

HE HATED GREYFRIARS!

Amazing
Schoolboy-Adventure
Yarn of . . .

Harry Wharton & Co.

The Magnet 2^D

*Billy Bunter's
Own Paper*



FELLOW PRISONERS!

HURRY UP THE WHISTLE GOES NEXT WEEK!

500 FREE FOOTBALLS



HURRY UP if you want to be in the running for one of the FIVE HUNDRED FREE FOOTBALLS offered to "FOOTER-STAMPS" collectors! The call-over is coming next week.

"Footer-Stamps" are still appearing every week and consist, of course, of pictures of six different actions on the football field—the object of this great competition stamp-game being to score as many "goals" as you can with them, and by the closing date (November 5th) for this month's prizes.

TO SCORE A "GOAL" you collect a complete set of six stamps (they're numbered 1 to 6), made up of the following movements: **KICK-OFF—DRIBBLE—TACKLE—HEADER—SHOT—GOAL.** (Note that the "goal" stamp by itself does NOT count as a "goal"; you must get a set of the stamps 1 to 6 each time!) The more stamps you collect the more "goals" you can score, and this week there are ten more stamps below to add to your collection. Cut them out—there's another complete "goal" for you among them, and the other stamps will, no doubt, fit in with others you have left over from previous weeks (or even previous contests). Save all your stamps still, and collect any more you can, because time is getting short.

★ If you want to score some other quick "goals," remember that "Footer-Stamps" are also appearing in **MODERN BOY** and **GEM** each week. There are more "goals" waiting in these papers this very week!

The 500 Footballs in the October prize-giving are going to the 500 readers scoring the highest number of "goals" with "Footer-Stamps" for the month. So don't send any stamps yet: wait until we tell you how and where next week.

RULES—500 Footballs will be awarded in the October contest to readers declaring and sending in the largest number of "goals" scored with "Footer-Stamps." The Editor may extend or amend the prize list in case of too many ties, and no reader may win more than one prize in "Footer-Stamps."

Each "goal" must consist of a set of "Footer-Stamps" Nos. 1 to 6, inclusive. All claims for prizes to be made on the proper coupon (to be given next week). No allowance made for any coupon or stamps mutilated or lost or delayed in the post or otherwise. No correspondence! No one connected with this paper may enter, and the Editor's decision will be final and legally binding throughout.

(N.B.—"Footer-Stamps" may also be collected from the following papers: "Gem," "Modern Boy," "Boy's Cinema," "Detective Weekly," "Triumph," "Wild West Weekly," "Thriller," "Sports Budget," and "Champion.")

OVERSEAS READERS! You pals who are far away—you're in this great scheme also, and special prizes in cash will be given for the best scores from overseas readers. There will be a special closing date for you as well, of course!

TEN MORE
"FOOTER-STAMPS"
FOR YOUR PILE!



THE ONLY WAY! Gilbert Tracy has used all his cunning to get himself kicked out of Greyfriars, but without result. His only alternative now is to bolt . . . and bolt he does!

The RUNAWAY *By* FRANK RICHARDS



Gilbert Tracy lifted his right foot and jammed it just over the spot where P.-c. Tozer had lately parked his supper. "Oooogh!" gasped the police force of Friardale, as he staggered back.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Wrong Man!

"GO it!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Let's see you do it!"
"On the ball!"

"Stand clear, you fellows!"
Mr. Quelch, the master of the Greyfriars Remove, standing at the open window of his study, smiled as he looked out into the bright October morning.

It was morning break at Greyfriars School. A little crowd of Remove fellows were punting a footer in the quad, and their cheery voices reached the Remove master at his window.

Harry Wharton & Co. and six or seven other Removites were there, among them Gilbert Tracy, the new boy in the Form.

Mr. Quelch smiled approval.

He liked to see his boys enjoying life, with the happy exuberance of youth, and he was distinctly pleased to see Gilbert Tracy joining up with the rest in the punt-about.

Tracy, in two or three weeks at the school, had given his Form-master more trouble than any other fellow in a whole term. If that sulky, sullen, discontented fellow was forgetting his sulky discontent, and making the best instead of the worst of things, Quelch was very glad to see it.

So Mr. Quelch watched the little crowd in the quad with a smiling face.

Tracy, it seemed, was going to take a special shot; he had the ball at his feet, and the other fellows were standing back to give him room. Most of them were laughing.

"You couldn't do it!" came Vernon-Smith's voice.

"Easy as falling off a form!" answered Tracy.

"Coker's a good thirty feet away," said Bob Cherry. "If you can tip his hat off with a footer at that distance—"

"He can't!" said Smithy.

"Well, let's see."

"Go it!"

Mr. Quelch looked a little dubious as he heard that. He glanced in the direction in which most of the Removites were looking.

There stood Horace Coker of the Fifth Form. Coker, it seemed, was going to be the target for that shot, and all the juniors were keenly

ings, was a first-class footballer, and a perfect wizard with a Soccer ball.

Gilbert Tracy placed the ball and stepped back for a short run.

Coker of the Fifth, in the distance, was talking to Potter and Greene of his Form, quite unconscious that he was a target for shooting practice.

Gilbert Tracy took a quick run and kicked.

Whiz!

The football flew.

But it did not whiz anywhere near Coker of the Fifth. It whizzed at quite a different angle—a very unexpected angle. Tracy seemed, all of a sudden, to have lost all his skill, and kicked as wildly as Billy Bunter or Coker himself might have done.

For a split second fellows wondered where the ball was going. Then they knew.

Crash!

"Oh!"

All eyes shot round to Quelch's study window. Horrified eyes had a vision of a whizzing football impinging on Mr. Quelch's majestic countenance, tapping him fairly on the nose!

Mr. Quelch went backwards.

The sudden shock took him entirely by surprise. He did not, indeed, know what had happened for a moment or two.

But he knew that he was knocked backwards, and that he sat down on his study floor with a sudden bump.

He sat and gasped, the football rolling over his knees.

Outside in the quad there was a general gasp. The Remove fellows stared at Quelch's study window—now vacant—with bulging eyes.

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"You elumsv ass!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"You—you—you've got Quelch!" gasped Johnny Bull.

"You awful ass, you've knocked Quelch over!" stuttered Frank Nugent. "There'll be a row now!" erinned Smithy.

"The rowfulness will be terrific!" exclaimed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "My esteemed and idiotic Tracy, you have done it now!"

"An accident, of course," said Tracy. "My foot slipped—"

"Did it?" said Harry Wharton dryly. "Let's hope that Quelch will believe that it did. It wants some believing."

"You could see that it was an accident—"

"Yes; the same accident that happened to my uncle at Wharton Lodge, when you were punting a footer there," said Harry. "You have rather too many accidents of that sort, Tracy."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Think he did it on purpose?"

"I don't think—I know!" answered the captain of the Remove.

"Jolly good shot, if he did!" said Bob.

"The goodwillness was terrific! But—"

"Of course I meant it for Coker," drawled Tracy. "Nobody saw Quelch at his window—"

"We didn't; you did," said Harry Wharton. "What's the good of gammon, Tracy? You planned the whole thing when you saw Quelch at his window."

"Are you going to tell Quelch so?" sneered Tracy.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"He won't need telling. He knows you're the best shot in the Remove with a Soccer ball!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is!"

Mr. Quelch rose into view again at the study window. The expression on his face was quite alarming. There was a smudge of mud on his nose, and the rest of his face was crimson. His eyes were fairly flashing.

"Tracy!" he thundered.

"Yes, sir?" answered Gilbert.

"Tracy, how dare you—"

"An accident, sir!"

"Come to my study at once, Tracy!"

"Yes, sir!"

Gilbert Tracy walked away to the door of the House, and Quelch turned from the window. The Remove fellows were left in a buzz.

Some of them were doubtful whether Tracy had intended to bowl over his Form-master. Such a trick was quite in keeping with his proceedings ever since he had been at Greyfriars; but they doubted whether he could have brought off so remarkable a shot if he had wanted to.

But Harry Wharton had no doubt. He knew what Tracy could do, and he had seen him play the same trick before. And little as he liked the new junior, he was sorry for him, in view of what undoubtedly awaited him when he arrived in his Form-master's study.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Prisoner in "Punny"!

MR. QUELCH was rubbing his nose with a handkerchief when Tracy entered his study.

That nose, like Marian's in the ballad, was red and raw under the smudge of mud on it.

A Soccer ball banging on the nose was bound to do some damage. Quelch's

nose was a little damaged. There was a pain in it. His looks indicated that there was a pain in his temper also.

But, rather to Gilbert's surprise, he had not taken up his cane.

Twice already that morning Gilbert had had to "bend over" under the cane—once in first lesson, once in second lesson; the first time for having cut prep the previous evening, the second time for having banged his desk-lid.

Gilbert certainly did not want any more cane. He had taken the risk, unable to resist the temptation to "get" his Form-master with the footer at the study window. But a third whopping in one morning was rather a dismaying prospect; and Gilbert, as he entered the study, perhaps wished that he had let Coker, after all, have the footer.

But Mr. Quelch made no motion towards the cane that lay on the table. He ceased to rub his painful nose, and fixed his gimlet-eyes on Gilbert grimly.

"I'm awfully sorry, sir!" began Gilbert meekly. Gilbert could be meek when he liked. "Quite an accident, sir! My foot slipped—"

"You will serve no purpose by uttering falsehoods, Tracy," interrupted Mr. Quelch. "You should have learned by this time that you cannot deceive me."

Gilbert was sulkily silent.

"What you have done," continued Mr. Quelch, "amounts to an assault upon your Form-master; and any other boy would be taken to the head-master, to be expelled for such an act. Possibly you hope that that may be the result in this case."

Mr. Quelch set his lips.

"I am quite aware of the cause of your incessant bad conduct ever since you have been in the school, Tracy. You hope to tire out my patience and cause me to send you home. So long as you go back to your former slack and idle life at Oakwood Place, you do not care if you are sent away from the school in disgrace."

He paused again.

"You will not be sent away, Tracy. You give me more trouble than any other boy in the Form. You are the worst boy in the school. I should be exceedingly glad to be relieved of the responsibility of you. But I have promised your uncle—Sir Giles Oakwood—to take you in hand and make something better than an idle, selfish slacker of you—and I shall keep my word."

Gilbert did not answer, but there was a very perceptible sneer on his face; and Mr. Quelch's hand strayed towards the cane on the table.

Still he did not take it up.

"You have been caned twice this morning, Tracy," he went on. "I do not care to cane you a third time, and I shall not do so."

Tracy stared a little. He was glad enough to hear that; for he could still feel the twinges of the swipes that had landed in the Form-room. But if he was not going to be whopped, he wondered what he was going to get. Mr. Quelch was determined not to take him to the Head to be sacked, and the only alternative seemed to be to whop him, or let him off. And Quelch did not look like letting him off!

Mr. Quelch opened a drawer of his desk and took therefrom an iron key.

Tracy blinked at it.

"You will now come with me, Tracy," said the Remove master.

In wonder the new junior followed him from the study.

Quelch was not taking him to the Head. Where he was taking him Gilbert could not guess—at first. But when they turned into a long corridor

at the top of a back staircase he guessed. He had never seen the punishment-room at Greyfriars, but he had heard it spoken of, and he knew that it lay at the end of that corridor.

His face set.

"Punny," as the Greyfriars fellows called that undesirable residence, was seldom used at Greyfriars. In the tough old days of an earlier generation it had been used often enough, and delinquents were said to have been kept there on a diet of bread and water. In more modern days it was seldom entered; hardly once in a term was a fellow locked in to meditate on his sins. But that was what was going to happen to Gilbert.

It was, perhaps, the most efficacious way of dealing with a young rascal who could not be sent away from the school, and whom whoppings could not induce to toe the line. Gilbert breathed hard as he followed the Remove master to the door at the end of that long, silent corridor—far from the occupied portions of the building, and out of the sound of voices.

Mr. Quelch put the key in the lock, turned it, and threw the door open; he motioned to Gilbert to enter.

With set lips the new junior stepped into the punishment-room.

Mr. Quelch stood within the open doorway, his face grim.

Gilbert cast a hurried and dismayed glance round the room.

It was not large; the floor was bare; the window was small, and barred with iron so that the glass could not be reached from within, the ancient wall being very thick. There was a small iron bedstead and two or three other articles of furniture. Gilbert's face grew darker and darker. How long was he going to be shut up in this den?

His eyes turned on his Form-master sulkily and savagely.

"You will remain here, Tracy, for three days," said Mr. Quelch. "I shall send Trotter here to make up your bed. Your meals will be brought here—very plain meals. You will be allowed out twice a day for one hour each time, in charge of a prefect, for exercise while the other boys are in class. Your school books will be sent here, and you will be expected to do your usual Form work, and, in addition, certain exercises which I shall prepare for you. You will not be allowed to waste your time."

"Oh!" breathed Gilbert.

"During the next three days you will have ample leisure for reflection, and I trust that you will profit by it," said Mr. Quelch grimly. "I shall now leave you here, Tracy; you will see me again after third school."

Mr. Quelch turned to the door.

Tracy's eyes glittered.

The prospect before him was enough to dismay any fellow, and it was one that he certainly had not foreseen.

"You're going to leave me here?" he said, between his teeth.

"I have told you so, Tracy."

"For three days?"

"Precisely."

"I won't stand it!" yelled Gilbert.

"I don't want to stay in this rotten school! Uncle Giles would let me go home if you minded your own business! I won't stay here!"

Mr. Quelch looked at him grimly.

"For that insolence, Tracy, your detention in this punishment-room will be extended to four days, instead of three!" he said. "You have yourself to thank. I shall now lock you in."

He stepped to the door.

As he did so Tracy made a sudden spring.

Mr. Quelch, assuredly, was not looking for anything of the kind. But Gilbert was desperate and he was reckless.

A sudden, violent shove sent Mr. Quelch staggering away from the door; he staggered two or three paces and collided with the table, which rocked.

"Upon my word!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "I—"

Slam!
Even as the Remove master lurched against the table, Gilbert leaped through the doorway and slammed the door after him.

Mr. Quelch, with a gasp of wrath, jumped at the door.

Click!
Before he could grasp the door-handle the key turned outside.

The next moment he was dragging at the door-handle—in vain. The thick oak door was locked, with Gilbert outside—and it was Henry Samuel Quelch, the master of the Remove, who was a prisoner in the punishment-room.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Under Lock And Key!

"UNLOCK this door!"
Mr. Quelch's voice came almost hoarsely.

Seldom or never had the master of the Remove been so intensely enraged and exasperated.

Dragging at the door-handle was futile; the door was thick and the lock was strong. Banging at it to attract attention was equally useless; for the room was far out of hearing from below. But Mr. Quelch was not, for the moment, thinking of that. It had not occurred to him yet that the young rascal intended to leave him there. He could not imagine that any fellow would dare! This was a trick—one of Tracy's reckless tricks—to be duly punished when Tracy was in his hands again.

"Unlock this door! Tracy, do you hear? Unlock this door at once!"

"I hear you," came a voice from outside, muffled by the thickness of the ancient oak. "I hear you all right. I don't fancy anybody else will!"

"Unlock the door!"

"I'll watch it!" chuckled Gilbert.

"Will you release me at once, Tracy?"

"No, I won't!"

"You shall be caned—flogged!" the Remove master gasped. "Tracy, I command you to open this door immediately!"

"Are you going to lock me in if I do?"

"Certainly! Most decidedly!"

"Then you can have your turn first! Stick there and see how you like it, old bean!"

"Boo!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

There was a chuckle outside.

"Perhaps you'll get tired of keeping me in this rotten school when you've had a few days in that den!" came Tracy's voice.

"A few days! What?"

"I'm not letting you out, anyhow! I'm taking the key away with me!"

Mr. Quelch stood staring at the door.

He could hardly believe it yet—that that young rascal had locked him in the punishment-room, intending to leave him there. It was incredible, unthinkable—but it was dawning on Mr. Quelch's mind that it was so!

He heard the sound of the long, iron

key being withdrawn from the outside of the lock.

He thumped on the door with his knuckles.

"Tracy!" he roared.

"Hallo!"

"Open that door at once!"

"Bow-wow!"

"What—what did you say?"

"I said bow-wow!"

Mr. Quelch fairly gurgled.

Tracy, in his first days at Greyfriars, had been cheeky enough, but the cane, wielded by the hand of Henry Samuel Quelch, had put a speedy end to that. But with a locked oak door between him and his Form-master, Gilbert had recovered all his cheek, and a little more. He was talking to his Form-master now as no Remove man had ever talked to Quelch before.

"You—you—you young rascal!" stuttered Quelch at last. "If you—if you dare to leave me here—"

"You'll see!"

"Will you let me out of this room, Tracy?"

"Will you let me out of this school, Quelch?"

"What—what?"

"I'll let you out, if you'll let me take the first train home."

"Impudent young rascal!" roared Mr. Quelch. "As soon as you are in my hands, Tracy, you will be caned with the greatest severity."

"Then you won't get me in your hands in a hurry!" retorted Gilbert.

"I command you—"

"Rats!"

"Wha-a-t?"

"Rats!"

"You—you—you—" gasped Mr. Quelch, almost incoherent.

"Ta-ta, old bean!" called out Gilbert.

"I'll give you a look-in later, if I can get along here without being spotted! Perhaps you'll have made up your mind, by that time, that you've had enough of me at Greyfriars!"

"Boo!" roared Mr. Quelch.

There was no answer! But the Form-master heard a sound of receding footsteps. Tracy was going—with the key in his pocket, leaving the door locked on him.

"Tracy!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

Tracy was gone!

For several minutes Mr. Quelch stood in a gasping state, hardly able to realise his position.

He was locked in the punishment-room. There was no possible escape until the door was unlocked; it would not have been of much use as a punishment-room, if there had been! No sound from that room could reach ears below—it had been designedly situated in the remotest part of the rambling old block of buildings that constituted Greyfriars School. Mr. Quelch was aware of it—only too well aware of it!

The worst of it was that no one knew, or could guess, that he was there! There was no hope of help.

He would be missed within ten minutes, when he was due to take his Form for third school in the Remove room. His Form would wonder what had become of him. But whatever they surmised, they were not likely to surmise that their Form-master was locked up in punny. Such an idea as that was likely to occur to nobody!

Could that young rascal dare to intend to leave him there?

If he did, Mr. Quelch was "for it."

Not a soul in the school knew where he was—it was after the football had knocked him over at his study window that he had decided on the punishment-room for Tracy, and he had taken him directly there. It had been his intention

to report the matter to the headmaster at once; but he had not, of course, yet done so. Dr. Locke would never dream of this. No one would dream of it! All depended on Tracy—and if that young rascal left him there, there he had to stay!

He turned at last to the window. But there was no hope in that. The ancient wall was nearly two feet thick. It was as much like a loophole as a window. Iron bars were crossed over it. He could not even reach the glass, let alone put his head out. He had a distant glimpse of kitchen gardens, at the back of the buildings, that was all.

Far in the distance he discerned Mr. Mimble, the gardener, at work with a hoe. No shout would have reached him. Even if his attention had been drawn to the little window of punny he could not possibly have seen Quelch there.

The Remove master turned back from the window.

His feelings were inexpressible.

He stepped back to the door. With a sort of hopeless hope, he knocked on it, again and again!

Knock, knock, knock!

But he ceased knocking at last. It was useless, and he knew it. He sat down at last on the single chair in the room.

He listened for a sound of returning footsteps. Even yet, he could scarcely believe that that reckless young rascal intended to leave him locked in, when it was time for him to take his Form in the Remove-room.

But he listened in vain!

There was no sound of footsteps! Tracy was gone, and he was gone for good! Mr. Quelch was a prisoner in the punishment-room; and he had to stay a prisoner, unless Gilbert chose to come and let him out! And it was clear that Gilbert was not going to choose to do anything of the kind!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Where Is Henry?

"WHERE'S Henry?"
Bob Cherry asked that question.

Third school was due—and a little over-due, and the Remove had gathered at the door of their Form-room. But Henry—otherwise Henry Samuel Quelch—generally prompt on the tick of the clock, was conspicuous only by his absence.

Not often did Quelch keep his class waiting. It had happened—but it had happened very seldom. But it was happening now—and it was not merely a matter of a minute or two. Five minutes had passed, and the other Forms were all in and going strong, while the Remove still waited.

"Where on earth," said Bob, "is Henry?"

"The wherefulness is terrific," grinned Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh, "but if the esteemed beak turns upfully, you had better not let him hear you calling him Henry, my absurd Bob!"

"I say, you fellows, this is all right, ain't it?" said Billy Bunter. "I say, five minutes gone—that leaves fifty-five out of the hour! Every little helps, you know!"

An hour spent in class was, from Billy Bunter's point of view, a sheer waste of sixty minutes that might have been better spent! So any deduction from that hour was, in the estimation of the fat Owl of the Remove, a clear gain.

"Bathing his nose, perhaps!" suggested the Bounder. "It looked to

me as if it needed it, at his window in break."

There was a chuckle at Vernon-Smith's suggestion. Possibly Quelch's nose needed bathing, but that was not likely to keep him late for his class. But he was late—very late!

Gilbert Tracy, leaning on the Form-room door with his hands in his pockets, listened to the discussion with a lurking grin on his face.

He had joined the Remove as they came in for third school—and most of the fellows were surprised to see that he showed no sign of having been whopped.

Certainly no fellow in the Form knew where he had come from just then, or dreamed that he had left an enraged Form-master safe under lock and key! "Seven minutes late!" said Skinner, looking at his watch. "Quelch is out to break records this time."

