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AFTER LIGHTS OUT!

BY FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

First Day of Term!

"Here we are,
Here we are!
Here we are again!"

BOB CHERRY'S voice was raised in song.

It mingled, more or less harmoniously, with the rumble of the train that was bearing a swarm of Greyfriars fellows schoolward.

Few fellows were glad that the holidays were over, but Bob, at least, was going back to Greyfriars for the new term in exuberant spirits.

There were nine fellows packed in the carriage in the local train from Courtfield to Friardale—or ten, counting Billy Bunter as two! Bunter was double-width, and needed room for two, if not for three.

Bunter grunted discontentedly.

Packed between Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull, Bunter declared—not once, but many times—that he hadn't room to breathe. And the other fellows did not seem to care whether he breathed or not!

There was plenty of noise in the carriage. Bob was singing—loudly, if not tunefully. Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull and Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh were talking—sometimes in turns, sometimes all together. Billy Bunter was uttering a series of unheeded complaints. Skinner and Snoop were comparing notes about the

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"hols." Only one fellow in the crowded carriage was silent—a slim, rather delicate-looking fellow, who was a stranger to the Greyfriars juniors. He had a corner seat, and sat quite silent, sometimes glancing from the window at the pleasant countryside of Kent, sometimes rather timidly at the noisy crowd that filled the carriage.

"For goodness' sake, shut up, Cherry!" said Billy Bunter irritably. "What are you yelling for?"

"Don't stop singing, Bob!" said Frank Nugent. "Keep it up, old chap!"

"Why, you silly ass!" exclaimed Bunter. "What the thump do you want him to sing for?"

"If he left off singing, he might begin to whistle!" explained Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you fathead—" said Bob Cherry.

"Sing, old bean—sing! It's the lesser of two evils!"

"The lessfulness is terrific!" declared Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "The singfulness is not the boonful blessing, but the whistfulness would be the ridiculous limit!"

That remark caused the timid-looking youth in the corner to look round quickly at Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. The dusky nabob's wonderful flow of English often had a startling effect on strangers.

"Fathead!" said Bob, with undiminished cheerfulness. "You've got no ear for music! What is it Shakespeare says? 'The man that hath no music in his soul—'"

"Don't you spout Shakespeare now!" grunted Billy Bunter. "We get enough of him from Quelch in class! I say, you fellows, we shall be at Friardale in a few minutes now."

The timid youth in the corner spoke for the first time.

"Is Friardale the station for Greyfriars School?"

Billy Bunter did not trouble to answer. Bunter's fat thoughts, as usual, were concentrated on his fat self. But Bob Cherry, glancing round, answered.

"That's right, kid! Going to Greyfriars?"

"Yes."

"New kid?" asked Bob.

"Yes."

The new boy spoke shyly, colouring a little, evidently rather diffident among the cheery crowd of schoolboys. That was not at all unusual in a new boy going to a big school. Bob Cherry was just the fellow to give a shy new kid a little cheery encouragement to begin with.

"We're all Greyfriars men here," he said. "All these chaps are Remove. What Form are you going into, if you know?"

"Mr. Quelch's Form—the Lower Fourth."

"That's the Remove," said Bob. "Gentlemen, chaps, and sportsmen, this kid is going into our Form! What's your name, kid?"

"Arthur Traill."

"Meet Arthur Traill!" said Bob to his comrades. "Traill, you're a lucky young dog!"

"Eh—how?"

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This issue contains another FREE PHOTOGRAVURE PLATE.

"You've bumped right into the best set in the Remove!" explained Bob.

"That's us!"

"Oh!" said Traill; and he grinned.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter! Traill, this chap is Wharton, captain of the Form! The good-looking kid is Nugent—"

"Fathead!" said Nugent.

"The fellow with the feet is Bull—"

"What about your own?" bawled Johnny Bull.

"And the gentleman with the Day-and-Martin complexion is Hurree Bang Jolly Wallop, Nabob of Pingpong!"

"My esteemed and ridiculous Bob—"

"To hear him speak English is an education in itself," went on Bob. "He learned English under Mook Mookerjee, the wisest banshee in India—"

"Moonshce, my esteemed Bob—"

"I mean moonshce! He learned English from a jolly old moonshce, and has never got over it!" said Bob. "The chap who might be mistaken for an out-size balloon is Bunter—Billy Bunter—"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"The weedy, seedy one is Skinner—"

"Look here, you cheeky ass—" exclaimed Skinner.

"And the pasty one is Snoop—"

"You silly chump!" roared Snoop.

"They don't always look so pasty as they do now," continued Bob. "They've been smoking cigarettes in the hols—that's the trouble!"

The new boy was grinning, and Skinner and Snoop scowling. Bob Cherry's method of performing introductions seemed to have had a cheering effect on the new boy already.

"Now you know quite a lot of the Remove," said Bob. "Five of the best, two of the worst, and one of the fattest—in fact, the very fattest!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter! Take a back seat! Keep quiet! We want to make a good impression on the new kid. So the less you say the better!"

"You silly ass!" roared Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, we shall be at Friardale in a minute!" hooted Bunter. "That silly ass Cherry keeps on jawing, and a chap can't get a word in edgewise! I say, I never got a ticket at Courtfield for this train!"

"What about it, ass?" asked Harry Wharton. "You can pay the fare when you get out at Friardale."

"But I've left all my money at home," explained Bunter. "At the last minute I forgot my banknotes—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I say, you fellows, do listen to a chap! I didn't spend the money on tuck at the station; I left it at home, as I said. Now, look here, I want you fellows to be pally! Keep round me, and let's go out in a crowd, and I can shove through without giving up a ticket—see?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Of course, I shall pay them afterwards," said Bunter. "I'm expecting a postal order—"

"The same one you were expecting last term?" asked Nugent.

"Or the one you were expecting the term before that?" inquired Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, you fellows! Look here, the train's slowing down! We're getting in! I'm absolutely stony! I had to have a bit of a snack at Courtfield—I mean, I quite forgot my banknotes when I left home! I suppose I can rely on you fellows to see me through?"

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"To see you through in bilking the railway!" roared Johnny Bull.

"That's a rather rotten way of putting it, Bull! Still, if you prefer it, you can lend me the money to pay the fare. It's only two shillings from Lantham—I had a ticket as far as Lantham. It's rather a waste. We could shove out all right in a crowd. Still, if you fellows prefer to lend me the money, all right!"

"You fat villain—"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here we are!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as the train stopped in Friardale Station. He hurled the door open and jumped out, and his friends followed him. Bunter rolled after them in a great hurry.

"I say, you fellows, who's going to lend me two bob?" he howled.

"The whofulness is terrific," chuckled Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh.

"Well, look here, if you're too jolly mean to lend me the money, get round me, and I'll shove through all right."

"Get round Bunter, you men!" said Bob Cherry.

"Look here—" hooted Johnny Bull.

"My dear chap, get round Bunter! And all of you lay hold of him together!"

"Oh!" said Johnny. "Right!"

"I say, you fellows—hold on—I mean, leggo—wharrer you up to—oh crumbs!"

He tells whoppers, he breaks bounds at night! That's the reputation Arthur Traill, new boy, earns for himself among the Greyfriars Removites. But there's a surprise in store for Harry Wharton & Co., and for you, for Arthur Traill turns out to be as straight as a die!

bellowed Bunter, as the Famous Five of the Remove got round him, and collared him on all sides.

In five pairs of hands, even Billy Bunter's unusual weight was easily handled. The fat junior was swept off his feet.

Bump!

"Yaroooooh!"

And Harry Wharton & Co., laughing scudded along the platform to the exit, leaving William George Bunter sitting on the platform and roaring, with a roar that the Bull of Bashan might have envied.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Very Neat!

ARTHUR TRAILL, the new kid in the Greyfriars Remove, gathered a bag from the rack, and made a movement towards the carriage door.

Skinner gave him an unceremonious shove out of the way, and passed him—a shove so rough that Traill involuntarily sat down again.

"Here, look out!" he exclaimed.

Skinner did not give him a glance. Skinner was annoyed at the way Bob Cherry had performed his playful introductions; also, he had noticed that the new fellow looked timid and diffident; and if a fellow seemed timid, that was reason enough for Harold Skinner to rag him. Snoop, following suit, knocked off the new boy's hat as he

went after Skinner, and Traill gave a jump. The two were laughing as they stepped out of the carriage; the new boy grabbed up his hat, with a red face. Bob Cherry and his friends had given him rather a pleasant impression of Greyfriars fellows—but Skinner and Snoop had the reverse effect.

Skinner and Snoop paused a moment to grin down at Billy Bunter, who was sitting on the platform and spluttering.

"I say, you fellows," gasped Bunter, blinking at them through his big spectacles, "I say, give a fellow a hand!"

"Certainly," answered Skinner. "Give him a hand, Snoopsey."

"Oh, rot," said Snoop. "Come on—we shan't get a seat in the school bus—there's always a rush."

"Give Bunter a hand, I tell you. Take his other ear."

"Oh!" Snoop chuckled. "All right!"

"I say—beasts—leggo!" roared Bunter, as Skinner grasped his right ear, and Sidney James Snoop his left, and hauled him up. "Oh crumbs! Oh crickey! Leggo my ears! Oh—whoop!"

Billy Bunter scrambled up in haste.

"That all right?" asked Skinner blandly.

"Beast!" roared Bunter, rubbing his crimson ears.

"Well, you asked us to help you up!" said Skinner. "But if you're not satisfied, you can sit down again. Lend him a hand, Snoopsey."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh crumbs! Stoppit!" howled Bunter, as Skinner and Snoop, seizing him suddenly, sat him down again.

"Why, you rotters—wow, ow, wow!" Skinner and Snoop, chuckling, joined the crowd going along the platform. Traill stepped from the carriage, and smiled at the gasping, spluttering Owl of the Remove. He had a bag in one hand; but with the other, he helped Bunter up—taking him by a fat arm.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "Thanks!" He blinked at Traill. "I say, hold on a minute, Pail—did you say your name was Pail?"

"No; Traill!"

"Well, Traill, then. Stop a minute, Traill!"

Traill politely stopped a minute. He would have been rather glad to get on to the school in the company of those cheery fellows who had been in the carriage with him. But Harry Wharton & Co. were already out of sight in the crowd—making for places in the school bus. They had felt quite kindly towards the new "kid," especially Bob, who was always good-natured itself; but they had, nevertheless, forgotten his existence for the moment. There was always rather a scrap for places in the school bus, and the Famous Five were not the fellows to be left out of a scrap.

Billy Bunter leaned on Traill's arm for a minute or two, gasping for breath.

The new boy bore that infliction patiently. Having recovered his breath, the fat Owl proceeded to business.

"Know anybody here, Tail—I mean Traill?" he asked.

"No; nobody," answered the new boy.

"I'll look after you," said Bunter patronisingly. "I'm always jolly decent to new kids! Rely on me."

"Oh! Thanks!" said Traill, without enthusiasm. He was feeling rather lonely and forlorn; but somehow, Billy Bunter's fat patronage did not make him feel any better. Some things were worse than solitude; and it was generally agreed in the Greyfriars Remove that Billy Bunter's company was one of those things.

Bunter gave him a benevolent blink. "That's all right!" he said. "Stick to me, and I'll see you through. By the way, have you got your ticket safe!"

"Oh, yes, quite."
"Well, let's see it," said Bunter. "They're awfully particular here about tickets—jump on a fellow if he happens to lose it. New kids often get the wrong ticket! Let's see it."

Trail drew a railway ticket from his pocket. Bunter took it from him, and blinked at it, and nodded.

"That's all right—from Lantham," he said. "I'll carry it for you, old chap—we'll go out together! Come on."

"You needn't carry my ticket," said Trail in surprise. "I suppose I can carry my own ticket."

"Better let me take care of it," said Bunter. "You've got that bag to carry, too! Look here, I'll ask for you to be put in my study in the Remove, if you like. Quelch will do anything I ask him—he thinks a lot of me. I should be head boy of the Form, but I don't care about it—I let Wharton have it! Wharton's that rather stuck-up chap who was in the carriage."

"I didn't think he looked stuck-up!" "Frightfully," said Bunter. "A regular beast. They're all beasts, in fact—rotters! I shouldn't really know them at all, only I'm so good-natured—I let pushing fellows stick on to me, you know! Hold on, Trail!—wait here a minute, will you—there's Smithy wants me."

Without waiting for Trail to reply, Billy Bunter hurried away across the platform, and vanished from sight among the crowd of fellows.

Trail waited for him to come back. He did not wait because he wanted Bunter's company; but because Bunter had his ticket. But he waited in vain.

Bunter did not come back. The astute and unscrupulous Owl of the Remove rolled out of the exit from the platform, giving up Trail's ticket as he went. Once safe outside, Billy Bunter grinned a fat grin of satisfaction. Bunter's opinion was that this was rather neat; he felt that he had handled a difficult situation well! As for Arthur Trail, Bunter did not think about him; a fellow really couldn't think of everything!

Trail waited! The platform cleared; and Bunter did not return. Trail waited—and waited—and at last moved off, in a puzzled frame of mind. It was clear that that fat fellow had forgotten him and gone off—no doubt forgetting also that he was carrying Trail's ticket. It was useless to wait longer; and as the new fellow had no ticket, he had to pay as he went out.

He looked about him as he came out of the station. A large vehicle, just in front of him, was swarming with merry juniors. Most of the fellows in possession were Removites—prominent among them Harry Wharton & Co. A very elegant fellow—Cecil Reginald Temple, of the Fourth Form—was trying to get on, and Bob Cherry was playfully pushing him off again, as Trail came on the scene.

Temple of the Fourth sat down. Dabney and Fry of the Fourth, who were rushing on to back up their leader, fell over him as he sat suddenly in their way. There was a roar of laughter from the crowd in the bus.

"I say, you fellows!" Bunter pushed into the place Temple had involuntarily vacated. "I say, make room for a chap!"

Trail recognised the fat fellow who had his ticket! He ran forward and caught Bunter by the shoulder.

"Oh, here you are!" he exclaimed. "Give me my ticket, please!"

Bunter blinked round at him.

"Leggo my shoulder, you ass!" he

snapped. "Look here, Bob, old chap, you make room for me—see!"

"Oh, all right, porpoise!" answered Bob. "Jump on!"

"Give me my ticket first!" exclaimed Trail warmly. "I had to pay two shillings to the ticket-collector, as you had my ticket—"

"Leggo my shoulder, you beast!" "I can get it back if I take the ticket to him," said Trail. "Look here, give me my ticket!"

"I haven't got it!" roared Bunter. "Leave off bothering a chap, can't you? Give me a hand up, Bob!"

"But you have got it!" exclaimed Trail. "You said you'd carry it—"

"Well, I dropped it—lost it! Blow you! Don't bother me about your silly ticket!"

"You fat brigand!" roared Bob Cherry. "Have you been bagging the new kid's ticket off him?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Sit down, you fat sweep!"

"Whooooop!" roared Bunter, as he sat down.

"Jump on, Trail! Room for one!" said Bob cheerily. "You'll never see your ticket again if you let Bunter have it! The fat sweep was travelling without one! You've been diddled, old bean! Jump on! We're just starting!"

Bunter scrambled up, red with wrath. "I say, you fellows, I'm getting on! You're not letting that new tick get on and leaving an old pal behind, I suppose? I never had his ticket! I've never seen him before! Don't know him at all! I don't even know that his name's Trail! Never heard the name!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now, lemme get on, you beasts— Yaroooooooh!"

Billy Bunter sat down once more, and the bus rolled away for Greyfriars School. Bunter scrambled up and shook a fat fist after it—left behind, while the "new tick" rolled on to Greyfriars in the cheery company of the Famous Five.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Up to Wharton!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH, the Bounder of Greyfriars, looked in at the doorway of Study No. 1 in the Remove.

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent were there, busily and cheerfully engaged in unpacking various things. The chums of the Remove gave the Bounder a cheery nod.

"Hallo, Smithy! Had good hols?" "Topping!" answered Smithy. "How did you get on with your Easter cruise?"

"Oh, fine. Only one fly in the ointment—a fat fly—Bunter! Come in, and help us with this cake!" said Harry Wharton.

"I've looked in to tell you that Quelch wants you," answered Smithy, with a grin. "You've got to cut off to his study."

"Oh, blow!" "I'll help Nugent with the cake while you're gone!" added the Bounder.

Harry Wharton laughed, and quitted the study. As head boy of the Remove and captain of the Form, his time was not wholly his own, and he was a dutiful head boy. Still, he wished that Quelch would have forgotten his existence on the first day of the term, when there were plenty of things to occupy a fellow's time and attention. However, the word of Henry Samuel Quelch, the master of the Remove, was law in the Lower Fourth, and Wharton lost no time in repairing to his Form master's study.

Mr. Quelch was not alone when he entered that apartment. Arthur Trail, the new junior, was there. Apparently, it was not on matters connected with the Form that Mr. Quelch desired to speak to his head boy. It was in connection with the new fellow.

"This is Trail, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch, "a new boy in the Remove!"

"Yes, sir. I've met Trail," said Harry, with a nod to the new junior. "We were in the same carriage to-day."

"Oh, very good!" said Mr. Quelch. "I hope you will be friends, Wharton, as I am placing Trail in your study."

Wharton barely suppressed a grimace. He felt kindly enough towards the new kid, but he did not want a third in Study No. 1. But that was a matter for Mr. Quelch to decide, so Wharton answered dutifully:

"Oh, certainly, sir!"

"You may go, Trail," said Mr. Quelch. "Please remain, Wharton, as I have something further to say to you."

Trail went, and Wharton waited. The door closed after the new junior, and Mr. Quelch coughed, and then coughed again. Finally he spoke.

"Wharton, you are my head boy, and I place great reliance upon you. I can ask you what, perhaps, I should hesitate to ask of any other boy in my Form."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Wharton silently, wondering what was coming.

"This new boy Trail," resumed Mr. Quelch, "is, as perhaps you have noticed, a little—not exactly delicate, but hardly so strong and sturdy as the average Greyfriars boy of his age. Some years ago he had an illness, and, though he completely recovered from it and is now in normal health, he is by no means so strong as the average Remove boy. In these circumstances, I should like to ask you to befriend him as much as you can, and—make things, so far as may be possible, easy for him in his first term here. For that reason I have placed him in your study."

"Oh!" said Harry.

Probably the captain of the Remove did not look very enthusiastic. He did not know Trail—had never seen him before that day, or heard of his existence. To have a new kid—and a new kid that needed looking after—landed on him the first day of term was a thing that might have dismayed any Greyfriars man. Mr. Quelch looked at him keenly, and Wharton tried to assume a cheerful expression.

"You are head boy of my Form, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch. "You will not forget that certain responsibilities attach to the position."

"Oh, quite, sir!"

"I will say no more," said Mr. Quelch. "Although you have some faults of temper, Wharton, you are the boy I trust most in my Form, and I am well aware that you have a kind heart and a generous nature."

"Oh, sir!" gasped Wharton, colouring. This sort of thing was very uncommon from Mr. Quelch.

"I will leave it to you to do your best to meet my wishes," said the Remove master.

"I will certainly do everything I can, sir!" said Wharton, quite earnestly. "Trail looks a decent fellow, and I'm sure we shall be friends. I'll do my best, sir!"

"That is all I can ask!" said Mr. Quelch graciously; and with that he dismissed his head boy.

Wharton left the study, with a rather thoughtful shade on his brow. He looked round for Trail, prepared to begin at once by taking him up to the study; but the new boy was not to be

seen. Willing as he was to do as Quelch had requested, Wharton did not consider that he was bound to hunt for the new kid, and he went back to the Remove passage, not doubting that Traill would turn up sooner or later.

He found Nugent and the Bounder getting on with the cake in Study No. 1, and joined them in disposing of it.

"What did Quelch want?" asked Frank.
 "New kid coming into this study," answered Harry—"that kid in the train—Traill."

He added no more while the Bounder was present. Smithy was the fellow to make sardonic fun of the idea of looking after a new kid and dry-nursing him and bear-leading him, as Smithy would have

sheep on his first day," said Frank; "and that kid Traill seems rather uncommonly sheepish in his looks. As Quelch asked you—"

"Nice for me!" grunted Wharton. "Like to put in as head boy, Frank? I'll resign in your favour."

"No. But I'll go and look for the kid, if you like," answered Frank.

"Shouldn't wonder if he's standing in a corner, with his thumb in his mouth!" Harry Wharton laughed.

"I'll go!" he said.

And he went in. Half a dozen of the Remove were in the passage, and Wharton called to them.

"Seen a new kid, anybody?"
 "Yaas," answered Lord Mauleverer.
 "Oh, good! Where is he?"

staircase and went down. Nobody in the passage had seen Traill apparently; he had not come up. On the landing Wharton came on Billy Bunter, who was grinning.

"Seen the new kid Traill, Bunter?" asked Harry.

"He, he, he!"

"You fat image, what are you cackling at?"

"He, he, he!" cachinnated Bunter.

"Stop sniggering, you fat ass, and answer!" snapped the captain of the Remove. "I've got to find the kid; he's been stuck in my study. Where is he? He could see that Bunter knew."

"He, he, he!" cachinnated Bunter. Wharton took the fat Owl by one ear, "Now, you podgy piffler—"



"Give Bunter a hand, I tell you," said Skinner. "Take his other ear." "Oh!" chuckled Snoop. "All right!" "I say—beasts—leggo!" roared Bunter, as Skinner grasped his right ear and Snoop his left, and hauled him up.
 "Oh crumbs! Oh crickey! Leggo my ears! Oh—whooop!"

expressed it. But the Bounder had his own occupations to see to, and, after the cake was finished, he went along to Study No. 4, where Redwing was unpacking. Then the captain of the Remove gave details.

