counsel for prosecution in those circumstances?"

There was a titter amongst the assembled Removites which died down as Peter Todd held up his hand.

"In the circumstances, I can reply in the affirmative to my learned friend. The—h'm!—jury will consist of you chaps—h'm, gentlemen!—in the room—h'm—court!"

"Get on with the washing!" sang out Bolsover.

"Order, please!" bawled Bob Cherry, who had constituted himself usher.

"Order yourself, you silly ass!" roared Bolsover major truculently.

"Shurrup, Bolsover!" It was a com-

men of the Remove, to prove to you that the accused did, out of malice and spite and motives of revenge, purloin the manuscript in question."

There was a murmur, and dark looks were cast on Harold Skinner.

"I propose to call my first witness," continued Peter Todd. "Mr. Wharton, kindly step into the witness-box."

The captain of the Remove entered a railed-off space boxed in on three sides by the big fireguard.

Peter Todd levelled a legal finger at him.

"Did you hear the accused voice threats of revenge on his Form master for a well-deserved caning he had received?"

Wharton replied in the affirmative, and added that the threats had been heard, too, by the rest of the Famous Five.

"Stand down, Mr. Wharton, for the moment," went on Todd gravely. "William George Bunter! Is he in court?"



As Bob Cherry crossed to the "witness box," he caught his foot in the fireguard and lurched against Todd. That worthy disciple of the law balanced precariously on the chair for a moment, and then toppled floorwards with a crash. Bump! "Yaroop!"

bined howl, and the burly Removite subsided into silence.

"I will read over the charge, gentlemen," commenced Peter Todd, although you are all familiar with it.

"This morning our esteemed Form master discovered the loss of his manuscript which, as this court is well aware, represents a lifetime of study and diligent toil—"

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Sampson Quincy Ifloy Field. "Cut it short."

"Order, please!"

Peter Todd surveyed the "court" grimly.

"The rotter—h'm!—individual responsible for the theft of the manuscript was given the opportunity of returning it without punishment. As you know, he did not avail himself of this golden chance."

"Oh, get on with it!" roared Bolsover major. "We don't want to be here all night."

Peter Todd gave the interrupter a crushing glance and resumed:

"It is my unpleasant duty, gentle-

"You know he is!" growled Bob Cherry. "Get on with it!"

"William George Bunter—" sang out Peter Todd.

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

Billy Bunter rolled forward, blinking through his big spectacles.

"You must not address counsel by familiar names!" admonished Peter Todd, wagging a bony finger at his fat study-mate. "Kindly tell the court what you overheard in Study No. 11 when you were concealed beneath the table."

"Oh, really, Peter—"

"Get on with it, you fat barrel of lard!" roared Peter, forgetting the dignity of the law.

And Bunter got on with it, and told the "court" all that he had overheard.

"And did the accused bribe you to keep silent?" asked Peter Todd.

Billy Bunter blinked indignantly.

"Oh, really, Toddy, you know jolly

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SKINNER'S NARROW SQUEAK!

(Continued from page 13.)

well that I'm not the sort of chap to accept a bribe!"

"Did the accused give you any money?" demanded the prosecuting counsel.

"He may have made me a small loan until—until my postal order arrived," said Bunter cautiously.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter's evidence broke the tension.

"Silence!" roared Bob Cherry.

"You may stand down for the moment, Bunter," said Todd; and the Owl of the Remove, thankful to be out of the limelight for once, rolled to the back of the crowd.

"I now call upon Sidney James Snoop and William Stott!" said Peter Todd.

Skinner's cronies shuffled forward.

"Did the accused in your presence utter threats against our Form master Mr. Quelch?" questioned Peter Todd.

Snoop and Stott eyed Skinner's pale face and remained silent.

"You were asked a question, and this court demands an answer," went on Peter inexorably.

Snoop looked at Stott, and Stott looked at Snoop.

Both nodded.

"Did the accused say that he would purloin Mr. Quelch's manuscript?"

Again the two black sheep nodded.

Peter smiled grimly.

"You may stand down. Robert Cherry, please!"

Bob Cherry, crimson of face, rose to his feet and crossed to the "witness-box." In his confusion he caught his foot in the fireguard and lurched against Todd. That worthy disciple of the law balanced precariously on his chair for a moment, and then toppled floorwards with a crash.

Bump!

"Yooooop! You clumsy ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Peter Todd and Bob Cherry scrambled up with crimson faces, and quite two minutes passed before order was restored.

"Gentlemen, Robert Cherry will now tell you what happened in the dormitory on the night the manuscript was taken."

Bob Cherry, not liking his job in the least, proceeded to tell the juniors about Skinner's stealthy entry into the dormitory on the eventful night.

His evidence created an impression.

Next, Peter Todd summoned Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, Bob Cherry, and William George Bunter to enter the "witness-box." It was a bit of a tight squeeze, especially with the ample circumference of the Owl of the Remove to take into account.

"These gentlemen of the Remove," began Peter Todd afresh, "in addition to my humble self, actually saw the missing manuscript in the possession of the accused in circumstances, I venture to say, that speak for themselves. In short, the accused was secreted in the box-room, when we came upon him, actually handling the manuscript."

There was a buzz of excitement amongst the Removites. With all Peter Todd's long-windedness and somewhat original version of how a case should be "tried," he had at all accounts brought his evidence for the prosecution to a conclusion that seemed to dispense with the formal necessity of a defence.

"Sentence the rotter!"

"Rag the cad!"

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Cries arose on all sides and Skinner's white face went even a shade paler.

Bob Cherry roared for order, and at last order was maintained.

"Gentlemen," said Peter, jumping to his opportunity, so to speak, "that concludes the evidence for the prosecution. I will now call upon our learned friend, Mr. Vernon-Smith."

The Bounder, who had been taking copious notes of the proceedings, rose to his feet and was greeted with a cheer.

"You chaps have heard Toddy wagging his chin," he began unconventionally.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And I promise not to be so long-winded as he was," continued the Bounder. "In the first place Skinner here denies the charge. I propose to cross-question him."

There was a hush.

Skinner stood up.

"Do you admit, Skinner," began Vernon-Smith, disregarding all formality, "that in a moment of anger you threatened to get even with Quelch?"

Skinner nodded.

"Do you affirm that you never really meant to pinch Quelch's manuscript; that you allowed your boastful tongue to run away with you?"

Skinner glared at his counsel at that before he answered:

"Yes."

"Will you now tell the court why you were out of your dorm on the night in question?"

"Yes. I went to have a flutter at the Cross Keys, like you have had yourself, Smithy, many times."

"Oh, ah, h'm!" coughed the Bounder, colouring slightly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do you swear on oath that you did not enter Mr. Quelch's study that night?"

"On my honour I did not!" said Skinner, his colour returning. "Some other rotter is hiding behind me!"

"Now will you tell the court why you bribed Bunter?" was Vernon-Smith's next question.

"I got the wind up," admitted Skinner, blushing somewhat. "I knew that my threat about getting even with Quelch would come back on me, especially if that fat rotter, Bunter, started to tittle-tattle."

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

Bunter, with a grunt, subsided into sulky silence.

"And again," said the Bounder, who had gone over the ground swiftly with his client before cross-examining him publicly, "will you tell us frankly why you went to the box-room?"

"I went there for a smoke," said Skinner defiantly.

Vernon-Smith nodded.

"How did you come to discover the manuscript on one of the shelves?" he asked.

The Remove were silent to a man now.

Skinner licked his lips.

"I had nearly finished my fag," he said slowly, and the juniors hung on his words, "when I caught sight of a bulky parcel of quarto paper on one of the shelves. I crossed to the shelf, and had just made the discovery that the paper was Quelch's manuscript, when Wharton and his crowd burst in."

Peter Todd jumped to his feet excitedly.

"I submit to the court that the evidence of the accused is a tissue of lies from beginning to end—"

There was a loud murmuring which the Bounder quelled as he held up his hand.

"Look here, you chaps, I submit that the whole case for the prosecution hangs purely and simply upon circumstantial evidence. Each charge made against Skinner he has answered truthfully—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"In the circumstances, I submit that there is no case, and ask you to acquit the—ahem!—prisoner without a stain on his character."

The Bounder sat down and Skinner gave him a grateful glance.

Peter Todd addressed the court dramatically. He pointed out what a spiteful character Skinner was; that he was not over inclined to study George Washington when a lie or lies would serve his purpose; that he was a funk who had refused to go to the Head and own up like a man, and that sentence should be passed upon him for disgracing the Remove.

There was a regular uproar in the Common-room, and amidst it no one noticed the presence of George Wingate in the doorway.

He had overheard Peter Todd's address to the juniors, and with it came enlightenment as to the whys and wherefores of the meeting. An extraordinary expression settled on the handsome face of the captain of Greyfriars as Peter Todd, holding up his hand, called for silence.

"Gentlemen of the Remove!" bellowed Peter. "In the absence of a magistrate at this court, I take it upon me to ask you whether you find the prisoner at the bar guilty or not guilty of the charges levelled against him?"

"GUILTY!"

It was a regular roar, and Skinner's lean face paled a deathly white.

"And what sentence, gentlemen," bellowed Peter Todd, "do you see fit to award this miserable and undesirable member of such a highly distinguished and respected Form as the Remove?"

"Make him run the gauntlet!"

"Send him to Coventry!"

"Rag him!"

"Boil him in oil!"

"Scrag him!"

There were innumerable suggestions, some of them amounting almost to lynch law. Once more Peter Todd held up his hand.

"I move that the question of punishment be left to your Form captain, Harry Wharton," he said.

"And I suggest," came the slow, deliberate voice of George Wingate from the doorway, "that you leave the question of punishment to Dr. Locke."

There was a series of gasps and surprised ejaculations from the assembled juniors as, wheeling, they saw the stalwart figure of the captain of Greyfriars.

Wingate strode forward, his face set and compelling. Skinner collapsed on his chair and trembled visibly.

"I have heard all I want to hear," said Wingate, breaking the uncomfortable silence, "and can appreciate your sentiments in trying to deal with this matter yourselves. But I am afraid that it is my duty to intervene and place the facts as I have heard them before Dr. Locke. Skinner, you will follow me at once!"

All eyes turned on the shivering cad of the Remove. He started slowly from his chair, and, with weary footsteps and sagging shoulders, he followed in the wake of the captain of the school.

He left behind him a buzz of comment in which, occasionally, expressions of sympathy were uttered on his behalf; but more often than not came the opinion that he had "asked for it," and was undoubtedly "going to get it!"

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Sentenced to Expulsion!

"HAVE you nothing further to say, Skinner?" Dr. Locke's tone was ominously quiet. Harold Skinner shivered.

Mr. Quelch gave him a penetrating glance as if to read what was passing in the wretched junior's mind. On the headmaster's desk lay the precious manuscript which, in his delight at suddenly seeing again in his own study, had sent the master of the Remove post-haste to Dr. Locke to acquaint him with the good news!

It was while Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch were theorising as to how the missing manuscript had turned up again so mysteriously, that Wingate had ushered Skinner into their presence.

Briefly the captain of Greyfriars had told what he had heard in the Common-room.

Then, with hardened face, Dr. Locke had cross-questioned Skinner. But the hapless cad of the Remove could give no better answers to his headmaster than he had given to his Form-fellows.

"There is nothing more to be said," said Dr. Locke at length. "To-morrow, wretched boy, you will be flogged in the presence of the assembled school, and your name will be erased from the register—"

Skinner threw an appealing glance at his Form master.

"Mr. Quelch! I am innocent—I swear it!" he panted wildly. "On my word of honour, sir!"

For one moment Mr. Quelch's grim countenance softened. Then his eyes travelled to the manuscript, and his expression changed.

"I'm afraid I cannot help you, Skinner," he said quietly. "You had

your chance of escaping punishment and this terrible disgrace. You did not see fit to take advantage of the opportunity."

"But, sir—" began Skinner cringing. "My people—what will they say?"

"You should have thought of such things before you descended to such petty, spiteful means of inflicting injury upon your Form master," said Dr. Locke sternly.

"But I never did it, sir!"

"Enough!" said the Head icily. "We have gone into the matter from every angle, and there is not, on the evidence, the slightest doubt that you are the culprit."

Wingate moved forward in response to a gesture from Dr. Locke.

"Wingate, kindly escort this boy to the punishment-room," he said majestically, "and see that the door is locked when you leave him."

Dr. Locke turned to Mr. Quelch as if oblivious of the further existence of Harold Skinner.

That wretched junior, with Wingate's firm grip on his collar, dragged his feet towards the punishment-room. He passed a staring group of Removites en route, but he hardly saw them. His eyes were blurred, his head was singing. Flogged! Expelled!