"Can't be with the Head!" said Frank Nugent. "The Head's gone in with the Sixth."

"Gone to sleep in his armchair, and forgotten Form!" suggested Billy Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I've gone to sleep in an armchair, and forgotten school, more than once!" said Bunter.

"Quelch hasn't!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "I wonder whether I'd better go along to his study and remind him?"

"No fear!" said the Bounder, promptly. "If you're anxious to get on with the acquisition of knowledge, old bean, you're the only man here who is!" "Hear, hear!" grinned Bob.

"I say, you fellows, if he keeps us waiting a quarter of an hour, we can clear!" said Billy Bunter, hopefully. "Mossoo has done it, more than once! I wonder if Quelch is going to?"

"Too much jolly good luck!" said Peter Todd.

"By gum, though, he's over eight minutes late now!" said Herbert Vernon-Smith. "Only another seven—"

"Oh, what larks!" breathed Bob. Faces in the Remove were quite eager now.

All the fellows knew the time-honoured rule; if a master, by any chance, kept his class waiting fifteen minutes, that class was entitled to go.

Monsieur Charpentier, the French master, had done it several times; Mr. Capper, the master of the Fourth, had done it; Wiggins, master of the Third, did it at least three times a term, but never, never had Henry Samuel Quelch given his Form such a glorious chance!

Was he going to do so now? Really, it looked as if he might, for he was nine minutes late; and such a thing had hardly occurred before in the memory of the oldest inhabitant.

"Six more minutes!" murmured Squiff.

"Only six!" said Tom Brown. "And think of getting down to footer instead of jolly old Roman history."

"Hurrah!" "I'm blessed if I can make it out," said Harry Wharton. "I—I think I'd better go along to his study."

As a Removite, Harry Wharton would rather have kked Quelch to cut that class and leave the fellows free to put in a spot of football practice—which most of them enjoyed much more than the acquisition of knowledge. But as head boy of the Form, he rather felt that he ought to remind Quelch of the time, if Quelch had inexplicably and unaccountably forgotten it.

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But if Harry Wharton thought so, no one else did. There was a howl of protest at once.

"Chuck it!" "Pack it up!" "Don't you barge in, Wharton!"

"Let Quelch rip!" "Yaas," remarked Lord Mauveverer. "Let him rip, old bean! Perhaps he wants a rest! I know I do!"

"But—" said Harry. "Rats!" "Rot!" "Chuck it!"

"I say, you fellows, perhaps he's had a fit in the study, or something," suggested Bunter brightly. "I say, that would be rather a spot of luck, what? Might mean no lessons at all to-day, if he's taken really bad, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "It's a jolly old mystery, though!" said Bob Cherry. "Ten minutes late now—never knew Henry ten minutes late before!"

"If he's had a fit—" "Fathead!"

"Tracy was the last man to see him alive!" remarked Skinner. "Where did you leave the dear old scout, Tracy?"

"I saw him in his study!" drawled Tracy. "You know he sent for me there."

"But he can't be sitting in his study all this time and forgetting that he's got a Form to take!" said Hazeldene. "All the better if he is, but he can't be."

"More power to his elbow!" said Bob Cherry. "Eleven minutes, my beloved carers! Four more, and we beat it!"

"If he's asleep in his armchair, let's hope he won't wake up under four minutes!" chuckled the Bounder. "If he's bathing his nose, let's hope that the damage will keep him busy another five!"

"The hopefulness is terrific."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob. "Hero's Prout!"

Mr. Prout—probably having heard the buzz of cheery voices from the corridor—came out of the Fifth Form Room.

He stared at the crowd of Removites and rolled majestically down the passage towards them.

"Why are you not in your Form-room?" demanded Prout.

Really, it was no business of Prout's. The Fifth Form master had no concern with the Remove.

However, Wharton answered him politely.

"Mr. Quelch hasn't come yet, sir, to let us in." "Bless my soul!" said Mr. Prout. He glanced at his watch. "Do you mean to say that Mr. Quelch is ten minutes late for his class, Wharton? This is very extraordinary. Unprecedented!"

"Unparalleled, we were thinking, sir!" said Vernon-Smith gravely.

There was a gurgle from the Removites.

Prout looked at the Bounder very suspiciously. Smithy's face was quite grave; but Prout strongly suspected that he was being cheeky—as, indeed, he was!

"You cannot remain here!" said Prout decisively. "You had better go into your Form-room. Go in at once!"

The crowd of Removites did not stir. They were not disposed to be ordered about by Prout, if they could help it. But there was another reason, and a stronger one. The Form-room door was locked in break; and the Remove could not go in for third school till Mr.

Quelch came with the key. Prout, who generally left his own Form-room unlocked overlooked that.

"Do you hear me?" boomed Prout. "Yes, sir!" said Harry. "But we're waiting for our Form-master, sir."

"Do not argue with me, Wharton!" Prout waved a plump hand at the door of the Remove-room. "Go in at once! Your Form-master is obviously delayed—and you cannot hang about the passages in this disorderly manner. Go into your Form-room."

"Sorry, sir, but—" "I have told you," boomed Prout, "to go into your Form-room! I will not allow you to hang about the passages in a disorderly mob. Go into your Form-room: this instant, Wharton!"

"I can't, sir!" said Harry. "What! Why cannot you?" "I'm too big, sir!"

"Too big!" repeated Prout, gazing at him. "What do you mean, Wharton? Is that answer intended for impertinence, or is it dictated by absolute stupidity?"

"Neither, sir!" said the captain of the Remove cheerfully. "I mean that I'm too big to squeeze through the keyhole, sir."

"The—the—the keyhole!" stuttered Prout.

"That's the only way in, sir, as the door is locked!" explained Harry Wharton. "I couldn't manage it, sir!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a yell from the Removites.

The expression on Mr. Prout's plump and portly face at that moment was really entertaining.

"Oh!" ejaculated Prout, quite taken aback. "Oh! Ah! The—the door is—is—is locked! Ah!"

Prout revolved on his axis, and retreated to his own Form-room. Loud chortles from the Remove followed him there. The Fifth Form door was closed with a bang!

"Fourteen minutes!" said the Bounder.

Excitement in the Remove was now at white heat!

One minute more, and by the old rule which they had never had a chance to put into use before in dealing with Mr. Quelch, they were entitled to go their own ways—free for the remainder of the hour! It seemed too good to be true!

Stodious fellows in the Remove were, doubtless, reluctant to miss the lesson, and lose the valuable knowledge they might have acquired from Mr. Quelch. But such fellows were few in the Lower Fourth Form at Greyfriars!

Undoubtedly the great majority of that Form were eager to cut, on the very stroke of time! They were not likely to give their missing beak a split second's grace over the stipulated fifteen minutes!

The Bounder held up his watch to the general view! Most, if not all, eyes fixed on it. The second-hand seemed to crawl.

It was a matter of seconds now! But it was so amazing for Quelch to forget a class, that even in the last few seconds, the fellows fully expected to see the angular figure come whisking up the passage—dashing all their hopes at the last moment!

But, to the general delight and relief, that angular figure did not come whisking! The final seconds slid by!

"Time!" announced the Bounder. "We're off!" "Hurrah!"

It looked like a foot race, as the Remove scampered off, and streamed out of the House, into the sunny autumn morning. The juniors fairly



"Go into your Form-room this instant, Wharton!" boomed Mr. Prout. "I'm too big to squeeze through the keyhole, sir!" said the captain of the Remove cheerfully. "The—the—the keyhole!" stuttered Prout. "That's the only way in, sir, as the door is locked!" explained Wharton.

whooped, as they scampered out—free as the birds of the air, while all other Forms at Greyfriars were grinding on the same old grind!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Mysterious Disappearance Of A Beak!

DR. LOCKE raised his eyebrows, in surprise.

Having handed over the Sixth Form to Mr. Lascelles, the maths master, the Head was taking a gentle walk in the quad—in which quarter he did not expect, at that hour, to see anything of the Lower School.

But he did! Quite prominent to the view was a fat youth in spectacles, sitting on a bench under one of the old elms, working his methodical way through a large chunk of toffee. Billy Bunter was too deeply interested in the toffee to notice the Head; but the Head noticed Billy Bunter.

In another spot, Skinner and Snoop were loafing, with their hands in their pockets. In another, Bolsover major and several more fellows were playing leapfrog. Still more surprising, from the direction of the football ground came a sound of cheery shouting—where a good many of the Remove were engaged in a pick-up game.

As the Remove were supposed to be in third school with their Form-master, the Head was naturally surprised—indeed, astonished.

It was improbable that Mr. Quelch had suddenly decided to give his Form an extra holiday. Yet what the Remove were doing "out," when all other Forms were "in," was a mystery. "Bless my soul!" murmured the surprised headmaster.

He beckoned to the nearest junior—who happened to be Gilbert Tracy.

Tracy had watched the headmaster emerge from the House—with a covert grin as he watched him. He came up respectfully as the Head beckoned.

"Why are you not in the Form-room?" asked Dr. Locke. "Has Mr. Quelch dismissed his Form early, Tracy?"

"Mr. Quelch did not come to take us in third school, sir," answered Tracy. "Wha-a-t?"

"He never came, sir," said Tracy. "Wharton said it was the rule that we need not wait if our master did not turn up after a quarter of an hour."

"That is the case," said Dr. Locke. "But what do you mean to tell me, Tracy—that Mr. Quelch was fifteen minutes late for his class?"

"Yes, sir." "Dear me! I trust that Mr. Quelch is not ill," said the Head. That seemed to his mind the only explanation.

Yet if Quelch was ill, surely he would have sent word to his chief, so that arrangements could be made for taking the Remove! It was quite perplexing.

Dr. Locke walked back to the House and tapped at Mr. Quelch's study door. He glanced into the study.

It was vacant. Rather to his surprise, he noticed a football lying on the floor, just within the open window. But there was no sign of Quelch.

Concluding that Quelch must have gone to his room, the Head negotiated the staircase. But Mr. Quelch was not to be found above any more than below.

In a very perplexed frame of mind, Dr. Locke descended again and went to the Remove Form Room. But the door of that apartment was still locked—so, obviously, Quelch was not there.

The Head's next visit was paid to Masters' Common-room. Monsieur Charpentier was there, perusing his

latest "Figaro" from Paris, not having a class just then.

At sight of the Head, Mosssoo jumped to his feet, and bowed almost to the floor with Gallic politeness.

"Mr. Quelch is not here, Monsieur Charpentier?"

"Non! Non, monsieur!" answered Mosssoo.

"Can you tell me where he is?"

"Mais oui! Monsieur Quelch, he is in ze Form-room viz his Form, je crois," answered Monsieur Charpentier, in surprise.

"He is not there, Monsieur Charpentier, and I do not seem to be able to find him," said Dr. Locke. "You do not know whether he has gone out?"

"Non! Je n'en sais rien," answered Mosssoo. "But if you vish, sair, I go to search—"

"Not at all, sir!"

Dr. Locke left the Common-room, more and more surprised. Quelch, who should have been in the Form-room with his Form, did not seem to be in the House at all. It was really extraordinary.

It looked as if he had gone out, forgetting his Form—which certainly the most absent-minded master ought not to have done.

However, the Head proceeded further. He looked into the library, where he found Mr. Woose, the librarian, who could only tell him that Quelch had not been there. Then he went out into the quad, but failed to discern any sign of Quelch on the horizon. He walked down to Gosling's lodge, but could only learn from Gosling that he had not seen Mr. Quelch go out. If Quelch had, however, gone out by the masters' private gate, Gosling might not have noticed him—but it was growing more and more surprising.

In all his peregrinations in quest of THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,601.

Quelch, the Head naturally never thought of going up to the punishment-room, remote in a secluded quarter high up in the building. Quelch had no business there that he knew of, and the thought of it naturally never crossed his mind. Certainly he was not likely to suspect that a Greyfriars Form-master had been locked in any room by a member of his Form!

"Bunter!"
"Oh! Yes, sir!" Bunter, sticky with toffee, bounded up at the voice of his headmaster and blinked at him through his big spectacles.

"Do you know where Mr. Quelch is to be found, Bunter?"

"Oh, no, sir! He never turned up for third school, sir," said the fat Owl anxiously. "We waited, sir—"

"Quite so! Mr. Quelch was present in second school. I presume?"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"Have you seen him since, Bunter?"

"In break, sir, when Tracy—I—I mean, when the footer bunged on his beazer, sir—"

"What?"

"I—I mean, on his boko, sir—"

stammered Bunter.

"His what?"

"His—his nose, sir! At his study window! Smithy thought he might be bathing his nose, sir! It got rather a bang!"

"Do you mean that your Form-master was struck by a football, Bunter?" asked the Head, gazing at the fat face of the Owl of the Remove.

"Yes, sir! An—an accident—"

"How did this accident occur, Bunter?"

"Tracy—I mean a Remove chap—was buzzing a footer at Coker of the Fifth, sir, and it whopped on Quelch's boko—I mean his beazer—that is, his—"

his nose—by accident, sir, at his window—"

Dr. Locke's lips tightened. If Tracy, the new junior in the Remove, had kicked a football in his Form-master's face, the Head knew exactly how much of an "accident" there was in it. However, that was a matter for Mr. Quelch to deal with personally, and he did not doubt that Quelch had dealt with it.

"You have not seen your Form-master since, Bunter?"

"No, sir."

More and more surprised, the Head walked back to the House. He was astonished—and a little grim. Mr. Quelch, no doubt, would be able to explain—but he certainly would be required to explain this extraordinary conduct!

It was clear now—or, at least, it seemed to be clear—that he was not in the school at all. A Form-master who walked out and left his Form to their own devices, was booked for an interview with his chief, which he was not likely to enjoy.

Dr. Locke left word with Trotter to request Mr. Quelch to come to his study when he returned. But Mr. Quelch did not come to his study, and he had not appeared when school was dismissed—he had not appeared when the Head left his study and went to his own house for lunch.

Really, it looked as if Quelch was making a day of it!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Missing Master!

"I SAY, you fellows, this is luck!" That was Bunter's opinion. Bunter's opinion was shared by a good many fellows in the Remove.

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But they were all surprised, and surprise was spreading outside the Remove. Fellows in other Forms were getting interested.

It was Quelch's custom to take his lunch, which was the School dinner, with his Form in Hall. He had not appeared at dinner.

The Removites realised that they need not have been so eager and anxious at third school. Quelch had not been likely to turn up! For he had not turned up since, and what had become of him, and what he fancied he was up to, was a thrilling mystery.

Now it was time for afternoon class, and the Remove, as in duty bound, gathered at their Form-room door. That Quelch would cut another class seemed too astonishing to be possible. But there it was—the Form-room door was still locked; no Quelch had appeared, and the Bounder had his eye on his watch, ready to count up to fifteen minutes!

It was really incredible that such an unusual thing should happen twice in the same day. But it looked as if it was going to happen.

It was quite delightful to Billy Bunter—quite attractive to many fellows. There was Latin prose that afternoon, which had few attractions for most of the Remove. An extra half-holiday was a great catch. But more thoughtful fellows than William George Bunter were concerned for Quelch.

It was known that the Head had already been inquiring about him. The whole school knew now that he was absent. Prout, Capper, Wiggins and other masters had glanced very expressively at the mob of juniors waiting at the Remove door. Wingate of the Sixth had asked them questions about Quelch. From the Sixth Form down to the Second, fellows were wondering and surmising what sort of a game the Remove beak fancied he was playing.

Prout had told the other beaks that this was unprecedented. He had declared that it was unparalleled! The other beaks agreed that it was.

"Where in the name of all that's weird and mysterious is jolly old Henry?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"O where and O where can he be?" sang Skinner.

"The wherefulness is terrific."

"Must have gone out," said Johnny Bull. "A sudden telephone call, perhaps; but—"

"But he would let the Head know, and he hasn't," said Harry Wharton. "I—I suppose he can't have had an accident."

"How could he?"

"Well, I can't make it out! Can anybody?" asked the captain of the Remove.

Nobody could.

"Look here, you fellows," said Mark Linley. "Quelch must have gone out, and something's happened to delay him. We don't want to land him in a row with the Head—"

"Don't we?" grinned Tracy.

"Well, you may, but nobody else does!" snapped Mark. "I think we ought to go into the Form-room, you fellows."

"Through the keyhole?" asked Skinner.

"Wharton can get the key from Quelch's study. He's head boy."

"Um!" said Harry Wharton doubtfully.

"I don't think," grinned the Bounder.

"I say, you fellows, I jolly well ain't going in if Quelch don't come!" squeaked Billy Bunter. "No jolly fear!"

"I know I'm not," said Tracy.

"Same here!" said Hazeldene,

"Any man fearfully keen on Latin prose this afternoon?" asked Vernon-Smith, glancing round.

"Hardly!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll give Quelch his fifteen minutes," said Smithy. "Then if he ain't here, we clear. That's the rule, Linley. I'm surprised at a solemn old sobersides like you suggesting breaking a rule."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, as an imposing and majestic figure came in sight in the corridor.

"Four more minutes," said the Boulder, his eye on his watch.

"It's the Head, Smithy."

"Oh!"

Dr. Locke came up the corridor to the Remove door. The juniors stood at attention. Evidently the happy experience of the morning was not going to be repeated. The headmaster was taking care of that.

Dr. Locke's kindly face was unusually severe in expression. Quelch's prolonged and unaccountable absence was not only puzzling, but it was annoying. It was making inroads upon the Head's own valuable time.

"Mr. Quelch is not here?"

It was rather a superfluous question, as the Remove would not have been waiting at the door, if their Form-master had been on hand.

"No, sir," answered Wharton.

"You had better go into your Form-room," said the Head.

"Yes, sir. Shall I get the key from Mr. Quelch's study?"

"Do so at once, Wharton!"

The captain of the Remove hurried away.

Dr. Locke glanced over the waiting Form.

"Did Mr. Quelch leave a message with any boy here when he went out?" he inquired.

There was no answer. Tracy suppressed a grin. The Head was taking it for granted that Mr. Quelch had gone out. That, indeed, was the only conclusion to which he could come, as the Remove master was not to be found in the school. It was clear that Quelch's real whereabouts were not likely to be surmised.

Wharton came back with the key, and the Form-room door was unlocked. The Remove went in.

"Wharton, you are head boy here, I think," said the Head.

"Yes, sir."

"I shall leave you in charge, while I make arrangements for the Form to be taken in Mr. Quelch's absence."

"Very well, sir."

Dr. Locke rustled away.

"What a rotten sell!" sighed the Boulder. "Extra half-holiday if the Head hadn't got wise to it. I wish the old bean would stick to the Sixth and Creek!"

"The wishfulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"I say, you fellows, the Head's waxy!" said Billy Bunter. "He will comb Quelch's hair for him when he turns up. He, he, he!"

"But what the thump is Quelch up to?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Can't he have lost his memory, like they do in the newspapers, I suppose?"

"It's a giddy mystery," said Frank Nugent. "He seems to have gone off without leaving a message, or speaking a word to anybody. Something must have happened to prevent him from sending word to the Head."

"Run over, perhaps!" said Billy Bunter. "I say, you fellows, if Quelch

has been run over we shall get a new beak—"

"Shut up, you fat ass!"

"Well, I'm sorry for Quelch, of course, if he's been run over. Still, if we have a new beak, he won't ask me for my lines," said Bunter. "Quelch would, but a new beak won't ask for lines that Quelch gave out. That stands to reason. I jolly well shan't do my lines till I know whether Quelch is coming back or not. If he's been run over, it would be a sheer waste."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wingate of the Sixth came into the Remove-room. Apparently Dr. Locke had assigned the Remove to the care of his head prefect for the afternoon.

"You taking us, Wingate?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Yes," answered the Greyfriars captain. "Take your places. Your Form-master has been—um!—delayed somewhere, and if he isn't back after this lesson, you go to Monsieur Charpentier for French."

And the Remove settled down to Latin prose, not so sedulously, probably, as if Mr. Quelch had been present.

At the end of the hour Quelch had not come in, and the Remove marched along to Class-room No. 10 for French with M^ossoo.

After which they were dismissed for the day. And still there was no news of Quelch. And what had become of Henry Samuel Quelch was, by this time, a thrilling mystery that interested the whole school. And it was the one topic in the passages and the studies. Really, he seemed to have shared the fate of the hapless hunter who met the Snark that turned out to be a Boojum, and "suddenly, silently vanished away."

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Whip-Hand!

MR. QUELCH, in the meantime, was not enjoying life.

Quelch was pacing the punishment-room rather like a tiger in a cage.

Hours had passed—long, long hours. Every minute seemed like an hour to the hapless Remove master; and the hours seemed without end.

It was useless to hammer at the door; but Quelch had hammered till his arm ached. It was useless to shout; but he had shouted till his throat was hoarse. All the time his wrath was mounting.

What was happening in his Form? He did not know. What was the Head thinking of his absence? He could not guess. How long was he going to remain there, under lock and key? That depended on that iniquitous young rascal Tracy. And Tracy was still leaving him there.

Many times during that weary day Mr. Quelch almost made up his mind that his first proceeding, when he did get out, should be to rid his Form of that disrespectful and unscrupulous young rascal.

But that, of course, was exactly what Tracy wanted.

He had set out with deliberate coolness to make Quelch tired of keeping him at Greyfriars. He was not going to succeed.

Up and down, up and down the narrow limits of the punishment-room, Quelch paced and paced till he was weary. Then he sat down, only to jump up again and resume his weary pacing.