"All serene!" said Nugent. "The kid looks decent, and I dare say we shall get on all right! Where is he now?"

"Wandering about somewhere," answered Harry. "He knows this is his study, and he will butt in sooner or later, I suppose."

Nugent gave him rather a queer look, and laughed. Wharton, who was beginning again on the unpacking of a picture that had been brought to decorate Study No. 1, paused, and gave a grunt.

"Think I ought to go and find him?" he asked.

"Well, a new kid is a bit like a lost

"I saw him goin' into Capper's study."

"Capper's study!" exclaimed Wharton. Mr. Capper was master of the Upper Fourth. "What the thump is he doing in Capper's study?"

"Talkin' to Capper, I suppose," answered Mauly—or, more likely, Capper's talkin' to him."

"Blessed if I can see why! Capper has nothing to do with the Remove."

"But the new kid's in the Fourth," said Mauly.

"You silly ass!" roared Wharton. "Do you think I'm inquiring after new kids in the Fourth? Blow the Fourth! I mean a new Remove kid."

"Oh, I didn't know there was a new Remove kid!" answered his lordship placidly.

"You said a new kid."

"Fathead!" Wharton went along to the Remove

"Wow! Leggo!" howled Bunter.

"I'm not going to tell you! You needn't butt in and spoil the fun. That new kid's cheeky; making out that I had his ticket—Wow! Leggo my ear!"

Tap! Billy Bunter's bullet head tapped on the banisters, and the Owl of the Remove gave a roar.

"Wow! Beast! Wow!"

"Now, where's that new tick?" demanded Wharton gruffly.

"Ow! I don't know! I haven't seen him since I got in!" gasped Bunter. "Leggo my ear! I never saw Skinner and Snoop taking him to Coker's study—"

"What?" roared Wharton.

"Besides, it's only a joke; leave 'em alone! Leggo my ear! The—the fact

is, I—I think Traill's in the gym—in fact, I saw him there— Yaroooh!" roared Bunter, as his head tapped again. Leaving Bunter to roar, the captain of the Remove tramped away to the Fifth Form studies with a knitted brow.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Turning the Tables!

"NICE study, what?" said Skinner. "Very nice indeed!" said Traill. "It's really one of the best in the Remove," remarked Sidney James Snoop, with a private wink to Skinner.

"I like it very much," said Traill innocently.

It was, in fact, quite a nice study—and Traill, unsuspecting, had no idea that it was a Fifth Form study, and belonged to Coker and Potter and Greene, of that Form. After leaving Mr. Quelch he had asked the first fellow he met the way to Study No. 1 in the Remove. Unfortunately, that fellow was Skinner—and Skinner was a humorous youth, and his little jokes were not always good-natured. Taking a "rise" out of a guileless new "kid" seemed funny to Skinner, and that was his present happy occupation. He had seen Coker & Co. in Hall, so he knew that the coast was clear, and with a solemn face he guided the new boy to Coker's study. Several fellows, among them Billy Bunter, had watched them go, with grinning faces.

It was rather a large study—Fifth Form were larger than junior studies—and it had a big window on the quad. Traill had not expected anything quite so nice as this, and he was naturally pleased.

"Mr. Quelch said that Wharton and Nugent would be in the study with me," remarked Traill. "I left Wharton with Mr. Quelch. Know where Nugent is?"

"May be up any minute," said Skinner. "Make yourself at home, old bean, as this is your study. The fact is Nugent asked me to look after you a bit till he came up. Did you get any tea? It's always a scramble on first day of term."

"Oh, yes!"

"Still, I dare say you've got room for more," said Skinner; "and Nugent asked me to see to it. Look here."

There was a hamper in the corner of the study. It was one of those well-packed hampers that Horace Coker of the Fifth always brought back with him—packed by the loving hands of his affectionate Aunt Judy. Skinner dragged it out of the corner and lifted the lid. All sorts of good things, beautifully packed, lay within. Snoop stared as Skinner lifted out a bag of tarts and a bag of doughnuts and a cake. It was rather a risky business to interfere with the possessions of Coker of the Fifth.

"Sit down, kid," said Skinner in honeyed tones. "I dare say you can do with some of this stuff, what?"

"Yes, rather!" said Traill. "But did Nugent say—"

"Exactly! He made a point of it. Very nice chap Nugent," said Skinner. "He specially asked me to tell you not to stand on ceremony. Just tuck into anything you like. He'll be pleased."

Traill sat down at Coker's table in Coker's chair. Tea in Hall on the first day was, as Skinner had said, rather a scramble. Traill, as a matter of fact, was still hungry. And that array of good things turned out of Coker's

hamper looked very tempting. Traill lost no time in starting.

"I—I say, we'd better out, as we have to see the Head," said Skinner gravely. "Can't keep the Head waiting, Traill! He gets waxy if a fellow keeps him waiting. You're all right here?"

"Oh, quite, thanks!" said Traill. In the railway carriage he had not been very favourably impressed by Skinner, but he could not help thinking now that the fellow was very good-natured. Certainly he seemed to be taking a good deal of trouble about a new boy—at the risk, it appeared, of keeping the headmaster waiting.

"Wait here till Nugent comes," said Skinner. "He asked me to tell you to. Don't leave the study till he comes."

"Right-ho!" agreed Traill. If he waited till Nugent came—which, of course, Nugent was not likely to do—he was certain to be there when Coker came! That was the excellent Skinner's object.

What Coker would do when he found a fag in his study devouring the contents of Aunt Judy's hamper was an interesting question—very interesting indeed to Skinner. What was left of Traill might have to be carried away!

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It was absolutely certain that Horace Coker would go off at the deep end, and that the hapless new kid would have the time of his life. Coker was not likely to come yet; Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, was "jawing" about games in Hall. But Skinner had astutely settled that Traill was going to wait till the great Horace came.

Skinner helped himself to a couple of the tarts. Snoop followed his example. As Traill was to pay scot and lot, so to speak, they saw no reason why they should not sample the stuff, which was really worth sampling. Finding the stuff really good, Skinner and Snoop helped themselves to a little more; and Traill was going strong. Quite an inroad had been made into Coker's hamper, when there was a sound of hurried footsteps in the passage.

Skinner and Snoop started, but they knew that that light tread was not the heavy stamp of Horace Coker. They looked round as a rather breathless junior appeared in the doorway. It was Harry Wharton.

"Oh, here you are!" exclaimed Wharton.

Skinner and Snoop sidled to the door. But the captain of the Remove occupied the doorway, and did not move for them to pass. He glanced at Traill, who was scoffing tarts at a great rate, and then

fixed his eyes grimly on the practical jokers.

"What's this game, Skinner?" he asked quietly.

"Let me pass, please," said Skinner. "Not yet!" answered Wharton coolly. "I want to know what rotten trick you've been playing on the new kid!"

"Is there any law against pulling a new kid's leg?" sneered Skinner.

"Not at all—but there's a limit! Traill, you young ass, don't you know better than to butt into a senior study and scoff a senior man's tuck?" demanded Wharton.

Traill stared at him. "A senior study!" he repeated. "My hat! Didn't you know this was in the Fifth?"

"Eh? Isn't this your study?"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Isn't this Study No. 1 in the Remove?" asked Traill, staring.

"Oh, my aunt! So that's what you've told the young ass, Skinner?"

"Look here, let me pass, you rotter!" snapped Skinner. Wharton's arrival had completely spoiled Skinner's little joke.

"You're not passing yet," said Harry. "Stand where you are! You, too, Snoop! We're going into this. Traill, you benighted young ass, what do you mean by scoffing that stuff? Has Skinner told you you can mop up Coker's stuff?"

"Coker's!" repeated Traill. "Who's Coker?"

"The fellow this study belongs to—a Fifth Form man."

Traill rose to his feet.

"I—I—I thought—oh, my hat! Isn't it Nugent's—didn't Nugent say—oh crumbs!" Traill broke off in dismay. He was innocent and inexperienced; but he was no fool. He could see now how his leg had been pulled.

"You young ass! Lucky I found you here!" exclaimed Wharton. "If Coker came in and found you scoffing his tuck, you'd have been carried away in an ambulance."

"Oh!" gasped Traill.

"Will you let me pass, you cheeky rotter?" snarled Skinner. "I'll jolly well shove you over."

"Shove as hard as you like," answered Wharton contemptuously. "Traill, you young ass, get out! Wait for me in the passage, and I'll take you to my study."

"Oh, all right!"

Traill passed Wharton in the doorway. Skinner shoved forward to follow him; and Harry pushed him back without ceremony. It was a hefty push, and Skinner sat down, hard, on Coker's carpet. Snoop backed away.

"Look here, Wharton, it was only a jape!" said Snoop uneasily. "Can't you mind your own business?"

"A jape's a jape," agreed Wharton. "It's rather rotten to pull a silly new kid's leg—but if you'd bunged him into the wrong study, and left him, you could call it a jape! But it's no joke to set him scoffing Coker's tuck. You know as well as I do that Coker would have smashed him, if he'd found him at it. Do you call it a joke to get a new kid a frightful whopping on his first day in the school? Is that your idea of fun?"

Skinner picked himself up.

"Mind your own business," he snarled savagely. "And now let me get out of this study, confound you! What are you at, you rotter?" he added in alarm, as Wharton shifted the key to the outside of the door.

"You were going to leave Traill here, for Coker to handle," said Harry.

"Well, if you're so keen on Coker handling somebody, you're not going

to be disappointed. Stay here yourselves."

"You cheeky rotter!" bawled Skinner in alarm, and Snoop gave quite a squeak of terror. "Leave that door alone!"

"Rats!"

"Back up, Snoopy!" panted Skinner, and in sheer desperation, he made a rush. And Snoop, equally desperate, backed him up.

Harry Wharton stood like a rock in the doorway. He had no doubt about being able to handle the two weedy slackers of the Remove. They came at him together, and Wharton's right flashed out, and caught Skinner on the chin. Skinner established contact with Coker's carpet again, harder than before. Snoop sprang back just in time to escape the left.

Slam!

The door closed and the key turned. Skinner and Snoop gazed at one another in horror. They were locked in the study—to wait for Coker! Coker, it was absolutely certain, would thrash any fags he found in his study with his raided hamper. It had seemed quite funny to Skinner for Traill to get that thrashing. It did not seem funny at all to get it himself! The humour of the situation was now entirely lost on Harold Skinner!

"Oh crickey!" groaned Snoop.

"The rotter!" hissed Skinner.

Harry Wharton's footsteps died away down the passage. The door was locked—the window twenty or thirty feet from the ground. Skinner and Snoop groaned with dismay. Skinner lifted his hand to hammer at the door! But he dropped it again. Hammering at the door could only bring Fifth Form men there—if anybody!

Leaving the door locked, and the key outside, Harry Wharton joined Traill, and walked him away to the Remove. And Skinner and Snoop, in Coker's study, waited—for Coker!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Hunting Cover!

HORACE COKER, of the Fifth Form, looked very bright and cheery as he came up the passage to his study.

On either side of him walked his chums, Potter and Greene. Following him came Fitzgerald, Tomlinson, and Price, all of the Fifth. Coker was not always regarded as a man of consequence in his Form; indeed, few of the Fifth made a secret of the fact that they regarded him as a prize ass! But on the first day of term Coker had a certain popularity. Plenty of fellows seemed pleased to see Coker back again—and this had a pleasing effect on Coker. He did not attribute it to the gorgeous things he brought back to school with him—not being a suspicious fellow. Five Fifth Form men were coming up to the study with Coker—and he might have had a dozen or more—so extensive was his popularity on the first day of term. Later, it was likely to wane.

Coker turned the door-handle and shoved. To his surprise, the door did not open.

"What the thump!" ejaculated Coker. "This blessed door's jammed, or something! Blow!"

"Locked!" suggested Potter.

"Don't be an ass, Potter!"

"Hem!"

"How could it be locked?" said Coker. "Who the dickens could have locked my study door?"

"They key's on the outside," said Greene.

"Don't be a duffer, Greene! How

Here is some inside information about the

"Hush-Hush" CUNARDER —No. 534

(Which forms the subject of this week's Photogravure Plate.)

THE dream of every engineer is to build something tremendously larger or more powerful or faster than ever has been known before. One engineer can do a tremendous lot on his own by "dreaming dreams" and paving the way for others. When a number of clever engineers get together and pool their ideas and skill, we get something that is really remarkable—like the colossal Cunard liner now on the stocks at the Clydebank shipyard.

Well over a thousand feet long, this monster of the high seas holds the hopes of all those who want Britain to get back the world's speed record for a liner—and a sumptuous liner it is going to be, too. Our Free Gift Photogravure Plate this week gives you an idea of its gigantic proportions.

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Anything up to £5,000,000 this sea-going giant will eventually cost, and it comprises so many secrets in its structure and engines that for want of a better name its official title at the moment is No. 534—people are calling it the "Hush-hush" ship.

The plating of this super-liner's hull is to be so immensely strong that it will be able to stand up to a strain of forty tons to every square inch of its surface. What is probably the largest rudder ever made has been constructed for it, weighing 150 tons. The funnels are built to the same gigantic scale, too, for their top measurement is forty feet across. You could drive four motor-cars abreast down that great tube!

Put this mighty vessel by the side of the White Star liner *Majestic*, whose displacement is 56,621 tons, and the

Majestic would look like a midget, for No. 534's displacement is 73,000 tons. And No. 534 will eventually have thirteen decks!

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Enough carpet to cover a town, and sufficient furniture to stock a town will be needed to complete the outfit of No. 534; but then she is, or will be when completed—a town in herself, with below-deck marvels in the way of the most up-to-date machinery man can devise for driving an outside in ships through the world's stormiest seas.

If you have ever been in a shipyard where the keel of a big vessel is being laid, and have seen the gaunt ribs of the vessel gradually growing up out of what looks like sheer chaos and mountains of lumber, you will be able to appreciate the magnitude of the task which the builders of this record-breaker-to-be have set themselves.

It is owing simply to the hard times through which the world is passing that this superb liner is not yet ready to be launched. But during the period of cessation of work on the vessel everything that has been constructed has been amply protected against the weather, and when the great day comes, and No. 534 takes to the water, the engineers of all the world will raise their hats in acknowledgment to British enterprise and daring and skill!

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could the key be on the outside! You—"Coker broke off suddenly, as he saw the key sticking out of the lock on the outside of the door. "Well, my hat! What silly ass has been playing tricks in my study, I'd like to know."

Coker frowned wrathfully.

Within the study, Skinner and Snoop gazed at one another with almost haggard eyes, as they heard the voices outside. Coker was there—and they had had a wild idea of collaring Coker, taking him by surprise, and up-ending him, and escaping before he got on the right end again. But it was clear that Coker was not alone; so that desperate resource was impracticable.

On the other hand, to wait in the study till Coker discovered them, was an awful prospect! Coker had a quick temper, a heavy hand, and a hefty boot! He had a short way with fags—and in the present circumstances his way with Skinner and Snoop was certain to be very short indeed.

"Make a rush as soon as that fool

opens the door—what?" whispered Snoop.

Skinner shook his head.

"No use—there's a mob of them!"

"But—but what—I say, we shall get a fearful licking—you were a silly ass to bring Traill here—"

"Shut up! Get out of sight, and chance it," whispered Skinner. "By gum, I'll make that moon-faced new cad pay for this."

"It wasn't Traill—it was Wharton—"

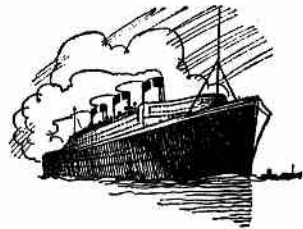
"Oh, shut up!"

Skinner glared desperately round the study. Then he ducked his head and dodged under the table. Snoop ducked to follow.

"No room for two!" muttered Skinner. "We'll be spotted! Find somewhere else—quiet!"

Snoop gave a snarl, and backed behind the screen that stood in a corner of the study. There was no time for argument; Coker was turning the key now. Sidney James Snoop was barely

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out of sight when the door was thrown open.

Coker marched in.

He stared about the study suspiciously. Finding the door locked on the outside had made him suspicious. He gave a snort, at the sight of the open hamper and tuck on the table.

"My hat! Somebody's been here!" he exclaimed.

"Looks like it!" said Potter, with a stare. "After the tuck! Queer that they should lock the door after them when they went."

"Jolly queer!" agreed Greene.

"Faith, it's quare intirely," concurred Fitzgerald. "If they'd taken the key—but they didn't—"

"Anythin' left?" drawled Price.

"That's all right," said Coker. "I fancy the young scoundrels must have been interrupted—there isn't much gone. By gum! I'll jolly well make them sit up for raiding my study! Remove kids, of course—they've got the cheek for it! Look here, let's go along to the Remove and give them a jolly good whopping, what?"

Skinner and Snoop entertained a brief hope.

But it was brief!

The other Fifth Form men had come here for a spread, and they were not disposed to change it for a raid on the Remove. Neither, probably, were they so keen as Coker to wake up a hornet's nest.

"Better find out first who's done it," said Tomlinson. "Not much good whopping the Remove, if it was some of the Fourth or the Shell, what?"

"Well, a whopping always does fags good!" said Coker. "Can't let a thing like this pass. If we let the fags begin the term by checking the Fifth, goodness knows where it will end."

Coker was keen, evidently, on a row. But Coker's voice was like unto one crying in the wilderness. All the other fellows were keen on the hamper.

"Oh, let 'em rip!" said Tomlinson, sitting down. "Like a fellow to help, Coker, old bean? That looks a jolly hamper."

"Topping!" said Price.

Coker grunted. He was in a minority of one. He yielded the point, and started unpacking the hamper. Good things galore were turned out and put on the table. Aunt Judy had done her beloved nephew remarkably well in packing that hamper. The raiders, whoever they were, had not had time to make a very deep inroad.

Quite a cheery party sat down round the table to dispose of that gorgeous spread, while Skinner trembled under the table, and Snoop shivered behind the screen.

"Sorry, old man!" said Tomlinson to Coker.

"Eh, what?"

"Didn't I kick your foot?"

"No."

"Well, it was somebody's foot. Sorry, whoever it was," said Tomlinson. "This cold chicken is a dream, Coker—a beautiful dream!"

"Glad you like it, old man," answered Coker amiably. "Hallo! Did I kick one of you chaps?"

The chaps shook their heads.

"There's something under the table, I think," said Fitzgerald. "I've banged my knee on something. All serene."

"You fellows are duffe. To shove things under the table," said Coker to his study-mates. "I believe in keeping a study tidy. A place for everything, and everything in its place! Look at those slippers on the bookshelf—"

"They're yours," said Potter.

"You put 'em there!" said Greene.

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"Oh!" Coker dropped the subject of the slippers. "Well shoving things out of the way under the table is rotten slovenly. I must say that. One of your bags, I suppose, Potter?"

"Not at all."

"Some rubbish of yours, Greene?"

"Not in the least!"

"Well, there's something there," said Coker, reaching out with a large foot under the table. "I can feel it! There—I've kicked it! It's something!"

There certainly was something! And the "something" that Coker kicked barely repressed a howl of anguish. Snoop, listening behind the screen, was glad that he was not, after all, sharing Skinner's hiding-place.

"Well, never mind," said Tomlinson. "What does it matter? Pass the salt, Pricey!"

"It does matter!" contradicted Coker. "There isn't a lot of room anyhow, without Potter and Greene stacking all sorts of things under a fellow's table."

"But we haven't—"

"Don't argue, Potter!"

"We haven't—"

"Don't talk rot, Greene! What's the good of telling me you haven't stacked a lot of rubbish under the table when I can feel it with my foot? There—I've kicked it again!"

"Ow! Wow! Ow!" came a hideous shriek from under the table. This time Coker's boot had clumped on Skinner's

"You—you see—I—I—" stammered the hapless Skinner.

"Hand me that cricket bat from the corner, Potter! I'll get him out fast enough!"

"Here you are!"

"Now, you young sweep—"

Skinner yelled as Coker lunged under the study table with the bat. He rolled out on the opposite side. Picking himself up with great activity, he made a bound for the door. But he had no chance—three or four big seniors closed up in his way, and grinned, and shoved him back.

"Collar him!" said Coker. "I'll teach him to raid my hamper! Hiding in the study all the time, after scoffing my grub! Find a cricket stump, Potter, old man!"

"Look here, let me get out!" gasped Skinner. "I never touched your grub! I—I was locked in here—that rotter Wharton looked me in—"

"And what were you doing in here, if he did?" demanded Coker. "Somebody locked you in. But you were in the study, what? And what were you up to? Scoffing grub from my hamper! Lay him over that chair!"

"Let go!" shrieked Skinner wildly, as the grinning Fifth-Formers grasped him and stretched him, face down, over the chair.

He kicked and struggled frantically, in horrid anticipation of what was coming.

"I'll give him six!" said Coker. "Give a fellow room! I'm going to lay 'em on—hard!"

Whack!

"Yaroooh!"

Whack!

"Whooop!"

Whack!

"Ow! Ow! Stoppit!" shrieked Skinner.

Skinner never could take a licking; and there was no doubt that Coker was laying it on hard—ver' hard. Six from Wingate would have been nothing to this—even six from Quelch. Skinner writhed and wriggled and roared.