The words were dinning themselves into his brain as Wingate thrust him inside the punishment-room. As from afar he heard the key turn in the lock as the captain of Greyfriars retired, leaving him to his miserable thoughts. Flogged! Expelled!

Many a time and oft had Harold Skinner committed misdemeanours that had merited his expulsion from the

school; but, with ~~commensurate~~ luck, scheming, cunning, and occasional lying, he had managed to avert the catastrophe. Now, it seemed, the end had come. Neither luck, scheming, cunning, nor lying could avail him.

With a groan and a wretched fear plucking at his heart, the cad of the Remove sank down on the sparsely covered bed, with his head in his hands. Like a drowning man seeing his past life in a series of swift mental pictures, so Skinner saw his past misdeeds in their proper perspective. And the vision of them made a dreary, dingy collection that brought even to Skinner's hardened character the twinges of remorse.

Suddenly his shoulders began to heave; a sob broke from him; and then Nature came to his aid, and the tears coursed down his cheeks.

Tap!

The wretched junior did not hear that soft tap on the door at first; but it became insistent, and at last Skinner looked up with tear-stained eyes.

"Skinner!" It was the voice of Sidney James Snoop, soft and cautious.

"What is it?"

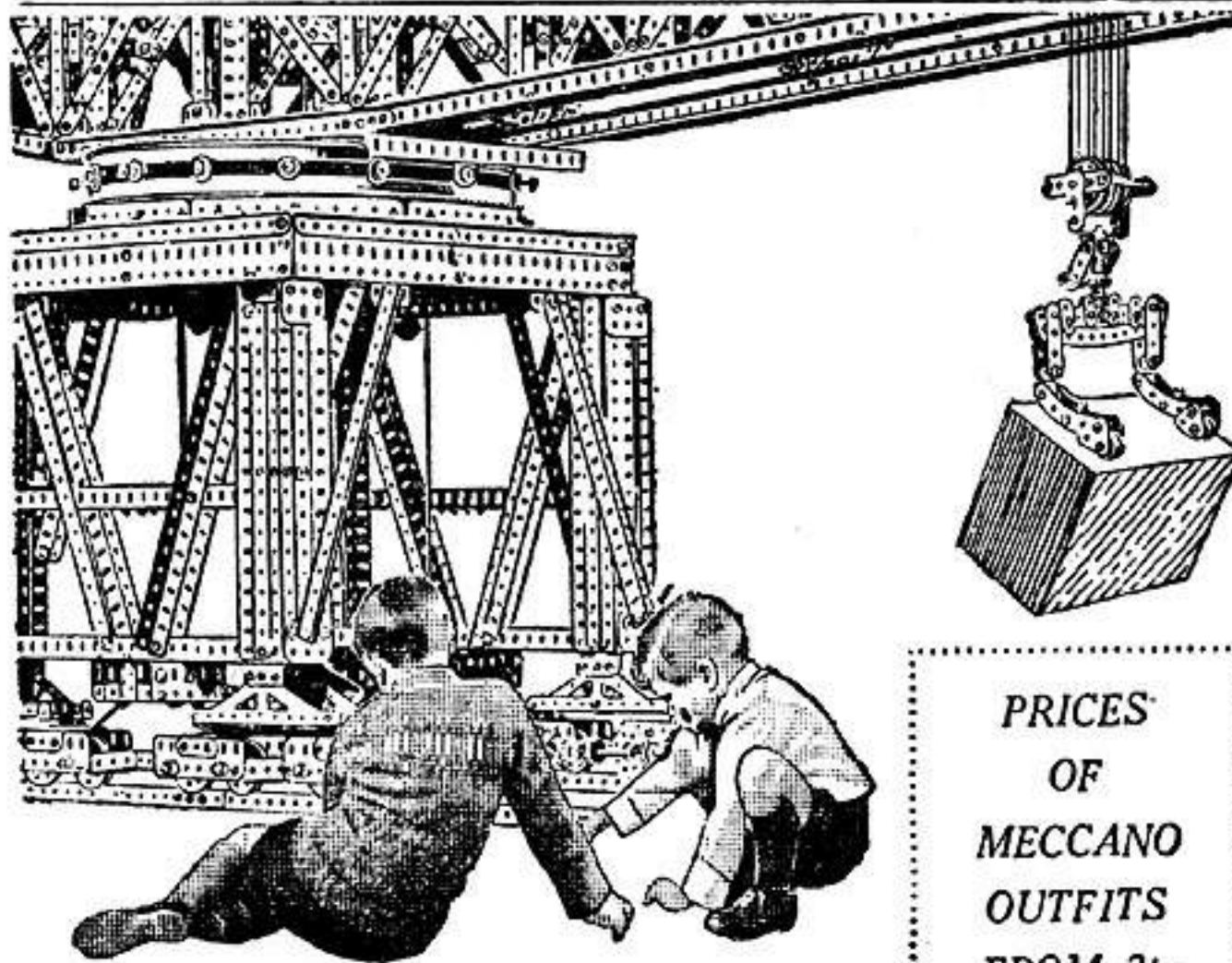
"I say, Skinner, I'm dashed sorry!" said Snoop, in a burst of friendliness doubtless prompted, too, by remorse. "We've just heard the news from Wingate."

"Yes," said Skinner dully.

"You were a fool to do it, old chap," said Snoop sympathetically. "I—I say, if there's anything a fellow can do for you—"

Skinner rose to his feet and crossed to the door. His eyes were shining now

(Continued on next page.)



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with a strange and sudden determination.

"There is something you can do for me, Snoopey," he said softly—"that is, if you mean to stand by me."

"What is it?"

"I'm not staying here to be flogged and expelled for something I haven't done—"

There was a gasp from Snoop. Even at that stage he envied Skinner his nerve for keeping it up, as he termed it.

"I'm going to bunk!" said Skinner determinedly. "That is, if you'll help me, old chap!"

There was a slight pause. Snoop was beginning to waver.

"You needn't be afraid," came Skinner's voice. "You won't be dragged into it. All I want you to do is to shy a rope up to this window when it's dark, so that I can climb out."

"Oh!"

"No one will know who helped me," said Skinner encouragingly. "Besides, they won't care much when I'm gone. Will you do it for me, Snoopey?"

Sidney James Snoop considered for a moment. After all, there was not much risk attached to the task of throwing up a rope from the quad to the window of the punishment-room if he waited until darkness set in.

"I'll do it!" he said at length in a tense whisper. "I'll be out in the quad at half-past nine. It'll be safe then."

"Good for you, Snoopey!" said Skinner, with some of his old cheerfulness.

"Must go now!" whispered Snoop urgently. "There's a prefect coming! Good luck, old chap! Rely on me!"

Snoop's footsteps paced away, and Skinner heard Gerald Loder's voice break in:

"You were talking to a fellow in the punishment-room, Snoop!"

"What if I was?" answered Snoop in an insolent fashion that surprised himself. "He's my pal, isn't he?"

"You know jolly well that it's forbidden to have communication with any fellow in the punishment-room," said Loder unpleasantly. "Take a hundred lines and another hundred for insolence. And if you're not out of this passage in two seconds you'll come up to my study for a beating!"

And Sidney James Snoop, the richer by two hundred lines for his friendly action, slouched off.

True to his word, he sneaked out into the quad at the appointed time that evening, with a coil of rope hidden under his jacket.

It was quite dark; but, for all that, Snoop's heart beat uncomfortably against his ribs, and he almost wished now that he hadn't agreed to assist Skinner in his escape.

But even Snoop had his good points, and those good points gave him strength. With nerves a-tingle, he crept round to the spot beneath the punishment-room. The clock in the old tower chimed the half-hour, and simultaneous with it a face was pressed against the barred windows of the punishment-room.

Snoop whistled softly.

There came an answering whistle from above. Skinner had heard him; doubtless could see his silhouetted figure outlined against the quad.

Snoop drew the coil of rope from beneath his jacket and swung it in the fashion of a cowboy. It had seemed, in theory, perfectly easy to throw a coil

of rope to the height of the punishment-room window. But it turned out to be a little more difficult in practice.

Twice the loose strands of the rope came within inches of Skinner's outstretched fingers as he plunged his arms through the bars of the punishment-room window. Twice the whizzing rope eluded him. But, according to superstition, the third time is lucky. It proved so in this instance.

Snoop judged his throw to a nicety; Skinner's clutching fingers caught a hold of the rope. Another moment the loose end had been dragged into the room. With beating heart, the cad of the Remove drew up the full length of the rope and secreted it in a coil between the blankets of his bed. Then, returning to the window, he peered out to wave an acknowledgment and a farewell to Snoop.

But that worthy had gone. He had done his part without being detected, and was eager to remove himself from the precincts as quickly as possible.

Skinner paced up and down the room restlessly. The hours seemed to drag like years; yet he had to wait at least until the school retired, for to attempt an escape before then was asking for recapture.

He heard the prefects ushering the junior Forms to their dormitories. Then he threw himself down on his bed and feigned sleep as the measured tramp of feet echoed along the passage without.

The key turned in the lock, and George Wingate looked in.

"Better turn in now, kid," he said kindly enough. "You'll catch cold lying there like that."

Skinner mumbled some unintelligible reply and saw the door close again. The key grated in the lock; that was the last time his peace would be disturbed that night. To-morrow they would come for him. To-morrow promised the ordeal of the flogging, followed by expulsion.

But when the morrow came Harold Skinner would not be there!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

An Unlooked-for Crisis!

"I SAY, you chaps—"

Billy Bunter's face was glistening with excitement.

"Get out!"

"Vamoose!"

Frank Nugent and Harry Wharton turned grim glances on the podgy Owl of the Remove.

It was the next morning, about a quarter of an hour before first lesson, and Wharton and Nugent were certainly not in the mood to appreciate the fascinating society of William George Bunter. They had left breakfast in Hall the richer by two hundred lines apiece as a result of incurring Mr. Quelch's displeasure.

Really it seemed that there was no end to the petty tyranny of Mr. Henry Samuel Quelch these days. Quite half a dozen fellows had been awarded similar impositions at the breakfast-table, and the word had gone forth that once more "Quelch" was in one of his "tantrums."

"I say, Wharton, old chap—"

"Oh, clear out!"

"But, I say, Nugent, old fellow—"

persisted the Owl of the Remove. Two distinct and hostile glares met the excited countenance of William George Bunter; in effect two danger

signals. But Bunter did not appear to heed them.

"I say, it's gone again, you know," he declared importantly. "Old Quelch's fairly raging about it."

"What?" echoed Wharton and Nugent in unison. There was something in Bunter's manner that intrigued them, used as they were to the Owl's little ways.

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter. "Old Skinner's had the last word, after all!" Wharton strode forward and shook the fat junior by the collar.

"Yaroooh! Stop it, you beast!" roared Bunter. "You'll make my glasses fall off, and if you b-break them you'll have to p-p-pay for them."

"What on earth are you gassing about?" demanded the captain of the Remove, releasing Bunter's collar.

"Yah! You beast!" gasped Bunter. "I've a jolly good mind not to tell you now, see!"

"Is he off his rocker?" said Nugent.

"Beast! Quelch's fairly on the war-path," said Bunter. "And all the prefects are out looking for Skinner!"

Wharton and Nugent started.

"Looking for Skinner? But Skinner's in the punishment-room!"

Billy Bunter grinned and winked knowingly.

"He's not! He's gone, and so has Quelch's manuscript!"

"Gammon!" exclaimed Wharton.

"It's true!" said Bunter indignantly. "I heard Wingate telling Gwynne."

"Skinner bunked!" said Nugent incredulously.

"Quelch's manuscript gone again?" murmured Wharton.

Billy Bunter blinked and grinned, and grinned and blinked.

"Not only that," he said impressively, "but Quelch's cashbox has disappeared, too!"

"What!"

"It's a fact," said the fat junior, thoroughly enjoying the consternation and bewilderment in the faces of his listeners.

"Well, I'm blessed!" ejaculated the captain of the Remove at last. "No wonder old Quelch was ratty this morning at brekker."

Nugent's face was serious.

"I should jolly well say so," he commented.

"He, he, he!" came Bunter's unmusical cachinnation. "Old Quelch's fairly ramping. Serve the beast right. I think it was jolly cute of Skinner to get his own back. He, he, he!"

"Oh, shut up, for goodness' sake!" said Wharton. "You're like a cheap alarm-clock."

"I must say it's pretty thick of Skinner," said Nugent slowly. "That is, if Bunter's yarn is true."

"If you doubt my word, Nugent—" began the fat Owl indignantly. But he got no farther, for the two juniors pushed past him unceremoniously and strode off down the passage in order to test the veracity of Bunter's wild story for themselves from informants who were more reliable.