It was not only his natural anxiety

about his Form, and about the wonder and surprise that his absence must cause that troubled him. He had other and even more troublesome worries. He was hungry.

He was, in fact, fearfully hungry. He had eaten nothing since breakfast.

Quelch was much worse off than any schoolboy delinquent locked in punny. Such a delinquent would, of course, have had regular meals. There were no meals for Quelch. Such a delinquent would have been provided with a bed for the night; but there was only a bedstead for Quelch, if he stayed the night in his present quarters. It seemed unbelievable that the young rascal would dare to leave him there for the night; but after a day of dismal silence and solitude, Quelch could not feel sure.

No sound reached him in his prison, except the distant clang of bells, at intervals. A bell, at last, told him that classes were over. The school had been dismissed, and no doubt everybody was discussing his inexplicable absence, and wondering what had become of him.

In the faint, faint hope that some fellow might, by happy chance, wander in the direction of the punishment-room, Quelch knocked on the door again, and knocked and knocked and knocked.

But he gave it up at last. The punishment-room was, of course, out of bounds—no one was likely to come anywhere near it.

But, at long last, he heard a sound at the door.

"Tap!"

Mr. Quelch fairly bounded to the door. If only someone had come—someone other than that rascal Tracy!

"Who is there?" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Guess!" came a familiar voice.

Quelch's momentary gleam of hope died away. It was the voice of Gilbert Tracy that answered him.

"Tracy!" said the Remove master, between his set lips.

"Right in one!" answered Gilbert.

"Have you returned to release me?" asked Mr. Quelch, controlling his wrath and speaking calmly.

"Yes, if you like," answered Gilbert.

"Open the door at once!"

"Likely, isn't it?" chuckled Gilbert.

"I'll let you out, if you like. Have you decided to send me home?"

"I refuse to answer such a question, Tracy."

"That means no, I suppose!" said Gilbert.

"You've had plenty of time to think it over, haven't you?"

"Unlock this door instantly!" said Mr. Quelch, in a choking voice.

"I'll watch it!"

"You—you—you insolent young rascal!"

"Wash it out, old bean!" said the cheery Gilbert.

"I've got the whip-hand now, and I'm keeping it. Uncle Giles would never have sent me here, if you hadn't talked him over. He would let me return home if you chucked it!

If you want longer to think it over, I'll leave you to it."

"Tracy! In no circumstances what-

ever will you be allowed to leave this school. You will not be rewarded for this insolence by gaining your object. Your punishment will be severe—as severe as I can make it—but you will not in any circumstances be allowed to leave Greyfriars!"

"You may alter your mind in the morning, old bean."

"You dare not leave me here for the night!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"You'll see!"

"Tracy! If you dare—"

"Bow-wow!"

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Is Not Late!

Quelch choked. There was a chuckle from the other side of the oaken door. "I'll give you another look-in 'some time in the morning!" went on Gilbert. "I have to be a bit careful getting here—but I'll come along some time. You can bank on this—you're staying here till you make up your mind to send me home!"

"Never!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "That's a long word!" said Gilbert. "You'll find that I mean it! Do you think I'm fool enough to let you out to take the skin off my back? Hardly! I've got to go through with it now, even if I wasn't keen on it!"

Mr. Quelch made no reply to that. It was certainly true that Gilbert had left himself no retreat.

He had, as it were, burned his ships behind him! To remain at Greyfriars within Quelch's reach, after what he had done, really required more nerve than to carry on with his scheme!

"Got that?" went on Gilbert. "You're not getting out of this till I've got you out of Greyfriars! I'm not quite a fool!"

"You—you—you—" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"You've got your fountain-pen," said Gilbert. "Write a note to my uncle, explaining that you've decided to send me home—"

"I shall do nothing of the kind!" "And slip it under the door to me!" continued Gilbert calmly. "Once you've put it in black and white, it will see me through, and you can't go back on it. Then I'll hand the key to some fellow to let you out while I clear."

"If you imagine for one moment that I shall do anything of the sort—" gasped the Remove master.

"I imagine that you will stick there till you do!" retorted Gilbert. "Aren't you getting hungry?"

"I order you to open that door!" "You'll be a bit peckish by the morning! Better have that note ready for me when I come along to-morrow."

"If—if—if you dare—"

"Are you pushing out that note?"

"No!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"I'll ask you again to-morrow! Pleasant dreams!"

"Tracy—boy—rascal—iniquitous young rascal—you—"

Mr. Quelch broke off, almost foaming. Tracy was gone. Evidently he meant what he said; he had the whip-hand, and he was going to use it; indeed, at the stage things had reached, he dared not do otherwise!

He was gone!

Henry Samuel Quelch was left again to silence and solitude.

He was left for the night!

To yield to the young rascal's demand was impossible—unthinkable—not to be considered for a moment! But—The long night was before Mr. Quelch; and he hardly dared to think of the sensation that his strange absence would cause in the school. And he was hungry—and getting hungrier!

Had he, after all, made a mistake in taking charge of that impossible, unmanageable boy? Quelch was beginning to think so! But he realised, at the same time, that that was precisely the frame of mind into which Gilbert desired to drive him!

He set his lips. Never! He would never yield—never for a moment consider yielding! But—

There was a "but" in the matter! How was this to end? During a whole day he had remained there, undiscovered; and he was no more likely to be discovered the following day!

He was not going to yield! But—

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"I SAY, you fellows—"

"It beats Banagher!" declared Bob Cherry.

His friends agreed that it did. Indeed, Hurree Janset Ram Singh averred that the beautifulness was terrific.

It was morning. When the rising-bell changed, the Greyfriars fellows turned out, wondering whether Quelch had come back.

Quelch had not come back.

Having made a day of it, the Remove master had made a night of it, too; and was, apparently, going to make another day of it.

Which was more and more surprising; it was indeed growing, as Alice said in Wonderland, "curiouser and curiouser."

It looked as if Quelch must have had some accident which had prevented him from returning. But nothing had been heard of any accident—so he could hardly have had one near the school. If he had been, as Bunter had cheerfully suggested, run over, it must have been at a distance from Greyfriars.

The Famous Five were discussing it—like everybody else in the school—when Bunter rolled up with a thoughtful expression on his fat face.

"Where's Quelch, Bunter?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Eh? How should I know?" asked Bunter, blinking at him with astonished eyes behind his big spectacles.

"Well, you know everything else!" argued Bob. "If he had a sudden telephone call, didn't you hear it through his keyhole?"

"No!" roared Bunter.

"Weren't you peeping round a corner when he went?"

"No!" howled the fat Owl.

"Well, what sort of a Peeping Tom do you call yourself, then?" demanded Bob. "Got out of practice in the holidays, or what?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly ass!" hooted Bunter. "I say, you fellows, stop cackling—I want to ask you something! Quelch won't be taking us this morning as he's not here, so—"

"Probably not!" agreed Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Well, who is?" asked Bunter. "If it's a prefect, which? If it's that beast Loder, a fellow had better not be late for class! You know how that rotter likes an excuse for handling his ash. If it's Wingate, a fellow might chance it. Know who?"

"It's been put on the board, fat-head!" said Harry Wharton. "We get French with Mossoo for the first hour, and maths with Lascelles the second. They've been shifting some of the sets to let Froggy and Larry loose on us, while Quelch is away. Froggy first."

"Oh! That's all right, then!" said Bunter, evidently relieved. "Sure it ain't Lascelles first? Can't be late with that beast!"

"Want to be late for class specially this morning?" asked Bob, staring at the fat Owl.

"Oh, no! Nothing of the kind!" answered Bunter promptly. "Certainly not! Still, a fellow might happen to be late, you know; and if it's Froggy, he won't say anything."

The Famous Five grinned. Evidently Bunter, for some mysterious reason of his own, intended to be late for class that morning—if it could be managed with impunity.

"If Froggy asks about me, tell him I'm looking for my French books, will you?" went on Bunter. "That will be all right for Froggy. I'll do the same

for you fellows, another time. I shan't be more than ten minutes late—it won't take me long to cut up to the Fifth."

"Better not let any Fifth Form man see you cutting up to the Fifth!" grinned Bob.

"Oh, that's all right; they'll be in with Prout, you know. I shan't go till the Fifth have gone in," said Bunter. "Sure it's Froggy this morning, you fellows?"

"Quite!" chuckled Bob. "And you're not going to be late for Froggy, old fat man! You can leave the Fifth Form studies alone."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

The Famous Five, grinning, gathered round Billy Bunter.

It was close on time for class; and they were going to keep an eye on the fat Owl till the bell went.

They could guess the business that the grub-raider of the Remove had in a Fifth Form study, after the Fifth had gone into class with Prout! Quelch's absence was a golden opportunity! A fellow could take risks with Mossoo!

"I say, you fellows, it's all right!" said Bunter, blinking round rather anxiously at a circle of smiling faces. "I'm not going to be late—"

"You're not!" agreed Harry Wharton.

"I say, gerrout of the way! I've got to go and speak to Mauly—"

"Mauly won't mind, if you don't! In fact, he'd rather!" said Nugent.

"I mean, I've got to go and—and get a clean handkerchief—"

"That one isn't quite black yet! You generally keep them till they're like the ace of spades!"

"Look here, you cheeky ass, let a fellow pass!" hooted Billy Bunter indignantly. "I came to ask you who was taking us this morning—not to stick here! I've got to see my minor in the Second before class."

"Sammy can wait till after class!"

"What I mean is, the Head told me to come to his study! If you fellows think I can keep my headmaster waiting—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" snorted Bunter. "I never saw such a suspicious lot! I'm not going up to Coker's study! Why should I?"

"You're not!" agreed Johnny Bull.

"Whatever Coker's got in his study, it's going to stay there."

"There's nothing in his study that I know of! I never saw him with that box of chocolates! I haven't seen him this morning at all. I never heard him saying anything to Potter about chocs in break. Besides, how could I help hearing what he said when I was passing just behind him?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, cackle!" grunted Bunter. "Look here, will you gerrout of the way, or won't you gerrout of the way? I'll tell you fellows what—stop playing the goat and I'll whack out my chocs in break!"

"Coker's chocs, do you mean?"

"No!" roared Bunter. "I don't mean anything of the sort! I'm expecting a box of chocs in break—from Bunter Court, you know! Think I'd snaffle a box of chocs from a senior study?"

"Yes, rather!"

"The rutherfordness is terrific!"

"Beast! So far as I know, Coker never had a box of chocs at all! I certainly never saw it under his arm."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, I wish you wouldn't stick round a chap like this! I say, there goes the bell!"

"Come on!" said Bob.

"You fellows get on—I'll follow you!" said Bunter. "Mind you tell Froggy I'm looking for my French books if he asks you! Not that I'm going to be late, you know. I'm going in right on the dot."

"You are!" agreed Bob. "I'll see that you do! Come on!" And Bob Cherry took hold of a fat ear, to lead its owner towards the House.

"Beast! Leggo!" roared Bunter.

"This way!" chuckled Bob.

"I say, you fellows—I say, look! There's Quelch coming in!" exclaimed Billy Bunter. "Coming in at the gates—look!"

"What?"

Like one man the Famous Five spun round to stare (towards the gates, Bob letting go the fat ear).

They stared in vain. There was no sign of Quelch! But, as they stared, the astute fat Owl cut off in the opposite direction.

His little fat legs fairly twinkled as he flew. He had gained a start, and he made the most of it.

"What does the fat ass mean?" exclaimed Bob. "Quelch isn't coming— Why, he's gone! Bunter! After him!"

Bunter was going strong. After him rushed the Famous Five.

Other fellows were heading for the House. At any moment the bell might cease to ring, and there was no time to lose. Harry Wharton & Co. did not want to be late for class if Bunter did!

"Stop!" roared Bob.

"Stop!" shouted Wharton.

Billy Bunter flew on, puffing and blowing. He was cutting round the gym to escape, putting on a speed that was remarkable considering the weight he had to carry.

It was sheer good luck—though not for Bunter—that Horace Coker of the Fifth came cutting round the corner of the building in haste to get to his Form-room before the bell stopped.

Coker and Bunter met at the corner from opposite directions, and crashed before they knew what was happening.

"Oh!" gasped Coker, as he went backwards.

"Ooooooogh!" gurgled Bunter, as he sprawled over Coker's long legs.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Famous Five.

"Oh, my hat! What—who—" roared Coker.

"Oh crikey! Owl! Urrrrrrgh!" gurgled Bunter.

The Famous Five rushed up and grabbed him. They dragged him off Coker's legs, and Coker sat up, spluttering. In the grasp of the Famous Five, Bunter was rushed away to the House.

"I say, you fellows!" gasped Bunter. "I say—Leggo! I say, I'm winded! I say, I've got a pain! I ran into somebody, I think—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you leggo?" roared Bunter.

But the chums of the Remove did not let go. They ran Bunter to the House and walked him in! The fat Owl, gasping and spluttering, joined the crowd of juniors at the Remove door, which Monsieur Charpentier was already opening. The bell had ceased to ring.

"Just in time!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Beast!"

"Just saved your bacon, Bunter!"

"Yah!"

Billy Bunter went in with the Remove. There was no help for it. Coker's chocs in Coker's study were safe—at least, until break!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Just Like Coker!

"WHAT have you got there, Bunter?"

"Nothing!" answered Billy Bunter promptly.

At which Bob Cherry grinned.

The moment the Remove were dismissed in break Billy Bunter headed for the staircase and shot up the same!

Generally Bunter negotiated stairs at a leisurely pace. He would start up a staircase at the pace of a very old and very tired snail! But circumstances alter cases, and on this occasion Bunter went almost like an arrow from a bow! He shot—but he did not, as he hoped, shoot alone! Bob Cherry spotted him, and shot after him.

So it came to pass that Bob was on the landing when Bunter rolled out of the Fifth Form passage with an enormous and very suspicious bulge under his jacket!

He gave Bob a devastating blink through his big spectacles.

He had no time to lose! Coker, as he knew, was coming up for that box of chocs in break! Bunter, owing to his unusual speed, was first in the field; but Coker might leave into the offing at any moment. Bunter had a natural anxiety to be clear before Coker happened. He knew the weight of

(Continued on next page.)



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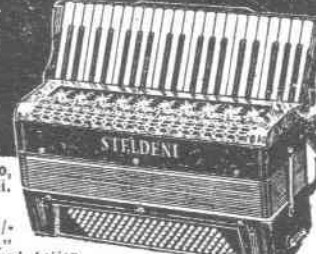
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Coker's boot! He had been there before, so to speak.

"Nothing?" grinned Bob. Standing directly in front of Bunter, he barred the fat Owl's way, and Bunter glared in vain.

"Nothing at all!" howled Bunter. "Let me pass, will you? That beast Coker will be up here in a tick—"

"What does that matter if you've got nothing there?" asked Bob.

"Beast! I—I mean, look here, old chap, I'll whack it out! Come along to my study—"

"You'll whack out nothing?" grinned Bob. "Thank you for nothing."

"I—I mean—"

Bob glanced over the banisters. Far below he had a glimpse of a bullet head.

"Coker's coming up!" he remarked.

"Oh crikey!"

"You've just time to cut back to his study with those chocs! Get a move on!"

"Beast!"

"Back up, you fat ass—or shall I lead you there by your ear?"

"Can't you mind your own bizney?" howled the exasperated Owl. "I haven't got Coker's chocs, and it don't matter to you if I have! I'm willing to go halves, you beast! Not that I've got them! It's my French grammar I've got here! I—I say, there's Quelch!"

"What?" gasped Bob.

"Old Quelch! He's come back! Look!"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bob Cherry. Bunter, apparently, hoped to catch him twice with the same chaff!

"There he is—just behind you, old chap. Look round!"

Had Bob Cherry looked round no doubt Billy Bunter would have vanished into the Remove passage with his plunder. But Bob did not look round! He stepped to Bunter and grabbed him by the collar.

"Get going!" he said. "You've not much time before Coker comes up, and if he catches you with those chocs—"

"Beast!" groaned Bunter. "Leggo! I'm going!"

"I'll come as far as Coker's study with you!" chuckled Bob.

"If you can't trust me, Bob Cherry—"

"Oh, my hat! Come on!"

"Beast!" roared Bunter.

But he came on, and they walked up the Fifth Form passage together to Coker's study.

At the door of that study Bunter halted.

Bob, grinning, waited for him to go in.

But Billy Bunter was desperate now. Instead of going in he made a sudden jump at Bob, and thumped out with a fat fist.

The thump landed suddenly and unexpectedly on Bob's waistcoat, and he sat down in the passage with a bump. Bunter flew on.

There was a back staircase at the end of the Fifth Form passage. Billy Bunter flew up that staircase, while Bob sat on the floor, and gasped for breath.

"Why, you—you—you fat, fooling frog!" gasped Bob. "I—I—I'll—" He tottered to his feet as Coker of the Fifth appeared in the passage, coming along from the landing.

Coker stared at Bob Cherry, and quickened his pace.

"What are you up to here?" he demanded. "Fags ain't allowed in this passage! What are you hanging about here for, Cherry?"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,601.

"Fathead!" was Bob's answer.

"I don't want any cheek," said Coker darkly. "I've a short way with fags, when they're cheeky! I want to know what you're hanging about my study for?"

"Idiot!" said Bob.

"What are you doing here?" roared Coker.

"Looking at a silly ass!" answered Bob.

Bob was there, as a matter of fact, to save Coker's chocs from the grub-raider of the Remove. Coker, of course, did not guess that! So far as Coker knew, that box of chocs was still where he had left it, on the table in his study, ready to be taken out in break.

Coker had no doubt that he had caught a Remove fag larking in the Fifth Form quarters; which was more than enough to rouse the ire of Horace Coker!

"Get going!" said Coker grimly.

"I'll help you!"

He lifted the largest foot in the Greyfriars Fifth.

Bob Cherry dodged.

Bunter had vanished up the back staircase, into parts unknown. Bob had intended to pursue him thither, and make him disgorge his prey! But he had to give up that idea now. Coker was keeping him too busy!

Coker's long leg shot out, and Bob barely dodged. He cut down the Fifth Form passage to the landing. Coker cut after him, and his long leg shot out again!

Thud!

"Ooooooooooh!" gasped Bob, as it landed.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker. "Have another!"

His foot shot out again! But this time it did not land! Bob side-stepped, and Coker's kick missed him, and the foot shot up into the air—Coker, standing stork-like, on one leg!

With great presence of mind, Bob Cherry grabbed the uplifted leg by the ankle and jerked.

"Oh!" gasped Coker.

He sat down suddenly! He sat down with a bump that almost shook the furniture in the Fifth Form studies. He roared.

Leaving him to roar, Bob Cherry cut on, and disappeared.

Coker staggered up, breathing fury, and tottered as far as the landing—where he was rewarded by the sight of a curly head disappearing far down the staircase.

Coker glared after that disappearing head, and gasped his way back to his study, to get that box of chocolates for which he had come up and for which his friends, Potter and Greene, were waiting in happy anticipation!

But Potter and Greene's happy anticipations were destined never to be realised!

Coker did not find that box of chocs on his study table! He did not find it anywhere! Those chocolates were gone from his gaze like a beautiful dream—and were never likely to be seen again—not, at all events, without the aid of X-rays!

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

An Amazing Discovery!

"YOU young rascal!"

Billy Bunter jumped.

He was not merely startled!

He was amazed—astounded! He fancied he must be imagining things! For, really, it was dumb-founding!

Bunter, for some minutes, had been enjoying life. He was seated on the old oak floor of an ancient passage, leaning back against an old oak door. He would have preferred an armchair in which to repose; but sitting anywhere was better than standing, from the fat Owl's point of view; and at the present moment Bunter's motto was "safety first."

Until those chocolates had been disposed of, Bunter was anxious to understudy the shy violet! He was anxious to avoid Bob Cherry—still more anxious to avoid Horace Coker!

But he was fairly safe, he considered, in his present refuge.

From that back staircase near the Fifth Form passage, the fat Owl had dodged away by several passages and staircases, and reached the corridor that led to the punishment-room.

This part of the building, being out of bounds for all Greyfriars fellows, seemed safe for a fellow who desired to avoid the public eye! Nobody would find him there by chance; and he hoped that he had thrown Bob off the track.

The punishment-room was at the end of that corridor, its doorway facing it. Sitting with his back to that door, therefore, Billy Bunter had a full view of the whole length of the corridor—which meant ample warning of the approach of an enemy.

With Coker's chocolate box open on his knees, Bunter dealt with the contents; and choc after choc disappeared on the downward path. Every now and then he cast a watchful blink up the corridor.

Behind him, of course, there was no danger, as he was leaning on the door of the punishment-room. That door was, as usual, locked; and that there was anyone in that room naturally never occurred to Bunter. Only rarely, very rarely, was a fellow locked in punny; and then the fact was known to the whole school. That a master was locked in there, the fat Owl was not likely to guess.

So when he heard a voice from behind him, Billy Bunter was, naturally, dumb-founded.

He was still more utterly dumb-founded by the fact that it was a familiar voice—that of his missing Form-master, Mr. Quelch!

His fat hand, with a chocolate in it, stopped half-way to his mouth! He jumped, and blinked round at the door! It seemed to him that it must be some extraordinary fancy! Quelch was missing from the school—had been missing for a day and a night! He could not have gone and left his voice behind him—like the Cheshire Cat that vanished leaving only his grin behind! That, obviously, was impossible! Yet Bunter, unless he was dreaming, had heard his familiar voice!

"You iniquitous young rascal, open this door at once!"

Billy Bunter blinked at the door.

He goggled at it, his eyes almost bulging through his spectacles.