Whack!

"Oh crikey! You rotter—"

Yarooop!"

Whack!

"Don't break him, old bean!" said Fitzgerald. "He's rather a weedy specimen. Don't break him in half!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Whack!

The last whack elicited a fiendish yell from Skinner. He rolled over as the seniors released him, staggered up, and bolted from the study. His flying footsteps died away down the Fifth Form passage.

Coker threw down the stump.

"I fancy," he remarked, "that young sweep won't raid my study again in a hurry! What?"

And the Fifth Form party, chuckling, sat down again to resume the interrupted feast.

Behind the screen in the corner Sidney James Snoop felt his flesh creep with terror. It did not occur to Horace Coker, or to his friends, that there was another fellow hidden in the study—they had found the grub-raider and stumped him, and they were satisfied, and they dismissed the matter from their minds.

Snoop was deeply thankful that he had not been under the table with Skinner. But the perspiration was thick on his brow, as he crouched behind the screen, hardly daring to breathe. The bare idea of getting a stumping like Skinner's made him orange.

Minutes that seemed like hours, if not days, passed: and Snoop crouched and

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ear, and it did damage. "Ow! Ow! Oooh!"

And Coker & Co. jumped as if they had been electrified.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Six for Skinner!

"GREAT pip!"

"There's somebody—"

"Under the table—"

"My hat!"

Coker and his guests were all on their feet, in great surprise. That frantic howl apprised them that it was not "something," but "somebody," that was under the table.

"Why, who—who-what—" stut-tered Coker.

He bent down and stared under the table. His startled eyes met the terrified and infuriated glare of Harold Skinner.

"A Remove fag!" roared Coker. "Skinner of the Remove! Hiding in my study! My hat! We know now who's been raiding my hamper! Have him out!"

"Cheeky young scoundrel!" exclaimed Potter. "Hook him out!"

"Come out!" roared Coker.

"I—I say," stammered Skinner, "I—I wasn't—I—I never—"

"Come out!" bawled Coker. "You know what you're going to get! Come out!"

Skinner did indeed know what he was going to get. It made him feel disinclined to come out.

"Are you coming out?" roared Coker.

cringed and waited. But everything comes to an end at last; and so did the feast in Coker's study. Tomlinson and Fitzgerald and Price rose to go—and went. And Potter and Greene made a move to follow them.

"I'm going to unpack some things," said Coker, glancing at Potter and Greene. "You can lend me a hand."

"Well, there's a meeting in Hall, you know," said Potter.

"Never mind that!"

"Wingate will be speaking—" said Greene.

"I don't care about hearing Wingate talk rot!"

Potter and Greene exchanged a glance. First evening of term was filled with matters of interest; and they were not inclined to spend it in the study—helping Coker unpack. They had helped him unpack the hamper; but that, of course, was a different matter.

"Look here come along with us, Coker," said Potter. "We'd rather not miss it."

"I think I said I was going to unpack."

Potter did not say: "Unpack and be blowed!" It would have been rather ungrateful, after that magnificent spread. What he said was:

"My hat! I've forgotten Prout! I've got to see Prout!" and he scuttled out of the study.

"Phew!" exclaimed Greene. "I'd forgotten Prout!" and he scuttled after Potter.

Once out of the study, however, their footsteps did not lead them in the direction of Mr. Prout, their Form master. They went down to Hall.

Coker grunted, and proceeded to unpack on his lonely own. Behind the screen, Snoop shook an unseen fist at him. All the other Fifth Form fellows were gone, and the coast was clear, excepting for Coker. But Coker, of course, had to hang on—that was the kind of exasperating idiot Coker was! Sidney James Snoop waited and waited and waited: while Coker moved about the study, humming a tune as he unpacked books and other possessions. Suddenly Snoop heard his voice.

"Now, where the thump did I put those Indian clubs?"

Snoop's knees knocked together! There were a pair of Indian clubs in the corner, behind the screen—Snoop's calves brushed them as he stood. If Coker started looking for those clubs—

He did!

Apparently he remembered where he had put them, for Snoop heard his heavy footsteps coming directly towards the screen.

Snoop had a wild idea of grabbing up one of the clubs, braining Coker with it, and fleeing over his prostrate body. But he had no time for that, even if he had had the nerve! Coker's hand was already on the screen to move it aside! Snoop, desperate, shoved it right at him.

"Why—what—" gasped Coker, in astonishment.

It seemed to Coker, for one startling, amazing moment, that that screen had suddenly come to life, and was jumping at him. Before Coker could begin to make out what was happening, it crashed.

"Oooogh!" gasped Coker.

He sat down suddenly, with the screen on his head. It hit his head quite hard, and his head burst through it. Sitting in a state of dazed amazement, with the screen round his neck, Coker had a glimpse of a junior scuttling out of the study like a frightened rabbit.

"Oooogh!" gasped Coker. "What the thump—who the dickens—my only aunt—oooogh—"

Snoop did not wait to hear Coker's remarks. Snoop was doing the Fifth Form passage at a rate which proved that Sidney James, under certain circumstances, would have had a jolly good chance for the School 100-yards!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Fight in Study No. 1!

A RTHUR TRAILL sat in the armchair in Study No. 1, and watched the kettle on the methylated stove in the fender.

Supper in Hall was over, and it was close on time for dorm: but there was to be cocoa in Study No. 1 before the Removites went to bed. Wharton and Nugent had gone along the passage, to see Bob Cherry and Hurree Singh in No. 15. Traill's adventures in Coker's study gave the chums of the Remove the impression that he was rather an ass; but they rather liked him, and quite friendly relations had been established in Study No. 1 in the Remove.

(Continued on next page.)

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Now he cheerfully watched the kettle, while his studymates were gone to gather the Co. for the final cocoa.

The new boy was feeling tired, after a day of such new and exciting experiences, and he was glad of a rest. But his rest was destined to be interrupted.

The half-open door was pushed wide open, and Traill glanced round, expecting to see Wharton or Nugent. But it was the bitter, malicious face of Skinner that he saw.

"Oh! You're here," said Skinner, coming into the study.

"Yes, here I am," answered Traill politely. He grinned a little. "Did you have a good time in that study in the Fifth?"

"You thought it rather funny to lock a fellow in, to get teco from that ruffian Coker, didn't you?" said Skinner.

"Wasn't that what you intended for me?" asked Traill. "It seems to me a case of the bitter bit! I don't see why you should play such a rotten trick on a new fellow."

"Coker gavo me six with a cricket stump!" said Skinner. "I've been looking for a chance to see you."

"Well, you can see me now!" Traill laughed. "You don't want to see Wharton! It was he who locked you in, you know."

Skinner had excellent reasons for not wanting to see Wharton about it. He had about as much chance in a scrap with the captain of the Remove as he would have had with Carnera. Skinner preferred to "take it out" of a fellow he could handle. And he very much wanted to take it out of somebody. He had had no chance, so far, as the captain of the Remove seemed to have taken Traill under his wing. Now he had found the new fellow alone; and was ready to pass on to him what

he had received from Coker of the Fifth. He came further into the study and shut the door after him.

Traill eyed him warily. "Get out of that chair!" said Skinner. "I'm quite comfortable in it, thanks."

Skinner stood before him, eyeing him. Skinner was no fighting-man, but he was in a savage temper, and he had no doubt that he could handle the slim, rather delicate-featured new "kid." He was bigger, and obviously stronger, than Traill; and he had no scruple whatever in taking advantage of those circumstances. In his present frame of mind, there was satisfaction in the idea of hammering the fellow right and left. As Traill made no movement, he leaned forward, grasped him by the shoulder, and hooked him out of the chair.

"Now put up your hands, you rotter!" he said between his teeth.

"You wouldn't rather wait for Wharton?" asked Traill. "He will be back in a few minutes."

Skinner's answer was a drive right at his face, which would have lifted the new fellow half across the study if it had landed.

But it did not land. With unexpected swiftness and neatness, Traill guarded, and Skinner's clenched fist passed him by, smiting the empty air, and Skinner, carried on by his own momentum, bumped against Traill. The new junior did not hit out, but gave the surprised Skinner a push, sending him down to the carpet, where he sat hard.

"Oh!" gasped Skinner. "Sit there and take a rest till Wharton comes back!" suggested Traill. "It's really Wharton you want to see, you know."

Skinner scrambled up, red with rage, and fairly hurled himself at the new Removee.

Traill gave ground, backing round the table, under the onslaught. But it was clear at once that he knew something about boxing; and though he was not strong, he was light and active. And it was clear, too, that he had plenty of pluck, which Skinner rather lacked. He guarded coolly, and not one of Skinner's savage blows reached him; and they circumnavigated the study table. Traill smiling, Skinner panting.

"You rotten funk!" gasped Skinner. "Haven't you pluck enough to stand up to a chap?"

"Oh, all right!" said Traill. Instead of retreating farther, he came on, and Skinner, to his surprise and annoyance, found his sawing fists swept away, and a set of knuckles planted on his nose.

For the second time, Skinner sat down.

It was not a hard knock—Traill did not seem to have enough beef in him for a really hard one. But it was enough to floor Skinner, and it had drawn a spurt of claret from his nose.

Skinner clasped his nose, and his fingers were reddened. Traill sat on the edge of the table and watched him. The cad of the Remove scemed in no hurry to get to his feet again.

"Chuck it," suggested Traill amicably. "What is there to row about, anyhow? You played a rotten trick, and got the worst of it. That's all! I don't want to scrap if you don't."

"You rotten worm!" gasped Skinner.

He scrambled up at last. By this time, Skinner was feeling rather sorry that he had provoked the scrap. But he simply could not back out from a fight with a new fellow who looked hardly half his weight. Traill was plucky, and he knew how to box; but physically he was not Skinner's match. Skinner came on again, putting all his beef into it; and Traill slipped round the table, and met him coolly and steadily.

Tramp! tramp! tramp! For two or three minutes they went at it, and this time Skinner got in a couple of body blows that made the new fellow gasp. That encouraged Skinner. The fellow was already tiring—there was no beef in him. Skinner pressed harder.

The study door was suddenly flung open, and a little crowd of juniors appeared in the doorway.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Scraping already!"

Harry Wharton ran into the study.

"Stop that, Skinner!" he rapped out.

"Mind your own business," snarled Skinner.

Wharton caught him by the shoulder, and slung him back. Traill stood panting for breath.

"It's all right," he gasped, "let him come on."

"Rot!" snapped Wharton. "You're not going to scrap, your first day here! Skinner, you rotter, if you're ratty about what you got in Coker's study, you can deal with me. I locked you in—not Traill!"

"Skinner would rather deal with Traill!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Skinner thinks it's more blessed to give than to receive."

"If that funk's going to hide behind you, Wharton—" sneered Skinner.

"Shut up, you rotter!"

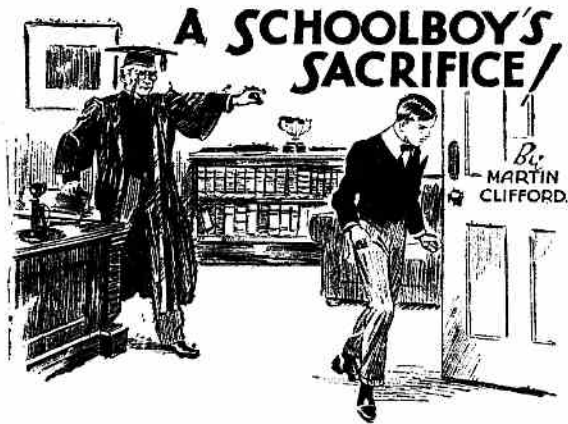
Traill pushed the captain of the Remove aside.

"Let him come on," he said quietly. "I think I can handle him—I'm going to try, anyhow."

"Hear, hear!" said Johnny Bull.

"The hear-hearfulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Harry Wharton frowned. He was mindful of his promise to Mr. Quelch,



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and ready to kick Skinner out of the study. But he could hardly prevent Traill from having his own way. He stood aside, while the combat was renewed.

Skinner came on again with a rush. Wharton looked on anxiously. It looked as if the slightly built new fellow must be rushed off his feet by sheer weight. But Traill side-stepped swiftly, and his fist lashed out, catching Skinner under the ear.

Crash!

Skinner went over like a ninepin and measured his length on the study carpet. He sprawled and gasped.

"Bravo!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Man down!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"Good man!" said Wharton, in great relief.

Skinner sat up.

"Ow!" he gasped. "Wow! Ow!"

"Like a hand up?" asked Johnny Bull sarcastically. "Shall we lift you on to your feet, old bean?"

"Ow! Oooh! Ow!"

"Take your time," said Bob. "It's dorm in a quarter of an hour. But I suppose you won't be frightfully disappointed if this terrific scrap is interrupted."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner scowled savagely. As a matter of fact, he had had enough. His head was singing, and Skinner never could take punishment. He sat where he was, and scowled.

"Well, is that the finish?" asked Harry Wharton. "If you're done, Skinner, will you crawl out, and clear? You don't need telling that you're not wanted here, I suppose?"

Skinner picked himself up slowly. Traill watched him warily, but Skinner did not look at him. Without a word, but scowling blackly, he crossed to the door and left the study. The fight, evidently, was over.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for Skinner!

WINGATE of the Sixth saw lights out for the Remove.

Traill came up to the dormitory with Harry Wharton & Co. He smiled faintly as he caught a black scowl from Skinner. Skinner, looking at him, was tempted to try his luck again; a less keen fellow than Skinner could have seen that the new boy was hardly fitted to take his place in the rough-and-tumble of life of the Lower Fourth. But if he had not beef and brawn he had pluck—and Skinner was not the man for a fight to a finish. He still had several aches and pains left over from the fight in Study No. 1, and he did not want to add to his collection. And there were other and less strenuous ways of making a fellow sorry for himself—Skinner was not particular.

After lights out there was a cheery buzz of talk from bed to bed. Traill did not join in it. When Bob Cherry spoke to him he did not answer.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Gone to sleep already, Traill?" called out Bob, in a voice that would have awakened most sleepers.

There was no answer from Traill. Evidently he was asleep, and in a very deep slumber.

"Let the dear boy sleep!" jeered Skinner. "The poor little fellow's tired. Why did they send him here, instead of to a home for crocks? He looks as if he would fall down if a fellow pushed him."

"He didn't fall down when you pushed him," chuckled Bob. "You did

the falling down, Skinner! And you weren't in a fearful hurry to get up again."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Skinner said no more.

Slumber sealed the eyes of the Remove at last, but Skinner did not sleep. There was a pain in his ear and a pain in his nose, which helped to keep him awake. But Skinner had no intention of sleeping till he had carried out a little scheme that he had in his mind for the discomfiture of the fellow who had licked him. But he was in no hurry. He dozed off once or twice, but he was awake when eleven o'clock boomed from the old tower. Then Skinner sat up in bed.

He listened for a few minutes, and spoke in a low voice.

"You fellows asleep?"

Only steady breathing, and the snore of Billy Bunter answered him. The Remove at that hour were deep in slumber.

Skinner waited another minute or two, and then slipped softly and silently from his bed. It was dark in the dormitory, only a glimmer of May starlight coming in at the high windows. Skinner groped his way cautiously in the gloom.

From under his bed he had taken a

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tin of treacle. That tin was to be up-ended over the sleeper in Traill's bed. Skinner grinned at the thought of the sticky fluid streaming over a startled face. Traill was going to have a sudden and unpleasant awakening. Long before he could be spotted Skinner would be back in his bed—leaving the Remove to guess who had played that trick on the new boy.

Silently, cautiously, Skinner groped his way to Traill's bed. He bent over it and listened for the sleeper's breathing, as a guide for the treacle.

He heard no sound. Listening intently he gave a start. It seemed, for the moment, that the fellow was not breathing at all. Then, in utter amazement, Skinner made a startling discovery.

The bed was empty!

The bedclothes were turned back, just as the occupant had left them, getting out of bed. He groped over the pillow—it was cold. It was some time, at least, since Traill's head had lain there.

Skinner stood rooted with astonishment.

The discovery was utterly unexpected.

Where was Traill after eleven o'clock at night? Skinner had not heard him move, but he remembered that he had dozed once or twice. During one of these brief dozes Traill must have got out of bed and out of the dormitory.

Obviously, he could not be in the dormitory! Where was he?

Out of bounds!

Skinner whistled softly.

There were fellows in the Remove who sometimes broke bounds after lights out—the Bounder, and Skinner himself! But a new fellow, on the first night of his first term in the school—that was amazing! Keen as he was, suspicious as he was, Skinner had never suspected for a moment that the innocent-looking new kid was that kind of a sweep! Breaking bounds at night—his first night in the school! It was the limit!

"My hat!" breathed Skinner.

He carefully replaced the lid on the treacle tin. That was not wanted now! The tin was hidden under Skinner's bed again, and the cad of the Remove stood for some minutes, thinking. Then, with silent tread, he crossed to the dormitory door, and with infinite caution turned the key in the lock. He suppressed a chuckle as he turned it. Skinner had been locked in Coker's study, now Traill was locked out of his dormitory. It was tit for tat with a vengeance. Skinner drew the key from the door and laid it on the floor under his bed.

When Traill came back and found that he was shut out, he would have to let the other fellows know that he had been out of bounds. He would have to awaken some fellow to get him to let him in. But Skinner did not intend him to be let in. Traill could spend the rest of the night outside, at the risk of being discovered out of his dormitory by a master or prefect. Skinner, as he crept into bed again felt that that would balance the account and a little over.

He lay awake for some time listening for a sound at the door. Twelve strokes boomed out from the clock tower, and Skinner's eyes closed in spite of himself. Traill had not come back yet—at midnight! He was keeping it up! Skinner fell asleep, the last thought in his mind being that he would waken when Traill, at the door, tried to attract the attention of some Removite to let him in.

Clang, clang, clang!

It was the rising-bell that awakened Skinner in the glimmering sunshine of the spring morning. He had slept soundly, after going to sleep so late.

Skinner sat up and rubbed his eyes.

"I say, you fellows! Bother that bell!" groaned Billy Bunter. "I say, don't make a row—I'm going to have a few more minutes."

"Turn out, you fat slacker!" boomed Bob Cherry.

Bob was first out of bed in the Remove.

"Shut up!" hooted Bunter. "I tell you I'm going to have a few more minutes!"

"You won't have time to wash, old fat man!"

"I don't need so much washing as you do! I'm clean!" said Bunter. "Shut up and let a fellow—Whoooooop!"

Bunter rolled out in a tangle of sheets and blankets, with the help of Bob Cherry.

"Beast!" he roared.

Skinner sat rubbing his eyes. He remembered the strange happening of the night, and bent over the side of his bed, to glance at the door-key he had placed there. It was still there, where he had laid it.

The dormitory door was still locked—Traill had not come back—he had not tried to make any fellow wake and let him in!

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,317.

"Oh crumbs!" ejaculated Skinner. Traill, then, must be still outside the dormitory—in full view of early-morning maids—outside a locked door; indubitable proof that he had been out of bounds at night. Skinner chuckled.

A dozen Remove fellows were up already, and Skinner wondered that they had not noticed that Traill's bed was empty. He glanced at it. Harry Wharton was standing by it, shaking a heavy sleeper by the shoulder to awaken him. Skinner heard a yawn from Traill's bed.

"My hat! You're a jolly sound sleeper, old bean," said Harry. "Didn't you hear the rising-bell?"

Arthur Traill sat up, blinking. "Eh! No! I sleep pretty soundly!" Skinner stared at him. He could not believe his eyes! He could not believe his ears! The ghost of Arthur Traill could hardly have startled him so much! He had locked Traill out of the dormitory—the door was still locked, the key where Skinner had placed it—and there was Traill, sitting up in bed, as if he had never left the dormitory at all! Skinner, his eyes fairly popping out of his head, stared at him, wondering dizzily whether he was dreaming.

THE NINTH CHAPTER

Sauce for the Gander!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry stared at Skinner. "What's the row? Seen a ghost, or what?"

Skinner did not answer. He looked like a fellow who had seen a ghost. Half a dozen other fellows, as well as Bob Cherry, were looking at him curiously.

He was unconscious of it. With bulging eyes, he stared at the new fellow, sitting up in bed and yawning. Traill turned out. It was Traill—not his ghost, though Skinner could almost have believed that it was a ghost. His brain was in a whirl. What did it—what could it mean?

"It—it—it's Traill!" Skinner found his voice at last. "It's Traill! How did he get here?"

That extraordinary question drew most eyes in the Remove dormitory on Skinner. Nobody else in the room had the least idea that Arthur Traill had left his bed during the night. Traill seemed as surprised as anyone else. He looked round at Skinner blankly.

"What—what did you say?" he ejaculated.

"I said, how did you get here?" exclaimed Skinner. "How did you get in after you were locked out?"

"Locked out?" repeated Traill. "Wandering in your mind, old bean?" asked the Bouncer. "What on earth are you talking about, Skinner?"

Skinner got out of bed. He had not intended to mention the trick he had played; but he did not think of that now. He was too amazed and disconcerted to think of it.

"How did you get back?" he exclaimed, coming a few steps towards Traill. "How did you do it?"

"Get back?" repeated Traill. "From where? How? What do you mean?" He looked at Skinner as if he thought that the fellow was a little out of his mind.

"Are you making out that you never went out of the dorm last night?" demanded Skinner.

"Eh? What? No need to make that out," said Traill blankly. "Of course I never went out of the dormitory last night. Why should I?"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,317.