The Remove, in fact all Greyfriars, was in a furore. The news, like all ill news, had travelled swiftly.

Skinner had gone.

Quelch's manuscript was gone.

Quelch's cashbox was not in its accustomed place.

The obvious solution to the triple mystery came easy to hand; namely, that Skinner had made good his escape somehow, and, in a spirit of revenge, had availed himself of a last minute opportunity to avenge himself on his Form master.

Opinions did not differ greatly. The average fellow at Greyfriars held that the disgraced Remove junior had played it rather low, and there was little sympathy to expect from them if ever they saw Skinner at close quarters again.

At morning prayers Dr. Locke addressed the school.

"My boys," he began, and a pin could have been heard to drop in the silence, "you are doubtless aware that I had occasion to sentence one of your number yesterday to a public flogging and expulsion. That boy, Skinner of the Remove, has had the audacity to break out of the punishment-room—"

The Head paused, and when he resumed again, his voice trembled with anger.

"Not only has he had the cowardice to flee from his just punishment, but he has descended so low as to appropriate Mr. Quelch's cashbox and his manuscript before he took flight."

Sidney James Snoop felt himself crimsoning. Bitterly did he repent him of having had a hand in Skinner's escape. But it was too late now to indulge in self-recriminations.

"I need not ask the miserable boy here who assisted Skinner to escape to come forward," went on Dr. Locke bitingly, "for that Skinner had outside assistance is proved by a rope fastened to the bars of the punishment-room. But woe betide that misguided youth when his identity is discovered."

Sidney James Snoop felt quite faint. In his anger the Head was as good as saying that he had played an active part in the "lifting" of the cashbox and the manuscript.

"The school will dismiss for classes," concluded the Head.

And he rustled from the dais in the full majesty of flowing gown.

All that morning masters and pupils alike found school work anything but congenial. Skinner's despicable action seemed to have created a font of irritation that grew with the passing of the hours. And no more was this noticeably so than in the Remove Form-room.

Mr. Quelch's face was drawn and white. His eyes glittered strangely, and every offence committed by the Remove, large and small, brought down the vials of his wrath on the offender. Really, it seemed that the loss of his manuscript and his cashbox was sending the master of the Remove out of his mind.

Lines and lickings fell as thick as leaves in Vallombrosa that morning. Bob Cherry was given two pages of Virgil to write out a hundred times simply for shuffling his feet. Bunter was caned and detained for the next half-holiday for not having done his prep to the satisfaction of Mr. Quelch. Even Mark Linley, who was perhaps the



With Wingate's firm grip on his collar, Skinner was marched off towards the punishment-room. His eyes were blurred, his head singing.

most studious and painstaking member in the Form, received Quelch's biting tongue for a simple mistake in English history.

The Bounder was caned for "check." Harry Wharton was caned for whispering in class.

Snoop was detained and caned for dropping a blot on his exercise.

Stott was caned for not standing up immediately when his Form master addressed him.

Really, it seemed that the master of the Remove had lost all sense of proportion. In the circumstances it was not surprising that a spirit of revolt against this petty tyranny began to take root amongst the more hardy juniors in the Form.

Vernon-Smith was the first to set the ball rolling in open defiance.

Mr. Quelch's eagle eye fastened on him at a moment when the Bounder was gazing idly out of the window.

"Vernon-Smith!" "Yes?" drawled the Bounder insolently.

Mr. Quelch's eyes blazed. "That is not the correct way to address your Form master, boy!"

"Is it not?" replied Vernon-Smith coolly.

The master of the Remove pursed his lips and decided to overlook that particular piece of studied insolence.

"And why, Vernon-Smith, were you not paying attention to the lesson? What was it that called for your attention in other quarters?" Mr. Quelch's voice carried an inflection of sarcasm in it.

"I was thinking of your manuscript and your blessed cashbox," drawled the Bounder coolly; and a nervous titter ran round the Form.

"Indeed?" snapped Mr. Quelch, with glinting eyes. "And why were you thinking about my manuscript and my cashbox, may I ask?"

"I was thinking that it would be a dashed good thing for the Remove if you find 'em again," replied Vernon-Smith cheekily. "And the sooner the better!"

There was a murmur of assent among the Remove that brought a bright spot of colour to Mr. Quelch's pale cheeks.

"Boy! How dare you!" The words choked themselves from the Form master's throat.

Next moment, to the astonishment of the Remove, Mr. Quelch darted forward, fastened a grip on Vernon-Smith's collar, and dragged him bodily to the front of the desk. Then, with his free hand, he snatched up the cane.

Whack, whack, whack! The cane fairly sang across the Bounder's shoulders. Hardy as he was, the Removeite could not keep back a cry. And that cry was sufficient to bring the seething juniors to their feet.

"Shame!" The cry started from a few juniors at first, and then swelled into a chorus.

Whack, whack, whack! Mr. Quelch hardly seemed to hear the combined shout of his pupils.

"SHAME!" This time he could not help hearing it. Indeed that one expressive word was voiced with such volume that it could be heard over all Greyfriars.

Mr. Quelch's hand dropped from Vernon-Smith's collar. The Bounder squirmed away, his face pale, his eyes glittering.

"Boys—" Mr. Quelch turned a dazed face to his Form. "Boys—" THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,189.

He passed a hand over his forehead in dazed fashion. The cane dropped from his hands.

Crash!

Before any junior present had realised it fully Mr. Quelch had crashed to the floor.

Three or four juniors darted out of their places to their Form master's aid. It was the Bounder who reached the insensible master first.

"Quick, water!" he snapped. "He's dead out!"

While Vernon-Smith supported Mr. Quelch's head on his knee, Harry Wharton unfastened the Form master's collar. Nugent dashed for the water-bottle, and Johnny Bull saw to it that the excited and dismayed juniors kept back far enough to allow of a sufficient passage of air to revive the unconscious master.

"He's coming round," whispered the Bounder, as he felt the master stir, and next moment Mr. Quelch's eyes opened.

"Where—where am I?"

"You fainted, sir," said Harry Wharton. "You'll be all right in a moment."

"Have this drink of water." Nugent proffered a glass of water, and the master of the Remove gulped it down.

And at that moment Dr. Locke rustled in. He had heard the commotion from the Sixth Form room, and had hastened along to see what all the disturbance was about.

"What—what! Bless my soul!" he ejaculated, hurrying forward. "My dear Quelch, are you ill—"

Mr. Quelch smiled faintly at his chief, and, supported by the juniors, struggled to his feet.

"I'm—I'm all right now, sir," he said weakly. "I—I—I must have fainted."

He clutched at the desk for support, and in a moment Dr. Locke's arm went out to steady him.

"My dear sir, allow me to help you to your room. You look positively ill," said the kindly old doctor.

"But I'm all right now, sir!" protested Mr. Quelch.

Dr. Locke smiled kindly.

"My dear Quelch, I insist. Wharton, you will take charge of the Form during your master's absence."

"Yes, sir."

Dr. Locke helped Mr. Quelch to the doorway. There the Head paused for a moment.

"In the circumstances I feel sure there is no necessity for me to ask you to continue with your lessons as if Mr. Quelch were here to supervise."

With that, the Head and the master of the Remove passed from sight.

There was a murmur amongst the Removites as they went back to their places. All their pent-up anger had evaporated now in this unlooked-for crisis. For all his sternness, Mr. Quelch was generally liked, and not one of the Removites but hoped that nothing serious was the matter with him, and that he would make a speedy reappearance amongst them.

And, needless to say, Harry Wharton, acting as temporary Form master for the rest of the morning, found his task an easy one—as easy as the Remove to a man found Wharton a congenial mentor.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Helping Hand!

"MY hat!"

"Great Scott!"

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent uttered those ejaculations simultaneously as they entered Study No. 1 after tea that day.

They quite expected to find that celebrated apartment empty. Certainly they never expected to see Harold Skinner there!

"Skinner!"

"What the thump are you doing here?"

Harold Skinner held a warning finger to his lips. The cad of the Remove looked pale and haggard and untidy. Dark rings showed under his eyes, telling of want of sleep. Harry Wharton and his chum could not have been more surprised than if they were beholding a

ghost. It took them some minutes before they recovered from that first shock.

"Shut the door!" said Skinner, in a hoarse whisper.

Harry Wharton, much to his surprise, found himself doing so; what is more, he turned the key in the lock.

"What's this game?" demanded Nugent harshly.

Skinner gulped.

"I want your help," he said earnestly. "I'm absolutely at my wits' end."

And Harold Skinner locked it. He sank wearily into the armchair.

"You want our help?" said the captain of the Remove at length, in tones of incredulity.

Skinner nodded.

"I'm innocent!" he exclaimed passionately. "On my word of honour, I know nothing about Quelch's manuscript. I couldn't stand a flogging"—his voice broke—"and the sack for something I hadn't done, so I bolted."

"We know that," said Nugent dryly. "Although why you should be cad enough to sneak Quelch's manuscript again, and his cashbox, I don't know."

Skinner stared.

"Quelch's manuscript—his cashbox!" he muttered. "I don't understand!"

Wharton laughed mirthlessly.

"There appear to be lots of things you don't understand, you rotter!" he said. "But I thought even you wouldn't go so far as to play a rotten low-down trick like that!"

"You might have cleared out without doing any further damage," added Nugent scornfully. "And the sooner you get out of this study the better I shall like it."

Skinner's eyes opened wide in astonishment.

"I don't know what you're talking about," he said. "What's this about Quelch's cashbox—"

"Mean to say you don't know?" said Wharton grimly, in a tone that implied the contrary. "Of course, you don't know anything about Quelch's manuscript or his cashbox? We didn't expect you would!"

Skinner rose to his feet. There was a gleam in his eyes.

"Look here, you chaps! Are you telling me seriously that something's happened to the manuscript again?"

"Not only that, but Quelch's cashbox is missing, too," said Wharton bluntly. "And you're the only fellow who knows something about them, that's certain. That's why you bolted!"

"On my word of honour," said Skinner "Honest Injun, I don't know anything about them! Do you think I'd be here if I did?"

Wharton and Nugent were taken aback. Put like that, it seemed hardly credible that Skinner would come to them. For a moment doubts as to Skinner's guilt in the matter began to take root.

"Look here, Wharton!" said Skinner. "I keep telling you that I'm innocent. Won't you believe me? If I had been guilty, in the first place, you don't think I should hang about the school once I had got out of the punishment-room, do you?"

"I don't know what to think," said the captain of the Remove, after an awkward pause.

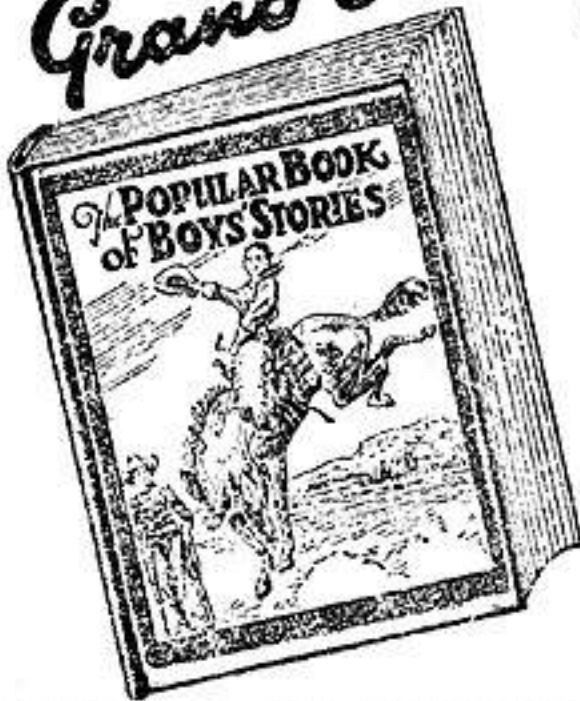
And Frank Nugent shook his head.

Skinner followed up his advantage eagerly.

"It's very obvious," he said, "that someone else is responsible for all this, and the rotter is making me the scape-goat!"

Wharton looked thoughtful.

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"Yet the Head heard all the evidence, and thought you were the culprit," he said.

"He cornered me because I was out of my dorm the other night," said Skinner eagerly. "You see, I couldn't very well tell him that I went to the— the Cross Keys. He'd have expelled me for that."

Once again Wharton and Nugent found their doubts surging uppermost. Skinner was either a consummate liar, or else he had been misjudged.

"I've come to you chaps," said Skinner quietly, "because I want you to help me. Oh, I know we've never been friendly!" he added hastily. "But you're the only fellows I can turn to now. I dare not go home. My people would—" His voice broke.