It was Quelch's voice! It came from the other side of that door! Quelch was in punny!

"Do you hear me?" came the voice of Mr. Quelch. "How dare you not answer me, you—you—you rascal!"

The man in the punishment-room, evidently, had heard Bunter there, through the door! Why he was calling him names, Bunter did not know. He could not see through solid oak, so he couldn't know that it was Bunter, and couldn't know that he was scoffing snaffled chocolates.

It did not occur to Bunter that the Remove master was taking him for



"You will return to Greyfriars immediately, Gilbert, under Mr. Quelch's care!" said Sir Giles, in a quavering voice. "You ——" "I won't!" yelled Tracy desperately. "If you won't have me here, I'll jolly well clear off, and you can thank yourself if anything happens to me!"

someone else. Mr. Quelch, hearing a sound in the corridor, naturally concluded that it was Tracy, as Tracy was the only fellow likely to come there.

He was addressing Gilbert Tracy; his words falling, however, upon the astonished ears of Billy Bunter!

"Do you hear me?" thundered the voice from the locked room. "Tracy, you insolent young rascal—Tracy! Do you hear?"

Bunter jumped.

"Oh crikey!" he gasped.

That ejaculation seemed to reach the ears within. There was a startled exclamation in the punishment-room.

"Who is that? Is not that Tracy? Who is there?"

"Oh crumbs! Me, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"Who?" roared Mr. Quelch.

"Me! Only me!"

"It is not Tracy?"

"Eh? Oh, no! Me!" It did not occur to Bunter to mention his name. He was not quick on the uptake!

"Will you tell me who you are?" came a roar. Quelch's temper had, perhaps, suffered a little from his imprisonment.

"Only me, sir!" gasped the fat Owl. "Tracy ain't here, sir!"

"Your name?" roared the Remove master.

"Oh! Bib-bib-Bunter, sir!" gasped the Owl of the Remove.

"Bunter! Oh! I might have guessed as much, from your stupidity!"

"Oh, really, sir—"

"Bunter! Thank goodness you are there, stupid as you are! Bunter, I am locked in this room!"

"Oh crikey! Are you really, sir?" stuttered Bunter. "I say, everybody

thinks you've gone off somewhere, sir, and not come back."

"The key is not in the lock, I suppose, Bunter?"

"Eh? Oh, no! Haven't you got it, sir?"

"You stupid boy, do you think I should remain locked in here if I had the key?"

"Oh! But—but how did you lock yourself in then, sir?" gasped Bunter.

"What?"

"You couldn't have locked yourself in without the key, sir, could you?"

"You utterly stupid boy, I did not lock myself in!"

"Eh? The door's locked, sir." Bunter turned the door-handle. "I can't open it, sir! It must be locked."

"It was locked from the outside, you obtuse boy; it was locked by Tracy, who has taken away the key."

"Oh crikey!"

"Bunter, go to the headmaster at once, and tell Dr. Locke where I am! I am very glad you came here, Bunter! I shall excuse you for having broken bounds in coming here! Go to Dr. Locke at once, and tell him that I am locked in here, and that Tracy has the key."

"Oh crumbs! Have you been there all the time, sir?" gasped the astonished Owl.

"Yes, yes! Go at once—"

"He, he, he!"

"Are you laughing, Bunter?" shrieked Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, no, sir! I—I was sneezing! I mean—he, he, he!"

"Bunter, go to the headmaster immediately, and inform him—"

"Oh! Yes, sir! I say, did Tracy lock you in, sir?"

"Yes, yes! Go at once! Lose no

time, Bunter! Go to Dr. Locke this instant! Do not lose a moment! Do you hear me?"

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"Go! Hurry!"

"Oh, all right, sir!"

Billy Bunter was grinning now. From his point of view, there seemed to be something comic in a Form-master being locked up in the punishment-room by a member of his Form! But he suppressed his fat chuckle! It was clear that Quelch saw nothing comic in the state of affairs!

Bunter had not finished the chocolates yet. He packed the remnant into his pockets, left the box on the floor, and prepared to start. And, as he took the first step, a figure appeared at the other end of the corridor—coming along to the punishment-room! It was Gilbert Tracy!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Two Of Them!

TRACY gave a violent start, at the sight of Billy Bunter.

Bunter grinned at him.

Tracy did not grin! His face registered utter dismay!

From the punishment-room came a sharp, barking voice:

"Are you gone, Bunter? Lose no time, I tell you!"

"I'm going, sir!"

"Go at once!"

Bunter rolled down the corridor towards Tracy. He grinned as he rolled. The expression on Gilbert's face entertained him.

Tracy breathed hard!

(Continued on page 16.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1.601.

JOLT THAT JARRED FOURTH FORM JAPERS!

Temple's Tail Between Legs

When Wibley's famous circus gave a show in the gym on Tuesday evening, Temple and his pals decided to put the kybosh on it.

Not by rough-house methods, of course. Perish the thought! Upper Fourth chaps are far too refined for that. Temple had a better plan. He trained his followers in a measured and mirthless laugh, to be uttered in chorus by the on a signal from him. Temple calculated that this laugh, if repeated at every moment when the show was going a bit flat, would have a simply paralysing effect on the performers!

A big crowd of Upper Fourth chaps accordingly rolled up to the gym and amused themselves till the circus started by passing remarks, accompanied by titterings, about the personal appearance of the Remove chaps who happened to be near them.

The Remove chaps in question nobly forbore from wading in and wiping up the floor with the humorous Fourth men.

A good deal of self-control was needed for this. A good deal more was needed later on, when the show began and Temple's wrecking tactics showed themselves. But the Remove men had it!

Readers who read our review of Wibley's Circus when it opened out at Mr. Vernon-Smith's country house at the end of the summer vac. will wonder how many periods were sufficiently flat to give Temple an opening. We can assure our friends that they were few and far between. If anything, the show was even better than on the first occasion.

But no show, however good, can be uniformly good from start to finish, and there were naturally moments when things quietened down a little. Every time such an interval occurred, Temple's humorists gave vent to their slow and solemn "Hah—hah—hah!"

Put yourself in Wibley's place and you can imagine that he found it irritating. The audience found it irritating, too, and loud cries of "Chuck it!" and "Shut up!" greeted each outburst on the part of the Fourth. But Temple & Co. carried on regardless. Temple rightly judged that irritation on the part of the audience helped his scheme rather than hindered it.

Everything seemed to be going nicely for the wreckers, in fact. Then something went wrong.

Wingate stood up in his place in the front row. He had a peculiar smile on his rugged countenance.

"If I might butt in for a moment," he said, "I should like to congratulate Wibley on the most original and entertaining school show I have ever seen."

Yells of "Hear, hear!" and "Good old Wingate!" greeted this announcement.

"The lion was great," went on Wingate. "The crocodile really remarkable. The bears and the kangaroos were good enough to go on the screen. There is only one criticism I have to offer and that concerns the hyenas."

Wibley, in the ring, looked puzzled. "Hyenas, Wingate? But we haven't got any!" he protested.

"The hyenas," said Wingate, gravely, "are really spoiling the show and my own idea is that you ought to get rid of them. In any case, you shouldn't allow them at large amongst



GREYFRIARS

No. 315.

EDITED

FIRST ELEVEN BRING OFF DOUBLE-EVENT!

Latest Sports Shorts

By H. Vernon-Smith

There is no Junior match to report this week, but the Compulsory Practice game, played on Wednesday, unexpectedly comes into the limelight for a very special reason.

BUNTER, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN LIVING MEMORY, SUCCEEDED IN SCORING A GOAL!

I have given this remarkable event a paragraph to itself and I think it deserves it. I should like to make it clear, too, that there was no fluke about it. Bunter kicked the ball and it went into the net; and Tom Brown in goal didn't get within a foot of it!

Bunter's detractors say he was miles off-side. It is also argued that Brown, seeing that it came from Bunter, took it for granted that the ball would go nowhere near the goal and made no attempt to save it. I am going to ignore these captious criticisms and award the Owl full marks for scoring an undoubted goal. Well done, Bunter!

The First Eleven played St. Jim's on Big Side last Saturday, and brought off the "double event" by winning an exciting game by 3 goals to 2.

Both sides gave a splendid display and the home team's brilliant combination in attack made me wonder

the audience. Why not kick them out?"

"But where are they?" demanded Wibley.

For answer Wingate pointed straight at Temple and the Upper Fourth contingent!

There was a gasp—then a grin—and then a roar! The audience rose to it and yelled!

Temple and his pals, of course, did not join in the yell. They scratched their chins and rubbed their noses reflectively and looked at each other and blushed and coughed. Finally, Temple glanced at his watch and remembered an appointment and departed; and his followers followed him at the double!

After that the show went with a bang right to the finish.

It is perhaps hardly necessary for us to add that the Upper Fourth "hyenas" have not been seen in public since!

at times how on earth they managed to lose to St. Jude's a fortnight ago I have an idea that it will be some time before they are defeated again.

Next week, the Greyfriars Junior Eleven pay a visit to Highcliffe. Both Teams will be keen to preserve their unbeaten record, and a rattling good game should result. I have no doubt myself about our ability to beat Courtney and his men, but I am told that the Highcliffians won both their games against Redclyffe more easily than the scores of 3—2 and 1—0 would suggest. We must certainly not make the mistake of under-rating them!

Item: The Third beat the Second



to the tune of 7—1 and two black eyes on the Fags' Sports Ground last week. The Second are now going to make an intensive effort to put on weight by doubling their rations of herrings—fried, of course, on the ends of pen-holders at the Form-room fire!

QUELCH'S UNUSUAL BEHAVIOUR!

A smile on Mr. Quelch's face attracted a good many startled glances, the other day.

Curious spectators noticed also that there was an unusual spring in the Remove master's walk.

Passing Mr. Prout on the stairs, he omitted his customary frown and remarked that it was a very fine day. Mr. Prout was observed to hold on dizzily to the banisters for a moment or two before resuming his journey.

Mr. Quelch entered his study. Listeners outside heard the steady tapping of his typewriter.

After it had stopped, Skinner ventured to peep through the keyhole. He stated, when he returned, that he had seen the extraordinary sight of Mr. Quelch, waving a sheaf of papers aloft and doing a jig round the study!

Nobody is likely to take Skinner's word for that, of course. But, on the other hand, the news that has just reached us certainly lends support to it.

Mr. Quelch, it seems, has just completed the hundredth chapter of his monumental "History of Greyfriars!"

The GREYFRIARS HERALD



HARRY WHARTON'S WEEKLY POW-WOW

I have been reading through all the back numbers of the "Greyfriars Herald" that Fisher T. Fish produced while I was away with Mauleverer's party in the South Seas, and I must say that my transatlantic colleague made quite a good fist at it! The stories and news items and smaller features were well up to standard; and Fishy's editorials, with their picturesque phraseology, have a peculiar charm of their own. But the funny thing about it is that Fishy himself is not a bit proud of the "Greyfriars Herald" that flourished under his editorship!

BY HARRY WHARTON.

October 22nd, 1938.

COCKER CORRESPONDS WITH AUNT JUDY!

You Can't keep a Good Man Down

My dear Aunt Judy—Very many thanks for the... I didn't have time, I'm afraid, to sample it myself, but Potter and... tell me it was simply grate. I knew of the fact that it was full of fruit, they were able to eat it without feeling the slightest bit "seedy." Don't mind my joke, Aunty. You know how my simulating wit was on rising to the surface!

I am sorry to hear that owing to the jealousy of Wings and Blundell and

others I could mention, I have not yet been made captain of the skool, but hope springs eternal in the yewman breast, and it will not be long before my grate gifts receive their long-over-due reward.

You will be pleased to hear that I scored three jolly fine goals in the Form footer game on Wednesday. Unfortunately, Mr. Lascelles, who was first, disallowed the first because he said I was offside—an outrageous decision. He ruled out the second also on the paltry plea that I threw it into the goal with my hands instead of kicking it. The third was allowed, but I must confess that I was a little disappointed over this, as it turned out to be against my own side.

I had completely forgotten that we'd changed ends at half-time, you see, Aunty; and I really think they ought to have special rules making it count as a goal for a chap's own side

when a chap genuinely forgets which way he's supposed to be kicking.

I am glad to say I am making excellent progress in skool work this term, although I don't expect for a moment that an old donkey like Prout is likely to give me any credit for it in the term's report. The only thing Prout seems interested in is keeping me back. But you can't keep a good man down, as I told Potter and Greene yesterday. P. & G. quite agreed with me—or, at least, they would have done so if their mouths hadn't been so full of your cake that they couldn't speak!

Thanks, dear Aunt Judy, for all your kind wishes. I certainly hope to see you at half-term. But don't bother to send those woollen chest-protectors, please. I haven't started on last year's yet.

Your affectionate nephew,
HORACE.

GREAT DAY AT PORTER'S LODGE!

Gosling Celebrates Birthday

William Gosling celebrated his umpteenth birthday this week and the day was one that will go down in the annals of school history.

Long before the hotly-handled old porter rose to ring the rising-bell juniors were up and about preparing pleasant surprises for him.

Tom Brown was out to collect a nosegay of flowers for him, picked them in his own garden—Gosling, by the way, not Brown's. Others tied up their birthday gifts in newspapers. Peter Todd had bought Gosling a box of herbal cigarettes for the relief of asthma. Skinner had obtained a bottle of water for rheumatic sufferers and thoughtfully transferred it to an empty gin bottle. Dick Rake had bought the old fellow a second-hand copy of a book entitled "How to Overcome the Drink Habit." Others had selected equally thoughtful presents.

Most startling of all was Vernon-Smith's gift of an expensive rocket which Smithy fixed up in the effry so that the first pull on the bell-rope would discharge it.

Gosling had the surprise of his life when he was welcomed, on emerging from his lodge, by the hearty cheers and a chorus of

"Many happy returns Gossy!"

It was quite a time before he recovered his balance sufficiently to reply "Thank 'ee kindly, young gents!"

He looked somewhat suspicious when the fellows started handing over their presents, and his thanks for them were delivered with a

certain amount of reserve. But he took them all right and carried them back into the lodge in triumph, leaving them there to be opened later in the morning.

The only exception was Skinner's gin bottle, which he opened at once. Chaps who peeped through the windows saw him drawing the cork and pouring out a quantity into a small glass. He then emptied the contents of glass into his mouth.

The next moment, he came staggering out of his lodge, gasping and spluttering and pulling the most frightful faces.

"Ouch! Grooooh! Wot is it?" he gurgled. "Wot I says is this 'ere: Wot is it? Ouch!!"

Skinner winked at the crowd and asked:

"What's what?"

"That 'ere bottle as is

labelled 'Gin'!" groaned Gosling. "Wot I says is this 'ere: wot is it?"

"Something for the relief of that rheumatism you're always talkin' about, old bean!" was Skinner's cheery retort. "Don't you like the taste of it?"

"Ouch! Wot I says is this 'ere: I've bin pisened, by the feel on it!" moaned Gosling. "I arks agin: wot is it I've drunk?"

"Spa water, old sport, of course!" Skinner said innocently. "Surely you recognised the taste of water?!"



"Ha, ha, ha!"

The crowd roared. Gosling's failure to recognise the taste of water struck them as funny. But Gosling failed to see the funny side of it. He glared and shook his fist and said quite a lot of unkind things about Skinner. Then he stamped off to ring the rising-bell.

Rising-bell began on a very unusual note, for no

sooner had Gosling pulled the bell-rope than a deafening explosion awoke the echoes of Greyfriars.

Smithy's rocket was a signal of success. It knocked Gosling all of a heap and woke up the entire school with a speed that the normal clanging of the rising-bell had never achieved. Windows opened and heads popped out from bed-rooms all round the quadrangle.

No better advertisement for Gosling's birthday could have been imagined.

All through the day Gosling had a continual stream of visitors, many of whom left behind useful souvenirs in the shape of half-crowns and other oddments.

Lord Mauleverer saw to the birthday cake. He ordered a real beauty from Chunkley's and, in the absence of any authentic information about Gosling's age, decorated it with 99 candles—which Gosling, fortunately, was too muddled-headed to count.

Finally, as a special birthday treat, half the Lower School remained out of gates after locking-up time, so as to give the old rascal the pleasure of reporting them for coming in late.

And, wonder of wonders, Gossy didn't report a nan-jack of them!

No doubt about it, chaps, Gosling's birthday was a red-letter day—a day to be long remembered.

If he had a birthday every day, we can quite imagine the old fellow turning into the most benign old porter you could wish for!

When I looked him up in Study No. 14 half an hour ago to congratulate him, his hatchet face creased up into an expression of complete contempt.

"If you reckon that's my idea of a school noospaper, you got another guess coming!" he snapped. "Hyer me holler! If I'd had my way, I'd have scrapped everything and written the lot myself! Yes, siree!"

"But it's all good as it stands, you ass!" I told him. "It's bright, cheery stuff, attractively written and presented. You ought to be proud of it!"

"Sez you!" retorted Fishy. "I guess you like it because it's done jest the way you wanted it. I didn't have a free hand, see? I'll tell a man you'd have seen a change or two if I'd run the paper like I wanted—jest a few! Noos with some spice in it—that's what I'd have given 'em! Plenty of scandal an' peeps behind scenes, put out in neat, nifty, zippy, snappy pars, the way they do it in 'l'l of' Noo York! Yes, siree!"

And Fishy wouldn't budge an inch! He did concede that he had done the job well according to our poor, feeble British standards. But nothing like so well as if he'd been allowed to turn it into an entirely new "Greyfriars Herald," modelled on the "tabloid" newspapers of his native land!

Well, he is entitled to his opinion. I still think he did the job well and my opinion is shared by the others who were in our South Seas expedition.

So I hereby move a vote of thanks to Fisher T. Fish for keeping the flag flying while we were away. Frank Nugent would like to second it; and I think our innumerable readers all over the world will very willingly support it. The resolution is carried unanimously!

Thanks a lot, Fishy! I should be lacking in gratitude if I omitted to add that I shall at all times welcome contributions from Fish on subjects suitable for our columns. But scandal and get-rich-quick schemes are barred!

Fishy can obviously write; and he has original ideas on most subjects our readers are interested in. He should prove an attractive addition to our regular contributors, even if we have to print footnote translations of the more obscure of his American phrases!

For the time being, he is too busily engaged in trying to make a fortune out of his newly discovered second-hand books "racket" to bother about literary work. But something is bound to happen to this scheme before long—something always does happen with Fishy's schemes!—and when it does, I hope we shall hear from him.

Meanwhile, of course, I shall see that the "Herald" maintains its reputation as the world's greatest school newspaper—even without Fisher T. Fish!

By the way, owing to the fact that Dikey Nugent is suffering from writer's cramp, it is thought advisable to give him a rest for a week or two—hence the absence of a "Dr. Birchmell" story in this issue.

HARRY WHARTON.



(Continued from page 13.)

All was discovered now! Never for a moment had he supposed that any fellow would wander in the direction of the punishment-room, and learn that the missing master was there. No fellow had any business there, and it was out of bounds, too; he could not imagine why Bunter was there! But there was Bunter—and all was known!

"You fat fool!" hissed Tracy. "What did you come here for?"

"He, he, he!"

"You bubbling bloater—" hissed Tracy.

"He, he, he! I say, you had a nerve to lock Quelch in punny!" grinned Bunter. "I say, you'll get it hot when he gets out! He, he, he!"

Tracy's eyes glittered at him.

All his scheming was disconcerted by this unexpected happening.

He was coming to speak to the prisoner of the punishment-room through the door; and by this time, he had little doubt that Quelch would be prepared to pass the required note for Sir Giles Oakwood under the door! He was ruthlessly determined to leave him there, under lock and key, unless he did—and until he did! But his scheme was knocked sky-high now that Quelch's whereabouts were known!

"Where are you going, Bunter?" asked Tracy between his teeth.

"He, he, he! Quelch told me to go to the Head—"

"No need!" said Tracy. "I've got the key!"

"Oh, all right! I say, look out when you open the door!" grinned Bunter. "Quelch is fearfully wild! He was calling me names, thinking it was you! He, he, he! I say, I'll open the door, if you like—and you can keep out of sight for a bit, and give him time to cool down! He, he, he!"

Tracy set his lips.
The game was up—if Bunter spread the news! But Tracy was desperate. There was a chance—still a chance, if he could keep Bunter quiet! There was only one way of keeping Bunter quiet—if he could contrive it! He was going to try, at all events! The most desperate chance was better than facing Quelch in his wrath.

"Here's the key!" he said.

He took the long, iron key from an inner pocket, and handed it to the fat Owl.

Bunter took the key, grinning, and rolled back up the corridor to the door of the punishment-room.

Tracy, with set lips, followed him.

"Is that you, Bunter?" came Mr. Quelch's bark, as he heard the sound of footsteps.

"Yes, sir!" answered Bunter.

"You stupid boy, why have you not gone to the Head? Go at once! If you lose time, Bunter, I shall cane you!"

"I've got the key, sir!"

"What?"

"The key—"

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"Oh! That alters the case! You have the key to this door? Has Tracy given you the key?"

"Yes, sir! I—"

"Unlock the door at once, then, Bunter!"

"Yes, sir!"

Bunter jammed the key into the lock. He grinned round at Gilbert before turning it.

"I say, hadn't you better cut?" he whispered. "Quelch will grab you the minute he gets out."

"Oh, get on with it!" muttered Tracy.

"Well, you're rather an ass!" said Bunter. "I jolly well advise you—"

"Shut up, you fat fool!"

"Yah!"