"That's a lie!" yelled Skinner. Traill looked at him.

"We had a scrap last night," he said. "Do you want to begin the day with another, before breakfast?"

"What on earth are you driving at, Skinner?" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "What the dickens has put it into your head that the new kid went out of the dorm in the night?"

"Because I saw his bed empty!" hissed Skinner. "He was out before eleven o'clock, and he hadn't come back at twelve."

"Great pip!"

"What rot!" said Bob Cherry.

"The rotfulness is terrific!"

"I suppose I can believe my own eyes!" exclaimed Skinner. "I tell you I got up and saw his bed empty. I was awake for an hour afterwards, and heard twelve strike, and he hadn't come back."

"Oh crumbs!" exclaimed the Bouncer. "Have we got a new giddy goat here, who breaks bounds on the first night of term? My hat!"

"Rubbish!" said Wharton sharply. "I suppose there's no truth in what Skinner is saying, Traill?"

"None at all!" answered Traill.

Skinner glared at him speechlessly. He disliked the new fellow, and would have been glad to make him out a "bad hat." Yet he was surprised to hear him make a false statement. Traill did not look like a fellow who would lie. Yet he was lying now—unless Skinner had been dreaming!

"Is this one of Skinner's jokes?" asked Lord Mauleverer. "If it is, I don't see the fun myself. There's a limit, you know, old bean."

"It's the truth!" howled Skinner. "He was out of bounds past midnight. I locked the door to keep him out of the dorm, and fancied that he would try to wake up fellows to let him in. But—the door's still locked. I can't make it out—"

"The door's locked?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Yes, and the key's under my bed."

"Are you potty? If the door's locked on the inside, how could Traill have got back, if you locked him out?"

"That's what I'm asking him."

"Well, my hat!"

"I say, you fellows, there's the key." Billy Bunter blinked under the bed and hooked out the key. He rolled across to the door, put it into the lock, and turned it. "The door was locked all right."

All the Remove watched Bunter as he unlocked the door. There was no doubt that it had been locked on the inside. To all the Form but Skinner that was proof that Traill had not been out.

Traill burst into a laugh.

"You've been dreaming" he said. "Do you imagine that I was outside and got in through the keyhole?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner had quite a dazed look. He had not dreamed it—he was certain that he had not dreamed it. Most of the fellows were laughing now.

"He must have climbed back through the window," said Skinner at last. "That's all—he must have got in at the window."

"Some acrobat!" said Bob Cherry.

There was a loud laugh. The dormitory windows were more than forty feet from the ground. Below the windows, as some of the fellows knew, ran a narrow stone ledge, adorned with gargoyles, along which an extremely agile fellow, with a nerve of iron, might have passed to adjoining roofs—and below that was a mass of thick old ivy,

by which a descent to the ground was barely possible.

It was on record that a Remove fellow had climbed down from the dorm windows. But the bare idea of a slight fellow like Traill, a total stranger to the place, performing such a feat, on his first night in the school, was absurd; or seemed so to the Remove. Tom Redwing, the sailorman's son, might have done what Skinner suggested—the Bouncer was said to have done it—but Traill, whom Skinner himself had described as a "crock"—even Skinner realised that the suggestion was incredible.

Traill stared at him and laughed.

"I looked out of the window here—yesterday, when I came up for the first time," he remarked. "It made me feel giddy, just to look out. I can see myself climbing in the dark—just a few!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How did you get in, then?" demanded Skinner.

"I haven't been out you ass!"

"You deny going out of the dorm last night, while all the fellows were asleep?" hissed Skinner.

"Certainly."

"It's a lie—a lie!" Skinner almost screamed. "You were out of bounds, and I locked you out! You know you were out of bounds—"

"Hold on!" said Harry Wharton quietly. "Let's have this clear. You fancied Traill was out of the dorm, Skinner, and you locked the door—"

"I knew he was out!"

"Well, you thought so, at least, as you locked the door. And why did you lock a fellow out?"

"I—I—I—" Skinner realised that he was treading on slippery ice. "I—I was going to give him a fright—of course, I should have let him in when he came back. I expected him to call or knock—"

"And how did it happen that you got up in the middle of the night and found his bed empty, as you say you did?"

"Never mind that—I did, anyhow!" snarled Skinner.

"You got up to play some rotten trick on the new kid—is that what you mean?"

"No business of yours if I did! I saw that he wasn't in bed!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Where did you bag that, Bunter?" roared Bob Cherry suddenly. There was a tin of treacle in Bunter's fat hands.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "It—it's mine, old chap! I didn't see it under Skinner's bed when I got the key—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The—the fact is, I—I brought it up to the dorm with me last night. I happened to put it under Skinner's bed instead of my own! If Skinner makes out that it's his—"

"I dare say Skinner would rather not make out that it was his," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Bring it here, you fat frump! It's Skinner's, and Skinner's going to have it!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Hand it over! I think we've got it clear now," said the captain of the Remove. "You don't usually bring a tin of treacle up to bed with you, Skinner. You don't usually get up and sneak along to another fellow's bed in the middle of the night! I fancy we can put two and two together! You were going to mop that treacle over Traill."

"Well, the rotter!" exclaimed Traill.

"Suppose I was?" snarled Skinner. "I didn't, because he wasn't there! If he'd been there, he would have got it!"

"Well, he must have been there, as he wasn't anywhere else. It was dark, I



"Ow! Wow! Ow!" came a hideous shriek from under the table as Coker's boot clumped on Skinner's ear. "Ow! Oooh!" Coker's guests jumped up in surprise. "Why, who—who—what—" stuttered Coker, staring under the table. "My hat! It's Skinner, hiding in my study! Now we know who's been raiding my hamper! Have him out!"

suppose, and you fancied he wasn't! Anyhow, you're not going to play sticky tricks like that in this dormitory. You've had a narrow escape of getting fearfully sticky, Traill. Skinner's not going to have a narrow escape—he's going to have the treacle!"

"Good egg!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"I say, you fellows, don't waste that treacle!" exclaimed Billy Bunter anxiously. "I say, I like treacle—"

"Let's hopo Skinner does! It's his, and he's going to have it. Where will you have it, Skinner?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It won't be wasted," continued Wharton. "Skinner wants a lesson about playing such a dirty trick on a chap when he's asleep! After this, I fancy he won't bring any more treacle into the dorm. Here, Skinner—"

By that time, Skinner was wishing that he had said nothing! But it was rather too late. He jumped away as Wharton came towards him with the open tin of treacle. Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull grasped him at once.

"Let go!" yelled Skinner frantically.

"My esteemed Skinner," chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "whoever is saucy to the goose, must be saucy to the gander, as the proverb remarks."

"Urrrrrgh!" gurgled Skinner, as the treacle streamed from the tin over his face. "Wurrrrrgh! Ow! You rotter—grooooooh! Gug-gug-gug!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner struggled wildly. But he was held, while the treacle streamed down, covering his crimson face with a sticky mask. For the second time, Skinner's jesting had turned against himself; and this was

really rather worse than what had happened in Coker's study. Skinner lived, and moved, and had his being in treacle; and when he was released, he clawed wildly at streaming treacle, spluttering and gurgling and gasping, amid yells of laughter from the Remove.

When the rest of the Form went down, Skinner was still busy cleaning off treacle. Skinner was late for prayers that morning. He had a lot of washing to do.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

"Chuck It, Skinner!"

"O H, chuck it!" said Snoop, in a tired voice.

Sidney James Snoop was fed-up.

"Yes, chuck it!" said Stott, with a nod.

Frederick Stott seemed as fed-up as Snoop! Skinner, sitting on the table in Study No. 11, scowled at the two of them.

The new term was a week old.

A week was more than long enough for the average schoolboy to forget a "row" with another fellow.

But Skinner had not forgotten.

His dislike of the new junior, Traill, seemed to improve, like wine, with keeping.

Like many humorists, Skinner hated to have a joke turned against himself. All the Remove had laughed over the affair in Coker's study—where Skinner had captured the whopping he had intended for Traill. They had laughed again over the treacleing in the dormitory.

Still more, they had laughed at Skinner's story of Traill having been out of bounds after lights out.

The last was, perhaps, the unkindest cut of all. Skinner was not very particular about the truth; and so, on the occasions when he did tell the truth, it was intensely annoying not to be believed. The opinion of the Remove fellows was, that Skinner would say anything about a fellow he disliked—and not a fellow believed a word of his story about Traill's breaking bounds. Indeed, it seemed to be disproved by Skinner's own action in locking the dormitory door.

Yet Skinner knew that it was true! Traill had been out of bed, and out of the dormitory that night, and Skinner knew it.

The fellow was, therefore, a liar and a humbug; no better than Skinner himself, in fact.

When Skinner was found out in a fib, it did not worry him very much. But to be generally set down as a liar, when he was telling the truth, was intolerable.

Traill had made no mark in the Form; many fellows hardly knew he was there. But so far as his existence was noted, he was rather liked.

He was good-natured, good-tempered, agreeable; and he was on friendly terms with the Famous Five, the leaders of the Form! Except for Skinner, he had no enemy. He was not strong, but he was plucky, as he had shown in his little trouble with Skinner. He was quite popular, which Skinner was not, and never likely to be.

And all the time, he was, as Skinner

(Continued on page 16.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,317.



AFTER LIGHTS OUT!

(Continued from page 13.)

was convinced, some sort of a "bad hat"; a fellow who broke bounds at night like Skinner himself, or the Bounder, or Angel of the Fourth! Harry Wharton & Co. would have dropped him like a hot potato had they known what Skinner knew! But they did not believe a word of it; they took Traill's word, and treated Skinner's with contemptuous scorn.

Even in his own study, Skinner found that his own familiar friends turned against him. Snoop and Stott were fed-up, and they told him so.

"My advice to you," said Stott, in his slow and stolid way, "is to chuck it, Skinner! You're making a fool of yourself."

"I tell you," said Skinner, "that the fellow's a black sheep, and breaks bounds at night."

"And you don't?" grinned Snoop. "I don't humbug about it and tell lies!" snarled Skinner. "I don't make out that I'm pi. That rotter does!"

"I don't believe he'd have the nerve to break bounds," said Stott, "and I don't believe he'd want to, if he had the nerve!"

"Well, I've told you—"

"Gammon! The sooner you leave off telling that silly story, the better!" said Stott. "You've got your knife into the chap, and that's that!"

"I tell you—" yelled Skinner.

"Oh, chuck it!" exclaimed Snoop. "Let the fellow alone! I'm fed-up to the back teeth with the subject, anyhow. Look here, if you're going to gabble that silly story over again, I'm off!"

And Snoop walked out of the study and Stott followed him. Skinner scowled after them. Generally, Snoop and Stott followed his lead; but they had no sympathy whatever with his feud with the new fellow. Skinner himself might have got over it, but for the bitter irritation of being condemned by the white Form as a slanderer, when for once, at least, he had stated the exact facts.

He left Study No. 11 and went moodily down the Remove passage. Outside Study No. 1, there was a cheery group of juniors in flannels. Harry Wharton had a bat under his arm, and Nugent a ball in his hand. The Famous Five were going down to cricket practice after class; and as Skinner came along, Bob was shouting to a fellow in Study No. 1.

"Come on, Traill! Games practice, old bean."

"Right-ho!" came back Traill's cheery voice. And he appeared in the study doorway with a smile on his face.

Skinner gave him a bitter look. Traill looked a wholesome, decent fellow—not at all the fellow to be suspected of breaking school bounds at night. Harry Wharton & Co. were taking him at face value, as it were. Yet Skinner knew! It angered and exasperated him to see

Traill taking in these fellows with such ease. They never concealed their contempt of Skinner, and his slack and shady ways. Yet Skinner maintained that he was, at all events, a better fellow than Traill. If he sneaked out of school after lights out, as he did, at any rate, he did not tell lies about it. If he was a shady sweep he was not a humbug. Traill was both, in Skinner's belief.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Wherefore that sunny smile, old bean?" asked Bob Cherry; and the juniors laughed.

Skinner's face was wearing anything but a sunny smile.

"You fellows haven't found that spoofer out yet?" asked Skinner, with a bitter sneer. "I dare say the prefects will, sooner or later."

"What is there for them to find out, Skinner?" asked Traill.

"You know better than I do! You don't get out at night to admire the scenery by moonlight, I suppose?" jeered Skinner.

"I don't get out at night at all," said Traill quietly. "Can't you get that silly rot out of your silly head, Skinner?"

Skinner looked at him hard. If ever a fellow looked as if he was telling the truth, Traill did. It almost took Skinner's breath away. He could lie himself, but not in this quiet, convincing manner.

"Well, you take the cake!" said Skinner. "You've spoofered these chaps—anybody could spoof such mugs. But you know that I know! How you can stand there and tell such whopping lies—"

"That's enough," interrupted Harry Wharton. "Look here, Skinner, everybody's fed-up with this! You've got to chuck it!"

"I'll please myself about that!" snarled Skinner.

"You won't!" said the captain of the Remove quietly. "I suppose you dreamed that Traill was out the first night of term. You seem to believe your own silly yarn! But nobody else believes it—and you've got to chuck it! You've said enough, and a little over!"

"The chuckfulness is the proper caper!" agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The fed-upfulness is terrific, my esteemed Skinner."

"I've said, and I say again—" began Skinner.

"Chuck it!" roared Johnny Bull.

"I've said—"

"My hat! He's wound up!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Here, hand me that bat, Wharton! Now, Skinner, you've got to chuck it—see? Otherwise, I shall give you a dig, like that—"

"Ow!" roared Skinner, jumping away.

"And a lunge, like that—"

"You dangerous idiot, keep that bat away!" shrieked Skinner, dodging back along the passage.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Are you going to chuck it?" grinned Bob.

"No!" yelled Skinner. "I'll say what I like, and I say— Yaroooh! Oh crickey! Yoooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" howled the juniors, as Skinner beat a hasty retreat along the passage, Bob following him and prodding with the bat.

Bob Cherry prodded rather hard. Skinner ran, and then he tore—and he was going at about 60 m.p.h. by the time he reached his study. He rushed in and slammed the door.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"More if you want it, Skinner!"

bawled Bob, through the keyhole. "Lots more! Tons! Better think it over, and chuck it, old bean!"

And Bob Cherry rejoined his comrades and went down to the cricket with Traill, laughing as they went. Skinner, in his study, was not laughing—he was gasping and groaning. Prodding with a cricket bat, in Bob Cherry's hefty hands, was neither grateful nor comforting. And, savagely malicious and revengeful as Skinner felt, it was borne in upon his mind that he had better, as he was advised, "chuck" it!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Biff for Bunter!

"I SAY, old fellow!"

Billy Bunter blinked in at the doorway of Study No. 1. Traill, the new fellow in the Remove, was there alone, seated in the armchair. The high back of the chair was towards the window, and Billy Bunter, as he blinked at the new junior through his big spectacles, did not make out his face very clearly. However, he recognised him—it was Traill. And he proceeded:

"I say, old chap, you might answer a fellow!"

Traill did not answer. His face was directly towards Bunter, standing at the door. But he took no more notice of the fat junior than if he had not seen him.

Bunter grunted.

"Look here, Traill—"

Silence!

"If you call that civil, staring at a fellow and not answering him, I jolly well don't!" snapped Bunter. "Look here, I want to settle about that ticket—I owe you two bob."

Traill did not move or speak.

"I'm not a fellow to go about owing fellows money," went on Bunter. "I've always been jolly particular about that sort of thing. Neither a borrower nor a lender be, you know, and all that! Well, I'm expecting a postal order tomorrow morning."

Bunter paused, like Brutus, for a reply. Like Brutus, he did not get one! He snorted and carried on.

"The postal order will be for five shillings! I'm going to square the two I owe you out of that! See?"

If Traill saw he did not say so. He was as silent as a stone image.

"Deaf?" hooted Bunter. "Can't you answer a fellow?"

Traill couldn't, or wouldn't! At all events, he didn't!

"Some fellows make out that I never square," went on Bunter. "Well, I'm going to as soon as my postal order comes in the morning! Now, my idea is this, Traill: I'm short of cash till my postal order comes. Suppose you give me three bob now, and take the whole of the postal order—five shillings! What?"

Still no reply.

"What about it?" hooted Bunter.

Silence!

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated the Owl of the Remove. "Are you deaf, or asleep, or what, you howling idiot?"

He rolled nearer to the junior in the armchair, bent over him, and blinked at him more closely. Then he made the discovery that Traill's eyes were closed, and that he was fast asleep.

He blinked at him in astonishment. Traill had been at cricket practice with the Famous Five and other Remove fellows, and he had come back alone to the study, quite tired. There was no

doubt that Traill lacked the average fellow's "beef," and he tired soon—and all the more so because he was determined not to be a weakling, and so rather over-did his exertions. Still, it was rather surprising to see any fellow so sound asleep in the afternoon. It had been noticed in the Remove that Traill was a particularly sound sleeper—but this was rather unusual. Billy Bunter gave a discontented grunt as he realized that his eloquence had been wasted on a fellow buried deep in slumber, who had not heard a word of it!

"Look here, wake up, you ass!" hooted Bunter.

Traill's eyes did not open. Billy Bunter took hold of his shoulder and shook him. That would have awakened any fellow in the Remove excepting perhaps Bunter himself. But it did not awaken Traill. He remained fast asleep.

"Well, my hat!" said Bunter. "Talk about Rip Van Winkle! Here, you sleepy idiot, wake up! See? Wake up!"

Traill stirred as Bunter shook him again. His eyes did not open. Bunter blinked at him in utter astonishment. Traill, so far as Bunter could make out, was pretending to be still asleep, to pull his leg. He extended a fat hand, took Traill's nose between a fat finger and thumb and pinched it hard! That, Bunter considered, would wake him up!

The result was rather unexpected. Traill made a sudden movement, and his arm shot out, catching Bunter under his fat chin. Bunter went over backwards and sat down with a bump that almost shook Study No. 1.

"Ooooooh!" roared Bunter. "Ow! Keep off, you beast! You rotter—wow! Oh crikey! Ow!"

The fat Owl squirmed away and picked himself up, in anticipation of another punch. But Traill still sat in the armchair, and his eyes were still closed.

"You beast!" roared Bunter. "Making out you're asleep when you've knocked a fellow over! Are you trying to pull my leg, you fathead?"

Traill did not answer or move. Bunter, from the door, blinked at him blankly. Why the fellow was playing such an idiotic game was a mystery to William George Bunter. If it was a joke, Bunter did not see the point.

"I've a jolly good mind to have you out of that chair, and mop up the study with you!" roared Bunter.

No answer.
"What are you playing this silly trick for—pretending to be asleep, when I know jolly well you're not?"
Silence!

"You silly, fatheaded, frabjous ass!" hooted Bunter. "Do you think it's funny? Yah!"

And Bunter stamped out of the study, and slammed the door after him. Then he rolled away in search of Lord Mauleverer, in the hope of getting that postal order cashed.

Hurree Singh and Johnny Bull. Wharton looked into Study No. 1 to call the new junior.

There was no reply; and a second glance showed him that the study was empty. Traill was not there.

Wharton stepped back into the passage.

"Seen Traill, any of you men?" he called out.

"Blow Traill!" grunted Skinner.

"I saw him, about ten minutes ago," said Vernon-Smith. "He was going up the passage towards Masters' rooms."

"What the thump was he going there for?"

"Blessed if I know! I called to him,

but he didn't answer," said the Bouncer.

Greatly puzzled, Wharton went along the passage that led to Masters' rooms. Juniors were not supposed to wander in that quarter of the House; they had no business there. Traill was a new fellow; but he had had time to learn his way about the House, in more than a week. Why he had walked down that passage was a mystery.

However, Wharton followed. Tea was late, and he was hungry, and he wanted to gather in Traill and get to Study No. 13. But the new junior was not in sight in the passage, or in the next one into which the captain of the

(Continued on next page.)

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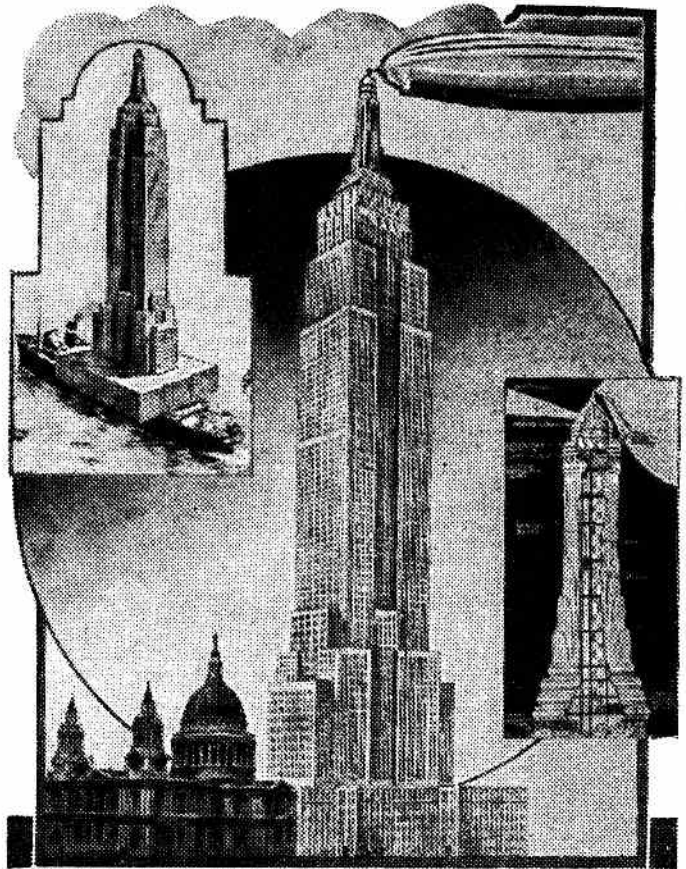
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THE TWELFTH CHAPTER,

The Cold Shoulder!