Wharton and Nugent were touched. They had never imagined that Harold Skinner, the sneering, selfish young blackguard of the Remove, had any deep feelings for those who were bound to him by blood ties. This was a very different Skinner from the one of a few days ago. There was a meekness and humiliation about him that told of self-subjugation, and the new Skinner, so to speak, touched the hearts of Wharton and his chum.

Wharton and Nugent looked hard and long at the junior, as if endeavouring to read into his very soul. More than once Skinner had fooled them, and he had himself to thank if they doubted him now.

"Will you help me?" Skinner broke the silence.

"What can we do?" asked Wharton. "Staying here won't help matters, as far as I can see."

"It will," said Skinner quickly. "I thought—I thought you'd make a few inquiries yourselves, and try to find out who the rotter is who has sheltered behind me."

The captain of the Remove looked questioningly at Nugent. The latter nodded.

"Look here, Skinner," said Wharton quietly. "Nugent and I are prepared to believe you—"

Skinner looked grateful.

"And we'll do what we can," went on Wharton. "If what you say is true some rotten cad is taking advantage of the threats you were heard to utter. I didn't know there was such a vile cad in Greyfriars, but if there is we'll do our best to show him up."

"Thank you!" said Skinner simply; but those two words spoke volumes of gratitude and relief.

"Where have you been hiding?" asked Nugent suddenly.

"On—on the roof," answered Skinner quietly.

The two juniors started.

"On the roof?"

Skinner smiled wanly and nodded.

"I got clear of the punishment-room by means of a rope," he said. "Never mind who gave it to me. My first idea was to bolt into the village and stay there for a while. Then I altered my mind—"

"And camped out on the roof?" gasped Nugent incredulously.

"Yes; I entered the school again by the box-room window," explained Skinner. "collared a blanket and a candle and some matches, and slept in the tank shed. You know the big tank—"

Wharton and Nugent knew it well—the main tank that supplied the school and which was housed in a wooden structure near enough to resemble a shed.

"You slept there?"

Skinner nodded.

"It was a bit cold, but otherwise all right," he replied. "I had to go somewhere."

The juniors stared at him in amazement. The idea of a fellow sleeping out on the roof in the tank shed with but a blanket to cover him fairly staggered them.

"Have you had anything to eat?" asked Wharton quickly.

"Nothing since last night," said Skinner. "I'm—I'm feeling a bit peckish."

"Good heavens, I should think so!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove. "Get something out of the cupboard, Franky."

But Nugent was already doing that. He brought to light the remains of a rabbit pie, and at a gesture from Wharton, Skinner eagerly fell to. It was quite five minutes before he looked up again.

"That's better," he said thankfully. "You two are bricks—I won't forget!"

**WHO WANTS A
POCKET KNIFE?**

Tell an amusing tale like the following, which has been sent in by W. R. Evans, of 46, Salmon Lane, Stepney, E.14, and the postman will bring you one!



Policeman: "Hey, didn't you see that notice, 'Road Closed'?"
Cyclist (who has fallen down a hole): "Yes, blow it! And I found it wide open!"
GET BUSY ON A JOKE TO-DAY!

Wharton and Nugent regarded him with knitted brows. They had been thinking over the situation deeply; they had promised to help the miserable junior, out of the goodness of their hearts, although how they were to set about it was already beginning to give them cause for concern.

"Look here, Skinner," said Wharton at length, "you can't stay out on the roof—you'll catch your death of cold!"

"I'll risk that."

"But you can't!" said Nugent. "It's asking for pneumonia or something!"

Harry Wharton looked thoughtful. "I wonder if we can fix him up a bed here?" he said at length. "It'll be risky, I know, but still that's better than camping out on the roof."

Nugent nodded. The situation was beginning to worry him.

"It'll be all right if we can keep it dark," he said. "Certainly the beaks wouldn't think of looking for Skinner here."

"You're awfully decent to take this trouble," said Skinner. "I'll never forget it."

Wharton made up his mind. He had promised to help, and there was no turning back now. Of the consequences to himself and his chum if the authorities discovered their complicity in helping to keep Skinner out of their hands he did not give a thought. After all, it was no good meeting trouble half-way.

But it looked as if trouble was hovering very near to Study No. 1 that afternoon—trouble in the shape of Billy Bunter, whose thump on the door, and whose high-pitched voice caused the three juniors to start violently.

Bang, bang!

"I say, Wharton—"

"Bunter!" muttered the captain of the Remove. "Oh, my hat!"

Bang, bang! Bunter was getting impatient.

"I say, Wharton, open this blessed door!" he hooted. "Wharrer you got it locked for?"

For the fraction of a second the three juniors inside the study stared at each other aghast; then Wharton motioned for Skinner to hide himself under the table.

Skinner obeyed the signal instantly. The ample folds of the table-cover completely hid him from view.

Wharton breathed hard and crossed to the door.

A fat, wrathful face peered in when the key turned in the lock.

"What do you want to lock your blessed door for?" snorted Bunter indignantly.

"That's our business," replied Wharton crisply. "Now state yours and fade away, old fat man!"

Billy Bunter blinked suspiciously round the study. He was an obtuse youth, but even he could tell from the strained atmosphere that something had been "going on" behind that locked door.

"He, he, he!" he cackled suddenly. "Caught you at it—what?"

Wharton and Nugent started.

"Eh? What are you gassing about?"

Billy Bunter winked and wagged a fat, admonishing finger at the two juniors.

"It's all right," he said, "you can trust me. I like a bit of a flutter myself sometimes."

"What?"

"I always thought you two were deep," went on the Owl of the Remove pleasantly. "But you might have asked a pal to join you."

"A pal—" stammered Wharton.

"To j-join us?" gasped Nugent.

"Yes," said Bunter in aggrieved tones. "I like a game of poker myself, you know. I'm a bit of a goer when I get the chance."

"Ha, ha, ha!" Harry Wharton suddenly burst out laughing. It had dawned on him that Bunter was labouring under the delusion that he and Nugent had been indulging in a quiet gamble behind the locked study door.

"Nothing to cackle about," said Bunter warmly. "I'm a dab hand at poker, or nap, or pontoon. Of course, I'm used to playing for high stakes, you know. Still, to oblige my pals, I don't mind taking a hand for small stuff."

"This is too rich," said Nugent, with a grin. "You really take the cake, old fat man."

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

Wharton held up his hand.

"Never mind about the cards, Bunter. What do you want me for?"

Billy Bunter's podgy chest swelled with importance.

"I've got great news" he said mysteriously. "I don't know what you chaps would do without me to look after you."

"Eh?"

"Temple didn't know I was there," went on the fat junior.

"Temple!" gasped Wharton.

Billy Bunter nodded.

"He was gassing to Dabney and Fry in the tuckshop, you know," he explained. "Cheek, I call it! To think that a mouldy lot of Fourth-Formers could raid us—"

"Raid us," said the captain of the Remove, beginning to piece together Bunter's somewhat unintelligible remarks. "Oh, that's Temple's game, is it?"

Bunter nodded.

"Apparently there's going to be a big raid to-night on our dorm. I heard Temple gassing to Dabney and Fry. The raid is planned for eleven o'clock. He, he, he! The rotters didn't know I could hear everything."

"Well, you've come in useful for once," said Harry Wharton. "I reckon there'll be a big surprise for Temple and his crowd long before eleven o'clock to-night."

"Oh, rather!" exclaimed Nugent. "We'll get there first."

Bunter seemed very satisfied with himself. It wasn't very often that he was of use to his Form but in this instance Bunter's fondness for loitering about the tuckshop had proved useful. If Temple & Co., of the Upper Fourth, were making plans to raid the Remove dormitory that night, those plans were likely to come "unstuck" now that Bunter had passed on the information to his Form captain.

"I say, old chap!" Bunter's face changed.

"Say on, old fat man!"

"I say, old fellow, I've been disappointed about a postal order," said the fat junior plaintively. "This postal service is simply rotten, you know."

Wharton nodded gravely. He knew what was coming.

"I say, Harry, old chap, would you oblige a pal with a small loan until the post comes. I expect my postal order from my uncle, the duke, will be for a pound. If you let me have five shillings now—"

Wharton slipped a hand into his trousers pocket. Bunter's eyes gleamed.

"There's half-a-crown, old fat bean," said the captain of the Remove with a grin. "If that's any use—"

Apparently it was, for Bunter's podgy hand closed on it eagerly.

"Thanks, old fellow! I'll see you later."

And the richer by half-a-crown, William George Bunter rolled away as fast as his fat little legs would carry him, in the direction of the tuckshop.

Wharton and Nugent breathed sighs of relief. It had been an uncomfortable five minutes, for if Billy Bunter had spotted Skinner in hiding beneath the study table the fat would have been in the fire with a vengeance. In less than ten minutes all Greyfriars would have known that Skinner, the disgraced Removeite, was in hiding in Study No. 1, and that Wharton and Nugent were deliberately sheltering him. As it was, with luck, Skinner's presence would be concealed until a better hiding-place could be found for him.

"You can come out now, Skinner!" whispered Wharton.

And Skinner crept out of hiding once more.

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"Better shove a chair behind the screen," said Nugent thoughtfully. "Skinner can sit there and read, or do something. He'll be out of sight, anyway, if anyone else blows in."

It was a good idea, and Skinner immediately acted upon it. A chair was placed behind the screen in the corner of the room and the fugitive junior was given a copy of the "Holiday Annual" to read.

He remained there until bed-time that evening without discovery, although visitors to Study No. 1 were fairly frequent. But not one of them for a single moment suspected that that innocent-looking screen sheltered the fugitive junior all Greyfriars was talking about, which, as things were destined to turn out, was extraordinarily fortunate for Harold Skinner.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Wharton's Timely Action!

"TUMBLE out, you slackers!"

Bob Cherry's command was calculated by that cheery junior to be a whisper, but it could certainly be heard the whole length of the Remove dormitory.

"Tumble out!"

It wanted a couple of minutes to half past ten. According to all rules the Removeites should by this time have been deep in the arms of Morpheus. But as Bob went from bed to bed the juniors showed extraordinary signs of wakefulness.

"Don't make a row, you chaps!" whispered Harry Wharton, slipping on his dressing-gown.

"Ay, ay, skipper!"

With quiet thoroughness the Remove juniors—with two exceptions—put on their dressing-gowns and slippers. The two exceptions were William George Bunter and Lord Mauleverer. The former's snore rang unmusically through the dormitory, whilst Lord Mauleverer's deep breathing signified that the schoolboy earl was fast asleep.

"Shall I haul out these slackers?" asked Bob.

Harry Wharton grinned.

"Let 'em sleep!" he whispered. "They're not necessary, anyway!"

Bob grunted. He hated slacking in any shape or form, and he considered that in the raid upon the Upper Fourth dormitory it was up to every Remove junior to lend a hand or a foot, or whatever was necessary. Still, Wharton's word was law.

Since receiving Bunter's information as to the projected raid on the Remove at eleven o'clock, Harry Wharton had laid his plans. Each member of the Remove had been informed and requested to keep awake until half past ten. At that time it was Wharton's intention to sally forth with his merry men for the Upper Fourth Form dormitory, there to "wipe up the floor," as he termed it with Temple & Co.

"All ready, you chaps?" Wharton's whisper ran round the dorm.

There was a whispered chorus of affirmatives, and at a move from their leader, the juniors, armed with pillows, bolsters and knotted towels, filed out of the dormitory with scarcely a sound.

Greyfriars lay in darkness. Even the lights on the landings had been switched out by the master on duty, but Wharton's pocket torch, flashed on at safe intervals, gave all the illumination that was necessary.

In an excited, tense crowd the Removeites arrived at the door of the Upper Fourth dormitory.

Harry Wharton held up a hand for silence. There came no sound from the other side of the door. Obviously Temple & Co. were not expecting visitors.

Creak!

The door creaked slightly as Wharton gently pushed it open.

"Who's that?" It was Cecil Reginald Temple's voice.

"Little us!" replied Wharton, bounding into the dormitory. "Go for 'em, Remove!"

Rather!

Like the celebrated verse which tells us how the cohorts swept down like wolves on the fold, so Harry Wharton and his "army" swept down on the Upper Fourth.

Swipe! Biff! Bang!

The Remove pillows and bolsters and towels were going great guns, and as each weapon swept home muffled howls of rage and pain and surprise floated ceilingwards from the discomfited Upper Fourth juniors.

"Sock it into 'em!" sang out Bob Cherry.

"Yaroooh!" yelled Dabney, catching the full weight of Bob's pillow and staggering backwards in a heap.

"Go for the rotters!" bawled Temple, forgetful of the time and place. "Rag the cads—yooooooooop!"

Temple's commands ended in an undignified gurgle as Harry Wharton's bolster took him fair amidstships, so to speak, and sent him crashing back into Fry.