Bunter turned back the key. The door was unlocked! He turned the door-handle, and pushed open the door!

As he did so, Gilbert Tracy charged him from behind, and sent him spinning headlong into the punishment-room.

Crash!

Quelch was standing just inside, ready to emerge when the door was opened. But Quelch did not emerge! Bunter, hurled headlong in, crashed into him, and knocked him backwards.

The Remove master staggered back, the astonished Owl stumbling over at his feet!

Tracy, with lightning swiftness, reached at the door-handle, and dragged the door shut.

Slam!

The door slammed, and the key was instantly turned again. Tracy stood panting!

He had succeeded!

Bunter had discovered the imprisoned Form-master! But he had not released him! He had been locked in with him!

Quelch had not been looking for that! Still less had Bunter! Both of them, now, were on the wrong side of the locked door!

Tracy, in the corridor, drew the key from the lock. He was still master of the situation.

Hardly a moment later, there was a grab at the door-handle within. But it came too late! The door was fast!

There was an exclamation, or rather a roar, of wrath!

Mr. Quelch wrenched and wrenched at the door! He could hardly believe that he was still locked in—that the cup of freedom had been dashed away, when it was fairly at his lips! Crimson, breathless, he wrenched, and wrenched.

Billy Bunter tottered to his feet—inside the punishment-room! He set his spectacles straight on his fat little nose and blinked at his Form-master.

"Oh crikey!" ejaculated Bunter.

"Tracy!" roared Mr. Quelch.

"Tracy? Are you there, Tracy?"

"Hallo!"

"Have you locked this door again?"

"What do you think?"

"You—you—you young rascal—"

"Go it!"

"Unlock this door at once!" shrieked Mr. Quelch.

"Likely, isn't it?"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. "I—I say, has—that beast locked the door again? Why, he's locked me in!"

"You stupid boy!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Why did you allow him to do anything of the kind?"

"Oh lor! The beast pushed me from behind!" gasped Bunter. "He—he—he pushed me in—oh lor! I say, I—I—I'm locked in as well as you, sir! Oh crumbs!"

"Blockhead!" roared Mr. Quelch. He was too angry to measure his words.

"Oh, really, sir—"

"Tracy! Will you open this door?"

Quelch thumped on the oak, fairly

frantic with disappointment and rage.

"Tracy—you—you—"

"Got that note ready?" asked Gilbert through the keyhole.

"What?"

"If you've got that note ready for old Giles, slip it under the door—"

"You insolent young knave—"

"Still sticking it out?" asked Gilbert.

"All right—take your own time! You've got company now—I hope you'll enjoy it. I'll come along again after class! Better have that note ready then, or you're booked for another night of it."

There was a dismayed howl from Bunter.

"I say, Tracy! Look here, you beast—I mean, look here, old chap, you can't leave me here. What about dinner?"

"You shouldn't have butted in, old fat rabbit!"

"I can't miss my dinner!" yelled Bunter.

Gilbert chuckled.

"Looks to me as if you'll have to," he answered, "and tea as well—not to mention supper and brekker—"

"Oh crikey!"

"Are you showing that note under the door, Quelch?"

"What! Certainly not! Not in any circumstances—"

"All right, I'll wait! I'll keep this up as long as you do!" answered Gilbert. "Anything more to say before I go?"

"You iniquitous, insolent young rascal, the most severe punishment—"

"You can tell Bunter that! Ta-ta!"

Gilbert Tracy walked away, with the key in his pocket.

Mr. Quelch gave one more frantic wrench at the door-handle—and gave it up!

Gilbert's footsteps died away.

In the punishment-room, Quelch glared at Bunter and Bunter blinked at Quelch! The Remove master was as far from freedom as ever; and there were now two prisoners in the punishment-room instead of one! Quelch had company now—if that was any comfort to him. Probably it was not. Certainly it was no comfort to Billy Bunter. Billy Bunter thought of dinner, and groaned in anguish of spirit!

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Another Mysterious Disappearance!

"W HARTON!"

"Yes, Wingate?"

"Send Bunter to my study!"

"Yes."

Wingate of the Sixth was frowning; most of the Remove were grinning. Third school was ending in the Remove Form Room, and third school had not been graced by the presence of William George Bunter.

The Greyfriars captain had taken the Form for that "school." The amazing absence of Mr. Quelch—still more amazing the more it was prolonged—left a Greyfriars Form without a master, and changes had to be made in the time-table. Monsieur Charpentier had taken an extra turn, Larry Lascelles had taken one, and Wingate of the Sixth took a turn.

The afternoon, luckily, was a half-holiday, and no doubt the Head hoped that something would be heard from Mr. Quelch before the dawn of another day. If not, it was clear that some definite arrangement would have to be made; indeed, it was already rumoured in the Remove that when Quelch did turn up, it would be to receive the "order of the boot."

Several fellows had been a little late for third school, Wingate being easier-going in such matters than Quelch. But only one fellow had stayed out, and that fellow was the fat Owl of the Remove.

Wingate was irritated, and he was going to warn Bunter by means of the ash that he could not play the goat like this, simply because the Form was for the moment minus a Form-master. He was a good-natured fellow, and had overlooked some unpunctuality; but he could not overlook this. Hence his order to the head boy of the Remove to send Bunter to his study.

"The fat chump!" said Harry, as he went out with his friends. "He couldn't cut a whole class, even with Mossoo! Bother him! Anybody know where he is?"

"If his postal order's come, he's in the tuckshop!" grinned Nugent.

"No need to look in the tuckshop, then!" remarked Bob Cherry. "But I'm blessed if I understand Bunter's game! He must know that he can't get by with this!"

"Seen Bunter, anybody?" called out Harry Wharton, after a walk round the quad, a glance into the Rag, and a visit to the studies.

Nobody seemed to have seen Bunter. All the Remove were wondering at his nerve in cutting a class. As a matter of preference, Billy Bunter would have cut every class every day as regularly as clockwork! School on those lines would have seemed a very pleasant place indeed to William George Bunter. And really it required a lot of nerve—and Bunter was not famous for nerve. No one, so far, doubted that he had stayed out of his own accord.

"Well, this beats it!" exclaimed Wharton. "Has that fat chump disappeared like Quelch, or what? Who saw him in break, if anybody did?"

"I did," answered Bob. "Last I saw of him, he was cutting up the Fifth Form passage with Coker's chocs!"

"Well, he can't be still scoffing chocs! Coker may have seen something of him, though. I'll ask Coker!"

Coker of the Fifth was in the quad. He frowned at the juniors as they came over to him. He had not, it appeared, forgotten sitting down so suddenly in the Fifth Form passage with the assistance of Bob Cherry.

"Seen anything of Bunter, of our Form, Coker?" asked Harry.

"I'm going to!" grunted Coker. "Somebody's snaffled a box of chocs from my study! I fancy I can guess who it was!"

"You didn't get after him?"

"No! I haven't seen him—yet!" Coker's accent on the last word indicated that something unpleasant would happen to Bunter when he did see him.

Nothing was to be learned from Coker. The Famous Five carried their inquiries further afield. It was Wharton's task to find the fat junior, but his comrades kindly lent him their aid.

They rooted in passages and studies, and asked every fellow they met. But Bunter was not to be rooted out; neither had any fellow any information to give.

It was growing more and more puzzling. The disappearance of Mr. Quelch had been a startling mystery, and it really seemed impossible that a member of Quelch's Form had disappeared like his Form-master! Disappearing was not catching, like measles!

Nevertheless, Bunter was not to be found.

After a quarter of an hour, Harry Wharton gave it up and went to Wingate to report that he could not find Bunter.

The Greyfriars captain stared at him. "What do you mean, you young ass?" he demanded. "I suppose Bunter's in the school, isn't he?"

"If he is, I can't find him."

"By gum! If he's gone out of gates—he wouldn't have the cheek! All right—send him along when you see him!"

It was left at that, and Harry Wharton dismissed Bunter from his mind. But he remembered him when the dinner-bell rang and the Greyfriars fellows came in to dinner.

For Billy Bunter did not come in with the rest!

Quelch generally sat at the head of the Remove table at dinner. His place was taken now by a prefect—Walker of the Sixth. Walker did not even notice that Bunter was not there, but all the Remove, of course, did, and there was a buzz of surprise along the table.

That Bunter would willingly, and of his own accord, miss a meal was not only unlikely—it was really impossible! If Bunter cut tiffin, something had happened to Bunter!

"Less chatter there!" said Walker. "Bunter hasn't come in, Walker!" said Harry.

"Hasn't he? Then he can miss his dinner!" said Walker. "Not so much chatter, do you hear?"

After dinner, Harry went up to the high table, where the prefects sat, to speak to Wingate. Amazing as it was, it was clear that Bunter was missing, and the matter could not be carelessly dismissed.

"Can I speak to you, Wingate?" asked Harry.

"What is it?"

"Bunter hasn't come in to dinner! He can't be found anywhere in the school. I thought you'd better know!"

"Oh gad!" said Wingate blankly. "All right! What the dickens does the young ass think he's up to? All right!"

The Remove went out of Hall—discussing Bunter. Bunter had now replaced Quelch as a topic. A good many fellows started looking for Bunter—in all sorts of likely and unlikely places. But the only result was to demonstrate, beyond doubt, that Bunter was not to be found.

"Seems to be catching!" grinned the Bounder. "First Quelch—now Bunter!"

"It beats Banagher!" said Bob Cherry. "He can't have gone out—Gosling would have seen him!"

"He wouldn't let Gosling see him if he was going out in break, as fellows aren't allowed out of gates in break!" said Tracy. "More likely to drop over the wall of the Cloisters!"

"But why should he?"

"Blessed if I know—but it looks as if he has!" said Tracy blandly. "He's certainly not in the school!"

"Well, he's wide enough to be seen, if he was!" said Bob. "But—"

It was really a mystery.

Bunter might possibly have gone out when he cut third school, but if he had, there was no reason why he should not have returned. Certainly he would have turned up for dinner had he not been prevented. But what could have prevented him? Had an accident happened to Quelch, and another accident to Bunter? Accidents, of course, might, and did, happen; but really, they did not keep on happening like that.

Whatever the explanation, Billy Bunter had disappeared, and he stayed disappeared!

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Just Like Bunter!

"O H lor'!"

"Be quiet, Bunter!"
"Yes, sir! Oh, crikey!"
"Be silent!"

"I'm hungry!" groaned Bunter.

Mr. Quelch gave an angry snort. He had been hungry for about twenty-four hours, but he was bearing it with iron patience and fortitude. But patience and fortitude were not strongly developed in the Owl of the Remove.

Mr. Quelch was pacing the punishment-room. Bunter was sitting on the bed-tee. Both of them had heard the dinner-bell, faint and far in the distance. They had heard it, with deep feelings!

Bunter's company did not seem much consolation to the imprisoned Form-master. If he looked at Bunter, he frowned; if he spoke to him, he snapped. Indeed, he could have found satisfaction in boxing Bunter's fat ears.

His hopes had been raised, only to be dashed to the ground. Bunter, by sheer and happy chance, had found him, only to allow that iniquitous, malicious, unspeakable young rascal Tracy to tumble him headlong in and turn the key on him. Bunter really was not very much to blame, Tracy's action having been so very sudden and unexpected; but if the fat Owl had had his wits about him all might have been so different.

Now there were two prisoners instead of one in punny. That was the only difference Bunter's arrival on the scene had made. And Billy Bunter's moans and groans were not music to Quelch's irritated ears.

"I'm awfully hungry!" repeated Bunter dismally.

"Do you think that I am not hungry?" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"I'm kik-kik-cold!"

"Do you think that I am not cold?"

Billy Bunter snorted. Quelch might be hungry, and Quelch might be cold; but these were matters of small moment. Bunter was hungry, and Bunter was cold; that was important. If Quelch did not realise that, Bunter did—only too clearly.

It was undoubtedly very cold in the punishment-room. There would have been a fire for the intended occupant; but as no preparations had, of course, been made, there was no fire for the present occupants.

Quelch kept himself warm by endless untiring pacing. Perhaps his temper helped to keep him warm also; for there was no doubt that that, at least, was at a white heat.

Bunter sat on the bed-tee and shivered. He had missed dinner. He was going to miss tea. Indeed, unless that awful beast Tracy let him out, he seemed to be booked to miss all his meals, one after another, world without end.

There had been at first a spot of silver lining to the cloud—Coker's chocs in his pockets. But they had not lasted Bunter long. The last choc was long gone, and Bunter was fearfully hungry and very cold.

"I—I say, sir!" moaned Bunter.

"Well?" came a snap.

"It's awfully kik-kik-cold!"

"You have already made that remark, Bunter, more than twenty times. Kindly do not make it again."

"But—but if we had a fire, sir—"

"There is no fuel here. Are you so stupid as to suppose that I should not have lighted a fire if there was fuel available?"

"What about the chair, sir?"

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"What?"

"And—the table?"

"You will not be allowed to destroy the school property, Bunter."

"Oh lor!"

Bunter groaned. Quelch paced. Bunter's thoughts were concentrated wholly on food and fire; Quelch's were fixed chiefly on Tracy.

He was not going to yield. He could not and would not yield to the insolent demands of a rebellious boy who had trapped him like this, and dared to make terms with him through a locked door. But—

That "but" was growing bigger and bigger. It was plain now that Tracy was ruthlessly determined; that he did not, indeed, dare to let his Form-master out unless he was clear of the school when he emerged. This could not go on indefinitely.

Mr. Quelch did not share in the least Billy Bunter's whole-hearted devotion to foodstuffs. But he was awfully, fearfully hungry, and growing more awfully and fearfully hungry with every passing hour. Thirst did not trouble him; there was a sink and a tap in the corner of the room. But the emptiness of the interior Quelch seemed abysmal. He had never known what it was like to be so hungry before. This could not go on.

Yet to yield—to write the note that Tracy demanded, to allow him to leave the school and return home—that was impossible! He could not and he would not. On the other hand, how was this to end?

"Oh lor!" groaned Bunter, after ten minutes of silence. His teeth were chattering.

"Walk about, Bunter!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "Motion will keep you warm. Do not be so lazy! Do not be so slack! Do not be so foolish—so senseless!"

"Oh dear!"

Billy Bunter dragged himself to his feet and walked about. He walked about for nearly two minutes, then he sat on the bed again and groaned.

"Oh dear! I'm hungry!"

"Be silent!"

"I'm cold!"

"Pah!"

It had been bad enough when Quelch was alone. Really it was worse with Bunter. Solitude was unpleasant, but there were things more unpleasant than solitude, and Billy Bunter's company was one of them.

"I—I say, sir—"

"Well?"

"I'm freezing!" said Bunter pathetically.

"That is an absurd exaggeration, Bunter!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "You certainly are not freezing. Far from it. But—" Mr. Quelch paused. Bunter, it was only too plain, was very cold, even if he was not freezing, as he declared. "But—upon the whole, Bunter, you may use the chair to light a fire, if you wish."

"Oh, all right, sir!"

Bunter rose quite briskly from the bedstead.

There was only one chair in the punishment-room—a wooden Windsor chair. Bunter took it by the back and banged it on the floor till the legs came off. Then he banged the back off.

"May I use the books, sir?" he asked.

There were a number of volumes on a shelf—volumes of an improving nature, which no fellow was likely to read unless as a last resource to kill weary time.

"The books? Certainly not!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"How am I to get the fire going, sir?"

Snort from the irritated Remove master.

"You may use one of the books, Bunter."

"Oh, thank you, sir!"

Mr. Quelch paced and paced and paced, taking no further notice of Bunter.

Bunter was glad to be taken no further notice of. He helped himself to more than one book from the bookshelf. He tore out leaves in handfuls, and crammed them in bunches into the wide, old-fashioned grate. He struck a match and set them alight.

There was a cheerful and comforting flare in the fireplace.

With a furtive eye on Quelch, Bunter wrenched book after book into fragments, and jammed them in. He added the fragments of the Windsor chair.

A glow of warmth spread through the chilly atmosphere of the punishment-room.

It was grateful and comforting to Mr. Quelch as well as Bunter, and he was rather glad that he had given Bunter permission to destroy the school property to that extent.

The wood was rather slow in catching, but the turn-up books caught fast enough—indeed, a little too fast. Bunter stacked them in, and they flamed and blazed and roared, and a regular torrent of flame went soaring up the old chimney.

Billy Bunter retreated from the blaze with a crimson face.

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Fragments of ancient soot fell into the fire, and from the interior of the old chimney came a deep, sullen boom. More and more soot fell in smouldering chunks into the fire, scattering sparks.

"You stupid boy!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "What have you done?"

"I—I've lighted the—the fire, sir—"

"You have set the chimney on fire!" roared Mr. Quelch.

"Oh crikey!"

"How can you be so stupid, Bunter? It is dangerous to set a chimney on fire, especially an old chimney like that. Such stupidity! Such obtuseness! Upon my word!"

Billy Bunter grunted. Quelch might worry about a chimney on fire; Billy Bunter was not going to worry. Blow the chimney—that was Bunter's idea! He was getting warm now, at any rate.

Waiting until Mr. Quelch's back was turned, he jammed the rest of the wood into the grate, and followed it up with another book.

The chimney fairly boomed!

Smouldering soot fell into the grate thicker and faster. The atmosphere became sooty and smoky. Quelch sniffed and snorted with annoyance. Bunter did not care. He was as hungry as ever—but, at least, he was warm!

"I—I—I say, sir—"

"Well?"

"M-m-may I break up the table?"

"You may not, Bunter."

"Beast!" breathed Bunter, under his breath.

He squatted before the fire, to make the most of it while it lasted; and Mr.

Quelch sniffed and snorted and paced. And the chimney, rather like a volcano now in its ancient interior, boomed and roared and sent endless showers of sparks skyward.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Unexpected!

"SOME ass—" remarked Bob Cherry.

"What—"

"Chimney on fire!"

"Going strong, too!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"The smokefulness and sparkfulness are truly terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

The Famous Five were not the only fellows who noticed the chimney on fire; dozens of other fellows were staring up at it.

It was a bright but cold October afternoon. Innumerable fires burned in innumerable grates all over Greyfriars, and smoke ascended from many old red chimneys; but from only one chimney came such a thick, black volume of smoke, accompanied by streaming sparks. That chimney, evidently, was on fire.

"Not in the Remove," said Harry Wharton. "Nowhere near the Remove studies."

"Nowhere near any of the studies," said Frank Nugent. "Must be in a bed-room, or a box-room—"

"Who'd light a fire in a box-room?"

"Some ass!" said Bob. "That chimney's right at the top of the building. 'Tain't a bed-room."

"Or a box-room, either," said Johnny Bull. "Some fathead has lighted a fire in one of the old attics and set the chimney alight."

Quite a crowd gathered to watch the smoking chimney.

Mr. Prout, rolling majestically across the quad, came to a halt, to stare up and grunt.

"What careless boy has done this?" he demanded.

Nobody answered Prout, as nobody knew. Prout grunted again. Chimneys on fire were dangerous, and the matter had to be looked into. Prout personally was not anxious to mount innumerable stairs to look into it.

"By gum!" exclaimed the Bounder suddenly. "That's jolly odd!" Smithy was staring blankly at the smoky chimney.

"What's odd about it, Smithy?" asked Bob. "Chimneys have caught fire before now."

"Not that one," said the Bounder. "That's the chimney of the punishment-room."

"What?"

"By gum, so it is!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "But that room's always kept locked. How could anybody—"

"Goodness knows! But somebody has," said the Bounder. "There's a fire in punny now; that's the chimney."

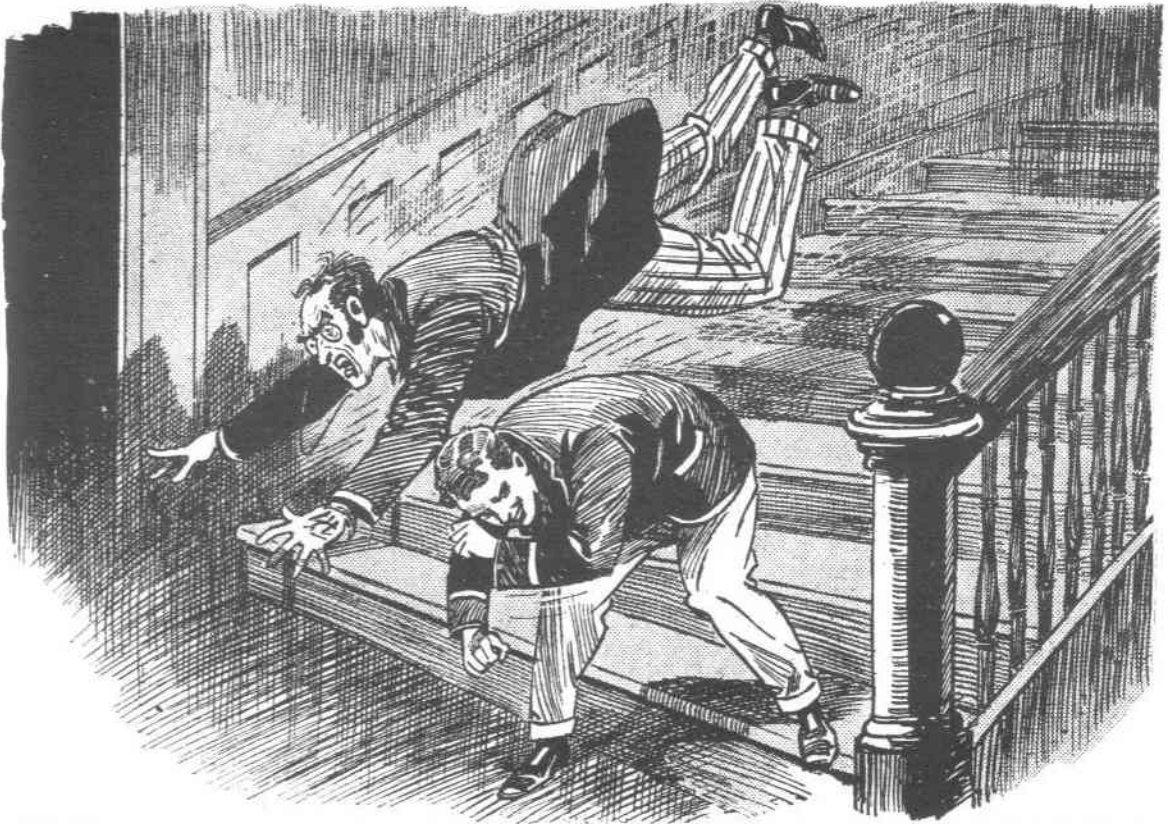
"Can that ass Bunter—" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

Billy Bunter was still in a disappeared state, and all the Remove wondering what had become of him.

