

OVER 300 FOOTBALLS WON!

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The Magnet ^{2^D}

*Billy Bunter's
Own Paper*



ALL BUNTER'S FAULT!

HOW MANY "GOALS" HAVE YOU SCORED? FOURTH BIG PRIZE-GIVING THIS WEEK!

250 FREE FOOTBALLS



For Scoring Goals with FOOTER-STAMPS

THIS WEEK'S "FOOTER-STAMPS!"



STOP! This is the end of the November "Footer-Stamps" Competition, and 250 Free Footballs are waiting to be given away to the readers who have not already won a football and who score the most "goals" with "Footer-Stamps" in this the fourth month's competition.

First of all, there are ten more stamps here, depicting six different actions on the football field. Cut them out at once, as there's another complete "goal" among them, and the odd stamps will, no doubt, fit in with others you may have left over from previous weeks (or even previous contests).

TO SCORE A "GOAL," remember you collect a complete set of six stamps (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.)

If you want to score still more "goals" to swell your total, remember that "Footer-Stamps" also appear in such famous papers as *GEM* and *MODERN BOY*.

Now, when you have scored as many complete "goals" as possible with the stamps you have collected, write your total ("goals," NOT separate stamps) on the coupon below. Add your name and address to the coupon also, then cut it out whole and attach your set of goal-scoring stamps only to it. Post in a properly stamped envelope to:

MAGNET, "Footer-Stamps" (November), 1, Tallis House, London, E.C.4 (Comp.), so as to reach there not later than **THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1st, 1938.**

OVERSEAS READERS—you are in this scheme also, and special prizes in cash are to be awarded for the best scores from readers outside the British Isles. In your case, send in as directed above, but note that the closing date is extended to **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1st, 1939.**

RULES: 250 Footballs will be awarded in the November contest to the 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—and all claims for prizes to be made on the proper coupon (given this 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*, *Sports Budget*, *Detective Weekly*, *Thriller*, *Wild West Weekly*, *Champion*, and *Triumph*.)

.....The MAGNET.....

"Footer-Stamps" (November)

Write in bold figures the number of "goals" you have scored with "Footer-Stamps" and attach your sets of goal-scoring stamps to this coupon.



I agree to accept the Editor's decision as final and binding.

Name

Address

N.B.—No responsibility taken for incorrect totals.

LAST DATE FOR CLAIMS, THURSDAY, THE FIRST—NO ENTRY FEE!

"HE'S THE WORST BOY IN THE SCHOOL!" That's what they say at Greyfriars about Gilbert Tracy. But Harry Wharton & Co. are making a mistake. . . . for it's Tracy who saves another schoolfellow who is sorely up against it!

TRACY TAKES *the* BLAME!



By
**FRANK
RICHARDS**

"Cut! Quick!" cried Tracy, racing up breathlessly. "You meddling fool!" exclaimed Hazeldene shrilly. "What are you butting in for?" "You dummy!" panted Tracy. "Quelch! He's coming!"

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Slippery!

"**M**AN down!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, of the Greyfriars Remove.

"Go it, Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bump!

It was Billy Bunter's fault.

Bunter had dropped a banana-skin! All that Horace Coker did was to tread on it inadvertently!

When Billy Bunter was the happy possessor of a banana, his whole and sole attention was devoted to the edible portion thereof. The skin, being inedible, Bunter would chuck away, regardless of the danger to traffic.

Thus it happened in break that windy November morning! Billy Bunter, masticating a banana, rolled on his way, leaving the skin behind him. Coker of the Fifth, coming out of the House, stepped on the skin—and immediately turned himself into a very good imitation of a catherine-wheel.

Coker was a little off his guard at the moment, or he might have observed that banana-skin in time. He was reading a letter as he came along—which was careless of Coker. But the letter was from his Aunt Judy, and it had contained the handsome tip of a five-pound note, which Horace had just taken out. With a fiver in one hand, and a letter in the other, perusing as he walked, Coker strode on regardless—till he stepped on that banana-skin! His next performance was extremely entertaining to all the fellows in the quad.

Harry Wharton & Co. of the Remove gazed at him with great interest. So did about twenty or thirty other fellows. Some of them shouted encouragement to Coker of the Fifth, as if they fancied that he was doing this specially for their entertainment.

"Go it, Coker!"

"Do that again, Coker!"

Coker did not do it again! Once was enough for him! For some moments Coker hardly knew what was happening. It seemed to him as if the solid globe on which he dwelt had suddenly slipped away from beneath him, leaving him whirling in space.

Another Record - Breaking School-Adventure Yarn of HARRY WHARTON & CO., of GREYFRIARS.

But when he finished whirling, he found that the solid globe was still there, and it felt very solid indeed as he sat on it. He sat hard.

"Oooogh!" gasped Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Fine!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Do it again, old man!"