Bump!

Fry smote the cold, hard, unsympathetic floorboards of the dormitory with a violent concussion.

Everywhere could be seen whirling pillows and bolsters and toppling, pyjama-clad figures. On all sides roars of pain and rage proceeded from the surprised Upper Fourth juniors.

The raid had been a complete success. From the beginning Temple & Co. had not stood a chance.

The uproar was terrific, loud enough certainly to prompt a master to inquire into the disturbance if he should hear it. But the rival Forms gave no thought to authority just then. The lust of battle was upon them. Cecil Reginald Temple tried to rally his men. With whirling pillow he launched himself at the head of a score of his Form fellows and drove the Removeites to the door. The advance, however, was but temporary.

"Back up, Remove!"

"Pile into 'em!"

"Down with the Fourth!"

Back came the Removeites in an avenging flood, and once more Cecil Reginald Temple & Co. were swept over. Thuds and groans and threats filled the night air.

It was a regular battle royal; and the honours easily rested with Harry Wharton & Co.

"Oh, you rotters!" groaned Temple, sitting up dazedly on the floor while three Removeites cheerfully slogged him with their pillows. "We were coming after you—yooop—at eleven o'clock!"

"We know that, my pippin!" sang out Bob Cherry. "But you've got to get up very early to catch the Remove!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Rather!"

"Rally round!" Wharton's voice rang out strongly.

It was the pre-arranged signal for the retreat, and the Remove juniors hastened to obey. While the main body of juniors fled back to the Remove dormitory, the Famous Five fought a

rearguard action until they reached the door.

Once outside Wharton seized hold of the door handle, pulled it to, and slipped a knotted, looped rope over it. "Right-ho, Bob!" he said breathlessly. "You cut back to the dorm. I can manage this!"

Pulling on the loose end of the rope Wharton dragged it to the opposite landing rail and made it fast with a number of sailor's knots.

Nugent, Cherry, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh lingered.

"Don't you hang on!" panted Wharton. "Cut back!"

Still the rest of the Famous Co. lingered. Suddenly Johnny Bull drew himself up tense. Looking over the balustrade he saw the oncoming shadow of a figure.

"Cave!" he hissed.

Wharton was still fumbling with the last knot and he scarcely heeded the warning, but the rest of the juniors scudded back to the Remove dormitory, thinking that their leader was directly behind them.

Thud! Bang, bang! Temple & Co. had discovered the fact that their door had been made secure in some way.

"Open the door!" hissed Temple sulphurously.

Wharton grinned.

He was just about to dart back to the Remove dormitory when he caught sight of a familiar figure within a few feet of him.

It was Mr. Quelch—the master of the Remove!

Wharton's heart nearly stopped still.

In his eagerness to make fast the knot that would hold the Upper Fourth dormitory door safe against reprisals on the Remove fellows he had not heard Johnny Bull's warning.

It was too late now. Mr. Quelch, mounting the stairs, was not more than a yard away from the captain of the Remove.

Instinctively Harry Wharton crouched back, but it was a forlorn hope. Mr. Quelch could not help seeing him.

Yet the master of the Remove came on with stately tread just as if the captain of the Remove did not exist. Neither did he pay any heed to the muffled uproar that proceeded from the other side of the dormitory door that cut off the enraged Upper Fourth Form juniors from their old foes of the Remove.

"Phew!" whistled Wharton beneath his breath.

Mr. Quelch passed so close to him that he could have touched him. Wharton waited for the Form master's familiar voice.

It did not come.

Mr. Quelch strode on along the landing, and hardly aware of the fact that he was doing so Harry Wharton followed.

It made a strange sight—the master of the Remove striding majestically along the landing and into the passage, and Harry Wharton stalking him in the manner of a Redskin.

Straight to the box-room went the master of the Remove.

Wharton halted at the doorway and peered in.

Then he jumped.

Mr. Quelch was standing by one of the shelves. His hands groped over one shelf as if seeking something. Then a frown puckered his brow.

"That's strange!" Wharton thrilled as he heard the voice. "Very strange! I distinctly remember—"

The words trailed off, and Mr. Quelch, turning suddenly, strode out of the box-

room. Wharton dodged back into the shadows just in time. A thought was taking root in his head that thrilled him.

Apparently unconscious of the near presence of Harry Wharton, Mr. Quelch began to retrace his steps downstairs.

With beating heart the captain of the Remove followed.

Then, to his amazement, the master of the Remove made tracks for the Form-room.

From the region of the doorway Wharton watched his every movement.

once more ascended the stairs. Once more Harry Wharton followed him.

But this time, however, Mr. Quelch passed beyond the Remove landing. He took the emergency staircase that led to the roof!

"Phew!" breathed Wharton.

There was not the slightest doubt now—Mr. Quelch was a victim of somnambulism. The captain of the Remove had read about sleepwalkers in books of fiction, but this was the first time he had ever encountered one in the flesh.

What was to be done.

**GREYFRIARS
CORRESPONDENTS**

No. 20.

Here's another snappy poem by the Greyfriars rhymester dealing with a popular Greyfriars character—to wit, Wingate minor.



DEAR MATE,—I'm doomed to detention—
Alas!—for the whole of the "half."

My crime? Well, it's nothing to mention—
Sticking pins in a schoolfellow's calf!
Sammy Bunter's the boulder in question;
He raided my hamper of tuck;
And somebody made the suggestion
That fat pigs should always be "stuck"!

But pigs have a habit of squealing,
And Sammy squealed loudly and long;
For mercy he started appealing—
"Oh, spare me! I'm not over-strong!"

Old Twigg came along at this juncture,
And Sammy—detestable sneak!—
Exposed his fat calf and the puncture,
So I am detained by the Beak!

Twigg set me a stiff imposition;
I must be more gentle, I'm told;
As if I'm a modern edition
Of Emperor Nero of old!
My nature is kind and forgiving,
But when I see Sammy again

His life will be hardly worth living—
I'll make him go purple with pain!

My chums are engaged in a scrimmage
In frenzied and fierce footer fray;
Yet here I must sit, like an image,
And fritter the moments away.
I hear all the cries and commotion,
The scene of the conflict I see;
And yet there might well be an ocean
Dividing the playground from me!

The chap who invented detention
Deserves to be burned at the stake;
For it's the most ghastly invention
A person could possibly make!
I'd rather endure a stiff flogging
Than sit here alone, any day;
The wearisome hours are just jogging,
Instead of careering away!

Dear mater, some slight consolation
A hamper of dainties would bring;
So have it addressed to the station,
And tie it securely with string,
Lest Sammy, the fat little pirate,
Should once again get on its track,
And make me exceedingly irate.
I am, your affectionate JACK.

He saw Mr. Quelch take some keys from his pocket and fit one of them into the desk. The desk open, the Remove master delved inside for some few moments and then drew to light a bulky parcel and a box that rattled!

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Wharton.

And while he stood there enlightenment came to him in a flood.

The snapping down of the desk lid roused him.

Mr. Quelch was walking towards the Form-room door!

Wharton stood directly in his path, and only moved aside just when it seemed Mr. Quelch must crash into him.

"He's walking in his sleep!" The words tumbled out of the junior's mouth unconsciously.

With the bundle and the rattling box under his arm the Remove Form master

Wharton asked himself the question several times. He remembered that it was considered highly dangerous to awaken a sleepwalker.

And while the captain of the Remove cogitated the point his Form master was mounting higher and higher.

A patch of moonlight suddenly fell upon Wharton which told him that Mr. Quelch had reached the trap in the roof and had thrown it back. With beating heart Wharton fairly raced up the remaining stairs and came out on the roof a few feet behind the somnambulist.

So near was the captain of the Remove to his Form master that he could have touched him by merely stretching out a hand a few inches. Yet he did not do so. Fascinatedly the junior watched.

Mr. Quelch had halted near one of the
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chimney stacks. Wharton could hear his voice quite distinctly:

"They should be perfectly safe here! Perfectly safe!"

And the moonlight, as the Form master stooped down, revealed a bulky parcel of manuscript and a cashbox.

"Great Scott!" Wharton could not suppress the ejaculation. Back into his mind came Skinner's repeated declarations of innocence. Really, there was no doubting the unhappy junior's word now. Mr. Quelch had "stolen" his own precious manuscript and his cashbox.

"Phew!"

With dilated eyes Wharton watched the master place the manuscript and cashbox between the chimney stack and the coping. Then Mr. Quelch straightened himself. He stood gazing out over the wide expanse of playing field that stretched before him in the moonlight shadows for some moments. Shivering, Wharton watched him. Then to the junior's horror Mr. Quelch advanced another step towards the coping that encircled the roof and swayed perilously over it.

"Oh, heavens!" Wharton felt his heart stand still for a fraction of a second. The next and he had darted forward and plucked Mr. Quelch by the arm.

The action was involuntary on his part, but it undoubtedly saved Mr. Quelch from a fall that would of a cer-

tainty have ended in his death, for at the same moment the Form master swayed over the low coping once more.

Wharton did not speak. Even then, despite the awful responsibility of the moment, he kept his head. He remembered in some dim way that to awaken a sleepwalker was a dangerous expedient; he remembered that it was possible to lead such an afflicted person by gentle pressure of the arm.

Gradually, inch by inch, Wharton drew Mr. Quelch away from that lofty ledge of peril and back to the trap in the roof.

The journey seemed interminable to the anxious junior, and he perspired at every pore from the strain. But at last the Remove staircase came in sight; then Mr. Quelch's own bed-room door, and it was with a thankful sigh that Wharton sighted it.

"Wharton!" The captain of the Remove started violently, as if he had been shot, as that voice, quiet as it was, reached his ears. He turned and saw Dr. Locke, clad in a dressing-gown, standing before him.

"What—" began the Head, and then he relapsed into silence as Wharton's gesture for silence and the strange look in Mr. Quelch's face came home to him simultaneously.

With startled eyes Dr. Locke watched the captain of the Remove escort Mr. Quelch to his bed. Then junior and

headmaster backed out, Wharton taking the precaution of locking the master's door. He handed the key to Dr. Locke.

"I think you had better keep this, sir," he said quietly.

"But Mr. Quelch—" began Dr. Locke, almost knowing the truth before Wharton proceeded to enlighten him.

"He's walking in his sleep, sir."

And from that first sentence of explanation the captain proceeded to recount the strange adventure of the night, touching but little on his own action in preventing Mr. Quelch from falling from the roof.

"My boy," said Dr. Locke warmly, "you have done well! But for your presence of mind—" He did not finish his words, but he shuddered.

"Shall I get the manuscript and the cashbox, sir?" said Wharton suddenly, as recollection of the miserable, haggard face of Harold Skinner came home to him. "I know where to find them, sir."

"Bless my soul! Please do, my boy," gasped the Head. "And then come to my study."

Wharton scudded off, a sense of triumph in his heart that Skinner's name had been cleared mingled with a sense of remorse that, like others, he had jumped to the very hasty conclusion in adjudging him guilty.

(Continued on next page.)

"Come into the Office, Boys!"

DO you fellows know anything about "oil-tankers"—those curious-looking ships which have their engine-rooms stuck right away in the after end, and which can carry a tremendous amount of fuel oil in bulk? One of my South-country readers has seen several of them passing down the Channel, and asks me why the funnel is so far astern. The reason, of course, is so that no sparks from the funnel can drop on the deck, or find their way into the tanks of oil. Instead of that, they drop harmlessly astern, and thus risk of fire is minimised.

Have you ever considered what would happen if an oil-tanker exploded? Oil, as you know, floats on the water, and when an oil-tanker explodes, great masses of burning oil pour from her, and float, blazing, over the surface of the water. Once I happened to witness a catastrophe of this kind, and, I assure you, I am not likely to forget that occasion.

WHEN THE SEA WAS ON FIRE.

It happened during the War, and the ship upon which I was, received an SOS concerning an oil-tanker which had been torpedoed by a German submarine. We hurried to the spot, and so did all the vessels in the near vicinity, but we knew perfectly well that we could do nothing. The explosion of the torpedo had ripped the sides of the ship open and set the oil on fire. In a short space of time the ship was hidden from sight, as the blazing oil surrounded it and screened it with flames and black smoke.

The sight was weird and terrible, and the heat was intense. Not a single ship could approach the burning sea, and although British destroyers were cruising around, they dared not risk a

dash through the burning ocean. Had they attempted to risk it the terrible heat would have exploded their magazines, and they, too, would have gone up.

Nor could any boat be launched from the doomed ship, for the boats went up in flames as the blazing oil licked them. To swim through the burning oil was also impossible, and all the surrounding ships had to stand by impotently, helpless to raise a hand in aid of the men on the doomed oil-tanker.