"Why should he?" asked Nugent.

"Well, somebody's in punny, that's certain!" answered the captain of the Remove. "And Bunter must be somewhere!"

"Upon my word!" boomed Prout. "I believe—I am almost sure that that is the chimney of the punishment-room! Some boy must have taken the key—"



With the clutching hand close behind him, Gilbert Tracy crouched on the bottom stair. Crash! Unable to stop himself in time, Mr. Quelch stumbled headlong over the new boy. "Oooooh!" he gasped.

Harry Wharton & Co. started for the House.

From the smoky, flaring state of the chimney it was evident that somebody was in the punishment-room—somebody who was ass enough to set the chimney alight when he lighted a fire. Billy Bunter was ass enough for that—or for anything else—and Bunter was not to be found. Why the fat Owl should have gone there and stayed there was a mystery—but really it looked as if he had. Somebody, at all events, was there!

"Anything up?" asked Gilbert Tracy, as the Famous Five passed him going into the House. Tracy was lounging at the doorway.

"Chimney on fire," answered Bob, and the juniors ran up the stairs.

Tracy shrugged his shoulders; he was not interested, though doubtless he would have been had he known which particular chimney it was.

Harry Wharton & Co. cut on. They reached the corridor that led to the punishment-room and cut along it.

The door at the end was closed.

Harry Wharton reached it and turned the handle, but the door was locked.

It was certain, however, that someone was there, or the chimney could not have been alight. It was impossible to guess why anyone should have locked himself in that unpopular apartment, but it appeared that someone had done so.

Wharton rapped on the door.

"Are you there, you blithering idiot?" he shouted. "Is this where you have been parking yourself all this time, you howling fathead?"

"Wharton!"

It was a bark from the punishment-room.

Harry Wharton fairly staggered.

He had surmised that Bunter might be there. He had never dreamed that Quelch might be there; he had not thought of Quelch at all. But it was Mr. Quelch's voice that answered him.

"What—what—who—what—" stuttered Wharton.

"Is that you, Wharton?"

"Eh? Oh, yes!"

"Is—is—is that Quelch?" stuttered Bob Cherry.

"That—that—that was Quik-Quik-Quelch's voice!"

"The esteemed and absurd Quelch!" gasped Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"Quelch!" said Johnny Bull, like a fellow in a dream.

"What the thump is Quelch doing there?" gasped Nugent.

"Wharton!" came the bark.

"Here, sir!" gasped Harry. "Is—is—is that you, sir? I—I—I fancied it might be Bunter there—"

"Bunter is here also, Wharton."

"I say, you fellows, get that door open!" came a fat squeak. "I say, I'm fearfully hungry—starving—"

"Silence, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, sir—"

"Be silent! Wharton!"

"Yes, sir?" gasped Harry.

"Find Tracy at once—"

"Tut-Tut-Tracy—"

"Tracy has the key of this room. He locked me in here yesterday morning."

"Oh crumbs!"

"Bunter found me here, and the iniquitous boy pushed him in and locked the door on him—"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Be silent, Bunter! Wharton, I am very thankful that you have found me here! Did Tracy tell you, or what—"

"Oh, no!" gasped Harry. "We saw the chimney on fire, sir, and came up. I—I thought it might be that ass—I mean Bunter—"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"The chimney on fire!" repeated Mr. Quelch. "Upon my word! Was that what drew your attention to this room, Wharton?"

"Yes, sir."

"It is very fortunate, then, that Bunter lighted the fire and was so stupid as to cause the chimney to catch. You did not know that Tracy—"

"Oh, no! Did he—did he really?" gasped Wharton. "Have you—have you really been in there since yesterday morning, sir? Oh crumbs!"

"I have, Wharton! Find Tracy at once and take the key from him—"

"Oh, certainly!"

"Come back here and release me as speedily as you possibly can, Wharton! Do not lose a moment!"

"Yes, sir!" gasped Harry.

"I say, you fellows, buck up! I'm starving—"

"Silence, Bunter! Hurry, please, Wharton! Take the key at once from that wretched boy and return here instantly!"

"I'm off, sir!"

Utterly amazed as he was by that astounding discovery, the captain of the Remove lost no time. He went down the corridor again as if he were on the cinder path, his chums at his heels.

In the punishment-room Mr. Quelch rubbed his chilly hands, with a grim smile. He was thinking of Tracy—and a cane! Billy Bunter smiled, too; he was thinking of dinner!

Gilbert's extraordinary game was up now, with a vengeance; it was only a matter of minutes now before the prisoners of the punishment-room were released—and there was going to be dinner for Bunter, and something much less agreeable for Tracy.

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THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Going Of Gilbert!

"TRACY!" gasped Harry Wharton.

Gilbert glanced round.

He had gone out into the quad, when the Famous Five came racing down the stairs to look for him.

They spotted him, and cut after him.

"Give me the key!" panted Harry.

"The what?"

"The key of the punishment-room!" said Harry breathlessly.

Gilbert caught his breath.

Quite unaware of the discovery that the juniors had made, that sudden demand took him completely by surprise. He stared blankly at the captain of the Remove.

"What do you mean?" he gasped. "I don't know anything about the key of the punishment-room! What—?"

"Hand it over at once!" said Harry.

"Quelch has sent me for it!"

"Quelch!" gasped Tracy.

"Yes, hand it over, I tell you!"

Gilbert stood as if transfixed, staring.

Bob Cherry burst into a chuckle.

"Cough it up, old bean," he said.

"We know where Quelch is now! We've just been up to punny—"

"You—you have—"

stuttered Gilbert.

"It's the chimney that's on fire!" exclaimed Bob.

"Oh!"

"Hand over the key at once, Tracy!" exclaimed Harry Wharton impatiently.

Gilbert set his teeth! He realised that the game was up now! Bunter had found the missing master, and he had dealt with Bunter, but he had no chance of dealing with the Famous Five in that way! His whole scheme had come down about his ears, like a house of cards! His face whitened with rage and disappointment.

"You meddling rotters!" he breathed.

"Give me that key!" snapped Harry.

"You must have been mad to play a game like this, Tracy! Give me the key!"

"I won't!" snarled Gilbert.

"You will!" retorted the captain of the Remove, and he grabbed at Tracy.

Gilbert jumped back, dodged, and cut across the quad! The game was up, and the prospect of facing Quelch when he came out, was terrifying! Gilbert's one idea, at the moment, was to gain a respite, at least, by throwing away the key—if he could!

But he was given no chance of that! Harry Wharton was after him like a shot.

Tracy ran like a deer for the Cloisters, with the captain of the Remove at his heels. He put on a desperate burst of speed and jumped at the old ivied wall at the end of the ancient Cloister.

But before he could pull himself up, Wharton was grasping at his legs!

"Come down, you dummy!" panted Harry.

"Let go!" yelled Gilbert.

He kicked savagely.

But Bob Cherry had hold of him in another moment! With a junior hauling at each leg, Tracy strove in vain to drag himself over the wall. He struggled and kicked, but the pull on his legs was too much for him, and he came sliding back, and bumped on the old stone flags.

"Now give me that key, you fool!" panted Harry.

"Hang you! won't!" gasped Gilbert.

"I'll take it, then!"

"You rotter! You—"

"Oh, shut up!"

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Gilbert hit out fiercely, but there was no help for him. The Famous Five grasped him, and held him, while Wharton dragged the key from his pocket.

As soon as he had it, the captain of the Remove cut back to the House at a run—leaving Tracy sprawling and spluttering.

He sat up, gasping for breath.

"Oh, you rotters! You—"

"You howling ass!" said Bob Cherry.

"Did you think you could keep Quelch parked in punny for ever? Are you off your dot?"

"Hang you!"

"By gum! I don't envy you, when Quelch gets going!" said Johnny Bull.

"You'll be sacked for this!"

"The sackfulness will be terrifico."

"That's what he wants!" grinned Bob.

"I fancy Quelch will let him have what he wants this time! Come on, you fellows!"

And the Co. followed Wharton, leaving Gilbert to his own devices.

Tracy tottered to his feet.

He leaned on one of the old stone pillars, panting for breath. His brain was in a whirl at this sudden catastrophe. He panted, and panted, and tried to think it out.

In a few minutes now, Quelch would be out of the punishment-room. He would come out rather like a tiger from a cage! What was going to happen to Gilbert?

Evidently he was not going to get that note from Quelch, to take home to old Sir Giles! Another day—even a few more hours—and he might have been successful, he believed so, at least. But that chance had vanished—and he was left to face Quelch's accumulated wrath!

If Quelch had written that note, disclaiming all further responsibility for him, he could have taken the train home—and stayed there! But as the matter stood, if he went home, he would be running away from school, and he would be sent back again!

Bob Cherry fancied that Quelch would let him have what he wanted—that it would be the "sack"—after what had happened. But Gilbert did not believe so for a moment! He knew that it would not be so! He would not be sent away from the school—he would have to take his turn in the punishment-room—probably with a tremendous whopping to start with! He was not going to face that if he could help it!

After all, his Uncle Giles was weak and indulgent—there was a chance that old Giles would stand by him, especially if he got home first, and told his story! That was, as he very quickly realised, his only chance now—the only chance he had left himself! The alternative was to face Quelch when he came out of punny.

Gilbert was not long in making up his mind!

The Famous Five had left him, no longer concerned with him, but it would not be long before he was looked for! If he was going, he had no time to lose!

He turned to the wall, clambered over it, and dropped outside! It was a cold day, but he did not think of going back to the House for his overcoat! He was not likely to be allowed to leave the House again, if he entered it! Just as he was, he went!

Immediately he had dropped from the wall, he started at a run. He kept on the trot, by the road over Courtfield Common.

Then luck came his way, as the motor-bus came roaring along from Redclyffe. He jumped on, and was carried rapidly on.

By that time, he had no doubt, he was being looked for all over Greyfriars. But he was safe away from Greyfriars now.

He left the motor-bus at the station, walked in and took his ticket, and went on the platform.

He had ten minutes to wait for a train, and they were long and anxious minutes. Every moment he dreaded to see a Greyfriars master or prefect come along the platform, looking for him.

They would guess—Quelch at least would guess—what he had done, and he had no doubt that he would be pursued.

But if pursuit was on the track, it had not yet reached Courtfield. The train came in, and he took his seat—and breathed more freely when it rolled on again, out of the station.

He had escaped, at all events! And he was going to reach Oakwood Place, long before Quelch could do so. Even if Quelch followed him by the next train, he would be an hour behind him! He would have ample time to "tell the tale" to old Giles—perhaps to get him on his side: anyhow, he would give his version, before Quelch could put in a word, and getting the first hearing might mean everything to him.

Gilbert did not feel sure—but he felt hopeful as the train rushed on, bearing him farther and farther away from the school he hoped never to see again!

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bolted!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Bunter was full of it.

He was also full of dinner.

Bunter, as soon as he was out of the punishment-room, had made what Fisher T. Fish called a bee-line, for the foodstuffs.

Foodstuffs had been provided, and Bunter had encircled them, in large quantities. He was still encircling them, though now his efforts were slackening a little, and he was able to speak.

A crowd of fellows were in the hall, watching his remarkable gastronomic performance, and listening to his tale of woe.

Greyfriars School was buzzing from end to end with the startling story.

The mystery of Quelch's disappearance had been cleared up—in the most amazing and unexpected manner!

Fellows could hardly believe that he had been in the school all the time—locked up in punny.

But he had; amazing as it was, he had! And he might have been there still, but for the fat Owl of the Remove.

Nobody had given a thought to the punishment-room. Naturally, nobody had dreamed for a moment that the missing master might be there. Only the chimney on fire had drawn attention to it; but for that, Quelch would still have been under lock and key.

How long Tracy had intended to keep him there, whether he had ever intended to let him out at all, were thrilling questions, and a crowd of fellows looked for Tracy to ask him about it. But Tracy was not to be found. They concluded that he was keeping out of sight, to give the keen edge of Quelch's wrath time to wear off. Anyhow, nobody could find him.

But Bunter was full of information, and for once the fat Owl had a large audience, and they hung upon his words.

Quelch had said little or nothing so far. It was known that he had had a hasty lunch—of which he was probably more in need than Bunter. Now he was

with the Head, and a prefect had been sent to take Tracy there. Nobody envied Tracy what awaited him.

"I say, you fellows"—Bunter's mouth was full, and his voice came a little muffled—"I say, I was so jolly hungry that—"

"Quelch must have been," remarked Peter Todd. "He can't have had anything since brekker yesterday."

"Poor old Quelch!" said Bob Cherry. "I was simply ravenous," said Bunter. "Luckily, I had Coker's chocs at first. But they didn't last long. I say—"

"But how the thump did you find Quelch there?" asked Bob Cherry. "Nobody knew or dreamed that he was in the school at all."

"Brains, you know!" explained Bunter.

"The brainfulness must have been terrific!" grinned Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Well, I think of things, you know," explained Bunter. "Everybody else was just beaten. Was I? No!"

"You fat fraud, you never knew, any more than we did!" said Harry Wharton. "You must have found him there by accident."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Well, how did you find him?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"Brains!" answered Bunter calmly. "Everybody had looked everywhere else! I—I looked in the right place, that's all! I say, I can tell you it made me jump when I heard his voice through the door!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at! Might have made any fellow jump, hearing his voice all of a sudden, when he was supposed to be miles away from—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the juniors.

"I say, you fellows—"

"You went there to look for him, but it made you jump to hear his voice, as he was supposed to be miles away!" roared Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I—I mean to say, it—it didn't make me jump! I mean, it might have made me jump, if—if it had—had made me jump, you know! If you fellows think I just went there to keep clear of Cherry and that beast Coker, and never knew that Quelch was there at all—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Nothing of the kind, of course!" said Bunter. "I—I found Quelch! I'd have had him out, only that beast Tracy pushed me in when I wasn't looking, you know, and banged the door and locked it again!"

"You must have been a blithering ass to let him!"

"Well, he caught me unawares, you know. And there was I, locked in with Quelch!" said Bunter. "But was I beaten? No fear! Quelch could do nothing—absolutely nothing—except snap at a chap whenever he opened his mouth. He might have stayed there till he perished of old age, but for me! Luckily, I knew what to do! Brains, you know! You fellows would never have thought of setting the chimney on fire—"

"No more than you did!" grinned Bob.

"I did it, didn't I?" hooted Bunter. "If I hadn't set the chimney on fire we should be there now. It was the only way, as that chap says in the play! Presence of mind, you know! If you fellows fancy that the chimney caught fire by accident—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It was sheer presence of mind!" declared Bunter. "And if you fellows

don't believe me, I can only say—Gurrgrgg! Urrrrgh! Wurrgrgg!"

Billy Bunter's mouth was rather too well supplied for easy conversation. A chunk went down the wrong way, and Bunter choked and gurgled.

"I mean to say—Grooogh! I mean—Yurrgrgg!" said Bunter lucidly. "And if you fellows are going to—woogh!—cackle, you can jolly well—Gurrgrgg!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is that fellow Tracy here?" Wingate of the Sixth came hurrying in. "Anyone here know where Tracy is?"

"Not here, Wingate," said Harry. "Some fellows have been looking for him, but he seems to be keeping out of sight—"

"Another mysterious disappearance!" grinned the Bounder. "I told you fellows it was catching!"

"He's wanted in the Head's study!" grunted Wingate. "Look here, some of you go and find him! The Head's waiting to see him!"

"Oh, all right!"

"Bet you he's bolted!" said Bob Cherry, as the Famous Five went out. "He wanted a lot of nerve to lock Quelch in punny, but he would want a lot more to face him when he got out."

There had been quite a lot of excitement in Greyfriars that day. But there was some more when it was discovered that Gilbert Tracy could not be found, and that he was no longer in the school.

Whether he was keeping out of sight till Quelch had had time to cool down a little, or whether he had "bolted," could not be known. But it was certain that he was no longer within the walls of Greyfriars.

But if the Greyfriars fellows did not know what had become of Gilbert, Mr. Quelch was not long in learning. For a telephone call to the railway station at Courtfield elicited the information that a schoolboy in a Greyfriars cap had been noticed taking the three-thirty train there. That settled the matter for Mr. Quelch.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There goes Quelchy!" murmured Bob Cherry, a little later, as the Head's car swept down to the gates with Mr. Quelch in it, sitting as upright as a ramrod, with closely compressed lips.

"After Tracy!" said Nugent.

"Then he's bolted," said Harry Wharton. "Best thing he could do, I suppose, after what he's done already. But—"

"Quelch will get him," said Johnny Bull. "Blessed if I see why he can't boot him out, and have done with him! Who wants him here?"

"Nobody but Quelch!" said Harry, laughing. "But Quelch seems to! I wonder if he will get him?"

The news was not long in spreading that Quelch had gone in the Head's car, obviously on the track of the runaway. Fellows were very keen to see that car when it returned, wondering whether Tracy would be in it. But the car had not returned at tea-time, and after tea a little crowd gathered at the school gates to watch for it.

Still it did not come, and it had not been seen when Gosling came down to shut the gates. Neither Quelch nor Gilbert was seen at calling-over; neither had been seen by the time the Greyfriars fellows went to prep.

If Quelch was on the trail of the Remove runaway, it looked as if he was finding it a long, long trail!

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Face To Face!

MASTER GILBERT!" The butler at Oakwood Place looked surprised.

All the household of old Sir Giles Oakwood knew how unwillingly Master Gilbert had gone to school. Still, they had not expected to see him back before the term was three weeks old.

"Where's my uncle, Wadham?" asked Tracy.

"In the library, sir!"

"Right!"

Gilbert threw his cap to Wadham, and walked across the hall to the library door. His heart was beating a little fast, but he was fairly confident of talking the gentleman round.

Sir Giles had been, indeed, so indulgent and long-suffering for so long a time that it had been a very unpleasant surprise to Gilbert when the old baronet determined to send him to Greyfriars, whether he liked it or not.

But the fact was that indulgence on the uncle's part, and self-indulgence on the nephew's, had made Gilbert so intolerable that the old gentleman had felt that something had to be done with him—for which reason he had consulted his old friend Quelch on the subject, with the result that Quelch had taken control.

Gilbert had no doubt that, without Quelch's intervention, he would have been allowed to carry on in the old happy style, going to the dogs his own way, and making an early start in that direction.

Without Quelch, it would have been all right. And he hoped, now that Quelch was not on the spot, to talk old Sir Giles round and persuade him to telephone to Greyfriars that the runaway was not returning there. There was a chance of success, if he saw his uncle before Mr. Quelch did. And even if Quelch followed him by the next train, Gilbert had an hour ahead of which to take full advantage. He was going to lose no time.

(Continued on next page.)

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"Master Gilbert!" Wadham, the butler, addressed the back of Tracy's head. "There is a gentleman with the master at the present moment—"

"I don't care!"

"But, sir—"

"Pack it up, Wadham!"

Tracy walked on, Wadham casting a very expressive look at the back of his head! Wadham's opinion, and that of the entire household staff at Oakwood Place, was that what Master Gilbert wanted, and needed badly, was the biggest and soundest thrashing that a cheeky young cub had ever had! However, Wadham "packed it up," as Gilbert bade him, and the Remove runaway went on to the library and walked into that apartment.

He did not, as he had said, care if Sir Giles was occupied with a visitor. He was going to interrupt him, whomsoever that visitor was. He had no time to waste, and the visitor, whoever he was, could go!

So he walked in, and crossed the library towards a silvery head that showed over the back of an armchair.

"I say, uncle—" he began.

Then he broke off, and the visitor rose and faced him!

Wadham had said that there was a "gentleman" with Sir Giles. He had not said who that gentleman was, and Tracy had never dreamed of guessing!

His eyes fairly started from his head at the sight of Henry Samuel Quelch.

It was the Remove master of Greyfriars!

Gilbert had not felt sure that Quelch had even left the school in pursuit of him. He had been certain that if Quelch had, the Remove master was an hour behind him on the railway! Yet—here he was; not only ahead of Gilbert, but evidently some time ahead!

The ghost of Mr. Quelch could hardly have startled him more! He gazed at the Remove master, wide-eyed and open-mouthed. Really, he could hardly believe that it was Quelch! It seemed, for the moment, like black magic.

"So you have returned here!" said Mr. Quelch, in a deep voice. "I concluded that that was your intention, Tracy!"

"Oh!" gasped Gilbert, in utter dismay.