"Wooogh!" gasped Coker.

He sat and gasped and blinked. He did not notice, in the confusion of the moment, that his hands were now empty. He had thrown them out wildly

as he went, clutching at space, and both the five-pound note and the letter had whirled off on the winter wind. The letter being the heavier of the two, dropped to the ground, and stayed there. The banknote whirled like a snowflake on the wind, and vanished into space—unnoticed by its owner. Coker was not thinking at the moment of a banknote, but of a bunip, hard and heavy, on the too solid globe!

"Gooogh!" gurgled Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cheeky fags!" spluttered Coker. "What are you singgering at? I—I slipped on something!"

"The slipfulness was terrific!" grinned Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Won't you do it again, Coker?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Oh, do!" implored Frank Nugent. "You really don't know how funny you are, Coker!"

"I—I slipped on something!" gasped Coker. He stared round to see what he had slipped on. As he was sitting on the banana-skin, he did not see it. "If you cheeky fags don't stop sniggering, I'll—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker heaved himself up. He was bumped, he was breathless, and a little dizzy. However, he heaved himself up—unfortunately treading again on the banana-skin as he gained his feet.

Then Coker, quite unexpectedly and unintentionally, did it again, as many voices had requested!

His foot slipped, his long legs whirled, and Coker sat down, for the second time

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smiting the Greyfriars quadrangle with his burly person.

Bump!

"Good man!"

"Hurrah!"

"Go it, Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh!" spluttered the dizzy Horace.

"Ow! Oh! Ah! Oh crikey! Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a whole mob of fellows round Coker now, all laughing. Coker was the only fellow who was not laughing—not seeing anything funny in this. Coker was red with wrath.

Once more he heaved himself to his feet! This time he was more careful, and avoided that banana-skin—rather to the disappointment of his audience. They would have been quite pleased to see Coker do it for a third time!

Coker, with deep feelings, kicked the banana-skin off the path. Then he glared at the Famous Five, as if disposed to kick them off the path after the banana-skin! Then, fortunately—more fortunately for himself than for the five—he noted the fact that his hands were empty, and remembered the letter and the banknote.

"Oh!" he gasped. "My letter—my fiver—you cackling duffers, I've dropped a letter—and a banknote—a fiver—"

"Here's your letter, old bean!" said Harry Wharton. He picked it up and handed it to Coker. "If the fiver's in it, it's all right."

"It wasn't in it, you young ass! I had it in my other hand!" exclaimed Coker. "Look for it, some of you!"

Several fellows had seen the letter fall, but nobody had noticed a light, flimsy slip of paper whirling away on the wind. There was quite a strong wind from the sea that winter morning—some fellows had to hold their caps on as they crossed the quad! If a banknote had blown away on that wind, it looked as if Horace Coker had a lengthy task before him to run it down to its lair.

Coker stared about him. So did a crowd of fellows! Nobody saw the banknote. Nobody, really, was likely to see it in a hurry.

"Can't you see it, some of you?" howled Coker.

"Blessed if I can," said Harry Wharton. "Might be anywhere—"

"Well, look for it!" snapped Coker.

"What?"

"All you fags look for it! Get a move on!"

The Famous Five gazed at Coker. As a matter of fact, they would willingly have helped Horace look for his banknote if politely requested so to do. But if Horace Coker fancied that he could give orders to Remove fellows, the first and most important consideration was to make Horace Coker understand that he had another guess coming!

"Do you hear me?" hooted Coker.

"Sort of!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Say please!"

"What—"

"Say please pretty—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker of the Fifth did not say "please pretty." He was in no mood to say please pretty, or anything like it! Two bumps on the quad, and the blowing away of a five-pound note had annoyed Coker. Instead of saying please, or please pretty, Coker made a stride at Bob Cherry, and smacked!

"Wow!" roared Bob.

Coker got in one smack—he had no time for more! A split second later, five pairs of hands grasped Coker, and for the third time he sat down on the quad—hard! He sat and roared: and

the Famous Five, grinning cheerfully, strolled away, and left him to sit and roar.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Run Down!

"SEEN Tracy?"

"He, he, he!"

Harry Wharton asked the question. Billy Bunter contributed the giggle! Bunter seemed amused.

It was rather unusual for the captain of the Remove to inquire after Tracy, the new fellow in the Form. Generally he avoided him, as much as he could avoid a fellow who shared the same study. Ever since Gilbert Tracy had come to Greyfriars at the beginning of the term he had been on the worst of terms with Harry Wharton and his chums, and with most other fellows in the Remove.

But on this particular afternoon, the captain of the Remove wanted him, and was looking for him; and failing to find him, inquired of Billy Bunter if he had seen him—eliciting a fat giggle from the Owl of the Remove.

"What are you sniggering at, you fat ass?" inquired Harry Wharton politely. "I asked you if you'd seen Tracy."