Every man perished, and the fire raged for hours. By the time it burned itself out there was not a sign of the lost vessel, and nothing to show that one of the most terrible things that can happen at sea had taken place!

NEXT, please! DOES THE SUN RISE IN THE EAST?

That is a question which J. H. asks me this week. Two of his chums have been having an argument, and, while one maintains that the sun always rises due east and sets due west, the other maintains that it rises and sets more towards the north in summer.

Your second chum is quite correct, J. H. In summer the sun is much farther north—in relation to the earth—than it is in winter, for the simple reason that the earth "wobbles" as it spins. Our longest day is the 22nd of June, because that is the day when the sun is farthest north. For instance, if you were standing on the equator on that day you would find that the sun, when it rose, would be bearing north 66½ degrees east of you. On the 22nd

of December—the shortest day—it would be bearing south 66½ degrees east. So you see, the sun varies as much as 47 degrees—that is, more than half a right angle—in its position of rising and setting during the year!

I hope I have made this clear. It's rather a technical subject—in fact, it is one of the principal things in the science of navigation.

THIS week, chums, I've got a tip for you, and a good one, too. Those of you who do not read our companion paper, the "Gem," should get a copy at once. This week there is a really wonderful yarn of St. Jim's in the "Gem"; it's called "The Snake-men of Zundaki!" Some of the St. Jim's fellows are on a tour round the world in the S 1000, the finest airship in the world, and they are staying this week at the palace of the Maharajah of Zundaki. Their stay is simply packed with thrills, and the most amazing adventures befall them, especially Blake and Baggy Trimble. Get a copy and see for yourself!

NOW a word about next week's programme. First of all there will be another splendid long complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled:

"THE SCHOOLBOY FORM MASTER!"

When I say that it shows Frank Richards at his best, you'll know there's something good in store for you.

Need I mention that there will be another grand instalment of our footer serial, and our usual shorter features?

Well, here's looking forward to another jolly little chat with you later.

YOUR EDITOR.

It did not take him long to retrieve the precious manuscript and the cashbox. With both of them tucked under his arm, the captain of the Remove raced back to Dr. Locke's study.

The Head took the two articles from him in silence and deposited them in his desk.

For some few moments there was a silence.

"I fear I have been responsible for a grave miscarriage of justice," said Dr. Locke, at length. "The boy Skinner—"

He broke off, with a sigh of self-censure.

Wharton started forward.

"I—I—I know where Skinner is, sir," he volunteered.

"What? Bless my soul!" gasped the Head. "You know, Wharton?"

Wharton grinned faintly.

"Yes, sir. He is in my study!"

Really, there seemed to be no end to Dr. Locke's ejaculations of surprise that night. He listened in amazement to the story Wharton had to tell and punctuated the intervals, when the captain of the Remove paused for breath with his favourite exclamation of "Bless my soul!"

"Well, well!" he ejaculated, at the conclusion of Wharton's story. "This is indeed a night of surprises. You put my mind at rest, my boy, to know that that unfortunate boy, Skinner, is still within the precincts of the school. Thank Heaven I was spared the ordeal of flogging and expelling an innocent person. You will, of course, conduct him to his bed in the Remove, and tell him that everything has come to light. He may consider himself still a member of this school."

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"I will see him personally in the morning," added Dr. Locke, passing a hand over his forehead wearily. "But this illness—mental illness—of your Form master is most disturbing. I have thought for the past week or so that Mr. Quelch was overtaxing himself."

"So have a good many of us, sir," put in Wharton. "He's not been the same man—"

"Overwork—overwork!" The Head was speaking more to himself than to the junior before him. "I blame myself for not having seen the signs earlier. And the fainting-fit—"

Once more the kind-hearted old Head of Greyfriars censured himself.

"He must have a holiday, immediately—immediately!" he concluded. "I will phone Dr. Pillbury at once, late as the hour is, to come over and discuss this matter with me."

Wharton coughed discreetly.

Dr. Locke looked up.

"Ah, my boy, you must be feeling tired," he said, with a gracious smile.



Harry Wharton & Co.'s pillows and bolsters and towels kept going great guns, and as each weapon swept home, muffled howls of rage and pain and surprise floated ceilingwards from the discomfited Temple & Co.

"We will discuss this afresh in the morning. Good-night, Wharton!"

"Good-night, sir!"

Wharton closed the door behind him and fairly raced through the silent, darkened corridors of the school until he came to the Remove passage. He burst into Study No 1 like a cyclone.

There was a startled exclamation from a recumbent figure amidst the blankets on an improvised bed, consisting of an armchair and two boxes.

"Who's that?"

"Little me!" exclaimed Wharton breathlessly.

"You! Wharton! What's wrong?" panted Skinner.

"Nothing, old scout!" said Harry, with a smile. "You're cleared! We've discovered the truth—"

"What?" Skinner bounded from the bed and gripped the captain of the Remove fiercely by the arm. "You're pulling my leg!"

"Never been more serious in my life," answered Wharton. "Come on, old bean, you can sleep in the Remove dormitory to-night, and you can consider yourself unflogged and unsacked."

"Gammon!"

"Truth!" chuckled Wharton, seizing Skinner's hand and giving it a warm grip. "The Head's orders!"

The story of Mr. Quelch's somnambulist ramblings created a nine days' wonder at Greyfriars, and Skinner, as was natural, came in for a fair share of the limelight. Dr. Pillbury, having made an examination of the "patient," had swiftly expressed the view that Mr. Quelch was on the verge of a breakdown through overwork, and that he was in need of a thorough rest.

Mr. Quelch himself, unconscious of the actual happenings of the night, made some demur, but he was over-ruled. Dr. Locke insisted that the master of the Remove should take "a few days off."

And accordingly Mr. Quelch left Greyfriars for a much-needed holiday. And not until he was well on the road to recovery was he informed of the secret of the missing manuscript and how near to death he had been but for the timely action of Harry Wharton.

Meantime, Skinner was the centre of attraction. Fellows who, hitherto, had had very little time for the black sheep of the Remove came up and congratulated him on getting clear of a very nasty entanglement.

And as there was so much limelight going begging, so to speak, William George Bunter thought it was high time that his share in the solution of the mystery received due attention. Bunter claimed that but for the fact that he had overheard Temple & Co. plotting their raid on the dormitory, Quelch's sleep-walking "acts," as they came to be known, would never have been discovered—which, in part, was true.

Thus, when Bunter, tackling the Famous Five on the subject, demanded some recognition of his services, Bob Cherry promptly obliged him by banging his bullet head on the wall, a measure which, however, drew but scant appreciation from William George Bunter. There was consolation near at hand, however, in the shape of Harold Skinner, who, doubtless feeling in a more generous mood towards his fellow beings than he had ever felt before, stood treat to all and sundry at Dame Mimble's tuckshop—including Bunter!

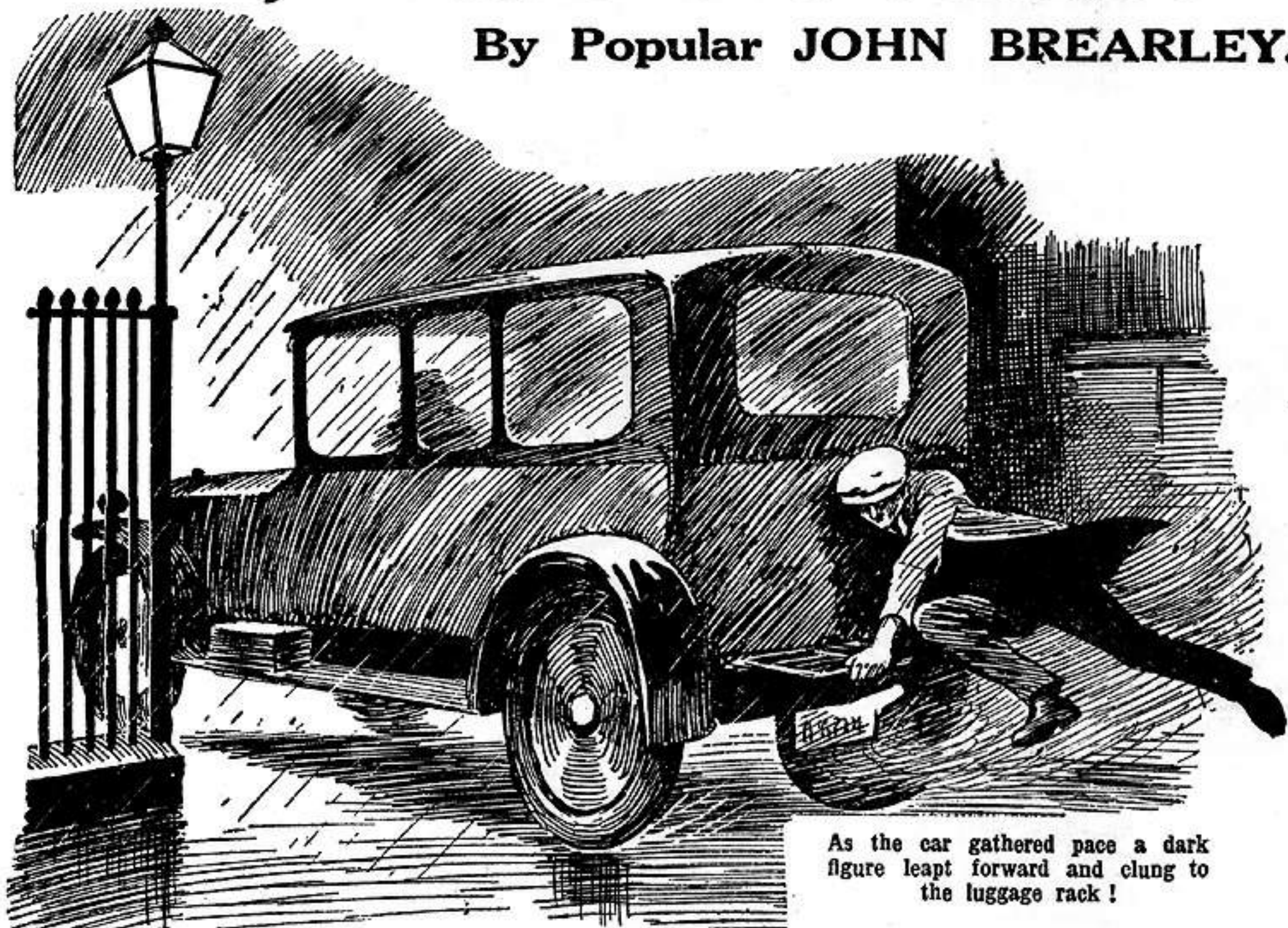
THE END.

(Next week's MAGNET will contain another grand long story of Greyfriars, entitled: "THE SCHOOLBOY FORM MASTER!" Read it, chums, and also look out for full particulars of our SPECIAL ENLARGED CHRISTMAS NUMBER!)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,189.

UP, THE ROVERS!

By Popular JOHN BREARLEY.



As the car gathered pace a dark figure leapt forward and clung to the luggage rack!

THE FIRST CHAPTERS BRIEFLY RETOLD.

James Brennan, owner of the Railton Rovers F.C., decides to pay a huge transfer fee for an experienced centre-forward to put new life into his failing team. The deal does not materialise, however, for Brennan is robbed of his savings by means of a forged cheque and then attacked by some unknown assailant who deals him a blow to the heart which proves fatal. Further disasters follow until Jimmy Brennan, the dead owner's son, is forced to sell his house for five thousand pounds in order to carry on. To add to Jimmy's misfortune, Thomas, the Rovers' only centre-forward, is ordered off the field for striking an opponent. Determined, without rousing suspicion, to find who is behind the plot to wreck the Rovers, Scotland Yard sends for Jimmy and suggests that a real "live wire" in Tim Osborne, late of the Canadian Secret Service, should take Thomas' place. His mind in a whirl, Jimmy boards a train bound for home.

(Now read on.)

Kidnapped!

THOUGHTS of the football club led Jimmy Brennan to wonder again what sort of a player this Tim Osborne was. Of course, it was pretty obvious Detective-Inspector Daniels wouldn't send down a man who was a dud to pose as a professional footballer, and draw attention to himself as such; but—and Jimmy frowned dubiously—it was a bit risky, he thought. There was a lot of difference between playing for old Peter Frazer's iron-works' team or occasionally for Maxport Hornets, and figuring in the ranks of Railton Rovers. He hoped Tim Osborne would stand the gaff.

Still—something had to be done. The

footer season was young yet, and it might be worth while even to drop a point or two now in the League if by playing Osborne it gave Scotland Yard a chance to solve the mysteries that were hedging him round.