Sir Giles rose to his feet. He peered at Gilbert over his gold-rimmed glasses disapprovingly.

Tracy set his teeth.

Evidently, he was not going to tell his tale first, and get his uncle on his side! Quelch was already there, and had been talking to the old gentleman when Gilbert came in!

The poet has remarked, that thrice armed is he that hath his quarrel just! Another poet has added, "and four times he that gets his blow in fust!" Quelch was in that position; he had got his blow in "fust."

Tracy had not thought of it, when he bolted; but he could guess what had happened. Quelch had not taken the next train; he must have covered the whole distance by car—and in a swift car! Tracy had had several changes on the railway, with consequent loss of time; but Quelch, had he followed by train, would similarly have lost time! But coming direct in a swift car, he had beaten Tracy to it, and beaten him easily!

Quite probably, Quelch had foreseen that the young rascal might be able to "talk round" the vacillating old gentleman, and he had put paid to that! He stood before Tracy, grim as a gorgon, his gimlet-eyes fixed on the dismayed face of the Remove runaway.

"Gilbert, my boy!" came Sir Giles' voice.

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high-pitched, quavering voice. "I am shocked—surprised—Gilbert, you have acted outrageously! You have actually run away from school, and given Mr. Quelch the trouble of undertaking a long journey to take you back—"

"You won't send me back, uncle—"

"What—what? I have no choice in the matter; you are well aware that I gave Mr. Quelch my word not to intervene, when he so kindly consented to take charge of you, and keep you at Greyfriars for at least one term—"

"I won't go back!" said Gilbert between his teeth. "You wouldn't send me back if Quelch hadn't got here first, and jawed you—"

"How dare you, Gilbert? You will return to Greyfriars immediately, under Mr. Quelch's care! You—"

"I won't!" yelled Gilbert desperately. "If you won't have me here, I'll jolly well clear off, and you can thank yourself if anything happens to me."

"Goodness gracious!" gasped Sir Giles. "What a boy! What a boy! Gilbert, I am determined that you shall remain at Greyfriars, so long as Mr. Quelch will consent to undergo the trouble and difficulty of managing you there! I am grateful to him, and you should be grateful also—"

"Oh, don't talk rot!" snarled Gilbert.

"What—what?"

"That will do, Tracy!" said Mr. Quelch grimly. "You will now come with me! Sir Giles, perhaps you will kindly order my car to be brought round."

"Certainly! Gilbert, you will return to school with your Form-master. You have acted outrageously—outrageously! I had hoped that you would return, at the end of the term, improved—very much improved! Unless you improve, Gilbert, I am not sure that you can be allowed to come home even for the holidays—I may have to make arrangements for you to remain at school over the vacation! This is a warning to you."

Gilbert stared at his uncle.

This was a change in old Sir Giles—a startling change! But even Gilbert could see that the change was not wholly due to the influence of Mr. Quelch!

The fact was that the old gentleman had found it such an immense relief, after the departure of that troublesome and unmanageable nephew, that the prospect of Gilbert's return was dismaying to him. He was fond of the boy, but that did not alter the fact that Gilbert had been an unlimited worry and trouble to him, and that he had no peace and quiet while Gilbert was at home.

Moreover, though Gilbert was bent on going to the dogs, his uncle naturally did not regard that as a desirable destination for him. Between a desire for personal comfort, and a sense of duty, Sir Giles had firmly made up his pottering old mind!

"You understand?" he wheezed. "Understand clearly, Gilbert! I expect improvement in you—a great improvement! Mr. Quelch's kindness—"

"Hang Quelch and his kindness!" roared Gilbert. "I won't go back, see—and he shan't make me, and—let go, will you?"

Mr. Quelch's fingers, like a steel vice, closed on Gilbert's arm.

Gilbert gave a savage wrench, but he could not escape that vice-like grip.

"You have said more than enough, Tracy!" said Mr. Quelch. "You will now be silent! Sir Giles, if you will order the car—"

"Yes, yes, at once."

Sir Giles touched a bell, and Wadham was told to order Mr. Quelch's car round from the garage.

Mr. Quelch walked Tracy out of the library, with that vice-like grip on his arm.

In the hall, Tracy gave another wrench! The vice tightened, till he felt as if his bones were going to crack!

"Ow!" gasped Gilbert.

"Come!" said Mr. Quelch, quietly and grimly.

And Gilbert came—and his arm was not released till he was sitting in the Head's car by the side of his Form-master, and the chauffeur was driving. And Gilbert, with an almost demonic expression on his face, sat by Quelch's side, while the car ate up the miles—back to Greyfriars School.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Quick Work!

LIGHTS gleamed from many windows at Greyfriars.

The October evening had long since closed in, and the Greyfriars fellows were at prep in the studies when the Head's car stopped at the door and Mr. Quelch descended therefrom with Gilbert, a hand on his shoulder.

Even now that they were back at Greyfriars within the old walls with the gate shut, Quelch was not trusting the runaway out of his reach—not till they were safe inside the House!

Gilbert walked in, with his Form-master, his lips set, and his eyes glinting under scowling brows.

All the way back to the school he had been watching for a chance to escape. Oakwood Place was no refuge for him now—it was useless to return there, even if he could get away. But he was in a reckless and desperate mood, and he was not going through it, at Greyfriars, if he could help it. But he had had no chance—and here he was, walking into the House, with a hand on his shoulder, which was not taken away till the door had closed.

Then Mr. Quelch released him.

"You will now come with me, Tracy!" he said grimly.

Tracy knew where he was going—to the punishment-room.

Quelch had left instructions for that room to be prepared, and it was now ready for Tracy. He went up the staircase with his Form-master in silence. His manner was quiet and submissive—but his outward look belied his feelings. He had not given up hope yet—and he was not yet in the punishment-room.

Now that they were in the House, Mr. Quelch's vigilance had relaxed.

In a few minutes more, Tracy would be safely locked in; and in those few minutes, certainly, Quelch was not expecting further trouble. In the corridor leading to the punishment-room Quelch paused for a moment to switch on the passage light.

For that moment his eye was off Gilbert. It was Tracy's first chance—such as it was.

He acted on it, promptly and unexpectedly.

He made a step backwards, and, turning, ran. Mr. Quelch, turning, clutched after him a second too late.

"Tracy!" gasped the Remove master. "Stop!"

Gilbert tore on desperately, and bounded down a back staircase. Mr. Quelch rushed after him. That staircase was dark, and Gilbert was lost to his sight. But the junior was hardly two or three yards ahead, and Quelch was after him like a shot. He rushed down the shadowy stair after him, with outstretched hand to grasp.

Crash! Bump!

For a moment Mr. Quelch hardly knew what was happening. But he knew that he was rolling over, and lumping. He had stumbled over something on the dark stair.

It was Gilbert! With the clutching hand close behind him, Gilbert had crouched on the bottom stair; and Quelch had gone headlong over him, sprawling in the passage at the foot of the staircase.

He sprawled dizzily, spluttering for breath, hardly knowing whether he was on his head or his heels. Leaving him sprawling, Gilbert bounded up and rushed on. Quelch was still prone, gasping wildly, when Gilbert leaped down another stair, and found himself in a lighted passage.

"Hallo! What—" exclaimed Coker of the Fifth, staring.

It was the Fifth Form passage, and several Fifth Form men were there—among them Horace Coker. They all stared at Tracy as he came scudding along.

"Great Pip! That's young Tracy!" gasped Coker. "Here, stop! Do you hear? Stop, you young sweep!"

Coker jumped in Tracy's way to stop him.

Coker's grasp would have stopped the runaway quickly enough had it closed on him. But Coker had no time to grasp. Tracy lowered his head and butted as he rushed into Coker, and Horace went over on his back, gurgling.

Tracy reeled for a moment, and then raced on, leaving the other Fifth Form men staring, and Coker gurgling.

Hardly a second more, and Tracy reached the landing at the lower end of the passage. He cast a hurried glance over the banisters. Below, several persons were to be seen, among them Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, and Monsieur Charpentier. There was no escape down the main staircase.

He turned away, cut across the landing, and ran into the Remove passage. Prep was over in the Remove, and fellows were coming out of the studies.

There was a roar of surprise at the sight of Tracy.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Tracy—"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Tracy, what the thump—"

Gilbert raced on up the passage, unheeding.

The Remove fellows stared at him in a buzz of excitement, but no hand was raised to stop him.

The Bouncer burst into a laugh.

"Hook it, old bean!" he called out.

"Here comes Quelch!"

"I say, you fellows— Oh crikey!"

"You ass, Tracy, stop!" cried out Harry Wharton.

Gilbert tore on to the box-room stair at the upper end of the passage.

Mr. Quelch appeared in sight at the lower end from the landing, panting, with a terrifying expression on his face.

"Stop that boy!" he thundered.

But if the Removites had been disposed to stop Tracy, it was too late. He was scudding up the box-room stair.

Quelch did the passage almost like the cinder path, under the staring eyes of the Remove. He whisked up the box-room stair in his turn, leaving the juniors in a roar of excitement.

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed the Bouncer. "Quelch got him, and brought him back! But he's jolly slippery! What a game!"



"Here's Tracy, you fellows!" said Harry Wharton, peering down into the gloomy, dusky depths of the chalk fissure. "We've found him!" "Get me out of here, you fools!" howled Tracy. "I'll—aytishoo! I'll go back to Greyfriars, if you like! I'll—oogh! I'll go anywhere, to get out of this! Aytishoo, aytishoo!"

"Put it on, old thing," grinned the Bouncer, unheard by Quelch.

And the juniors chuckled.

Quelch was losing no time to cut off Gilbert's escape outside the House. But neither was Gilbert losing time. Having stopped pursuit by locking the box-room door, Gilbert had cut across to the window, and thrown it open.

He clambered out, and dropped on the leads under the window.

Short as was his time at the school, Gilbert knew all about that way out, which was sometimes used by breakers of bounds. From the leads he swung himself down a rain-pipe, and landed, panting, on the earth. The next moment he was running.

Hardly a minute later, Mr. Quelch was out of the House, and three or four Sixth Form prefects, called to his assistance, came out with him. But

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they came too late to snaffle the elusive runaway. Gilbert had already dropped over the Cloister wall, and the October night had swallowed him.

Mr. Quelch's feelings were deep—indeed, their depth could hardly have been plumbed—when he went back into the House, at last, without Gilbert.

Gilbert was gone!

That night there was an empty bed in the Remove dormitory. Somewhere outside the school, heading for parts unknown, was the Remove runaway.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

A Lodging For The Night!

POLICE-CONSTABLE TOZER, of Friardale, flashed his lantern on a figure that sat on the stile in Friardale Lane, and came to a halt.

"Hi!" said Mr. Tozer.

Gilbert Tracy scowled at him.

It was a late hour, and even had the village constable known nothing of recent happenings at Greyfriars School, he would have taken notice at the sight of a Greyfriars boy, a mile from the school, at half-past ten at night.

But, as a matter of fact, Mr. Tozer knew all about Gilbert, and was keeping an eye open for him. The telephone had been at work since Tracy's escape. And intensely irritated as Mr. Quelch was by so much fuss and bother on account of the young rascal, he had little doubt that Gilbert would be rounded up and walked back to the school.

Gilbert, sitting on the stile, was taking a rest, and debating in his mind what he was going to do. It was futile to return to Oakwood Place, even if he could get there, and getting there was improbable. He was not likely to be able to take a train again, at least, anywhere near Greyfriars.

Unprecedented as it was for any fellow to run away from school, he had no doubt that Mr. Quelch would take prompt measures, as, indeed, he had done.

Every railway station within a wide radius would be barred to Gilbert once Quelch had got on the phone. He debated hiring a car at a garage. He had money to pay for it, so far as that went. But it was extremely doubtful whether any garage proprietor would hire out a car to a schoolboy late at night. It would be, in fact, quite obvious that Gilbert was running away from school.

So far, indeed, from taking a train or hiring a car, Gilbert did not care to venture into a town at all, lest a policeman's hand should drop on his shoulder.

So he was rather at a loose end. It might be possible to get a night's lodging in some cottage, on a plea of having lost his way; but that only postponed the difficulty till the morning when the hunt would be up and escape more difficult than ever.

Running away from school, in fact, was not an easy proposition. Having got away, Gilbert was rather in the position of the hapless fish that dropped out of the frying-pan into the fire. Really he did not know what to do, except that his mind was obstinately and savagely made up that he would not go back to Greyfriars, and take his gruel there.

Sitting on the stile and thinking it out, he remembered the village of Pegg, on the other side of the wood, towards the sea. Fishing-boats went out early at Pegg, and he might be able to hire a passage in one, and get landed farther along the coast, or he might be able to hide himself on some coasting vessel in the bay. He was debating that resource when Police-constable Tozer happened.

He scowled blackly at the police force of Friardale.

Mr. Tozer stepped nearer to him, flashing the light on his face.

"You're young Tracy, I s'pose?" said Mr. Tozer, with a stolid grin.

"Find out!" snarled Gilbert.

"You come alonger me," said Mr. Tozer. "I've 'eard from your school-master, I 'ave, you young raskil, you! I'm taking you back to your school."

"You're not, you old fool!" snapped

Gilbert. "Leave me alone, you half-baked clodhopper!"

That really was not the proper way to address the police force. Mr. Tozer gave an expressive grunt, and reached out a large hand to jerk Gilbert off the stile.

Gilbert, at the same moment, lifted his right foot; and, quite unexpectedly to Mr. Tozer, that foot jammed on the official tunic, just over the spot where Mr. Tozer had lately parked his supper.

"Oooh!" gasped the police force of Friardale, as he staggered back.

Mr. Tozer was stout, and was not blessed with a large supply of wind. What little he had, was driven out of him temporarily by that sudden and unexpected lunge from Gilbert's foot.

"Urrghh! You young raskil!" gasped Mr. Tozer. "Gurrghh!"

He rallied, and came at Gilbert again. But Gilbert had slipped down on the inner side of the stile and backed out of reach.

"Will you come alonger me?" gasped Mr. Tozer, glaring at him over the stile.

"No, I won't, you fat old ass!" retorted Gilbert.

Mr. Tozer, breathing hard, started clambering over the stile. Gilbert turned and ran.

He knew that the footpath through the wood led to Pegg Lane, and the fishing village beyond. He ran down the footpath, and behind him came the grunting breath, the flashing lantern, and the heavy pursuing footsteps of Police-constable Tozer.

That jolt on his well-filled tunic, and the fancy names Gilbert had applied to him, had annoyed Mr. Tozer. He felt a very strong desire to get his grip on the young rascal's collar—apart from the prospect of certain coin of the realm coming his way if he marched the runaway back to the school.

Mr. Tozer put on unaccustomed speed. Gilbert glared back over his shoulder at the lantern behind him.

Tozer was not gaining, but he was not far behind. Tracy gritted his teeth as he ran. It would not be much use getting to Pegg with the constable at his heels looking for him. And so long as he kept to the footpath, Tozer would not lose him—and, indeed, would not be long in guessing his destination, even if he did lose him.

Gilbert turned off the footpath into the shadowy wood. Friardale Wood was extensive, and one side stretched down to the cliffs. It was easy enough to elude pursuit among the trees and thickets in the dark.

Mr. Tozer was as well aware of that as Gilbert! He stopped, gasping for breath, at the spot where Tracy had turned off the path.

"Ere, you come back, you young rip!" shouted Mr. Tozer. "You 'ear me! You come back 'ere!"

Gilbert, at a distance in the wood, heard him, but did not heed. He tramped on, plunging through thickets and brambles, bumping into shadowy trunks, stumbling over roots.

"My eye!" gasped Mr. Tozer.

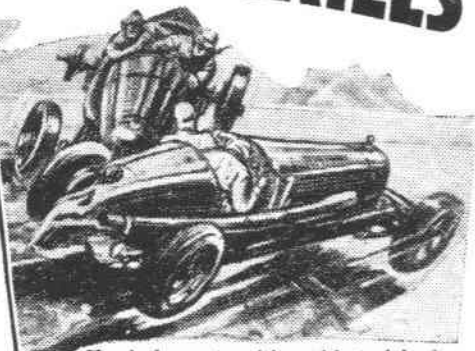
He, too, turned off the path, and tramped into the wood, flashing his lantern to and fro in search of Gilbert. Mr. Tozer was getting excited; and what he lacked in wind he made up in wrath! He tramped and stumbled determinedly after the Greyfriars runaway.

"Hi! Stop!" he roared, as he glimpsed a dodging figure in the shadowy wood, the lantern-light for a moment falling on Tracy.

Tracy vanished into the shadows. "The young rip!" gasped Mr. Tozer. He came to a breathless halt.

Gilbert had vanished; and the light did not pick him up again. Looking for

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THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

On Tracy's Trail!

him further was rather too much like looking for a needle in a stack of hay. And Tozer's wind was giving out.

"You young raskil, will you come back 'ere?" roared Mr. Tozer—without much hope, however, that Gilbert would.

There was no answer; and Mr. Tozer gave it up at last. He tramped back to the footpath, grunting, and back to Friardale Lane, to resume his nocturnal patrol.

Gilbert, from the wood, watched his twinkling light disappear, and grinned. He was done with the village constable now.

But if Mr. Tozer was gone, he had other troubles on hand. He was quite unacquainted with Friardale Wood, and he had no chance whatever of finding his way back to the footpath in the dark. He could only stumble and grope on, in the thickness of the wood, hoping that he would emerge somewhere.

Under the trees it was as black as the inside of a hat. Hoping that he was going in the right direction, Gilbert tramped on.

Suddenly, with a shock, he felt nothing beneath his feet. It seemed as if the solid earth had come to a sudden end.

It had, in a way, for Gilbert had walked over the edge of one of the deep chalk-rifts, of which there were a good many in Friardale Wood. In the daylight, it was easy enough to avoid; in the darkness, it was invisible, and Gilbert, as he stepped over the verge, had no chance of saving himself. He was falling before he knew what was happening!

He gave one startled yell and rolled. Down a steep slope, accompanied by loosened earth and falling stones, he rolled helplessly, till he brought up at the bottom of the rift, fifteen feet down, in a bed of mud moist from recent rains.

Bruised, bumped, breathless, he rolled there, spluttering and gasping. He sat up, smothered with mud, dizzy, and aching.

He scrambled to his feet. Blackness was round him, with here and there a ghostly glimmer of white chalk. He stood panting for breath, and rubbing his bruised limbs for several long minutes before he made an attempt to clamber out.

When, at last, he attempted to clamber up the steep slope down which he had rolled, he made the interesting discovery that it was impossible! His hands and feet slipped back from the wet and slippery chalk.

Twice, thrice, and a fourth time, he made the attempt, scrambling in the darkness, only to roll back and land in the wet mud.

Then he gave it up, exhausted by his efforts, and sat panting.

There was no getting out for Gilbert—not till daylight, at least! As he realised that, the Remove runaway would have been glad to see Police-constable Tozer's lantern glimmering again! Mr. Tozer's grip on his collar would have been better than this! But Mr. Tozer and his lantern were far away—it was past eleven o'clock, and Gilbert had Friardale Wood all to himself!

"Oh!" he gasped. And he shouted for help! Again and again he shouted! But there were no ears to hear; and only the echo of his shouts answered him! He gave it up at last.

In the Remove, when they turned in, the juniors wondered what had become of Gilbert. They little guessed! While they slept peacefully, and Gilbert's bed remained empty, the Remove runaway, like the man in the old song, had his lodging on the cold, cold ground!

"WHARTON!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Kindly remain!"

Harry Wharton kindly remained when the Remove were dismissed in break the following morning!

There had been a vacant place in the Form that morning. Tracy was not there. On the other hand, Mr. Quelch was there, after his absence. They seemed, as the Bounder remarked with a chuckle, to be playing "Box and Cox"—when one was there, the other wasn't!

Quelch's face was grim. No doubt his hard time in the punishment-room had told on him; and it could scarcely improve his temper. But that was not all, as the juniors knew.

It was unheard of for a fellow to run away from school. Tracy had run away! It was a tremendous sensation. In the case of any other fellow, his parents would no doubt have been requested to keep him away, for good. But Tracy was in a peculiar position at Greyfriars.

There could be little doubt that the headmaster would have been relieved to see the last of him. Gilbert had been at other schools, and had contrived to make the headmaster relieved to see the last of him! But Dr. Locke had given the Remove master a free hand in this case. It rested with Quelch! On the other hand, this kind of thing obviously could not continue. Quelch's position was growing very difficult.

Wharton stood at his Form-master's desk, wondering what was wanted.

"I think you may be able to help me, Wharton, in the matter of—of Tracy!" said Mr. Quelch abruptly.

"Yes, sir!" said Harry. He was willing to help, if he could; but he did not quite see how.

"Tracy is, as you know, absent from the school!" said Mr. Quelch. "I have taken certain measures, and I am sure that he has not gone away by train—I have no doubt that he is still in the vicinity. He must be found!"

The Remove master paused. "I have received some information from Mr. Tozer, the constable at Friardale," he added. "Mr. Tozer saw Tracy at a late hour last night, and followed him some distance into Friardale Wood. He was going towards Pegg. I have learned, however, that he has not been seen there. This matter is, of course, very disturbing to the headmaster, and if it continues I do not see how Tracy can remain here."

Quelch's eyes glinted as he said that. If Tracy did not remain there, it was defeat for the Remove master, and victory for the rebel of his Form.

"I could, of course, send the Sixth Form prefects in search of the boy," he went on, "but—but—" He paused a moment or two. "But I desire this unfortunate affair to make as little disturbance in the school as possible. There has been altogether too much excitement and discussion already."