"Does Quelch want him?" grinned Bunter. "Is he up for another row with the beak?"

"No, ass! I want him!"

"Fight?" asked Bunter, with interest.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"No, fathead—football!"

"Oh! I dare say he wouldn't have gone out if he'd known that!" said the fat Owl. "He's keen on footer—nearly as keen as he is on ragging Quelch, and backing gee-gees! He, he, he!"

"Has he gone out?" grunted the captain of the Remove.

It was a half-holiday that afternoon, and the Remove fellows had arranged a pick-up game. And Wharton, after a rather dubious consultation with his chums, had decided to give Gilbert Tracy a chance in the pick-up.

Gilbert was a "bad egg." He had been barred from Remove Soccer for foul play. He had been sent to Coventry by his Form for one unscrupulous trick after another. He was in his Form-master's blackest books; he was unpopular with the juniors; he had been an outcast at Greyfriars. He was regarded as so thoroughly bad an egg that one decent action on his part evoked general surprise.

Nevertheless, Gilbert, the bad hat, the bad egg, the rebel and mutineer, the study-smoker and backer of gee-gees, had played up decently for once, at least; and Harry Wharton & Co. had resolved to put him in the pick-up and see how it turned out.

Unfortunately, while he had been consulting with the Co. on the subject, Gilbert Tracy seemed to have cleared off for the afternoon.

"Half an hour ago!" said Bunter cheerfully. "I saw him! He, he, he! I know where he's gone! He often goes on a Saturday afternoon! He, he, he!"

"Well, if you know where he's gone, fathead, I can cut after him on a bike," said Harry. "Where has he gone?"

That question seemed to entertain Billy Bunter more than ever. He cachinnated spasmodically, and the captain of the Remove stared at him in irritated surprise.

"Where has he gone, you gurgling gargyle, if you know?" demanded Wharton.

"He, he, he!" exploded Bunter.

"You won't want to go after him where he's gone, old bean! Suppose Quelch spotted you?"

"What the thump—"

"He might!" grinned Bunter. "Quelch is going out this afternoon, and he might go by the towpath. He, he, he!"

"Has Tracy gone up the towpath?"

"He, he, he! Don't you go after him!" giggled Bunter. "Tracy would be whopped for going to the Three Fishers—but any other chap would be sacked! Tracy won't be sacked, because he wants to get away from the school, and Quelch won't let him. But you—"

Harry Wharton's brow darkened.

"How do you know Tracy's gone to that den, you fat chump?" he asked.

"Well, I heard him tell Skinner, and I saw him start. He, he, he! I say, are you going after him to root him out of a pub, old chap?" And Billy Bunter chortled at the idea.

Harry Wharton did not answer that question. He walked away with a frowning brow.

He had no doubt that Bunter's information was correct—this was quite in keeping with Gilbert's shady manners and customs. He was strongly inclined to let the matter drop, and leave the young rascal to go his own rotten way. He walked away towards the changing-room, where the Remove footballers were gathering.

But he paused, and changed his direction for the bike-shed.

Gilbert must have gone on foot—he had sold his bike earlier in the term to raise money for some of his dismal sporting transactions. It was quite likely that he could be run down, on a bicycle, before he reached his destination.

Wharton wheeled out his bike.

It was in a doubtful frame of mind that he started. It was quite likely that if he succeeded in overtaking the bad hat of the Remove he would be met by sneering hostility. But having resolved to give Gilbert a chance, he was not going to depart from that resolve if he could help it. The fellow had done him many bad turns—but he had done him one good one, unexpectedly and surprisingly. There was a spot of decency in him somewhere. And Marjorie Hazeldene, of Cliff House School, seemed to think rather well of him—and Wharton had a lot of respect for Marjorie's judgment. So, rather against his inclinations, he determined to do what he could.

His bike fairly whizzed along the towpath.

A red chimney over the leafless trees showed that he was quite near that delectable resort, the Three Fishers, when he sighted a figure lounging ahead on the towpath.

It was Gilbert Tracy.

He was lounging along with his hands in his pockets and a cigarette in his mouth.

At that distance from the school, perhaps, Gilbert considered it safe to smoke in public without being spotted by masters or prefects! More likely, he did not care! Rows came Gilbert's way too frequently for him to care much about one more! A fellow who had a feud with his Form-master, and had set out deliberately to make the school authorities tired of keeping him at the school, had to expect a good many rows—and Gilbert had certainly had a full share.

Wharton buzzed his bell as he sighted Tracy.

Gilbert glanced round over his shoulder. He stared at the captain of

the Remove, and then walked on, unregarding.

"Hold on!" called out Harry.

Tracy heard, but did not heed. He walked on without looking round again. The gate of the Three Fishers, which opened on the towpath, was in sight ahead, and Gilbert was heading directly for that gate.

"Stop, you ass!" shouted Harry.