In the midst of his reverie, Jimmy fell asleep suddenly, while the train crawled slowly into the Midlands, stopping at every station on the way. The rain was teeming down in sheets when it drew into Hallam Junction at last, a few minutes before midnight—and cold, disgusted, and only half-awake, Jimmy stumbled out on to the soaking wet platform. As far as he could see in the dim light only a few other passengers had got out, and most of these disappeared at once. The others, waiting for the Railton "local," made promptly for the shelter of the waiting-room. There was at least half an hour to wait before the connection came in, and then a miserable hour's journey to home. Jimmy grunted, and prepared to follow.

Slowly he sauntered along the platform, stopping for a moment beneath a lamp to correct his watch by the station clock. He had almost reached the waiting-room when a footstep sounded behind him, and a respectful voice hailed him eagerly.

"Beg pardon, sir! You Mr. Brennan, please?"

Jimmy wheeled quickly, to see a young man in plain chauffeur's livery standing at his shoulder. After a brief stare, he nodded.

"Yes?"

A pleasant grin of relief broke out on the chauffeur's face at once, and, taking off his cap, he pulled out a note.

"That's good, sir!" he smiled. "I was afraid I'd miss you. I'm here from the Elite Garage in Railton High Street, you know! Your uncle, Mr. Philip, came down an hour ago and ordered a car to meet you here!"

In spite of his sleepiness, Jimmy stiffened alertly at the words.

"My uncle sent you to meet me?" he echoed, his eyes watchful.

The chauffeur inclined his head.

"Yes, sir. He sent this note, too. Said you'd know what he meant!"

"Oh!"

Jimmy took the note with hesitating fingers and opened it carefully. A brief glance, however, was enough to tell him it was genuine, and his suspicions died. There were a few lines in his uncle's neat hand.

"Dear Jimmy,—Sorry to hear you've had to travel by the slow last train from town. As I don't like the idea of your waiting half an hour at Hallam and then coming on by the local alone, I'm sending a car to fetch you—just in case of 'accidents.' Savvy? This driver is the best man the Elite employ, and he will get you home long before the train will. See you to-morrow.—Yours, UNCLE PHIL."

A wave of gratitude poured over the weary youngster. Good old uncle! It

was just his quiet, thoughtful way to do such a thing.

The chauffeur and Jimmy passed quickly through the barrier and out to where a sleek, comfortable Daimler waited in the deserted station yard, swept by rain squalls and lighted only by the sidelights of the car and a single lamp over the booking-hall door.

Hunching their shoulders against the downpour, they hurried across the pavement; the chauffeur flung open the door and Jimmy stepped inside. Something whistled viciously through the darkness to meet him, a pain like a knife-stab darted through his head and everything vanished in a blaze of dancing lights. He lurched forward helplessly; tripped over a leg, and felt the floor of the car sliding from under him. Then another blow hit him, the lights disappeared, and blackness rolled over him like a flood.

Slowly but smoothly the decoy car purred out of the station yard. But just as its tail-light flicked through the gates a dark figure leapt forward in a last desperate spurt, caught the car, and with a harsh gasp of rage, flung itself recklessly on to the luggage rack. The Daimler gathered pace, and went flying onwards into the dreary night.

Death at Blackholt Quarry!

JIMMY BRENNAN opened his eyes sleepily. There was darkness all around him; darkness and a hissing sound, such as motor tyres make on a wet roadway. He couldn't make it out. He seemed to be lying on something that was moving at tremendous pace, despite the intense blackness, and, for some reason, his arms and legs were tightly bound and rigid.

In a dizzy sort of way he began to collect his thoughts. But a dull weight was pressing on his brain, and when he tried to move, the pain in his head made him gasp and relax. Gradually, as the position grew clearer, memory returned. He was going to Railton—his uncle had sent a car. He had followed the chauffeur, a decent sort of chap, out of the station, got into the car, and then—and then:

"Yo gods, I've been kidnapped!"

Realisation came to him in a flash, sweeping the mists from his numbed brain. Kidnapped! In spite of Scotland Yard's precautions, in spite of his own carefulness, he had been captured, taken in like a kid. And yet, there was Uncle Phil's letter! Surely that was genuine! But it couldn't be; it must have been a forgery like—like his father's cheque.

Under the fresh shock his mind began to ramble. What was it that the detective had said—funny chap he was, arresting fellows, then talking football to 'em, and—Where was he? Oh, yes, "You're in line for big trouble, Brennan!" That's what he had said. "Big trouble!" Jimmy tried to smile. It had been nothing but trouble since his father had died. And now "big trouble" had arrived!

A fierce flame of rage suddenly welled up inside him. He tried to struggle up. He'd show 'em!

"By gad, I'll kill somebody this time!" he raved.

Then a brutal heel stabbed downwards, and Jimmy, with another shiver of pain, slumped back into the depths once more.

When he came round again the pain in his head had grown duller. The car was still moving, but it must have turned into a side road, for the bump-

ing and jostling on the floor was terrible. As the pace grew slower the more violent became the jolts, and now and again Jimmy heard branches scraping the invisible windows and roof, showing the narrowness of the lane they were following. The racking journey went on until, just when he had reached the point of fading out again, the car stopped with a jerk.

Presently the door was flung open and an icy spatter of rain drifted in. A man's voice above him cursed gruffly at the cold; a pair of hands reached down and hauled him up. The next he was flung headlong out on to some coarse, saturated grass. Another voice, with a little tremor in it, spoke up:

"Is—is it O.K., Fred?"

Jimmy recognised the chauffeur's tones. A gruff voice answered roughly:

"Ow the blazes do I know, cooped up in the dark. Did yer pass anyone in this lane?"

"No!"

"Well, then, gettin' cold feet, as usual?"

"Ah, stow it! This isn't our usual game, is it?"

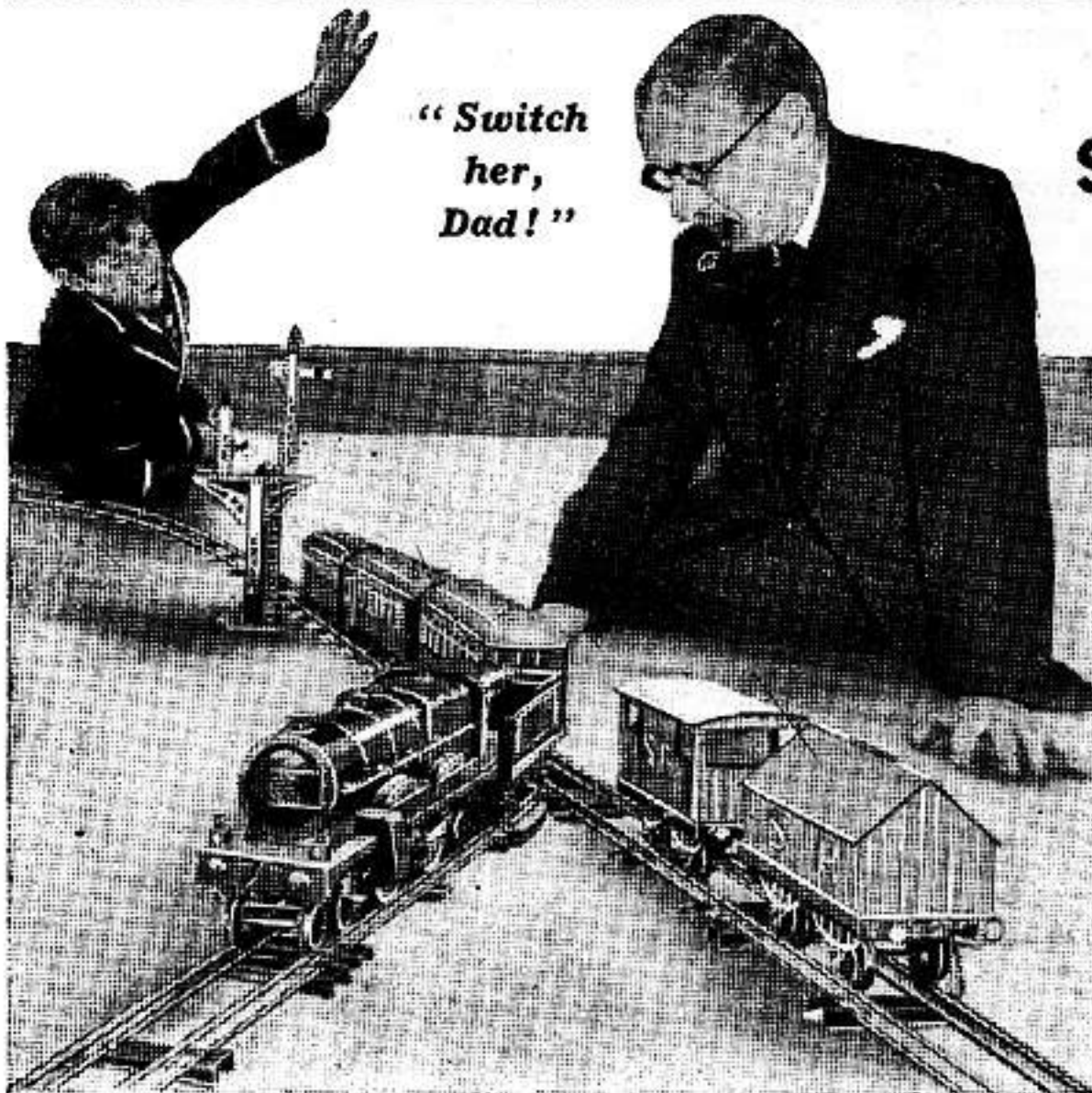
Jimmy heard a grating laugh.

"Well, it is this time. You been paid, ain't yer? Then don't start squealin'!"

The talk ceased, while the last speaker walked a few steps ahead. Lying on the grass, with the wind and rain beating on his face, Jimmy mustered his wits for a quick glance round.

He could see nothing of the two men, but in the single sidelight of the car that was burning he caught a glimpse of tangled undergrowth standing out weirdly against the surrounding gloom;

(Continued on next page.)



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and beyond that—nothing. He noticed, too, that for some reason, the men's voices seemed to echo weirdly.

"We're pretty near. Come on!" It was the harsh voice speaking again.

Jimmy felt iron hands close round his ankles and arms, and he was lifted in the air and taken farther into the darkness.

The men stopped at last, and Jimmy heard the leader issue brief commands:

"Nah, then! No balkin'! Two swings an' over—see?"

The grips on Jimmy's shoulders tightened. He felt himself swung gently through the air. Then came the sound of a gasping whine and his feet fell to the ground again.

"Fred, I—I can't do it! Not this way!" The chauffeur had lost his nerve.

A fierce oath crackled.

"Gaw, you— Take that cub's 'eels up agen, d'ye 'ear? Or, by—"

"I won't!"

"Then go a'cad of 'im, you scum!"

Jimmy crumpled into the grass as the man called Fred let go his shoulders and lashed out frenziedly. He heard the crack of the blow and a sob, followed suddenly by a terrible despairing shriek. The cry swelled out hideously, seeming to fade down into space, until, all at once, it stopped. But presently, after a long, aching silence, came another sound, soft, dull, and unspeakably horrible, paralysing the boy with horror.

Although he could not see what happened, he could guess! He was on the edge of some great pit, or cutting. And the chauffeur had "gone ahead"!

Numb with despair, he became aware of the other man bending over him, of hot breath fanning his cheeks.

"Nah, my buck, I'll do the job meself!"

Two powerful arms tightened round Jimmy's body. He was lifted easily from the ground and swung back over a burly shoulder. His captor braced himself for a tremendous forward heave. And in that split second, when Jimmy's heart was dead within him and his head drooped limply downwards, another pair of arms grabbed him from the darkness and tore him desperately from that awful clutch.

Came then a wild snarl of rage and fear, the ringing, venomous smack of a shot, and a red jet of flame that almost singed his face. The snarl broke off sharply into a choking sob; something big and heavy hit the ground and went sliding and clawing down the rain-slippery surface—

Silence!

The sound of a body, mangling itself on hidden rocks far below, floated up once more on the wind.

"How goes it, old chap?"

A quiet voice, cool and soothing after the nightmare he had gone through, made Jimmy open his eyes once more. The gag was taken gently from his mouth, and soon a sharp knife was ripping the ropes that bound him.

He was half carried, half dragged back to the car, taken inside and pushed carefully back on the cushioned seats.

The electric light in the saloon-roof was switched on, at once, and Jimmy blinked painfully at a strange figure, whose thin face was covered with little cuts and scratches, and whose shabby clothes were soaked and badly torn.

At sight of Jimmy's stare, his rescuer smiled quaintly.