HARRY WHARTON put his head into Study No. 1, and called cheerily:

"Tea with Bob, old bean!"
It was deeply dusky in the study. The chums of the Remove had kept up games practice rather late, and it was dusk when they came in. Tea was in Study No. 13 that day, and Nugent had gone on to that study with Bob and

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Remove turned. Wharton stopped, and looked about him. He was quite perplexed.

The rooms occupied by Mr. Lascelles, the mathematics master, were in the passage he was standing in. As he had no business there—except to find Traill—he was unwilling to be spotted there by any “beak” who might happen to come along.

“Oh, here you are!” he exclaimed suddenly.

The passage was deeply dusky; but he recognized the figure that came in sight, coming towards him from the farther end of the passage. It was Traill—apparently coming back from goodness knows where. He was a dozen feet from Wharton, when he came round a corner.

“This way, Traill!” called out Wharton. “We’re not allowed here—what the dickens have you come here for?”

To his surprise, Traill did not answer. He came on a few steps, and then turned into another passage that branched off to the right.

Wharton stared blankly. It was the “cut direct,” if Traill could have been supposed to have any reason for barring him, he could hardly have failed to see and to hear the captain of the Remove; but he had turned the corner without taking the slightest notice of him.

Puzzled, and beginning to get angry, Wharton walked quickly along to the corner, and turned into the passage Traill was following. The new junior was already some distance along it.

“Traill!” shouted Wharton. Traill did not turn his head. “Are you deaf, or potty?” shouted Wharton, really angry now. “What’s this game, you silly ass? You’re not allowed here—come back at once.”

Traill walked on. Wharton stared at his back in sheer amazement, almost stupefaction. No fellow could have failed to hear his shout; and Traill certainly was not deaf.

“We’re having tea in Bob’s study,” shouted the captain of the Remove. “Are you coming or not?”

Traill, unheeding, walked on, and disappeared round another corner. Wharton made a step to follow—and stopped! His face was red with anger.

There could hardly be a mistake now—for some reason, or no reason, the fellow was deliberately ignoring him—it was utterly unexpected, but it was unmistakable. Wharton set his lips.

He had been friendly with Traill, and made him welcome in Study No. 1—partly on account of Mr. Quelch’s request; partly from good-nature. But any fellow who fancied he could treat him like this, was not likely to get any more friendliness from Harry Wharton.

He turned on his heel, and walked away, leaving the new junior to his own devices.

“Hallo, hallo, hallo, where’s Traill?” asked Bob Cherry, when the captain of the Remove arrived in Study No. 13.

“Wandering about among the beaks’ rooms,” answered Harry, with a shrug of the shoulders. “Let him rip!”

“But what—why—” exclaimed Nugent. “You haven’t been rowing with Traill, surely?”

“No!” snapped Wharton. “It pleased the silly ass to cut me, for some reason; I don’t know his reason, and don’t want to. I know that I’m fed-up with him and his cheek!”

“Cut you?” repeated Johnny Bull blankly. “Why should he?”

“How should I know? I know he turned his back and walked away when I spoke to him, and that’s enough.”

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“But—but what did he say?” asked Mark Linley.

“Nothing! Just walked off without a word.”

“Well, my hat!” said Dob.

It was rather a surprised and uncomfortable tea-party in Study No. 13. Traill did not arrive; but in the circumstances, the Co. were rather glad not to see him.

After tea, Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent walked up the passage to Study No. 1 together. Wharton’s brow was knitted. He was puzzled and annoyed by Traill’s conduct; and still more annoyed by what he guessed was in the minds of his chums. They had not said so; but he could see that they wondered what he could have done, to give offence to the new fellow—and he was conscious that he had done nothing.

“Oh, here he is!” said Frank, as he opened the study door.

Traill was there, in the armchair. Nugent switched on the light, and it was then seen that the new fellow was fast asleep in the chair. The two juniors looked at him.

“Snoozing!” said Frank, with a grin. “He got pretty tired at the cricket—he’s not strong, old chap! He’s forgotten tea.”

“Well, I told him tea was in Bob’s study,” answered Harry. “I suppose he came back here, and went to sleep, instead of coming to tea. Better wake him up—the bell will be going soon for call-over.”

Nugent nodded, and crossed over to the new junior, and shook him by the shoulder. But he had to shake again and again and again, to awaken Traill.

“My hat! He’s some sleeper!” said Frank. “Here, wake up, old bean—you won’t be able to sleep to-night, if you go to it so strong in the day-time. Wake up!”

Traill’s eyes opened at last. He sat upright, and rubbed them, and stared at the chums of the Remove rather dazedly.

“Oh! Have I been asleep?” he exclaimed.

“Just a few!” chuckled Nugent. “Like a giddy top! Didn’t you want any tea, old bean?”

“Well, I’m hungry,” said Traill. “I was a bit tired—I dropped off as soon as I got into the study. Have I missed tea?”

“Well, rather!” Harry Wharton did not speak. His face was cold and hard. Traill glanced at him, and glanced a second time, as if surprised by his expression.

“Why didn’t you come along to Bob’s study to tea?” asked Frank.

“Well, I seem to have been asleep,” said Traill. “But I didn’t know you were tea-ing with Cherry, as it happens.”

“But Wharton told you.”

“Eh! If he did, I must have forgotten,” said Traill. “I don’t remember Wharton telling me.” He glanced at Wharton again. “Perhaps I didn’t hear you, Wharton.”

“I shouted loud enough for half the House to hear me,” answered Wharton curtly.

“Did you?” Traill stared at him.

“Well, I don’t remember, that’s a cert. Hallo! What’s that bell?”

“Call-over!” answered Nugent.

“Come along!”

“Oh, my hat! I’ve had a jolly long sleep!” Traill followed Frank Nugent from the study, and Wharton went more slowly.

He could hardly make the fellow out. Traill must surely expect him to be resentful, yet he acted as if nothing had occurred. And if he had forgotten that Wharton had shouted to him to

come to tea in Bob’s study, it was remarkable—very remarkable indeed. He had a good enough memory; he had shown that in class. Anyhow, he could hardly have forgotten that he had turned his back on the captain of the Remove and walked off without answering a word to him. Wharton did not want to be on bad terms with a fellow in his own study, but he certainly could not forget or forgive that kind of thing.

Later in the evening, when the three juniors were at prep in Study No. 1, Traill spoke to Wharton several times, and each time the answers were as curt as Harry could make them. Traill dropped into silence and said no more, and when prep was over left the study at once. Nugent glanced rather uncomfortably at his chum, and Wharton shrugged his shoulders. There was a rift in the lute in that study, and the strangest thing was that Traill did not seem to know why.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Breakers of Bounds!

“O II, my hat!” breathed the Bounder.

Smithy backed into the deep shadow of an old elm and hardly breathed. It was past eleven o’clock, and there was a glimmer of spring starlight in the quadrangle at Greyfriars. Smithy of the Remove was supposed at that hour to be asleep in the dormitory with the rest of the Form—but Smithy had some manners and customs that were, fortunately for himself, unknown to the school authorities.

Not that on the present occasion Smithy had been up to any great harm. He had stolen out of bounds after lights out to enjoy a joy-ride in a car. Smithy had plenty of money, and that was one of his ways of spending it. A rapid rush through the night in a swift car, with the excitement of being out of bounds, and the possibility of discovery and punishment, was a thing that the reckless Bounder liked. Now he was on his way in, and he was stealing towards the House in the shadows, when a tall, angular figure loomed up in the starlight, and Smithy had just time to hunt cover and escape the gimlet eyes of Mr. Quelch, his Form master.

Reckless as he was, much as he enjoyed taking risks, the Bounder’s heart beat uncomfortably fast as he crouched behind the tree and listened to the Remove master’s steps coming along the gravel path. Had Quelch seen him? He was sure not; but his heart thumped. Quelch sometimes took a turn in the quad before going to bed—which was rather dangerous for breakers of bounds. The footsteps came closer, closer—and passed. And Herbert Vernon-Smith almost panted with relief when they were by.

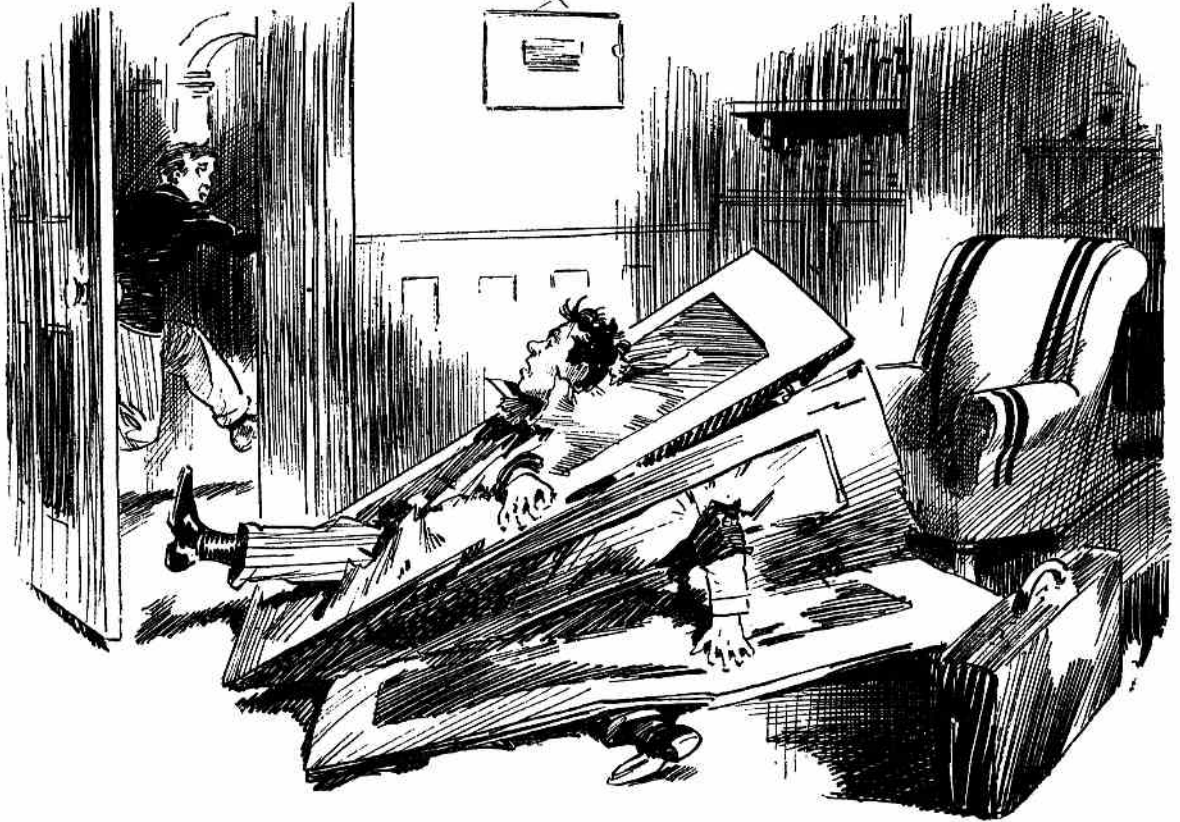
Quelch, unsuspecting, disappeared into the shadows. But the Bounder did not immediately emerge from cover. Quelch might turn back; it was only judicious to give him plenty of time to get clear.

Five minutes passed in silence, and then the Bounder was glad of his caution, as he heard footsteps again.

To his surprise, however, they did not come from Mr. Quelch’s direction, but from the direction of the House.

“Oh gad!” muttered the Bounder. “Is there another beak up? Is it going to rain beaks to-night?”

He peered cautiously round the trunk of the elm. In the dim, soft starlight he made out the figure coming along the path, the footsteps faint, but clearly audible on the gravel. It was not a beak; even at a distance and in the



Before Coker could realise what was happening, the screen crashed on him, and his head burst through it. "Ooooooh!" he gasped, as he sat down in a state of amazement, with the screen round his neck. He caught a glimpse of a junior scuttling out of the study like a frightened rabbit.

dimness, he could see that the figure was that of a boy.

The Bounder grinned. Another breaker of bounds, evidently—and going out, not coming in, as he was going away from the House. He wondered if it was Skinner, or Angel of the Fourth. He could see that it was a junior—the figure was not tall enough for a senior—and there was something familiar about it.

"Traill!" muttered the Bounder suddenly in amazement.

He made it out more clearly nearer at hand. The upper part of the face was shaded by the peak of a cap pulled low, and he could not see the eyes. But the features below were familiar enough, in spite of the dimness. It was Arthur Traill, the new junior.

Vernon-Smith stared at him, amazed. He had not believed a word of Skinner's story of the first night of term. But he believed it now. For here was Traill on his way out—at an hour when Smithy, reckless as he was, was coming in!

Traill came quietly on, walking as carelessly as if he had been taking a saunter in the quad in the daytime.

As he came opposite the tree where the Bounder was hidden Smithy made a movement. Traill was going the way Quelch had gone five minutes earlier; he was in danger of running right into his Form master. Smithy was not the fellow to let him do that unwarned. He dared not show himself, or call out, with Mr. Quelch in the offing, but he whispered as Traill passed the elm.

"Hold on, Traill! 'Ware beaks!" That warning should have been enough for any fellow out of House bounds at eleven o'clock at night. But Traill did not heed it, or even turn his

head towards the speaker; he walked straight on.

Vernon-Smith stared after him, stupefied.

He had whispered cautiously, but Traill must have heard him, passing only a few feet away. The fellow was not deaf. At the risk of being heard by the Remove master, Vernon-Smith called again in a louder key.

"Stop, you ass! Beaks! Hunt cover, you duffer!"

Traill did not even turn his head. He disappeared from the Bounder's amazed eyes in the deep shadow of the Elm Walk.

"Well, my hat!" muttered Smithy. "If ever a fellow asked for it, that silly ass is doing it! He'll run right into Quelch."

The Bounder listened intently. He was puzzled and a little angry. Traill must have heard his warning, and if he did not choose to heed it he might, at least, have acknowledged it. But he had taken no more notice of the Bounder than of the elm.

If Quelch was coming back along the path he was bound to meet Traill. But the Bounder heard nothing; apparently Quelch had continued on his way, and was not coming back. The Form master might be anywhere among the shadows and the glimmering patches of starlight, and Smithy was not inclined to quit cover till Mr. Quelch tired of his stroll and went back to the House. He continued to listen, hoping to hear the sound of a closing door.

It was a quarter of an hour later—a weary fifteen minutes to the Bounder—that he heard a faint sound in the distance that told of a closing door. Quelch had gone in at last.

Herbert Vernon-Smith quitted his cover and hurried round to the back of the House, where he was not long in climbing in at the box-room window he had left unfastened.

Traill, he was certain, was still out of the House. The Bounder was about to fasten the box-room window, when it occurred to him that it was by that very window that Traill had got out. Leaving it unfastened, Smithy crept away on tiptoe to the dormitory.

The Remove were fast asleep when the breaker of bounds crept in. He struck a match and looked at Traill's bed.

It was empty.

The Bounder grinned a cynical grin and shrugged his shoulders as the match went out. Skinner had been telling the truth, after all; the fellow was a breaker of bounds. And he was evidently a fellow of nerve, unsuspected in the Form; for as Skinner had locked the door against him the first night of term, he could only have got in by the window on that occasion. Smithy, iron-nerved as he was, would have hesitated to risk his neck in such a climb at night. Looking at Traill, no one would have believed that the slightly built fellow was capable of it. Yet it was clear that it must have been so.

Smithy turned in quietly. It was ten minutes or more before he slept, and in that time Traill had not returned.

Once he slept, he did not open his eyes again till rising-bell. Then he remembered Traill and glanced towards his bed. The new fellow was there fast asleep, deaf to the clang of the bell. Smithy remembered that it had been the same on the previous occasion; evidently

Trail's nocturnal adventures made him sleep in the morning.

Bob Cherry shook the new fellow and woke him up.

"Rip Van Winkle again!" said Bob, laughing. "Blessed if you don't beat Bunter at his own game, Trail!"

"I'm a good sleeper," confessed Trail. "Has the bell gone?"

"Yes, ass! Turn out!"

Trail turned out. The Bounder grinned. He wondered whether Bob would have been so cheery and so pally had he known what Smithy knew. It was not the Bounder's business to give any fellow away, however, and he said nothing. But as the Remove went down Smithy joined Trail and spoke in a low voice.

"Had a good time?"

Trail stared at him.

"Eh? What and how?" he asked. "You kept it up pretty late," said Smithy. "I wasn't an early bird myself, but you were going out when I was coming in. You were lucky not to run into Quelch. Did you spot him in the quad?"

"Is that a joke?" asked Trail blankly. Smithy gave him a look.

"Are you trying to spoof me?" he asked. "You know I saw you in the quad last night—you must have heard me speak when you passed me."

"In the quad! What the thump do you mean?"

"I mean what I say," snapped the Bounder angrily. "I'm not going to give you away, if that's what you're afraid of, you ass!"

"There's nothing to give away that I know of! Look here, if this is a joke I don't see it! I've had enough of that rot from Skinner!"

And Trail walked away, frowning, leaving the Bounder staring after him quite blankly.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Mysterious!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Bow-wow!"

"Something's up," said Billy Bunter.

"Tell us something we don't know," suggested Bob Cherry.

Most of the Greyfriars fellows had spotted the fact that something was "up" that morning. Some of them had noticed that the beaks looked unusually serious at early prayers. Quelch's face, at the breakfast-table, was uncommonly grim. Prefects of the Sixth Form had solemn looks, which showed that they knew—whatever it was!

"Somebody's for it!" said Frank Nugent. "But who—and what—and why?"

"The whofulness and whatfulness and whyfulness are terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Something is terrifically up."

"What is it, Bunter?" demanded Bob.

"Eh? How should I know?" asked Bunter. "I know there's something up, but I don't know what it is."

"And what do you mean by not knowing?" demanded Bob. "Aren't you our Peeping Tom and Paul Pry and Inquisitive Jack?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Let's bump Bunter for not knowing, when we're all burning with giddy curiosity," suggested Bob.

"Hear, hear!"

"I say, you fellows, don't play the goat! I say, I heard Quelch say to Capper that it was certainly not a

Remove boy! What do you think he meant by that?"

"What he said, very likely," answered Wharton. "Quelch often does!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Somebody's been up to something," pronounced Bob Cherry. "Hallo, hallo, hallo, Skinner! What have you been up to this time?"

Skinner laughed.

"Nothing," he answered. "But it's pretty plain that somebody has. Perhaps your precious pal Trail has been spotted."

"Oh, shut up!" growled Bob.

Vernon-Smith, probably, was the most uneasy fellow in the Lower School that morning. He was certain that Quelch had not seen him the previous night or he would have heard about it before this. But the Bounder was very anxious to learn what was up.

It was not till the Remove gathered in their Form-room that they learned. Instead of proceeding immediately to business, Mr. Quelch had something to say to his Form. No doubt the other beaks in the other Form-rooms were putting the same questions to their respective Forms.

"I require to know," said Mr. Quelch, in a deep voice, "whether any boy in this Form left the Remove dormitory after lights out last night?"

The Bounder felt an inward tremor, though his face was expressionless. Redwing's eyes turned on him—Redwing had known that the Bounder had planned one of his reckless excursions for that night. The Bounder glanced at Trail. But Trail's face was as unconscious as Smithy's own.

There was no answer to Mr. Quelch's question. The gimlet eyes scanned the Form, but read nothing beyond curiosity in the attentive faces.

"This morning," resumed Mr. Quelch, "a box-room window was found unfastened."

The Bounder gave a slight start at that. He had left the window unfastened for Trail; it had seemed certain to him that that was the way Trail had gone out; and he was not a fellow, like Skinner, to shut out a breaker of bounds. Had the fool left the window unfastened when he came in?

"Does any boy present know anything about this?"

No reply.

If any boy present knew anything about it, he did not seem disposed to confide in Mr. Quelch.

"It has been ascertained," continued Mr. Quelch, "that the window was fastened last night. That is beyond doubt. It must, therefore, have been unfastened later by some Greyfriars boy. The box-room in question is the one at the end of the Remove passage, which has caused some suggestion that the culprit was a Remove boy."

"That doesn't follow, sir," said Harry Wharton. "Anybody could go along to our box-room."

"Quite so, Wharton! And I shall not believe that it was a Remove boy, without proof. But it certainly appears that the window was opened at night obviously for the purpose of getting out. And whoever used that window must have forgotten to fasten it again. If any boy in this Form can tell me anything about it—"

Mr. Quelch paused. But there was no answer. Evidently no boy in the Form had anything to tell Mr. Quelch.

It was quite a long and painful pause. The matter was a serious one—very serious indeed from the point of view of the Head and his staff. It was

scarcely to be doubted that some Greyfriars fellow had broken bounds the night before and carelessly left the window unfastened on his return. No clue whatever existed to the culprit; but the fact was fairly certain. And such an offence meant a Head's flogging, at least—it might mean expulsion. The matter could hardly be more serious.