He put on speed. But Gilbert, unheeding, reached the gate and put his hand on it to open it.

In another moment he would have been inside, and Harry Wharton, most certainly, would not have followed him into those disreputable precincts. He drove at the pedals, and the bike shot on, the front wheel banged on Gilbert's legs, and the bad hat of the Remove rolled over on the towpath, yelling.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Soccer For Gilbert!

"OW!" yelled Gilbert.

"Oh!" gasped Wharton.

The bike rocked wildly, and he jumped off, tottering and sitting down in the damp grass, the bike pitching over. He sat and gasped, and Gilbert rolled and yelled.

Wharton was first on his feet. He scrambled up breathlessly and picked up his jigger. He stood and panted, between Gilbert and the gate, as Tracy, in his turn, scrambled up.

Tracy's face was red with rage.

"You cheeky fool!" he bellowed. "What the thump do you mean by running me down like that?"

"Sorry!" gasped Harry. "I had to stop you—"

"And what did you want to stop me for, you meddling fool?" howled Gilbert. "Is it any business of yours?"

"Yes! You see—"

"Get out of my way!" Gilbert Tracy clenched his hands and advanced on the captain of the Remove, his eyes glittering. "By gum, if you don't get aside, I'll knock you out of my way! Stand aside, you meddling dummy!"

More than once that term Gilbert had come to blows with the captain of his Form, and on every occasion he had had the worst of it. But in his rage he had forgotten that, and he came at Wharton with blazing eyes and clenched fists.

So far as he could see, Harry Wharton had taken it upon himself to prevent him from going out of bounds—using extremely drastic measures for that purpose. The bad egg of the Remove fairly boiled with rage at the idea.

"Hold on, you fathead!" exclaimed Harry hastily. "I came—"

"Get aside!" roared Gilbert.

"I tell you—" exclaimed Harry impatiently.

"I'm going in there! You're not going to stop me! I'll—"

"Will you listen to me?"

"No, I won't! I'll shift you!"

Harry Wharton let the bike run against the fence as Gilbert rushed at him. He put up his hands promptly.

Gilbert came on, hitting out savagely, and twice his knuckles came home on Wharton's face. Then a drive on the chest sent Gilbert staggering across the towpath, and he went down heavily in the grass.

He was up again in a moment and rushing to the attack.

Harry Wharton, with his hands up in defence, backed away; but as Gilbert came furiously on, he grasped him and, exerting all his strength, pinned Gilbert's arms down to his sides.

Tracy struggled and wrenched, in vain.

"Will you let go?" he howled.

"Will you keep quiet, you dummy?" panted Wharton. "I want to speak to you, you howling chump—"

"Shut up, and mind your own business! Do you think I want any sermons from you?" snarled Tracy.

"Let go, you rotter!"

"I came after you—"

"Like your cheek!"

"—to tell you—"

"Oh, shut up!"

"That we're playing a pick-up this afternoon—"

"Let go!"

"And that there's a place for you, if you want it—"

"Oh!" gasped Gilbert.

"Now do you understand, you ill-tempered fool?" snapped the captain of the Remove, and he released Gilbert.

"Now, if you want to go into that den, go in, and be blowed to you. Do you think I care what you do, you silly fathead?"

Gilbert stood staring at him.

He was ruffled, and ruffled, and breathless, and he had some aches and pains from the collision with the bike. But his expression changed as he understood.

"Oh!" he said. "You want me for football?"

"No, I don't!" snapped Wharton. "You can join up if you like. If you prefer billiards, or banker, with some frowsy loafer in a pub, please yourself."

Gilbert grinned.

"You couldn't expect me to guess that that was what you wanted, could you?" he asked. "You've barred me from the footer, up till now. Why have you changed your mind all of a sudden?"

"You were barred from the footer for a jolly good reason, as you know as well as I do! Foul play—"

"Oh, I know all that," sneered Gilbert. "But that's just where it was, isn't it?"

Harry Wharton calmed himself.

"We're giving you a chance, if you care to take it," he said. "You can take it or leave it."

"And you took the trouble to come after me, to tell me that?" asked Tracy, staring at the captain of the Remove.

"Yes. Please yourself!"

Harry Wharton turned to his bike again. He more than half regretted, by that time, that he had followed Tracy at all. He put a leg over his machine, Tracy still watching him curiously, without stirring.

"Well, are you coming back, or not?" he asked gruffly.

"If you mean it—"

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

Gilbert laughed.

"I'm coming! Not much fun at the Three Fishers, now that my uncle keeps me down to half-a-crown a week pocket-money!" he said. "But, whether you like it or not, I'd rather play footer than billiards or banker. Think I'd have come along to that putrid den if I'd known I could join up for football?"

Harry Wharton's face cleared.

"Come on, then," he said, quite cordially. "Look here, I can give you a lift, if you can stand on the foot rests. The fellows will be waiting."