"Say, I'm awfully sorry, Brennan!" he cried above the hiss of wind and rain. "You can kick me when you're better. I missed you at Hallam like a careless chump, and just managed to jump the car as it scooted away. And when they drove along this confounded quarry path I was jerked off and knocked silly. My lucky night! But thank goodness I was in time!"

He jerked his head backwards.

"No need to worry—it's finished now. They're both down below. Pity I had to shoot, but"—he shrugged—"I'll have 'em fetched up in the mornin'!"

"Who—who are you?" Jimmy, on the point of collapse, spoke thickly.

The quaint little smile crinkled the slim youth's eyes and lips again.

"I'm Tim Osborne!" he said shyly.

"Er—in fact—I'm your new contre-forward!"

His hands shot out swiftly. But Jimmy had crumpled up by this time, and had barely heard the reply. Laying him out gently, with a cushion at

his head, Osborne closed the door and slid into the driving-seat of the car.

Slowly it lurched away down the path. Silence, broken only by the whispering rain, brooded once more over Blackholt Quarry.

The Daimler, hitting the main road again, turned and headed for Railton at top speed.

For two days and nights following his appalling experience on the Blackholt Jimmy Brennan lay in the hazy borderland between consciousness and stupor, waking sometimes to blink feebly at his surroundings, only to slide quickly back into the mists of oblivion again. He was vaguely aware at intervals that he was back home in old Bill Nye's cottage, and now and then he recognised anxious faces bending over him; his uncle, Tony, Bill Nye himself, and a slim stranger whom he had seen before somewhere, but couldn't remember when. And as soon as he tried to think his brain wearily refused.

On the third day, however, his condition changed, and he began to rally. His head was still full of pain, but well-trained fitness and natural tough fibre were pulling him through. By the Thursday he was able to sit up a bit and remember.

Gradually, as the youngster lay staring round his pleasant little room after the doctor had gone for the day, past events began to take shape in his mind.

Setting his teeth against the pain of his wound, he tried hard to straighten things out. It was like puzzling over a half-forgotten dream. He remembered a revolver-shot, his assailant vanishing into the pit, and then a tall, slender fellow had come out of the darkness from somewhere and said his name was—

—was—
"Oh, blazes!" grunted Jimmy, patting his bandaged head tenderly. "Who was he, now? He must have got me home all right. Why, dash it, the beggar saved my life!"

And at that moment the door of his bed-room opened quietly, and the youngster he was thinking about stood smiling in at him.

(Tim Osborne plays a great part in next week's instalment of this powerful footer yarn, chums! Make sure you read every line of it!)



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Greynians Herald

No. 21.

LAUGH AND GROW FAT.

November 29th, 1930.

Edited by
HARRY WARRON,
 F.G.R.

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HAVE YOU "BATS IN THE BELFRY"? More Schoolboy Slang

"BLOW-OUT"—A FEAST

"BATS IN THE BELFRY"—A peculiar phrase which has often puzzled the innocent. "How shocking," said Alonzo Todd, "to turn a church belfry into a cricket pavilion by storing bats there!" But Alonzo is off the track. The phrase refers to a fellow who is dense and stupid, and not "all there" mentally. "BENDERS"—A form of casing in which the victim is compelled to bend over a desk or chair.

"BLOW-OUT"—See "Tuck-in."
 "BONE SHAKER"—A bicycle which has seen its best days, and which, having been used hardly by its owner, is now hardly used!

"BRASS"—Money.
 "BROKE TO THE WIDE"—See "Stony."
 "CHIN-WAGGING"—Talking "volubly on any subject. Spilling a bibid" is the American counterpart of this phrase.

"DIG"—A dictionary.
 "GATE-CRASHER"—One who barges in where he is not wanted. Billy Bunter is Greyfriars' best—or rather, worst—example.

"GORGER"—One who feeds to excess; one who is knobby of indulging in orgies. The biggest offender in this respect at Greyfriars is William George Bunter of the Remove.

"HANDERS"—A canning inflicted on the hands.
 "JAPE"—A wheeze, a lark, a leg-pull. A means of getting one's own back.
 "JAW-BREAKER"—A word of abnormal length.



"JIGGER"—A bicycle.
 "JERUSALEM CRICKETS"—These are not chirping insects peculiar to the ancient city of Jerusalem. The expression is a meaningless one, used by Fisher T. Fish in moments of excitement.
 "NIGHT-BIRD"—A boy who breaks bounds at night for an unlawful purpose. Loder of the Sixth is no "fledgling" at this game!

"OLD JOSSER"—An old fogey; a disrespectful allusion to certain masters at Greyfriars.
 "PI-JAW"—A lecture or scolding from one in authority.
 "PUSHING THE BOAT OUT"—Going to the rescue of a fellow who is "on the rocks," by making him a timely loan.
 "SCAVTRY"—Scatter-brained; having bats in the belfry.

"SPONDULICS"—See "Brass."
 "STEPPING ON THE JUICE"—Driving a mechanically-propelled vehicle at high speed, as witness Coker of the Fifth on his motor-cycle.
 "STONY"—Without visible means of subsistence. In the delirium, but out of dollars!

"TANNER"—Not an irate master who "tans" you; but the humble spondee.
 "TIN"—See "Brass."
 "TUCK-IN"—A schoolboy feast.
 "TUPPENNY"—A bit, punch, or blow, delivered with violence.

"YAROOOOH!"—An unintelligible cry, expressive of pain and anguish. Variants of this word are "YAROOOOH!" and "YOW-O-W!"
 (Those who wish to make themselves proficient in perfect up-to-date English should consult the "Dictionary of Slang," which is claimed to my dear in Study, No. 1 Remove Passage.—Ed., G. H.)

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WHAT IS YOUR FORTUNE— My Pretty Lad?

RICHARD NUGENT (Second Form).—Dicky's fortune is soon told. He will spend all his life writing out the lines he has written at Greyfriars. He is about 3,000,000 in debt already, so he will be an old man with a flowing beard like Dr. Broomhall before he catches up.

WILLIAM G. BUNTER (Remove).—I see a brilliant future in front of Bunter. When he leaves Greyfriars he will go to the City, and will make money hand over fist. Year by year his income will increase. More and more money will be piled up to his account in the bank, until—alas!—he is found out. He will then retire for the rest of his life to a large country house at Dartmoor. He will prefer clothes ornamented by a neat pattern in broad arrows, and his hobby will be brooking stones.

HURREE JAMSET RAM SINGH (Remove).—Jany will return to India, and will marry a squaw and settle down in his wigwam. When his uncle dies he will become the Jam of Moronahade—or whatever it is.

HORACE JAMES COKER (Fifth).—Coker's fortune is very peculiar. I confess I don't understand it. I see him spending his time in one room, which somewhat appears to be padded. He tells his visitors that he is the Emperor Napoleon, and sometimes he sticks straws in his hair and pretends he's a chicken. I haven't the faintest idea what all this means.

FISHER T. FISH (Remove).—Fishy will spend the rest of his life looking for the two pence he lost in Friardale Lane last Saturday.

GERALD LODGER (Sixth).—Loder will be hanged.

ALONZO TODD (Remove).—Alonzo's future is very dark. I see that several black men will cross your doorway. They are very scantily dressed, and have great knives and spears. Apparently they come for chest-protectors and woolen head socks. Then I see a great cooking pot, with many black figures dancing round it. My conclusions are, that you will some day become a missionary.

LOOKING FOR A JOB?

PLenty GOING AT GREYFRIARS

AAAAA.—AN AWFULLY SMART FAG WANTED. Must be clean, sober, and industrious, of good appearance, and address, and with a proper respect for authority. Apply personally, with testimonials from previous fag-masters, to George Wingate, Captain of Greyfriars.

(N.B.—Any applicant who produces spurious testimonials will receive a genuine licking!)

AAAAA.—A SMART FAG WANTED urgently. Good pay and prospects; light duties and liberal outtings; every comfort always in attendance to wait upon him—with an ash-plant! No fag who has previously been in my service need apply again.—PATRICK GWYNNE, Sixth Form Passage.

AAAA.—A FAG WANTED at once. I'm simply dying for a smoke!—GERALD LODGER, Sixth Form Passage.

BATHCHAIR ATTENDANT WANTED, for a noble earl who finds it too much fag to use his legs. No salary offered, but applicant may help himself to any stray Treasury Notes blowing about in my study. I will be awake to interview applicants from 7 p.m. till 7.5 p.m. Do not come earlier or later, or you will disturb my slumbers.—LORD MAULEVERER, Remove Passage.

PAGE-BOY WANTED, to turn over the pages whilst I am laugally reading my "Holiday Annual."—Apply Lord MAULEVERER, as above.

PRIVATE SECRETARY WANTED, by Famous Orator. Must be able to speak perfect shorthand, and type a thousand words a minute! Must have "history" ambitions, and be neat and tidy. Must provide his own typewriter, ink, pens, stationery, and set-tee. Wages—sixpence per week, unless the Famous Orator happens to be on the rocks! Food will be provided in the Fags' Common-room—bottings fried on pen-holders being the staple diet. No ignorant Form-master need apply for this responsible post; and any person whose spelling is at all shaky can keep off the grass.—Apply to Dicky Nugent, the "Literary Lion," Second Form.

BUNTER THE BUDDING BARD

Ode to a Jam Roll

VERSE—AND WORSE

GREYFRIARS LIBRICKS.

By Dicky Nugent. (Printed by the Orator on the Fags' Five-bob Printing Press, and published privately at One Shilling.)

It is, perhaps, just as well that Dicky Nugent's effusions are "published" privately. Some of the masters would have several sorts of fits if the little volume came into their hands. In one poem, the youthful "orther" describes all the masters of Greyfriars in a poetic procession. What would the Head say to this, we wonder?

"First comes Doctor Mister Locke,
 In a funny sort of frock."
 "And what would the master of the Fifth think of this?
 "Next comes Mr. P. P. Prount Getting, rather bald and stout."

Mr. Prount's few remaining hairs would rise up in righteous indignation, we imagine!

We are also told that "Mr. Flocker is a sleeker," and "Mr. Nugent had no wish to be offensive to those gentlemen, but it just happens that the epithets 'sleeker' and 'pig' rhyme with their names!"

"Mr. Lascelles takes mathematics, but I don't admire his tactics,"

But Dicky Nugent has something nice to say concerning "Mr. Quelch, a good old stager,
 For he often whacks my major!"

On the whole a very amusing little volume, which will cause many juckles up and down Greyfriars.



FISHER "FORTUNE" FOR STUDY-MATES

OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY

WILLS OF THE WEEK

Mr. WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER, the well-known story-teller, of Bunter Court, Bankum-shire, who wasted away to a shadow whilst staying at all Greyfriars School, bequeathed all his debts and liabilities to Robert Cherry, Esq., and all the postal orders which were on their way to him, but failed to turn up during his lifetime, to Peter Todd, Esq.

Mr. Bunter left gross estate to the value of six and net personality nappence!

Mr. HORACE COKER, the very amateur footballer, whose "passing" we deplore, bequeathed all his study furniture and effects to George Potter, Esq., and all his worldly wealth to William Greeno, Esq. Mr. Coker also bequeathed all the football trophies—Cups, Shields, Medals, etc., that he was expecting to win, but didn't!—to George Wingate, Esq., "who was always horribly jolly of me in my lifetime."

Mr. GERALD LODGER, of "The Cross Keys," Friardale (when not residing at Greyfriars), made a large number of bequests, including a silver cigarette-case to "my friend and follow-biade, Trotter the Page!"

Mr. WILLIAM GOSLING, Keeper of the Gate at Greyfriars, who "stuffed off" on Saturday last—to his lodge—left all his duties and responsibilities to Trotter the Page!

THE EDITOR OF THE GREYFRIARS HERALD, who expects shortly to be killed by overwork, will "cheerfully" leave the editorial chair to any fellow who is ass enough to take it over!

That spring comes bounding triestfully behind!

The reception accorded to Inky's volume of verse is bound to be "terrific"!

"DORMITORY DITTIES." By Lord Mauleverer. (Messrs. Wynken, Blythen & Nod, 2s. 6d.)

This volume was to have appeared last month, but an attack of sleepy sickness has prevented his lordship from completing the poems—or even starting them! It is hoped that the book will be published some fine (during the next hundred years!

There is also an "Ode to Autumn" which kicks off in the manner of Keats, but soon becomes pure Hurree Singh!

"Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
 Luscious friend of the maturing sun;
 Filling the smiling orchards,
 where the lootiness
 By daring schoolboys is
 di...rectly done."

We cannot but admire the cheerful sentiment of the following couplet—though it certainly owes a good deal to Shelley:

"If winter comes, cheer up!
 For you will find

(Continued at foot of next column.)