But there was nothing to be learned from the Remove, and the matter had to be dropped. The Bounder sat with compressed lips and bitter anger in his heart. He was safe, so far as that went; but he had had some very uncomfortable minutes. And he knew, too, that the incident would make the beaks and prefects suspicious and watchful, adding very considerably to the risks of fellows who kicked over the traces. It would not be safe to use that box-room window again this term, at any rate. Why hadn't the silly ass fastened it after him?

When the Remove went out in break, Tom Redwing joined his chum, with a troubled brow. He had been deeply alarmed for Smithy.

"You awful ass, Smithy," he said, in a low voice, as they went into the quad. "If you must play the silly goat you might at least be careful about it. It was simply asking for it to leave the window unfastened."

"Do you think I'm such an idiot?" growled the Bounder. "I left it unfastened because another fellow was out. The silly ass forgot it when he came in, I suppose."

"It's not like Skinner to forget a thing like that—"

"It wasn't Skinner—it was Trail!"

Redwing jumped.

"Trail! What rot! Don't be an ass, Smithy! You can leave that tosh to Skinner."

"It was Trail, I tell you," said the Bounder savagely, "and I'm going to pick a bone with him. The beaks will be rooting into this for days and days, and goodness knows what they may nose out. I jolly well wish I'd shut him out now—it would have served him right."

"But I can't believe—"

"Oh, rats! I tell you I saw him!"

The Bounder looked round and spotted Trail under the elms with Harry Wharton & Co. He walked across at once, with his eyes glinting under his knitted brows.

"You silly fool!" That was the Bounder's greeting to Trail. He was far too angry to measure his words. "If you want to be sacked, do you think other fellows do? Why didn't you fasten that window last night?"

Trail did not answer—he simply stared. Harry Wharton & Co. stared, too—blankly. Nugent was the first to speak.

"What the thump do you mean, Smithy? Are you potty?"

"You needn't butt in!" snapped the Bounder. "I dare say you fellows have guessed that I went out of bounds last night."

"That wasn't a hard one to guess," said Bob Cherry dryly. "You were a dummy to leave the window unfastened."

"Not your usual style, Smithy!" said Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"I left it for Trail!"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

The captain of the Remove had neither forgotten, nor forgiven Trail's offence towards him, and since that occasion he had had little or nothing to say to the new fellow. But he spoke warmly enough now.

"The fellow's taken you in, as Skinner says," sneered the Bounder. "I may as well admit that I was taken in, too, till I saw him out of bounds last night. Quelch came jolly near bagging the pair of us."

"What utter rot!"
 "I tell you I saw him—as near to me as you are now!" snarled the Bounder. "I left the window unfastened for him—I wasn't going to shut him out! And then the silly fool leaves it unfastened—and starts the beaks nosing all over the shop! I've a jolly good mind to punch his silly head."

"You'll get your own punched, if you say that I was out of bounds last night!" snapped Traill.

"What?" The Bounder glared at him. "Are you going to tell lies about it, now, the same as when Skinner spotted you? Are you making me out a liar?"

"Just that—"

The Bounder was already furious, and that was the last straw. He fairly sprang at Traill, hitting out right and left.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Hold on!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Stop that, Smithy!" exclaimed Wharton.

Arthur Traill staggered back under the Bounder's furious rush. But he rallied at once, stood his ground, and gave blow for blow. His usually quiet and good-tempered face was hard and angry, his eyes flashing. He was nothing like a match for the sinewy Bounder, but he stood up to him resolutely.

"Stop it!" exclaimed Wharton. He

rushed at the Bounder, grasped him by the shoulders, and dragged him back.

"Let go, you fool!" roared Smithy.

"Chuck it, old bean," said Bob Cherry soothingly. "What's the jolly old good of scrapping?"

"I'll smash him—"

"You won't!" said Wharton curtly, still grasping the Bounder, and holding him back. "The kid's not up to your weight, Smithy! Leave him alone! I know he called you a liar, but—I, for one, don't believe him."

"Harry!" exclaimed Nugent. Traill flushed crimson.

"You don't believe me, Wharton?" he exclaimed.

"No!" answered the captain of the Remove quietly. "I believed you when it was your word against Skinner's—but Smithy's not a liar like Skinner!"

Smithy gave the captain of the Remove a curious look. He calmed himself, and unclenched his hands.

"You can let go," he said, "I won't touch him again!"

"You can come on as soon as you like, you rotter!" exclaimed Traill. "I'll take all you can give me, Vernon-Smith."

"There wouldn't be much left of you!" said the Bounder with a grin, and he shoved his hands in his pockets and walked away.

Traill looked round at the faces of the Famous Five. Harry Wharton's was cold and set. He bit his lip hard.

"So you believe what Vernon-Smith has said?" he asked.

"Every word!" answered Wharton.

"It's true—you'd better say no more, Traill."

The Co. were silent. They hardly knew what to think. It seemed impossible that Vernon-Smith could have been mistaken—and obviously he believed what he said. And yet—

Traill's lip trembled.

"You seem to have something up against me the last few days, Wharton," he said. "I'm not surprised at this—from you! But—the other fellows—I thought they might take my word."

"Blessed if I can make it out," said Bob slowly. "Smithy couldn't have dreamed it, I suppose."

"I give you my word that I was not out of the House last night! Can't you take my word?"

"Well, yes, if you put it like that—" said Bob still more slowly.

"Of course," said Nugent, after a moment's hesitation.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh and Johnny Bull nodded. Harry Wharton's lip curled.

"Your word's no good to me, Traill," he said. "Smithy saw you out of the House last night, and that's that! It's no bizney of mine—I'm not your keeper! But I've called Skinner some pretty names for saying what I now know to be true—you've pulled my leg all along!"

"I've done nothing of the kind."

"You'd better say no more, I think," said the captain of the Remove contemptuously. And he turned on his heel, and walked away. The Co. looked after him, and looked at Traill; hardly

(Continued on next page.)

A treat for "after school"

"THERE'S something to look forward to after history is over," thinks Jones minor. Wrigley's . . . the monster pennyworth that is even more than a sweet. It is the purest pennyworth made—four pellets of delicious chewing gum that buck you up—make your mouth fresh and cool. Wrigley's makes you feel fresh and alert . . . the delightful flavour lasts . . . and lasts.

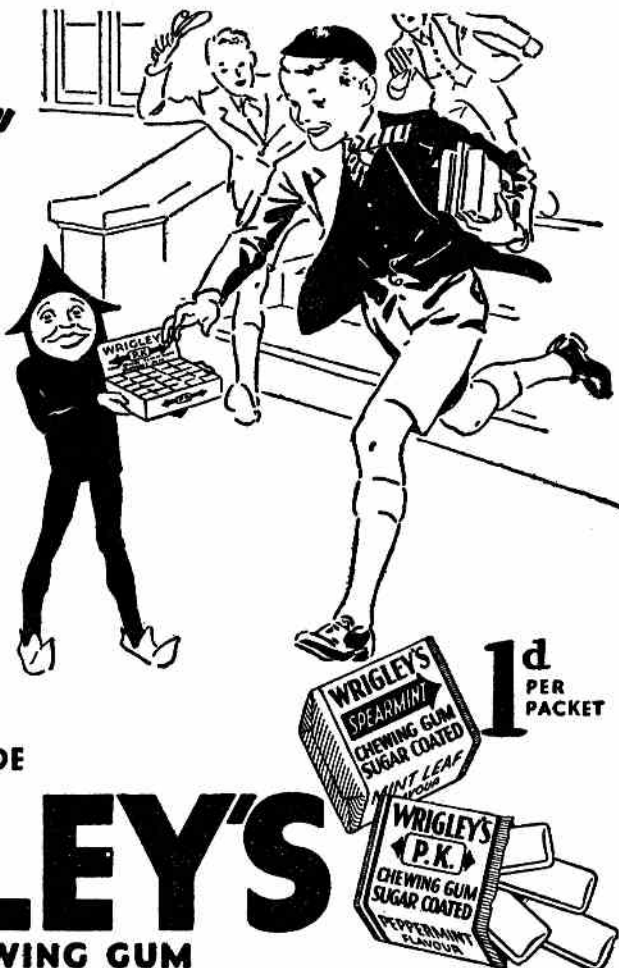
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knowing what to do, or what to say. The bell for third school came as a welcome interruption.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Caught in the Act!

SKINNER sat up in bed. His narrow eyes gleamed, in the dusk of the dormitory.

Half-past ten had chimed out from the old tower; and most of Greyfriars was buried in silence and slumber. Only from some of the masters' study windows, lights still glimmered.

But Skinner was awake—and watching! Many times Skinner had resolved to remain awake, and keep a watchful eye open; but generally he had fallen asleep. On this particular night he was on the point of dozing off when a sound in the dormitory jerked him back to wakefulness. It was the creaking of a bed, as some fellow got out.

Skinner sat up silently, and peered through the gloom. A few beds away, there was a moving shadow—and Skinner knew that it was some fellow dressing in the dark. Whether it was Traill, he could not see—but he had no doubt that it was.

He remained quite silent, grinning. He was in luck at last—catching the breaker of bounds fairly in the act; as he had often intended, but failed to do. He waited! There was going to be no mistake about it—this time! He was going to give the spoofing rascal plenty of rope! Not till the fellow was out of the dormitory, was Skinner going to chip in.

Straining his eyes in the gloom, he could make out the figure. It moved away from the beds; and Skinner started a little as he saw that it did not take the direction of the door. It moved towards the window—and there, in the glimmering starlight it was clearer to the view; and he knew, beyond doubt, the slight, slim figure of Arthur Traill.

Skinner stared, puzzled and perplexed. It was Traill, and he was going out of bounds—that was plain! But why was he going to the window—when he might have gone to the door? Did the fool prefer risking his neck?

Apparently he did; for he arrived at the high window, and drew himself up to the wide window-shelf. There he was silhouetted against the starlight. Skinner heard a faint sound as the window opened.

He suppressed a whistle of astonishment.

This, then, was Traill's usual way of getting out of House bounds. On the first night of term, Skinner had been driven to the conclusion that Traill, finding the door locked when he came back, had gone out again and climbed to the window. That, he realised now, was a mistake. It was by the window that he was accustomed to find egress and ingress. What Skinner saw now was a proof of it. That accounted, too, for the box-room window having been left unfastened on the night of the Bounder's escapade—Traill had not come in that way at all. Smithy had naturally supposed so—but it was not so.

Skinner watched, his heart beating rather fast, as the slim, active figure climbed out of the window.

The fellow was risking his neck—the danger he was incurring made Skinner shiver. Was he a human cat, to clamber about roofs in the dark? No one would have supposed that the slight fellow had the strength to pull himself up to such a height by the ivy. But if he did not

use the ivy, he had to clamber along a narrow ledge, at a dizzy height from the ground, and reach a landing window at a distance, where there was a fire escape ladder clamped to the wall. There was no man in the Remove who would have ventured to take such a risk—it made Skinner's head swim to think of it! Was that what Traill was up to? The fellow must have a nerve of iron.

The figure disappeared. Skinner crept out of bed. He crossed to the window, and clambered up, and put out his head into the starlight. There was no sound of rustling in the thick old ivy; no movement. Traill was not going down that way. Skinner looked along the ledge below the windows, that ran along the House wall, towards the landing window at a distance. Then he saw Traill.

His heart gave a jump. He knew that the fellow must be there; but he had expected to see him crawling cautiously along. But he was not crawling—he was walking!

Skinner could scarcely believe his eyes. Was the fellow absolutely without nerves, that he could walk along a narrow stone ledge, with a yawning gulf under his elbow?

Traill moved along slowly, but surely. He walked as easily as if he walked on firm earth.

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Skinner rubbed his eyes. It seemed to him that he must be dreaming. Every instant, he expected to see the fellow fall. Yet he realised that Traill must have done this before—more than once. There was something uncanny about it.

Evidently, he was making for the landing window, and the iron ladder clamped to the wall beside it. That window was near Mr. Quelch's room, and the Remove master had to pass it when he went to bed. Most likely Quelch had not gone to bed yet; but he might come up any minute. Traill was not only risking a terrible fall; but he was risking being seen from the landing window. It was a puzzle to Skinner.

But at all events he had now the proof he wanted. There was no doubt about that. All the Form had set him down as a slanderer, and now he had proof. The fellows would have to own up who was the liar when they heard what Skinner had to tell them now. He grinned as he dropped back to the floor of the dormitory.

A moment later he was shaking Harry Wharton.

"Wake up, old bean!" chuckled Skinner.

"Eh, what?"

Wharton came out of slumber with a jump. He sat up, staring at Skinner.

"What the thump? What are you waking me up for, you ass?"

"A little bit of news for you!" grinned Skinner. "Traill's gone out of bounds!"

Wharton gave a grunt.

"Did you wake me up for that?"

"Didn't you want to know?" sneered Skinner.

"No!"

Wharton laid his head on his pillow again. Since the episode of the Bounder and the box-room window he had had no doubt about Traill's ways—though Skinner was not aware of that.

"Look here—" muttered Skinner savagely.

"Leave me alone, you ass!"

Skinner gave him a scowl and turned to Nugent's bed. Frank came out of his sleep as he was shaken. Another moment and the bedclothes were dragged off Bob Cherry.

"Wake up, old beans!" said Skinner. "Wake up, the lot of you! You're all going to hear the jolly old news!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What—"

"Is that Skinner? What—"

"What's the row?" came three or four sleepy voices. Plenty of the Remove were waking up now.

"Traill's gone out of bounds!" chuckled Skinner.

"Oh, rats!"

"Shut up!"

"Chuck it, Skinner!"

"Look at his bed!" said Skinner. He struck a match and held it up over Traill's empty bed.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Where's Traill?"

"Echo answers where!" grinned the Bounder.

"Esteemed echo answers that the wherefulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh.

"He—he—he's gone!" stammered Nugent.

"Gone from our gaze like a jolly old beautiful dream!" grinned Skinner. He was enjoying this. "And he won't come back by the door, either; he prefers roof stunts! He went by the window, and I fancy he'll come back the same way."

"The window!" exclaimed Bob. "Rats! Rubbish! He couldn't climb down the ivy—he hasn't the beef in him—"

"He's gone along the ledge to the landing window near Quelch's room; he goes down the fire-ladder—"

"Rubbish! He couldn't!"

"I watched him go!" grinned Skinner. "He's some acrobat, and no mistake! I wouldn't have believed he could do it—only I saw him!"

All the Remove were awake now, excepting Billy Bunter. Bunter's deep snore still woke the echoes.

"Wharton doesn't want to know about it, it seems!" grinned Skinner. "But the whole Form's jolly well going to know! I've been called some nice names for telling the truth—"

"Well, it was rather a new stunt of yours," said Bob Cherry. "You couldn't expect anybody to guess that you were telling the truth."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

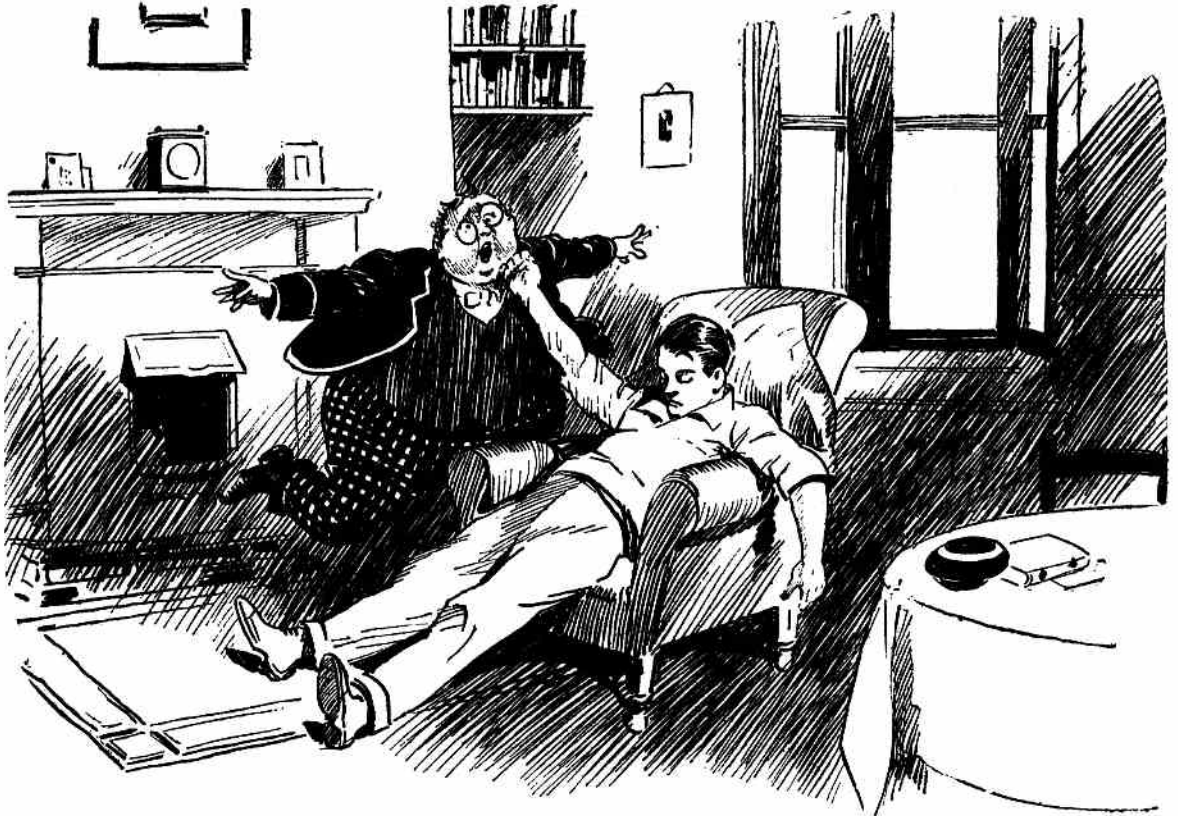
"Well, you can see for yourselves now," jeered Skinner. "If you like to squint out of the window you'll see him walking along the ledge, like a circus man on a tightrope! Blessed if I know where he gets the nerve!"

Harry Wharton sat up suddenly.

"What's that, Skinner? He can't be doing—Is the fellow mad? He will be killed!"

"He's done it before—more than once—"

Harry Wharton was out of bed with a bound. He made a leap for the dormitory window and put his head out. The colour drained from his face as he saw the junior outside. Traill's back was to him as he passed along the ledge. He



Bunter took the sleeping junior's nose between a fat finger and thumb, and pinched it hard. The result was rather unexpected. Trail made a sudden movement, and his arm shot out, catching Bunter under his fat chin. "Ooooooh!" roared the podgy junior. "You rotter—wow! Oh, erikay! Ow!"

was moving slowly, but seemingly with a sure step. He had almost reached the big landing window when Wharton saw him.

Harry gazed at him, spellbound. "Trail!" he called out hoarsely. The junior did not seem to hear; he gave no sign. And Harry did not call again—fearful of startling him and thus causing the catastrophe he dreaded. He gazed at the slight figure, his eyes almost starting from his head. How the junior kept his footing was a mystery. A gulf of death yawned under his elbow, yet he moved with sure steps as easily as if he were walking on a path in the quad far below. It was such a feat as only a circus acrobat might have been expected to perform, yet Trail performed it without a tremor.

"Good heavens!" breathed Wharton. It seemed impossible that the junior would not fall. Had he done this before successfully? Wharton could not believe it. And why was he doing it at all? If he wanted to get out of bounds there were safer ways than this. For a long moment Wharton stared in horror and stupefaction at the slow, but steady figure on the ledge against the wall; then he dropped back to the floor, raced across the dormitory to the door, and dragged it open. His only thought now was to get to the landing window when Trail arrived there, get it open, and get him in.

"You'll wake the beaks!" called out the Bounder.

"Harry—"
Wharton did not heed. There was a life in deadly peril, and the utterly reckless fellow had to be saved. He rushed out of the dormitory and tore along the passage in the dark and reached the big landing, where the

starlight fell in, in a silvery flood, on a broad space between the window and the stairs. He jumped to the window and dragged open a casement. The narrow parapet on which Trail was walking ran below, and as Wharton looked out, Trail was just reaching the window, his chin on a level with the sill. In the clear light of the stars Wharton had a full view of his face—and in utter amazement he saw that Trail's eyes were tightly closed.

For an instant he gazed at him, dumb-founded.

Then he understood. Trail was a somnambulist, and he was walking in his sleep!

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Somnambulist!

HARRY WHARTON stood motionless for the moment, gazing at the calm, composed face of that strange sleeper.

Like a flash it came to him. A somnambulist—that explained it all. Back into his mind came that incident when he had looked for Trail in the passages and the fellow had turned his back on him; afterwards he had found Trail asleep in the study. He knew now what had puzzled and angered him then—Trail had been asleep at the time; he had slept in the study, and walked in his sleep—as he was doing now. He had been asleep when the Bounder had seen him in the quad at night, though Smithy had not guessed it. Wharton felt a pang of remorse. The fellow had denied what Wharton knew must be true—but he had denied it in good faith, for he did not know.

Obviously, he remembered nothing in his waking hours of what he did in the strange state of somnambulism.

"Is the fellow mad?"
It was the Bounder's voice, husky, at Wharton's elbow. Smithy had followed him from the dormitory.

Wharton panted. "He's asleep!"
"Asleep!" The Bounder gave a jump. "Asleep—what—"
"Somnambulism!" breathed Wharton. "Oh, my hat!"