"Sorry I punched you," grinned Gilbert. "You see, I never caught on, and—"

"That's all right! I'm glad you're coming," said Harry. "Jump on!"

Gilbert stood on the foot-rests, holding to his shoulders, as he pedalled back down the towpath. Harry Wharton, glad, after all, that he had followed the

"bad hat," put on speed back to the school.

He wheeled the bike in quite cheerfully, and they walked together to the changing-room.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry, as they arrived. "Waiting for you, old bean."

"Here we are!" answered Harry.

He went in with Tracy.

"Tracy in?" asked Herbert Vernon-Smith.

The Bounder was captaining one side in the pick-up.

"Yes; you can have him, if you like."

"Keep him!" said Smithy dryly.

"He's let me down once. I've no use for him. Don't have any accidents in this game, Tracy, if you're playing. If you crock any man here, as you did Hobson, you'll get crocked yourself. That's a tip!"

Gilbert flushed crimson.

"Oh, wash all that out!" said Harry Wharton hastily. "Give a man a chance!"

"This is the first time I've heard you say so," sneered the Bounder. "Changed your mind about the fellow?"

"When Wharton says turn, we all turn!" remarked Skinner.

"Oh, shut up, Skinner!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Let's get going! You fellows get changed. We're waiting."

The Famous Five had made up their minds to give Tracy a chance, but the other fellows seemed far from enthusiastic about it. A fellow who had played foul in one match and let down his side in another could hardly expect a warm welcome among footballers. However, apart from a few sarcastic remarks, no objection was raised, and Gilbert changed for football.

Wharton, as he changed, looked round, in quest of a fellow who was not there.

"Where's Hazel?" he asked.

"Hazel hasn't turned up," answered Bob. "I think he's gone to see his sister, at Cliff House; he was saying something about it—"

"Oh, all right!"

The footballers went down to the field—minus Hazeldene.

Gilbert's face was clouded; there was no doubt that he felt his unpopularity in the changing-room. But it cleared when he lined up with Wharton's team in the field. For the next hour and a half, at all events, Gilbert was enjoying life at Greyfriars—which was rather a new experience for the outcast of the school.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Whose Cap?

MR. QUELCH, the master of the Remove, gave a little start.

He came to a halt, his eyes fixed on a Greyfriars cap—on an unseen head.

Quelch, as Billy Bunter had surmised, had taken his way by the towpath on his walk that afternoon. Coming along by the gate of the Three Fishers, he glanced at that unsavoury establishment with disfavour. He was startled to see a school cap of Greyfriars showing over the gate.

He stood and gazed at it.

Leaning on the gate inside, with his back to the towpath, was a man in a bowler hat, smoking a cigar. Quelch had a good view of him—if he wanted one! He had seen the man before. His name was Smith, called by his pals "Soapy," and he looked what he was, a disreputable racing man.

In Mr. Soapy Smith, Quelch had no

interest whatever. But he had a very keen interest in the schoolboy who, on the inner side of that forbidden gate, was evidently in conversation with him.

Obviously, it was a junior boy; a senior's head would have shown over the gate. Only the cap was visible—with a glimpse of dark hair, the face being below the level of the gate-top.

Probably the fellow, whoever he was, fancied that he was safely out of sight within the gate, unaware that his cap showed to a keen eye on the towpath.

At Greyfriars there were almost innumerable juniors; and that young rascal might have been in the Fourth Form, or the Shell, or in Mr. Quelch's own Form, the Remove. The sight of any Greyfriars boy in such precincts would, of course, have made Mr. Quelch sit up and take notice; but he was more especially interested in boys of his own Form. And he had a strong suspicion that that cap was on the head of a Remove boy—and that that Remove boy's name was Gilbert Tracy!

There were other fellows in the Remove on whom Quelch had a dubious eye. He did not trust Smithy, or Skinner, or Snoop. But in the case of Tracy it was not a matter of distrust; it was a matter of certainty. He knew exactly what a young rascal Gilbert was—he could not fail to know.

It was chiefly because Gilbert had got mixed up with racing men that his over-indulgent uncle, Sir Giles Oakwood, had decided finally that he had to be sent away to school, whether he liked it or not. Old Sir Giles could not manage him. His father, an invalid, owing to the breaking out of old wounds received in the War, was unable to deal with him, and Quelch had undertaken to do so, and to bring up Gilbert in the way he should go, with as stern a hand as might be required.

Whether Greyfriars had done Gilbert much good, so far, Quelch was doubtful. But there was one thing about which Quelch was not doubtful—whenever Gilbert kicked over the traces, Gilbert was going to get it hot and strong! Quelch was prepared, if necessary, to wear out his whole supply of canes in getting on with that good work!