Harry Wharton could quite understand that!

"I have, therefore, thought of asking you to give assistance," said Mr. Quelch. "It is very probable that Tracy is not far away—as likely as not lurking in the wood. He must, I imagine, have passed the night out of doors. This is very serious, Wharton."

"Very, sir," agreed Harry. "For his own sake, if for no other reason, the foolish and reckless boy must be brought back to school," said Mr. Quelch. "If his absence should be prolonged I can scarcely expect the headmaster to allow him to return here

at all. You are aware, Wharton, that I have very strong reasons for desiring to keep him here—for his own sake and for the sake of his father, who is an invalid owing to wounds received in the War. You have, I believe, some knowledge and skill in scouting and woodcraft—"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"I shall give you leave from third school, Wharton, and you may select some of your friends to go with you and make a search for Tracy. I have no doubt that he is skulking out of sight not very far from where Mr. Tozer saw him. If you will oblige me in this—"

"Certainly, sir!" said Harry.

"Then you will have leave from third school, and I shall hope that you will find Tracy, or at least bring me some news of him!" said Mr. Quelch. And with that he dismissed his head boy.

The captain of the Remove joined his friends, who were waiting for him in the quad.

"Anything up?" asked Bob.

Harry Wharton explained.

"We're on!" said Bob at once. "The silly chump ought to be rounded up."

"Yes, rather!" agreed Nugent.

"I dare say we can handle the matter better than the Sixth Form prefects, if you come to that!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"The betterfulness will probably be terrific," grinned Hurro Jamsot Ram Singh.

"And it's maths in third school this morning, too," said Bob. "This is really a little bit of luck."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, I think we ought to do what we can, as Quelch has put it up to us," he said. "If that fool has stayed out of doors for the night, as he seems to have done, he must have found it pretty parky in October without an overcoat on. He's asking to be made a hospital case."

"If he's anywhere around we'll get him," said Bob. "If we spot him he won't get away from us as he did from old Tozer. Ain't we the best Scouts in the Lower School?"

"Hear, hear!"

"I say, you fellows!" Billy Bunter was lending a fat ear to the discussion. "I say, I'll come. I should jolly well like to get out of maths."

"Fathead!"

"Look here, you beast, if you're going to get out of maths why shouldn't I?" demanded Bunter warmly. "You tell Quelch I'm coming, Wharton! You can tell him I'm the best Scout in the Remove—"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Not that we shall find Tracy, of course," said Bunter. "That's all rot! Besides, we don't want to find the cad. The sooner he's kicked out the better, in my opinion! Look what he did yesterday—keeping me hours and hours without my dinner! I'd be glad to see the last of him. I'll tell you fellows what—"

we get out of maths, and Quelch can fancy we're rooting through that putrid wood if he likes—and we'll drop in at Pegg, and have coffee and cakes at the Anchor there! What about that?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at! I think it's a jolly good idea," said Bunter. "I'll stand the feed at the Anchor—you needn't worry about that! You can leave that to me entirely. All you fellows need do, so far as that goes, is to lend me some money, and—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, do stop cackling! I'm expecting a postal order shortly—that will be

all right. You tell Quelch I'm in the party, Wharton."

"You'd better tell him yourself," said Harry, laughing. "You see, old fat man, we're going scouting after Tracy, not guzzling cakes at the Anchor in Pegg. And we can't roll a barrel along and scout at the same time!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter's bright suggestion was not adopted. Coffee and cakes at the Anchor in Pegg might be more agreeable than rooting through damp woodlands; but for reasons quite incomprehensible to Billy Bunter, that was what the Famous Five were going to do.

They went in to change into Scout outfit. When the bell rang for third school the rest of the Remove went into Form, and the Famous Five walked cheerily out of gates—on the trail of Gilbert Tracy.

THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER.

Getting Gilbert!

"HERE!" said Bob Cherry. The Famous Five were picking up "sign."

The woods in October were brown, damp, and windy, banked with fallen leaves, and with falling leaves fluttering continually on the wind. It was not quite so pleasant as scouting on sunny summer days. On the other hand, damp earth and fallen leaves afforded more sign. It was fairly easy for the Remove Scouts to pick up the spot where Tracy had left the footpath the previous night and the heavy tread of Mr. Tozer had followed him.

A light drizzle of rain had been falling that morning. Leafless branches dripped. Every now and then scattering drops of rain came on the wind from the sea. But the Famous Five were hardy and they did not heed the weather.

In such weather, however, it was certain that Tracy must have had a dismal night if he had found no shelter. If they found him the juniors would not have been surprised to find him with a bad cold. For his own sake it was clear that the sooner the reckless and obstinate fellow was found the better.

"Come on!" said Harry.

They left the footpath and tramped into the dripping wood. Rain-drops sprinkled on them, and mud splashed them. For some distance they picked up the extensive tracks of Police-constable Tozer in the damp earth, and here and there a sign of a lighter footprint.

In damp October weather it was not likely that there had been other wanderers in the wood, so there was no doubt that the lighter track was Tracy's.

While the Remove at the school were deep in mathematics the Famous Five arrived at the spot where Mr. Tozer had given it up and turned back. His trail could have been picked up back to Friardale Lane; but it was the other track that they were hunting for.

That was not so easy to find.

Putting themselves in the fugitive's place, they guessed that Tracy would have headed for the footpath again after he had dropped his pursuer. So they tried back towards the footpath. But there was not a spot of sign to be discovered in that quarter.

"Looks like a sell," said Bob Cherry at last.

"Looks as if he never got back to the footpath," said Johnny Bull. "I dare

say he pushed straight on through the wood to Pegg."

"Quelch said that he hasn't been seen there," said Harry. "He's put up somebody to keep an eye open for him, you can be sure of that."

"Might have headed the other way towards the cliffs and got down to the beach," suggested Nugent.

Wharton compressed his lips.

"Might have taken a tumble if he did," he said. "That's not safe after dark—especially for a fellow who's new here and doesn't know the lie of the land. By gum! I shouldn't wonder if the silly owl lost his way in the woods—it must have been as black as a hat at night-time! Any fellow might get lost here after dark."

"Let's try back!" said Bob.

They turned their backs on the footpath again and threaded their way once more among damp trunks and weeping underwoods.

It was about half a mile from the footpath that Bob came to a sudden halt.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Sign, old beans!"

The Scouts gathered to scan the sign. In a heap of damp, fallen leaves was the print of a boot, evidently a boy's boot. It was clearly defined and almost leaped to the eye.

"That's Tracy's hoof!" said Johnny Bull.

"No doubt about that!" agreed Wharton. "We're on the track, anyhow. He was heading towards the cliffs."

"Camped in one of the caves for the night perhaps," suggested Bob. "What a howling ass! I'd rather be in punny at Greyfriars!"

The Scouts pressed on. Trampled brambles a little farther on showed where someone had passed, and they could not doubt that it was Gilbert. Then another footprint was picked up in a patch of mud.

The juniors' faces were serious now. It was fairly clear, by this time, that the Remove runaway had been lost in the wood the previous night and had tramped at random in the darkness. A night out in a damp wood in October was a serious matter. What had become of him and where he was now they could not guess; but if he was still skulking in the wood they did not envy the condition he must be in. They hoped that the sign would lead them towards either Pegg or Friardale and that they would discover that he had obtained a night's shelter somewhere. But it led towards the cliffs.

It failed them at last, and they hunted in vain for more sign. It was getting near time to return to the school for dinner, but the Famous Five were not thinking of dinner. They were not only keen to succeed in their quest, but they were really anxious for Tracy now, fearing that some accident might have happened to him, wandering in the black darkness in the trackless wood.

But the sign had failed, and they were at a loss. They gathered in a group to consult.

Faintly, from a distance, a sound reached their ears through the trees.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Somebody else here!" exclaimed Bob.

"Listen!"

The sound was repeated. It was faint and distant, and they could not make out what it was. But it was a sound, and they pushed on in its

direction, listening intently as they went.

Then it came more loudly and clearly: "Atchooh! Atchooh! Aytishoo!"

It was a sneeze!

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob.

"Hear that?"

"Somebody with a cold!" said Nugent.

"Aytishoo!" came the prolonged sneeze again. "Urrgh! Gurrgh! Atchooh! Aytishoo!"

The Greyfriars Scouts exchanged glances. Someone was sneezing in the wood, quite near to them now. They could see no one through the wet brambles and thickets, but someone was near at hand.

"This way!" said Harry.

He pushed through a mass of clinging brambles, and came to a sudden halt on the verge of a deep, steep chalk-rift.

"Look!" said Bob, pointing.

On the steep verge there were traces of boots! Muddy chalk had been kicked up by feet that had slipped over.

"By gum!" said Johnny Bull. "He went over there—in the dark! And he—"

"Aytishoo!" came clearly.

It came from below.

"And he's still there!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Oh crumbs!"

They knew now that they had found Tracy: Someone had stumbled over that sudden edge in the dark and gone down. The sneezing showed that someone was still there. They could guess now where Tracy had passed the night—at the bottom of that rift, in the heart of the lonely wood.

Evidently he had not been able to climb out. If he had shouted for help after the day dawned, he had not been heard—nobody was likely to come within half a mile of that solitary spot.

"By gum!" repeated Johnny Bull. "Lucky for the silly ass that we came scouting after him!"

"The luckfulness is terrific!"

Harry Wharton dropped on hands and knees and crawled close to the edge and peered down.

The slope of slippery wet chalk led down into a rift at least fourteen feet deep, with pools of rain at the bottom. It was easy enough to slide down, but it was practically impossible to climb up again. Tracy was there—he had been there all the night, and all the morning—there could be no doubt about that now.

"Are you there, Tracy?" called out Harry, peering down into the gloomy, dusky depths of the chalk fissure.

"Aytishoo!" came the sneeze again.

A figure seated on a chalk boulder rose, and a face was turned up to the face staring down.

Tracy blinked up with watery eyes.

Not only had he caught a cold—but he had caught a very severe one. His eyes and nose streamed, and he sneezed and sneezed and sneezed.

"Urrgh! Aytishoo! Gurrgh! Who's that? Help!" he gasped.

"Here he is, you fellows!" said Harry. "We've found him!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Enjoying life, old bean?"

"Atchooh, atchooh, atchooh!" was Tracy's reply.

"The sneezefulness is terrific!" murmured Harree Jamset Ram Singh.

(Continued on page 28.)

Fall In, for an Interesting Walk and a Cheery Talk with—

The GREYFRIARS GUIDE



ALL ROUND GREYFRIARS. Mr. Lazarus' Shop.

(1)

Whenever William Wibley buys
A wig or grease-paints for disguise,
He always goes to where he knows
These articles are vended.
For Mr. Lazarus is sure
To have a wide and varied store.
He'll give a hand at make-up, and
He'll say: "My word! That's
splendid!"

(2)

All kinds of goods he's sure to keep,
They're mostly second-hand and
cheap;
Old jewels, rings, and clocks and things,
Old furniture and china.
His photos of the neighbourhood
As postcards are select and good;
Young Solly's shots of beauty spots
Could really not be finer.

(3)

We like old Mr. Lazarus,
He's always sure to welcome us,
And when we drop into his shop
His greeting's very handsome.
"Walk in and look around, young
gents!"
His stock is perfectly immense.
I fancy, too, 'twixt me and you,
It's worth a prince's ransom!

A WEEKLY BUDGET OF FACT AND FUN

By
THE GREYFRIARS
RHYMESTER

GREYFRIARS GRINS

Mrs. Mimble has been giving away
cakes which were not sold and have
gone stale. Bunter is beseeching fellows
not to buy.

Lord Mauleverer rather thought he'd
like to make a rabbit pie the other day,
but he gave up the idea. I fancy he
couldn't train the rabbit to get out a
pie-dish and jump into it.

Mr. Prout has missed a choice cigar
which he laid out on his study table.
It has now laid Skinner out.

Bunter found a penny this morning.
It must be nice to double your fortune
in a single moment.

Gosling upset a pot of black paint on
Loder the other day, but as he is such a
black sheep it didn't show.

PUZZLE PAR

A farmer's labourer started
work at a wage of £8 a year and
a £4 suit of clothes. He left at
the end of six months. What
wages had he earned?

Answer at foot of col. 2.

The Fifth Form have decided to have
a bonfire on Guy Fawkes night this
year. They already have a guy, of
course.

Dr. Locke has asked for assistance to
construe a difficult passage in a com-
plaint by Gosling that "some young rip
has nicked his snufflers."

RANDOM RIDDLES.—What coin is
doubled by taking away half?—A half-
penny.

Why is a camel bad-tempered?—
Because it has its back up!

What has no feet, but wears boots
and shoes?—A gravel path in the quad.
(It's worn mine out, anyway.)

Why does the hair on a man's head
usually turn grey before his moustache?
—Because it's at least twenty years
older.

What is the difference between a
policeman and his boots?—One is sworn
in, and the other is worn out.



THE MAN WHO KNOWS

All masters are ignorant asses,
They make a contemptible show,
They don't know a thing about classes,
For Coker's quite sure it is so.
And he knows it, you know, don't you
know?

In spite of his master's beseeching
He always spells "fruit" double O;
He doesn't think much of Prout's
teaching,
He thinks his intelligence low.
And he knows it, you know, don't you
know?

At footer the ref's always rotten,
And Coker ignores him, although
He might tell the ref he's forgotten
The rules and had far better go.
And he knows it, you know, don't you
know?

And grammars for him have no terrors,
The dictionaries give him no woe;
He finds they are all full of errors,
And cares not a jot for them—no!
And he knows it, you know, don't you
know!

George Wingate's a popular figure,
His brilliance is really aglow;
But Coker denies it with vigour,
He says he's as dense as a crow,
And he knows it, you know, don't you
know?

For Coker's no fellow to flatter,
It's straight from the shoulder, his
blow!

Whatever the subject or matter
He needs no assistance—for lo,
He knows it, you know, don't you
know?

THE GREYFRIARS ALPHABET

HARRY WHARTON,

the Popular Captain of the Remove.

W is WHARTON, our skipper,
And everyone thinks him a ripper!
He leads the Removites to action,
And generally gives satisfaction.
Though sometimes short-tempered, he's
never



Deceitful; he's honest and clever.
His job isn't easy; it's fearful.
But Wharton is usually cheerful.
He edits the magazine weekly,
And handles that duty uniquely.
He's president of the dramatics,
And leader in all acrobatics.
He has to select the eleven
(And that little job isn't heaven!),
But somehow his jobs are done neatly,
And—well, I admire him completely!

ANSWER to PUZZLE

He earned only £2, as he had already
received a suit of clothes value £4.

The RUNAWAY!

(Continued from page 26.)

"Help!" yelled Tracy. "I've been here all night! I've been aytishoooh! Is that Wharton? Ooooh! Groooh! Gurrgh!"

"Yes, you ass!" answered Wharton. "We've been hunting for you!"

"Gurrgh! Get me out of this!" gasped Tracy. "I've caught a—aytishoooh! I've caught a rotten—groooh! Ooooh!"

"We'll get you out as soon as we can!" said Wharton.

"Not so jolly easy," grunted Johnny Bull. "If we can get down there, we can't get up again!"

"Are you going to—groooh!—leave me here?" howled Gilbert. "Get me out of it, you fools! I'll—aytishoo!—I'll go back to Greyfriars if you like! I'll—oooh!—I'll go anywhere to get out of this! Aytishoo, aytishoo!"

"We'll have to get a rope!" said Harry. "You can cut off to Pegg, Bob, and get a rope, as fast as you can. I'll go down."

"Right-ho!" said Bob.

He started at a run followed by a volcanic outburst of sneezing from the hapless Gilbert.

Harry Wharton slid down the slippery slope, and joined Tracy in the mud at the bottom of the rift. The other three remained at the top. It was wet and muddy, cold and clammy, where Gilbert had passed that awful night. He blinked at the captain of the Remove, with streaming eyes.

"Can't you help me out?" he snarled.

"We shall have to wait for Bob to get back with a rope," answered Harry.

"How long will the silly fool be?"

"He can't get back under half an hour, at least."

Gilbert groaned.

"Half an hour more of this! Oh crikey! Gurrgh! Aytishoooh! Atchoooh-oo-oooooop! I've had a night! Ooooh! Look at me! Aytishoo! Ooooh! I shall be laid up! Urrgh! Got anything about you to eat?"

"Sorry—no!"

"You fool!"

Harry Wharton made no reply to that. Gilbert was in no state to have his nose punched, and there was no other adequate reply to be made.

Gilbert scowled and coughed and snarled and squeezed—and thus happily passed the time till Bob Cherry got back with the rope!

THE TWENTY-SECOND CHAPTER.

The Runaway's Return!

"I SAY, you fellows!" yelled Billy Bunter. "They've got him!"

Dinner was over at Greyfriars, and a crowd of fellows were in the quad. Many eyes turned on the party that arrived at the gates.

"My eye!" said Gosling, staring from his lodge. "My eye! Wot I says is this 'ere—my eye!"

It was rather an unusual-looking party, that entered the school gates! Five Scouts, smothered with mud, looked as if they had had rather a tough time in wet and muddy places. In their midst they supported a fellow who looked as if he had had a tougher and rougher time than all the other five put together.

Gilbert was not only muddy—he was caked with mud and chalk, clothed from head to foot as with a garment. His eyes and nose streamed, and he sneezed and sneezed and sneezed! He was unable to walk—the Famous Five had had to carry him, among them, most of the way to the school. Now he was set on his feet, and with a supporting hand on either arm, he tottered in, under a sea of staring eyes.

The Remove runaway had returned, at last—not in a happy state! But he was glad to get back! Food and warmth were what Gilbert wanted—and wanted badly! Greyfriars, from which he had been so anxious to get away, was a longed-for refuge now. He tottered in, sneezing!

"Got him!" grinned the Bouncer.

"Where did you find him? Looks as if he's had a high old time!" remarked Skinner.

"Had a good time, Tracy?" asked Smitty.

"Aytishoo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on!" said Harry Wharton. "The sooner the blithering idiot is got to bed, the better. Come on, Tracy!"

"Hang you!" snarled Gilbert.

Wharton was supporting him, with a strong arm; and that, doubtless, was Gilbert's way of expressing thanks for assistance!

"Oh, come on!"

The party moved on, towards the House. A buzzing throng accompanied them. Wingate of the Sixth came striding up.

"You kids found Tracy?" he exclaimed. "Tracy! What's the matter with you?"

"Atchooooooh!"

"Wha-a-t!"

"Aytishoo! Aytishoo! Groooh!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Wingate, staring at him.

"He's had a night out in the wood, Wingate!" explained Wharton. "He's caught a spot of cold—"

"More than a spot, I think!" said the Greyfriars captain, with a grin. "Get him in as quick as you can!"

The Famous Five marched the tottering Gilbert on, a buzzing crowd surging round them. The name of Tracy was on every tongue; and it reached the ears of the Remove master in his study.

Mr. Quelch glanced from his study window—with glinting eyes! His faith in the Remove Scouts had not, evidently, been misplaced—they had found Tracy! Mr. Quelch had hardly ventured to hope that they would find him—he had hoped that they would bring him news that would put him on the track. But they had found him—for there he was!

Mr. Quelch turned back to his table and picked up a cane therefrom! It was a specially stout cane, already selected for Gilbert's behoof! Mr. Quelch's grip closed hard on that cane, and his jaw squared.

Came in hand, he stepped out of his study to meet the runaway as he was brought in. First of all, "six" of the very best; then the punishment-room. That was the programme marked out for the Remove runaway! Grimly, Quelch emerged from the doorway as the Remove Scouts reached it.

Then, as his eyes fixed on Gilbert, Quelch's expression changed. The cane, which was in his hand, was slipped under his arm. One glance showed that Gilbert was not in a state for either "six" or the punishment-room! There was, in fact, no need to punish Gilbert! He had found his punishment for himself—and found it bad!

"Tracy!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "What—Wharton, where did you find this boy?"

"In a rift in the wood, sir—he seems to have fallen in, in the dark—"

"Bless my soul! Tracy, have you been out of doors all night?"

"Achoooh! Ooooh!"

"You have caught a severe cold; it appears, Tracy—"

"Aytishoo!"

"Wingate—Gwynne—kindly take charge of that boy! Take him at once to the sanatorium! I will telephone to the doctor!"

"Urrgh! Aytishoo! Ooooh!"

Mr. Quelch hurried in again—to ring up the school doctor. Gilbert was huffed, half-carried, to the school sanatorium between the two prefects, and disappeared from the eyes of the Greyfriars crowd. The Famous Five went in to change—more than ready for a late dinner, when they got it!

Gilbert had been lucky, in a way. There was no "six," and there was no punny for the runaway, after all.

In other respects he was not so lucky. A week in sunny was not an enjoyable experience for any fellow—especially in the throes of a fearfully bad cold.

For a whole week Tracy's place in the Remove was vacant. Certainly, nobody missed him very much! Probably it was a welcome rest for Mr. Quelch.

Probably, too, Mr. Quelch hoped that that experience would be a lesson to Gilbert, and that he would mend his ways when he rejoined his Form. That remained to be seen! Gilbert mended, at last—but whether his ways were mended was quite another matter.

THE END.

(The next yarn in this exciting series is better than ever, chums. Make a note of the title: "TRICKY TRACY!" Owing to the fact that the result of the First Round of our Great Footie Stump Competition will appear in next Saturday's issue of the MAGNET, readers are advised to order their copy early.)

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