Trail had come to a stop. His face was not two feet from the two staring Removites, but he was unconscious of their presence. His eyes were fast closed. The Bounder made a movement, but Wharton caught his arm.

"Don't touch him!" he breathed. Smithy nodded. He was aware that it was said to be dangerous to wake a somnambulist in the act of sleep-walking.

"But we can't leave him to it!" whispered the Bounder.

"No, but—"
It was clear that Trail had done this before—that he had made that perilous journey along the narrow parapet and descended from the iron ladder clamped on the wall in perfect safety. A somnambulist can do many things impossible in waking moments. But, though the sleep-walker was unconscious, some strange sense seemed to tell him that the window, usually closed, was open. Instead of moving farther along, he had turned his face to the sill and grasped it with his hands.

"He's coming in!" whispered Smithy.

"Thank Heaven!" breathed Wharton. To touch the sleeper might wake him.

suddenly and precipitate a tragedy. With deep thankfulness they saw him climb in at the window. A load was lifted from their hearts when he stood on the landing within, and Wharton hurriedly shut the casement behind him and fastened it.

Traill moved on, with a slow, steady step, across the landing. Wharton and the Bouncer followed. There was a sound of footsteps on the stairs, and the electric light flashed on. Some beak was coming up to bed, turning on the lights as he came.

"Oh, my hat! Quelch!" muttered Smyth.

"Phew!"

Mr. Quelch came up stepped on the landing, and stared at Wharton and Smyth and Traill.

"What—" ejaculated the Remove master, in angry astonishment. "Wharton, Vernon-Smith, Traill—what are you doing out of your dormitory?"

"Let him pass, sir!" exclaimed Wharton.

"What, what?" Mr. Quelch was standing directly in Traill's path, and the sleep-walking junior was walking straight at him. "What do you mean, Wharton? Traill! Stop! Do you hear me? Stop! What—"

Bump!

Traill walked right into Mr. Quelch.

"Boy!" gasped the Remove master.

"He's asleep, sir—" gasped Wharton.

"Asleep—what—nonsense! Traill—what—"

Mr. Quelch grasped the junior by the shoulder. Traill's eyes were open now—the sudden shock of the bump against the astonished Form master had awakened him.

He blinked.

"Why—what—" He stared round him blankly. "What—where the dickens am I—what—"

He broke off in sheer amazement.

"Traill!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Mr. Quelch—what—how did I get here?" panted Traill. "What does it mean? What—"

Wharton pressed his arm.

"It's all right, old chap! All serene," he said. "Come back to the dorm! You've been walking in your sleep—it's all right."

"Oh, crikey! I—I haven't—I—I—I couldn't have—" Traill stammered.

"I—I— Oh crumbs!"

Mr. Quelch understood now.

"Take Traill back to the dormitory, Vernon-Smith," he said.

"Yes, sir!"

The Bouncer led Traill away. When he was out of hearing, the Remove master turned to Wharton again.

"How did you find this out, Wharton?"

The captain of the Remove explained that a fellow had been awake and had seen Traill getting out of the window. Mr. Quelch shuddered.

"It was very sensible not to mention that before Traill—no to let him know the terrible risk he has run," he said. "To-morrow—" Mr. Quelch did not finish that sentence. "We shall see! Traill had better not remain in the dormitory—he is scarcely safe there, in these strange circumstances—I will see him in safety for the night, and to-morrow—"

Again Mr. Quelch broke off.

A few minutes later Traill, with a troubled and dismayed face, followed Mr. Quelch from the Remove dormitory. The Remove were left to slumber once more—but it was a long time before they slept. Even Billy Bunter was awake, and for a long time there was a buzz of

discussion over that strange and unexpected discovery.

"Poor old Traill!" said Bob Cherry. "I suppose he really was out, first night of term, after all—"

"I told you so, didn't I?" grunted Skinner.

"Yes, that's why I didn't believe it, old bean! We might have guessed this before, if you hadn't been such a fibber! But how was any fellow to know that you were telling the truth?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's a thing no fellow could be expected to guess! You'll admit that yourself, Skinner?"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" growled Skinner.

And the Remove slept at last.

THIS WEEK'S TONIC LAUGH!

"Don't put off until to-morrow what you can do to-day!" says Robert Platt, of 94, Crowther Road, Stockland Green, Erdington, Birmingham. He's sent in the following riddle, and has won a pocket knife for his trouble.



Johnny: "Mother, Peggy's been a naughty girl."

Mother: "Why, what has she done?"

Johnny: "She says she's not going to wear those 'darned' socks any more!"

More jokes and Greysfriars limericks wanted, please!

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter, Too!

BILLY BUNTER grinned.

Great thoughts were working in the podgy brain of William George Bunter!

It was the following afternoon.

From Study No. 1, in the Remove, came the sound of cheery voices. A feast of the gods was going on in that study.

It was a sort of farewell feast. It was given in honour of a fellow who was leaving. That fellow was Traill, who had been hardly a couple of weeks at the school. Nobody wanted to lose him; but it was clear that the somnambulist required the care of the parental roof—and Traill's father was coming for him that day.

The little rift in the lute in Study

No. 1 was, of course, over now—now that the curious mystery of the new boy was explained.

Even Skinner had told the new fellow that he was sorry. And Smyth was with the tea-party—one of the founders of the feast. Billy Bunter wasn't!

That, to Bunter, seemed a drawback that had to be remedied. Bunter had seen magnificent supplies carried into the study after class. It was to be a record spread. Traill was to take away with him a pleasant recollection of good-fellowship.

Bunter had rolled in—and two or three juniors had rolled out again. In the passage the fat Owl stood like a podgy Peri at the gate of Paradise. But Bunter's brain was at work. It did not often work—and when it did, the results were not tremendous, as a rule. But if anything could spur on Billy Bunter's fat intellect to great efforts, it was the prospect of a feed—and such a feed!

That was why he grinned. Bunter had an idea—a brilliant idea! He rolled into his own study—No. 7—where Peter Todd and Dutton were at tea. He plumped down in the armchair.

"Mind you don't disturb me, Toddy," he admonished. "I'm tired—awfully tired—and I'm going to sleep. If I walk in my sleep, mind you don't wake me—it's dangerous to wake a fellow walking in his sleep!"

"What-a-at?" gasped Toddy.

"Jolly dangerous!" said Bunter.

"Mind you don't do it, see?"

Toddy gazed at him.

Bunter closed his eyes, and opened his mouth! A minute more, and he was snoring!

Toddy still gazed. He seemed dumb-founded. Up from the armchair rose Billy Bunter, his eyes shut—or nearly shut—behind his big spectacles. He extended his fat hands and groped out of the study. Toddy just gazed—he seemed incapable of speech.

With eyes shut and hands extended, Bunter rolled along the passage to Study No. 1. Skinner, in the passage, stared at him.

"What on earth's that game?" he asked in wonder.

"I'm asleep—"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Walking in my sleep, you know," said Bunter.

"Oh crikey!"

Bunter rolled on, leaving Skinner almost in a state of collapse. He reached the half-open door of Study No. 1. Cheery voices came from within.

"Rotten to lose you, old chap," Bob Cherry was saying. "But of course, you'll be better at home."

"Yes, that's so," Bunter heard Traill answer. "Of course, nobody dreamed this would come on here. After my illness a few years ago I had an attack of it; but it was supposed to be over and done with, and I'd forgotten all about it. I dare say the excitement of coming to school brought it on again—my first day here was a bit exciting, one way and another. I'm sorry to be going; but the pater's taking me on a sea voyage—he told me on the phone to-day—and I fancy I shall have a good time. Of course, I shall get over it all right."

"I was rather an ass not to spot what the matter was, that night in the quad," said the Bouncer.

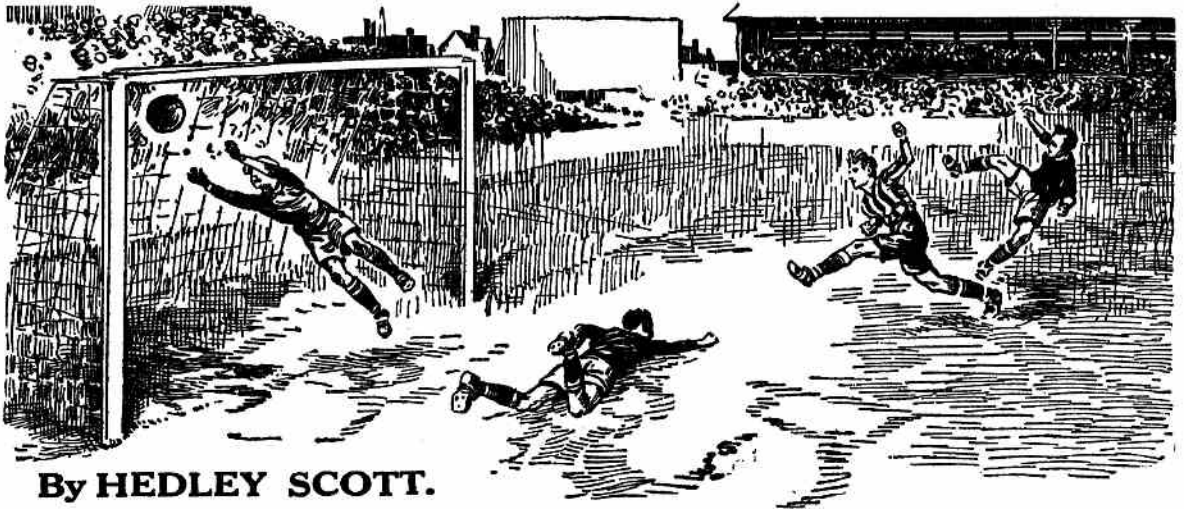
"Same here—that day in the passage," said Harry Wharton. "But, of course, a fellow wouldn't guess—"

Snore!

Harry Wharton broke off suddenly at

(Continued on page 28.)

NOBBY, the 'Shooting Star'!



By HEDLEY SCOTT.

WHAT'S GONE BEFORE.

Ever since Nobby—a nameless waif who had lived his early years with the circus owned by Don Carlos—came to Perriton Rovers, Daniel Willoughby Thundersley has schemed and plotted with the Don for the youngster's downfall. Then, when Lord Weatherstone, Thundersley's uncle, legally adopts Nobby, a last desperate attempt is made by the conspirators to get rid of Nobby. The scheme fails, and it comes as a tremendous shock to Thundersley when he learns from Ferrers Locke, the famous detective, that Nobby is his own brother who was kidnapped when an infant by the soundlessly Don! Thoughts of a terrible revenge flood Thundersley's mind as the Don phones through to say that he is coming along to see him.

(Now read on.)

Hand to Hand!

WILL you please go in! The master is expecting you, sir!"

The Don needed no introduction. He brushed past the manservant as if he did not exist, entered the lounge—and walked straight to the window!

Thundersley eyed him wonderingly. From behind the shelter of the hanging curtains the Don gazed into the roadway below. Directly opposite stood a tall individual in a lounge suit and a bowler hat. That individual seemed to advertise to the world at large and to the Don in particular that he was a plain-clothes man, which indeed was the case. What was more to the point, the Don had seen him many times before that day. Actually the tall man in the lounge suit had paid very special attention to the olive-skinned circus proprietor directly he had received orders from headquarters that he was to trail the man wherever he went. The Don had tried his utmost to throw the persistent shadower off the trail on his journey up from the circus, but the view from the window proved that he had not succeeded.

"Caramba!" exclaimed the Don. "What does he follow me for? Ah!"—his eyes lit up with cunning—"I will leave by the back entrance, yes."

Having reached that decision, he turned to Thundersley with outstretched

hand. But the strange look on the young man's face brought him up with a jerk.

"What is the matter, my friends? Are you ill?"

"Not in the way you would understand, you dirty, scheming, double-crossing dago," answered Thundersley in a voice that was vibrant with loathing. "But sit down for a moment."

The Don's lips parted in a snarl; his whole face changed.

"I am in a hurry, my friends," he hissed, "but even so, I do not permit anyone to call me names like that. Caramba! It will suit you better, my friends to choose your words to me. I have called for my money."

Thundersley laughed. "Money? You said over the phone settlement in full. Well, you slimy dago, you shall have your settlement."

The Don's face creased into an oily smile.

"Now you are talking. You geeve me five hundred pounds and you an' me are all square, yes? Nobby, the pig-dog, the carrion—he is safe. Verree, verree safe, yes. The Don—he always keeps his word."

"And sometimes a Thundersley keeps his, you rat!" exclaimed Thundersley, rising from the chair and bringing the revolver into view for the first time. "Your settlement will take the form of an ounce of lead."

The Don leaped out of the chair and backed towards the window. His lips parted and curled back over his yellow teeth in a snarl like that of a cornered beast.

"What are you talking about, my friends," he said huskily. "Put that gun down."

Thundersley advanced towards him slowly, revolver levelled from the hip. His face was ghastly pale, his eyes unhealthily bright. The Don thought he had suddenly gone mad—and gone mad Thundersley nearly had. The thought of what his young brother had endured at the hands of this inhuman monster, and of the part he himself had played, sent an overwhelming loathing and hatred through his whole being. In his eyes, the Don was like unto a poisonous snake, something that should be exterminated.

"I know everything, Pedrillo Sadini—"

The Don's olive face blanched. That name he had left behind him, as he thought, years and years ago.

"I know you now for what you are," continued Thundersley. "My father's enemy—my brother's enemy. My enemy—"

The Don shook as if with the ague. How much did this white-faced figure of vengeance know?

"Ferrers Locke is the man who has hounded you down," grated Thundersley. "To him I owe my brother's life—"

The Don recoiled with a sharp intake of breath. Recovering, he tried to bluff himself out of the tightest corner of his life.

"You are mad, yes. Mad, mad! I know nothings of what you say."

Thundersley laughed shortly.

"Mad am I? Well, perhaps I am. But, you lying wretch, whether I'm mad or not won't help you. You killed my mother—you killed my father. You did your best to kill my brother. You even schemed to send me to the gallows. Now it is your turn to suffer."

"Mad—mad!" screamed the Don, his dark eyes roving the room for a way of escape, or for a weapon. "Keep that gun away."

"You have a few minutes left to you," mocked Thundersley. "Five, to be precise. When that clock on the pedestal strikes the half-hour—" he broke off, but the abrupt halt was just as significant as any spoken words.

The Don shivered. How all his secrets had become known he did not know. At that moment all his thoughts and his cunning were concentrated on dispossessing Thundersley of the revolver.

In the black silk sash that girded his waist was a keen edged stiletto, without which the Don never ventured abroad. Stealthily his hand sought it, plucked it out and flung it in almost one movement. What happened next Thundersley hardly knew. Something bright whistled through the air, and bit deeply into the hand that held the revolver. Thundersley's finger tightened round the trigger a second before he dropped the revolver,

with a scream of pain. And in that second there was a blinding flash, a shattering explosion and the crash of breaking glass.

The bullet went a foot wide of the crouching Don and splintered the window in a thousand pieces—a circumstance which prompted the plain-clothes man waiting below to take a hand in the game.

He was across the street and racing up the spiral stairway to Thundersley's rooms in the same moment that the Don leaped forward with a snarl and fastened his long fingers round Thundersley's throat.

"Caramba! You would kill the Don, eh? But the Don will do the killing, my young friend. I know not how you found this out, but it won't help you. I hate you—I hated your father! He sent me to Devil's Island to a lingering death. But I have tasted revenge. Now I will take vengeance in full!"

The while the words poured from him in a torrent his fingers were slowly crushing the life out of his victim. Just for a moment he looked up to see the terrified face of the servant peering in at the door, and those terrible fingers relaxed. A hasty grab at the stiletto lying on the carpet, and once again that terrible blade was whistling across the room straight for the servant.

The servant never moved a muscle—and that fact probably saved his life. The hissing blade flew past his head with nothing more than half an inch to spare, and stuck quivering in the door. Long before it ceased to quiver the elderly servant had collapsed in his tracks in a dead faint.

But that respite, brief as it was, served Thundersley well. Despite his wounded hand—for the stiletto had pierced it deeply—he struggled with the courage and strength of desperation.

The revolver lay a yard away or more. If he could reach it—

The Don guessed his intention and chuckled with fiendish glee. He was more than a match for Thundersley—or so he thought. He would never get his hands on that gun. This was to be settlement in full—and bare hands would decide it. He reached out with his foot as he struggled with Thundersley and deliberately kicked the gun to the far side of the room, then he waded in with

both hands and feet like an Apache. Thundersley fought back blow for blow, with equal savagery. He realised that the Don was fighting to kill. All the primitive animal ferocity in his nature was uppermost—that and the old overwhelming desire for revenge on the Thundersley family. Up and down the pair of them tramped, overturning the furniture, smashing at each other with murderous punches. And while they fought like wild-cats the plain-clothes man was belabouring the door with his burly shoulder in a persistent effort to break in before murder was committed.

Inside the room Thundersley staggered away half a dozen feet, as the Don's clenched fist caught him under the chin. He slithered along the carpet, crashed into a pedestal upon which was a handsome Oriental vase and sent it clattering into fragments. Through half-blinded eyes he saw the Don catch up a chair, saw it whizzing towards him, and dodged away in the nick of time. The chair clattered against the wall, brought down a heavy, gilded picture—and it was that massive picture-frame which thudded against the Don's head as he rushed in to deal Thundersley the final blow.

The Arrest of the Don!

GASPING and reeling against the farther wall, Thundersley could hardly believe that his wild-cat enemy was, for the moment,

knocked out. His own senses were slipping from him. Both eyes were dark and puffy, both cheeks were streaming crimson where the Don's long nails had torn them, whilst loss of blood from his damaged hand was fast sapping his strength. It was fortunate for Thundersley that the burly shoulder of the plain-clothes man splintered a panel in the door. Another vigorous charge and the panel gave completely. Through the jagged aperture reached a massive fist, and the groping fingers soon found the catch of the lock and released it.

"Great jumping catswhiskers!" gasped the plain-clothes man, as he strode into the hallway and carefully stepped over the prostrate form of the servant. Then, catching sight of the ruin that lay beyond, he whistled. He

had seen a few "rough houses" in his time, but Thundersley's one-time luxurious lounge looked as if a bomb had exploded in it. There was hardly a sound piece of furniture in the room. Chairs and tables and pictures lay strewn about the floor in wild confusion. Catching sight of Thundersley, who was reeling against the wall, gulping in great breaths, the plain-clothes man's expression became stern.

"Wot's all this 'ere?" he demanded. "Who's who? And wot's wot, eh?"

Thundersley couldn't speak; he just pointed to the prostrate figure of the Don in a meaning gesture.

"Oh, 'im, is it?" remarked the plain-clothes man indifferently. "Is he dead?"

Thundersley shook his head, clawed his way towards a chair, stood it on its four legs, and sank into it, done to the wide. Meanwhile, the plain-clothes man was examining the unconscious Don.

"He's only knocked out," was his verdict, after a brief inspection. "Looks a bit of a mess. Hallo!"—catching sight of the manservant, who was now sitting up and blinking about him. "He's all right, too. Swell fight, if you arks me."

No one paid any attention to the plain-clothes man. The servant sat on the floor, gazing, as if mesmerised, at the long stiletto which was buried in the door; Thundersley completely relaxed, indifferent to what was happening about him; the Don slowly began to return to a conscious state.

The plain-clothes man seemed at a loss for a moment, but, catching sight of the phone, he rang up headquarters and explained what he could of the affair. His superior officer was terse—very terse—when asked for instructions.

"Arrest the man, you dolt! I'm coming along now."

There was the sound of a receiver being hastily hung up, and the plain-clothes man, slightly aggrieved, fumbled in his pockets and drew out a pair of handcuffs.

"Arrest 'im, eh? 'E didn't say who. I'll arrest all of them to make sure!"

He reached down, shook the Don into sensibility, and then dragged him towards Thundersley.

Click!

When Thundersley became aware that something had happened he found that his right wrist had been joined to the Don's left wrist by means of the single pair of handcuffs. But he was too far gone still to offer any objection, while the Don was only dimly conscious of what had happened.

"Erc, you," said the plain-clothes man to the servant, who at last had scrambled to his feet, "come over 'erc. Sit down. Now, don't argue. Sit down. You can do a spot of talking when the boss arrives. When I said 'Sit down,' I thought you'd 'ave enough sense to get yourself a chair. But I don't mind. You can sit on the floor if you like."

And the plain-clothes man began to while away the time by whistling "There's No Place Like Home." He stood smartly to attention, however, when the tread of feet echoed along the hallway, and Inspector Pycroft, accompanied by Ferrers Locke, strode in.

"Good lor!" exclaimed the C.I.D. man, as he gazed at the scene of desolation. "Looks like an earthquake had happened!"

Locke made no comment. He was quick to see the stiletto sticking in the door, and the revolver against the

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wainscoting on the far side of the room. He knew what had happened just as well as if he'd been present to witness it.

Catching sight of Thundersley handcuffed to the Don, he frowned.

"Release that man immediately!" he said gruffly.

"But Inspector Pycroft ordered me to arrest him," protested the plain-clothes man.

"Nonsense!" snapped Pycroft. "I said arrest him!" And he pointed to the Don.

"Makes no difference to me who's bloomin' well arrested!" was the plain-clothes man's inward comment.

At that moment the Don blinked himself into full consciousness, and the first face he saw was that of Ferrers Locke.

"Well, Pedrillo Sadini," remarked the private detective, "you've a lot to answer for. I wonder if they'll be pleased to see you back at Devil's Island? Rather fancy they will, what?"