Only too well did he know Gilbert's ways. He had caught the young rascal once, in his own study, phoning to a racing man. He had insisted that old Sir Giles should cut short his supply of cash, as one means of keeping him out of vicious ways. He kept an eye on Gilbert's comings and goings on half-holidays; and this very afternoon he had learned that Gilbert had gone out of gates in the direction of the river.

And so, though he could see little of the head across the gate except the cap on it, Quelch had very slight doubts that it was Gilbert. And if it was Gilbert, Gilbert was going to be sorry that he had stepped on the wrong side of that gate.

Quelch stood where he was, his gimlet eyes fixed. To approach was to give the alarm, when the young rascal would cut off across the grounds of the riverside inn, and probably escape unrecognised.

Quelch waited for him to emerge on the towpath, and doubtless he was going to when he had finished his talk with the lounging racing man. Then identification would be certain.

But, as it happened, Mr. Soapy Smith moved, to knock off the ash of his cigar on the top of the gate, and in doing so he sighted the Greyfriars master at a little distance on the towpath.

Soapy gave quite a jump as he met his gimlet eyes! Then he spoke hastily

to the schoolboy at his side. Quelch, immediately striding forward as soon as he was aware that he had been seen, heard his words:

"Ook it, sharp!"

The school cap instantly vanished.

Mr. Quelch ran to the gate. Quelch did not often run; generally his motions were leisurely and majestic; but on this occasion he fairly sprinted. He was not going to allow that young rascal to escape unrecognised if he could help it.

He reached the gate and glared over.

But the schoolboy, quick to take the alarm, had already cut into a weedy, untidy shrubbery by the path within and disappeared. Quelch could see stirring branches, showing the way he had gone; but he could see nothing of the Greyfriars junior.

He breathed hard.

Mr. Smith, with an impudent grin, gave him a nod.

"'Afternoon, sir!" he said affably. "Coming in, sir? I'll open the gate if you're coming in."

Henry Samuel Quelch gave Soapy Smith a look that ought to have withered him on the spot. A respectable, middle-aged schoolmaster was not likely to enter the precincts of the most disreputable public-house in the district—as the impudent Soapy was, of course, well aware.

"Do not be impertinent, my man!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "I saw a Greyfriars boy here—a boy belonging to the school of which I am a master."

"Your mistake, sir!" said Soapy, shaking his head. "There ain't no schoolboy 'ere as I knows on."

"I demand to know the name at once!"

"Ain't I said that there wasn't no schoolboy 'ere, sir?" answered Soapy stolidly. "If there was, I ain't seed 'im!"

"You were speaking with him!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, that lad!" said Soapy affably. "That wasn't no schoolboy, sir—that was the potboy 'ere!"

"How dare you tell me such falsehoods?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "I saw his cap—a Greyfriars school cap."

"Caps is much alike, sir! You're making a mistake! No young feller from your school would be allowed in 'ere!" said Soapy, shaking his head.

Mr. Quelch gave him another look—more withering than before, though it seemed to produce no withering effects on Soapy! Turning away from the gate, the Remove master walked down the towpath without another word—and Soapy winked at the back of his head as he went.

There was no truth to be extracted from Soapy Smith; Mr. Quelch realised that at once. The schoolboy had escaped unseen—and no doubt was already getting out of those forbidden precincts by another exit on the other side—on Oak Lane or the Courtfield road. Mr. Quelch's long legs were whisking rapidly—he was going to get back before that young rascal could get in.

Proof there was none—seldom or never was there any proof, in regard to Gilbert's many delinquencies. There had been no proof when he had ragged Quelch's study, and when he had poured ink into his Form-master's desk in the Form-room, though Quelch knew perfectly well that he had done these things!

There had been no proof when he had burned Harry Wharton's lines and landed the head boy of the Remove in a terrific row; but on that occasion Gilbert, for some inexplicable reason of

his own, had owned up and saved Harry Wharton from very serious trouble; otherwise he never would have been found out. Only too well did Mr. Quelch know his cleverness in covering up his tracks.

But this time he was not going to escape—for Quelch was going to question him and make him account for every minute of his time, since he had walked out of the school that afternoon—and if Gilbert failed to give satisfaction, Gilbert was not going to have the benefit of any doubt! Gilbert was going to have six of the very best, laid on as if Quelch were beating carpet! Mr. Quelch reached the school rather breathless—and in his grimmest mood!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Hazel In A Hurry!

"OOOOOOOOH!" gasped Bessie Bunter.

Her bike wobbled.

Miss Elizabeth Bunter was startled.

Really, it was enough to startle anyone.

Three schoolgirls, of Cliff House School, were riding down from Oak Lane, on the border of Courtfield Common. They were riding slowly.

Marjorie Hazeldene and Clara Trevlyn would have been glad to put on a little more speed. But Bessie Bunter made the pace; and Bessie Bunter's progress was, like that of her brother Billy, somewhat on the lines of that of an old and fatigued snail. Every now and then Clara, who was not quite so patient as Marjorie, urged Miss Bunter to buck up, get a move on, go it, or put some beef into it!

Bessie, unheeding those exhortations, continued to progress snail-like, till suddenly she squeaked, wobbled, and nearly fell off.

One side of the lane was bordered by a high fence, which enclosed a part of the rambling grounds of the Three Fishers Inn. Over that fence a figure suddenly swung, and thudded down into the grass, panting. Which, naturally, startled the three schoolgirls, and made Bessie wobble and gasp and squeak.

"Ooooh!" came from Bessie Bunter. "I say—Ooooooh! Who—what—I say—Ooooh!"

Marjorie caught her plump arm and steadied her just in time. Bessie jumped down, and Marjorie and Clara dismounted.

The fellow who had dropped so suddenly over the fence stood leaning against it, panting. Evidently he had been running before he reached that fence from within, and was out of breath. He stared, as he panted, at the three schoolgirls, and uttered a sudden exclamation.

"Oh, Marjorie!"

"Hazel!" exclaimed Marjorie, startled, as she recognised him.

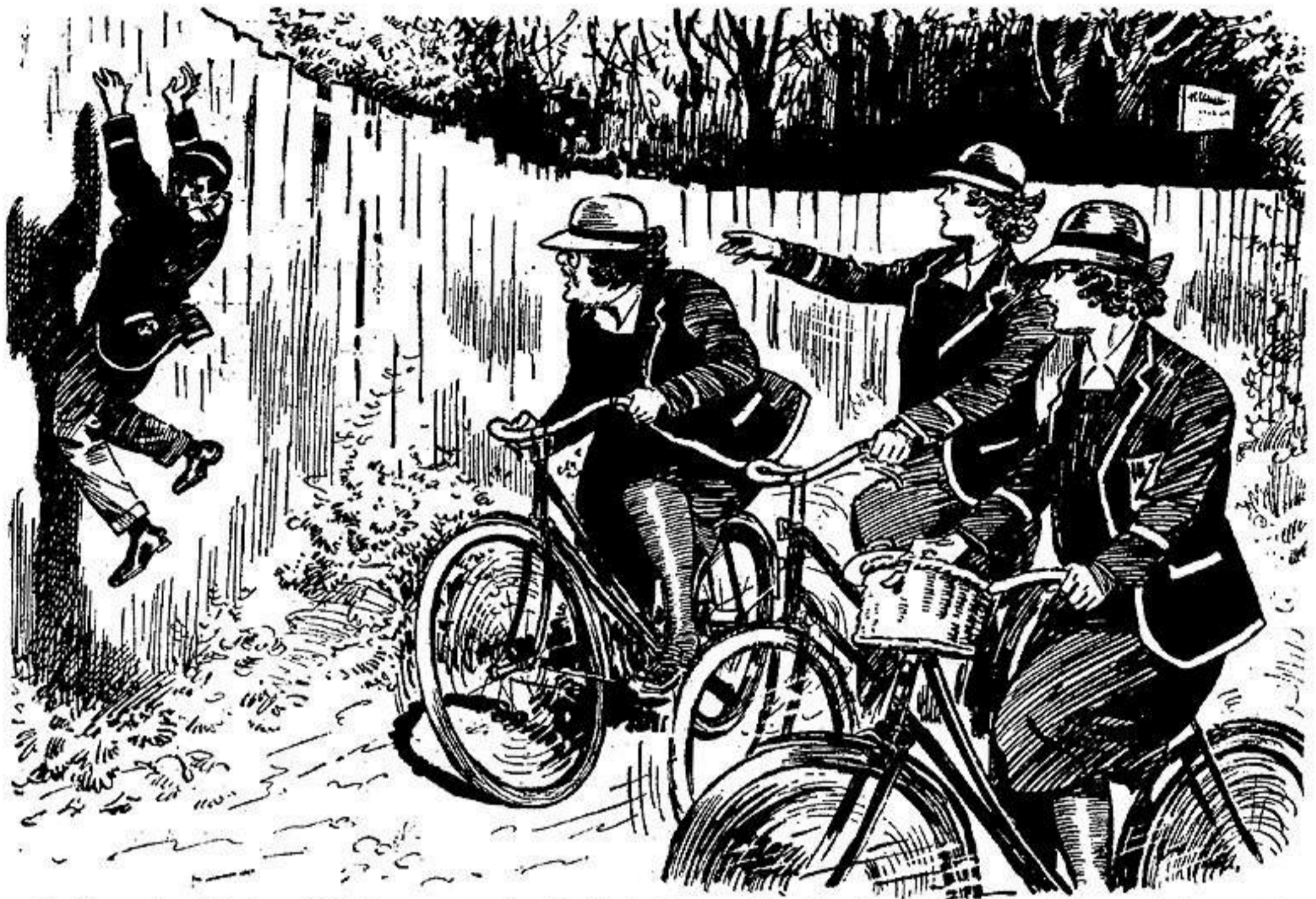
It was her brother, Hazeldene of the Greyfriars Remove.