"Caramba! Never, never!"

The look that the Don flashed him would have killed Locke on the spot—if looks could kill!

"Take him to the station, Morris," said Inspector Pycroft. "You'll find the van outside."

And yelling threats and imprecations in a mixture of Spanish and broken English, the Don, alias Pedrillo Sadini, was hustled out to the waiting police van and driven off to gaol.

A police photographer took a couple of flashlight pictures of the wrecked room. Pycroft very gingerly collected the revolver and the stiletto, and then turned to Thundersley.

"Congratulations, Mr. Thundersley!" he said, holding out a horny hand.

"Mr. Locke's told me the news about your brother on the way up Jove, old Weatherstone—ahem!—Lord Weatherstone'll go barmy over this!"

"Thank you," said Thundersley, wrapping a handkerchief round his wounded hand.

"By the way," said Pycroft suddenly. "Suppose this dago tried to kill you, what? That's what he came for, eh?"

Thundersley shook his head.

"On the contrary, I tried to kill him—but he was too quick with that stiletto."

"I don't think we need hear that officially, eh, Pycroft?" laughed Locke.

And Pycroft, winking, remarked that he always had been a bit deaf.

"Well, it's nearing the time we paid his lordship and young Trevor a visit!" chuckled Locke. "Jack's gone along ahead of us to start the ball rolling. But you look in need of a little attention first, Thundersley." He was examining the stiletto wound. "It'll heal nicely, old man. That's the best of these sharp weapons—if they only wound the healing job is always a simple one. Let me dress it for you."

A Fresh Start!

THERE was a joyful reunion of the Thundersley family that afternoon at Weatherstone Court, and to Ferrers Locke was entrusted the delicate task of breaking the final news to his lordship and Nobby—Jack Drake having very carefully led up to it.

His lordship looked like fainting, as bit by bit Locke pieced the puzzle together; but he took the shock like the stout old warrior that he was, and clasped young Nobby—or, to give him his right name, Trevor—to his breast.

As for Nobby, he felt that the whole thing was a beautiful dream, from which he didn't want to tear himself

away when the waking moment should dawn.

One whose joyfulness was not so wildly pronounced as the others was Daniel Willoughby Thundersley. His heart was heavy, for he had determined on a full confession; but catching Nobby's warning glance he remained silent.

At the first opportunity Nobby—for Nobby he must remain to the end of this narrative—drew his brother on one side.

"Look here, Dan"—he coloured as he used the name for the first time—"I want you to do me a favour."

"Of course I will. What is it, old boy?"

"Keep mum about the—the affair," whispered Nobby, referring to the safe robbery. "I honestly believe it would break the old man's heart if he knew."

COME INTO THE OFFICE, BOYS!

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

EVERY day now, chums, my post-bag is chock-a-block full of readers' letters, saying how pleased they are with the handsome Free Photogravure Plates. Allow me, then, to thank you one and all for the appreciation shown. You've got another fine photo-plate this week to add to your collection of "Marvels of Modern Engineering," and I can well imagine how pleased you are with it. Don't forget there are

NINE MORE PHOTO-PLATES TO COME

—and every one is a perfect specimen. The only way to make sure of getting the complete series of photos is to give your newsagent a standing order for the MAGNET. You'd feel awfully disappointed if you missed one of them now, wouldn't you? Next week's souvenir plate illustrates the world's tallest structure, the

EMPIRE STATE BUILDING. (A Man-made Mountain of Bricks and Steel.)

Don't spoil your collection by failing to get it!

Having got that off my chest, here's some more interesting news for you. Now that good weather is with us, and the great outdoors is calling, would you like a

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which is easy to construct and guaranteed to fly? You would? Good! Then here's your opportunity. These aeroplanes, already assembled, would cost you 2s. 6d. in the shops. You, however, will be able to get the various parts and full instructions for assembling the plane yourself for the modest price of 4d. Isn't this an offer worth taking advantage of? Yes, sir, every time! Think of the added fun, too, assembling your model. If you are interested, make certain of getting next Saturday's MAGNET, for in it you will find full particulars of this remarkable offer.

By the way, you'd do well to read this week's splendid school tale of Tom Merry

"You think so?" asked Thundersley. "I had made up my mind to come clean. I've got a lot to get off my chest. At the end of it you will hate me. Listen!"

And forthwith he plunged into a full account of his miserable dealings with the Don.

Nobby, pale-faced and troubled, heard him out. He was shocked—shocked to the core that any man could plan such villainy, let alone his own brother. But his hard days among the circus had developed in Nobby a generous heart. Quite simply he offered his hand to Daniel.

"I think I understand, Dan," he said. "Let's forget and shake hands. Let's start afresh from to-day. My brother—my brother!"

"Nobby, I'll make it up to you for

(Continued on page 28.)

& Co. in our companion paper, the "GEM." It's entitled "ST. JIM'S FOR EVER!" and tells of the exciting adventures of Tom Merry and Kerr, both of whom are masquerading as new boys at Ryletomb Grammar School, in a daring attempt to square accounts with their old rivals. You can take it from me, chums, this yarn is a real winner.

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Clockwork Speedboats, Yachts, Gliders, Cameras, and Games are only a few of the dozens of wonderful gifts which are illustrated in the new Nestlé's Gift Book. Of course, you know that a coupon or part coupon is enclosed with all the wrapped varieties of Nestlé's Chocolate, from the 2d. bar upwards! If you write to Nestlé's (Gift Department 47), Silverthorne Road, Battersea, London, S.W.8, they will send you a copy of the new Nestlé's Free Gift Book, and a Voucher for five free coupons. It would be an absolute crime to miss this chance of obtaining one of these splendid gifts!

Now for next week's programme. The Greyfriars yarn which I have in store for you is a real corker, and Frank Richards has let himself go in:

"TAMING A TYRANT!"

which contains more laughs and thrills than I've encountered for a long time. As you will notice, the curtain rings down this week on "Nobby, the 'Shooting Star.'" Let me tell you, however, that John Breasley, whose previous sparkling sporting yarns proved so popular with MAGNET readers, is "stepping" into pages of the MAGNET with a rattling fine story of King Cricket, entitled: "ALLISON OF AVONSHIRE!" The opening chapters of this grand story will appear next Saturday, so don't miss them, boys! Added to these fine features is the usual two-page "Greyfriars Herald" supplement, which is guaranteed to raise a laugh, our usual shorter features, and ANOTHER SUPERB FREE PHOTO-PLATE. If you've not already ordered your copy do so now.

YOUR EDITOR.

AFTER LIGHTS OUT!

(Continued from page 24.)

that sudden and unexpected sound from the door. All eyes turned downward in amazement. Snores were not uncommon, at night, in the dormitories; but such a sound was quite startling in the afternoon at the door of a study.

"Why, what—" gasped Frank Nugent.

"Bunter—" "What the thump—"

The tea-party in Study No. 1 sat transfixed. Billy Bunter, with his eyes shut behind his spectacles, his fat hands extended before him, gaped into the study. The juniors stared at him as if they had been mesmerised.

"What the— Oh crumbs!" exclaimed Traill. "Is the fat ass potty?"

"The pottiffulness is terrific," gasped Hurree Jamsct Ram Singh.

"Bunter, you benighted ass—"

Peter Todd's grinning face looked into the doorway after Bunter. Behind Peter another face grinned—Skinner's.

"Don't be alarmed, you men," said Toddy. "Bunter's walking in his sleep."

"What!" yelled the tea-party.

"He's caught it from Traill, you see! Mind you don't wake him—it's rather dangerous to wake a somnambulist. He said so just before he started snoozing. Just as if he knew, you know."

"Walking in his sleep!" gasped Wharton.

"Yes, rather," yelled Skinner. "He told me so—just told me in the passage."

"Oh, my hat!" "Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors gazed at Bunter as if fascinated. That even the fat and fatuous Owl of the Remove fancied that he could get away with a spoof like this was amazing. But evidently Bunter hoped so. If one fellow walked in his sleep why shouldn't another? The fellows believed that Traill was a somnambulist. Why shouldn't they believe that Bunter was one? That was how the fat and egregious Owl of the Remove looked at it.

Bunter reached the tea-table. He reached out to a plate of tarts, and took one. It crunched into his capacious mouth.

"Oh scissors!" gurgled Bob Cherry. "That's the game, is it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Crunch! Crunch! Bunter grabbed a second tart. If the fellows believed that he was walking in his sleep, it was all right. But it was a very big "if."

"Well, my only hat!" said Johnny Bull. "Bunter takes the cake, and no giddy mistake! Jevver hear of such a born idiot?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a roar of laughter in the study. Bunter, evidently, fancied that he was taking the fellows in.

"Oh gad!" said the Bounder. "Don't wake him! It's dangerous to wake a sleep-walker! Ha, ha, ha! And, of course, we all believe that he's sleep-walking!"

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

Crunch, went a third tart! Smithy rose and picked up the teapot.

"A little of this down his neck!" he remarked.

Bunter jumped.

"Oh, really, Smithy! Keep off, you beast!"

"Do sleep-walkers talk in their sleep?" grinned Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mind you don't wake me!" gasped Bunter. "I—I'm fast asleep, you know—snoring! Keep that teapot away, you beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I say, you fellows—yaroooh!" roared Bunter, as Smithy weighed in with the teapot.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Awake now?" asked the Bounder. "Here, hold him and I'll give him some more! Better make a job of it!"

"I say, you fellows—leggo! Keep that teapot away! Whoop! I say, I'm fast asleep I—I—I mean I've woke up now!" yelled Bunter. "Leggo! I've woke up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where am I?" gasped Bunter. "I—I seem to remember going to sleep in my study! How—how did I get here?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "You got here on your feet, old fat spoofer. But you're going out on your neck! Now then, all together!"

Bump!

"Yaroooh!"

Billy Bunter landed in the Remove passage.

"Yow-ow-ow! Beasts! I say— Whooooooh!"

"Now pour the tea over him—"

Billy Bunter did not wait for the tea. He bounded to his feet, and bounded away. And a roar of laughter followed him as he bounded.

Harry Wharton & Co. hoped, when Traill left, that he would be cured of his somnambulism. But about Billy Bunter, at least, there was no doubt—no doubt whatever! Billy Bunter was completely cured!

THE END.

(Next week's rollicking story of Harry Wharton & Co. is entitled: "TAMING A TYRANT!" Be sure you order your copy early, and thus make sure of the magnificent PHOTOGRAVURE PLATE which will be PRESENTED FREE with this issue.)

NOBBY, the 'SHOOTING STAR'!

(Continued from page 27.)

this," said Thundersley. "I swear it—but I must tell uncle about the robbery. I must—"

"Don't tell him to-day," implored Nobby. "I know it's wrong morally to keep a thing like this to ourselves; but, after all, if telling the truth is going to kill a fine old sportsman like uncle, without hesitation I say tell him nothing. Perhaps some day you will be able to restore the money. Dan, why don't you ask Mr. Locke?"

"Nobby's right," was Ferrers Locke's considered opinion when the wretched Thundersley approached him on the subject. "Let well alone."

And although it went against the grain to the reformed Daniel Willoughby Thundersley, he remained silent about that wretched episode.

As for the Don, he cheated justice before he had been languishing in goal twenty-four hours. They found him in his cell, lying still and silent. By his side was a tiny pellet of poison similar to that, which, analysis proved, had ended his life.

On his right hand was a heavy gold ring, in the secret cavity of which the cunning Don had stored his poison pellets against such an emergency.

To the Don, death by his own hand was preferable to a living, lingering death on Devil's Island, for back to that inhuman penal settlement he assuredly would have gone.

Ferrers Locke nodded grimly when told the news.

"Rather what I expected," he remarked. "It will save everybody concerned a lot of trouble. Look here, Pycroft, you've got an afternoon off on Saturday, haven't you?"

"Sure," replied the C.I.D. man.

"Well, come along with me and Jack to the Rovers' match against Mutton Athletic. I'll get three seats from old Sandy."


"That's a go!" chuckled Pycroft. "And I'll bet you a couple of cigars to a box of matches that the Athletic win!"

The worthy C.I.D. man lost that bet, for Perriton Rovers won by two goals to nothing. And the goals were scored by Daniel Willoughby Thundersley and his new-found brother Trevor—or, as he will remain for all time to the excited supporters of the Rovers, Nobby—the shooting star!

THE END.

(You've read the announcement on page 26, haven't you, chums? Well, now sit tight until next Saturday when you will be able to read the opening chapters of: "ALLISON OF AVOY-SHIRE!" the greatest sporting yarn ever written.)

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EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON

May 13th, 1933.



£1 REWARD!
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Summer Glories of Greyfriars

School at Its Best

"Oh, to be at Greyfriars,"
Now that Summer's here!"

The poet's words ring as truly now as when they were written. Greyfriars is a great place at any time of the year, of course; but in early summer it's a treat to the giddy peepers!

The rhododendron trees down by the gates are already in full bloom, and the old elm round the quad are a mass of foliage, while the Head's flower-beds are a glowing tribute to the tender care old Minnie bestows on them.

On a "halter," if you're in a languid mood, you can stretch out under the shade of one of the great trees near the tuckshop, suck at an ice-cream, and listen to the merry creak of the distant cricket ball and the rustling rustling of the leaves and imagine yourself in heaven!

If you're more energetically disposed, you can help old Minnie by playing his lose over one of the lawns, preferably when Tompe of the Fourth is coming along, resplendent in brand new flannels and blazer and just in need of a cooling shower-bath!

If you feel like venturing abroad, the silver waters of the Sark are only a stone's-throw away. There you can have a little punting exercise or a dip, just as you like. If you have a punt out and you run into Higheffians you'll probably have a dip as well, whether you like it or not!

Oh, it's great when the summer sun shines down on Greyfriars, chaps! Even old Gossy's crusty face is creased up into a smile, and Loder passes a Remove man without scowling! Even Skinner & Co. have for once come out from the study confines of Study No. 11 to take the air behind the chapel—not to mention as much of each other's wealth as a game of penny nap permits!

Don't forget, then, readers all, if you're thinking of looking us up at Greyfriars, come in the summer-time and see the school at its best!

DICKY NUGENT'S

WEEKLY WISDOM

That silly old fogey, Coker, is worried. He's wondering what to say when the Head finds out that his motor-bike knocked down an old maiden lady in Fritardale yesterday.

As Coker happens to be the world's worst cricketer, I should imagine the most truthful thing he can say is that he never bowled a "maiden over" in his life!

GREASE-PROOF PAPER.

Supply wanted for next Wednesday by Crickie Team suffering from Buter Fingers! Send (with our compliments) to C. K. TEMPLE, Fourth Form.

SECRET SOCIETY'S SECRETS

"Behind the Scenes" Revelations

This week we are able to reveal just what goes on behind the scenes at the meetings of the A.O.G.P.

The Ancient Order of Guinea-Pigs is a secret society of Fourth-Formers which has long defied the efforts of Remove sleuths to find out its secrets.

Well, one of our reporters has got in, anyway. He adopted the simple ruse of opening his mouth like a godfish and looking as if he'd left his brain-box behind, with the result that he was taken for a Fourth-Formner and allowed to enter.

He assures us that the A.O.G.P. is nothing to be feared, and that the members of our staff!



write home about. The Grand Master is our old pal, Cecil Reginald Temple. During the proceedings this gilded ornament of the Fourth wears a tabcloth over his shoulders and a hampshade on his head, and carries a battle-axe in his right hand.

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?



Horace Coker would like to go in for politics, and fancies himself in the role of a dictator. Nobody fancies him that way, however!



Frank Nugent has kept a diary from the day he came to Greyfriars, but he steadfastly refuses to let us see it. Nugent is wise!



An ancestor of Lord Maul-ibeg, the Fritardale postman, ever's is reputed to have been imprisoned in the Tower of London for twenty years. Bob Cherry suggests that he probably adopt most of the time!



W. G. Bunter has tried to cash his postal-order 167 times this term already. He has received exactly 167 refusals!



Raiding the Head's kitchen for his favourite strawberry jam, Sammy Bunter was caught by the cook—and he found himself in a different kind of jam when taken before the Head!

'Lenny's Little Letters

Dear Editor.—Notwithstanding that I am in no way lacking in authoritative deference, I cannot forbear to give utterance to a critical dissertation concerning Mr. Quelch. Permit me to condense my grievance explicitly.

At the termination of our antemortician instruction to-day, I approached Mr. Quelch concerning a lineal imposition due from me, and after an introductory prolegomenon, respectfully postulated certain logical theses supporting my inability to achieve its consummation in the requisite chronological period. Assuming his capability of empirical inference and deduction, I submitted as reasons for the posterior accommodation of the undertaking my preoccupation with scientific investigation and metaphysical speculation, not to mention anthroposophical research and similar studies in transcendentalism. I was about to supplement my discourse with asseverative data on my literary activity and philosophical acquisitiveness, when, to my not inconsiderable consternation, Mr. Quelch grasped an instrument of Hegelisation and applied it forcibly to my anatomy.

I submit, dear Editor, that this infelicitous magisterial propensity for punitive operations is inequitable to the point of incomprehensibility. Dissidently yours,
ALONZO TODD.

(After all, Lenny, you can't expect Quelch to worry his head about your scientific investigations when he's given you an imposition.—Ed.)

AS OTHERS SEE THEM

What I Think of Piet Delarey

By Dick Penfold

Piet Delarey hails from South Africa. His father fought against Britain in the Boer War; but, like many other Boers, he afterwards became more attached to the British flag than to that of his own mother country. Piet, too, is a pro-British as they make 'em, and his affection for England and English institutions could not be greater if his ancestors had lived here for centuries! There are, nevertheless, certain characteristics that distinguish him from the members of our staff!

EXPLAINED!



We noticed Bobsover major in Courtfield last week amusing himself by pulling bell-handles belonging to private houses and running away.



Now we know why he is sometimes referred to as the Terror of the "Ring!"



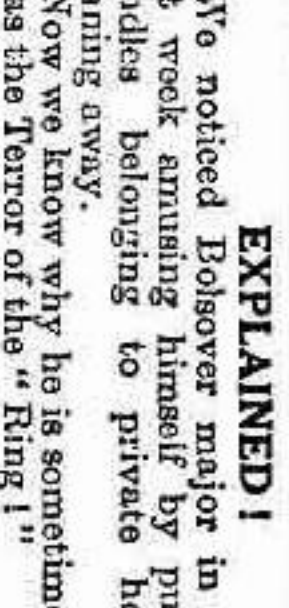
Social success is yours for the asking if you own a heavy laugh. Make yourself popular by acquiring one. It's quite easy. All you need do is go down to the nols and watch Coker at cricket practice. If you don't come away with a hearty laugh, we'll eat our hat!



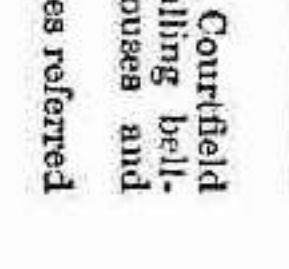
It's the same old round, Last year at bowling his ball finished up on the average about twenty-five yards wide of the wicket. This year it's only about fifteen yards wide.



At fielding practice he was in the wrong way. Instead of striking at us, they've gone on strike against Coker!



Apparently that's what Coker thinks, too. Anyway, his face is purple, and he's waving clenched fists in the air and doing a sort of Irish jig on the gravel path.



It's all right, chaps; you'll be happy, after all! We breathe again!

BLUE SHIRTS SWEEP SCHOOL

Coker on the Warpath

and traitors who have governed her in the past! Go forward on your victorious task! March to the prefects' room and throw them out, neck and crop!"

"Hail, Coker!" shout the wild-eyed Blue Shirts, the Hail, Coker!"

"Let every prefect in the school know that from now on he no longer gives orders—he takes 'em!" "Hail, Coker!"

"Oh, then, my followers!" concludes Coker, with a sweeping gesture towards the School House. "Forward to victory! Strike!"



It's the hour, right enough! Fly for your lives, fellows! The Blue Shirts are coming! Wait a minute, though!

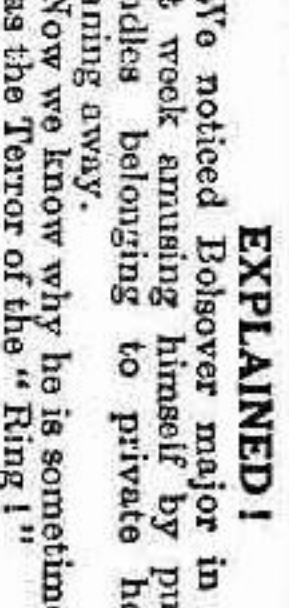
Bunter's Improved Cricket Form

By Dick Penfold

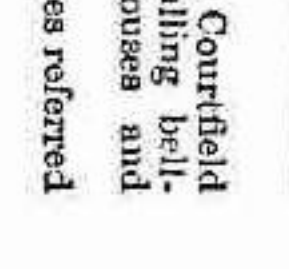
Bunter himself started quite definitely at the annual meeting of the Remove Cricket Club that he was, in support of his contention, he explained that during the Fritardale County has improved marvelously on his last year's standards.



Last year, for instance, he hit one ball out of twenty on the average. This year he hits one in ten.



It's the same old round, Last year at bowling his ball finished up on the average about twenty-five yards wide of the wicket. This year it's only about fifteen yards wide.



At fielding practice he was in the wrong way. Instead of striking at us, they've gone on strike against Coker!