Bessie gave him an accusing blink through her big spectacles. Clara Trevlyn gave him a sarcastic glance. Marjorie crimsoned. She knew what establishment was enclosed by that fence—and knew that her brother had been out of bounds.

"You nearly made me fall over!" squeaked Bessie indignantly. "What did you jump over that fence for, like a jack-in-the-box?"

Hazel did not heed her. His face reddened as he caught Clara's look and saw his sister's face cloud over.

"I've got a good mind to smack your



The three schoolgirls from Cliff House were naturally startled to see a Greyfriars junior suddenly swing over the fence and drop to the ground, panting. "Oooch!" gasped Bessie Bunter. "I say—oooooch! Who—what—I say—oob!"

face!" continued the indignant Bessie. "Playing silly tricks on girls! Yah!"

"Hazel was in a hurry!" said Miss Clara satirically. "Perhaps there's a Greyfriars prefect about."

Marjorie gave her friend a reproachful look. Clara gave a sniff! She was very fond of Marjorie, but she had very little use for Marjorie's brother.

"I—I say—" Hazel stammered confusedly. "I say, you needn't look like that, Marjorie! I've only been in that show to speak to a man—I had to speak to him about—about something—"

"What's the odds on the two-thirty at Wapshot?" asked Miss Clara, still in a satirical vein.

"Don't, Clara!" said Marjorie quietly. "We had better get on—"

"Hold on a minute!" gasped Hazel. "I say, lend me your bike, Marjorie—"

"What?"

"I say, I—I'm in a hurry!" Hazel's face was crimson, his manner uneasy and apprehensive. "I can ride your jigger! For goodness' sake, lend it to me to get back to the school—"

"But—"

"I've got no time to lose! I—I—I believe I was—was seen!" panted Hazel. "Look here, I'll leave your bike in the coppice near the school gates, if you'll lend it to me. For goodness' sake let me have it, Marjorie—I shall get into a fearful row if I'm not back—"

"Serve you right!" said Miss Clara. "Be quiet, Clara dear!" murmured Marjorie.

She pushed her bicycle over to her brother at once.

Hazel grasped it eagerly. A girl's bike—any bike—was a windfall to him at that moment.

"You've been out of bounds!" said

Bessie Bunter, that circumstance dawning on her plump brain. "You ought to be whipped!"

"Be quiet, Bessie!"

"Shan't!" said Bessie. "Don't lend him your bike, Marjorie! Do you want to get mixed up in it? Suppose they found out that you lent him your bike when he was getting away from a pub—"

"Do be quiet!"

"I'd rather smack his face than lend him my bike!" declared Miss Bunter. "He nearly made me fall, jumping over the fence suddenly like that—"

Hazel, unheeding Miss Elizabeth Bunter, jumped on Marjorie's bicycle and shot away.

Marjorie stood watching him as he went, with a clouded and troubled face. It was only too clear that the weak and wayward fellow was landing himself in trouble again, as he had often done before; and this time it looked as if he had had a narrow escape.

He was out of sight in a few moments, going all out for Greyfriars.

Miss Clara gave a very audible sniff.

"Now we're to walk, I suppose!" she said. "It's a mile to that coppice where he's going to leave your jigger, Marjorie!"

"I'm not going to walk a mile!" said Bessie Bunter promptly and positively. "If you're silly enough to lend your bike, Marjorie—"

"No, no, both of you ride on—I will walk!" said Marjorie hastily.

"Rot!" said Clara.

"I'm going to!" said Bessie.

And she did!

Marjorie walked by Clara's side as Clara wheeled her machine. It was a silent walk. Marjorie's thoughts were troubled and painful, and Clara, with heroic efforts, refrained from telling her what she thought of her brother. Only

every now and then she gave a sniff, indicative of what she thought. And she did not in the least share Marjorie's hope that Hazel would get in at Greyfriars in time to avoid getting copped.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

On The Football Field!

"GOAL!" It was only a pick-up game between two Remove sides, but a good many fellows had gathered round to look on.

Gilbert Tracy, as a footballer, was always worth watching. Early that term Harry Wharton, little as he liked him, had regarded him as a prize-packet for the Remove eleven, and it was for foul play, and for incorrigible unscrupulousness in every other respect, that Gilbert had been barred from football and everything else in the Remove. But when he chose to play the game there was no doubt that Gilbert was a wonderful man at Soccer—and on the present occasion, at least, there was no fault to be found with him.

There was some sort of a change in Gilbert.

Exactly what had caused it Harry Wharton did not know, but he knew the fact. Tracy had owned up in that matter of the missing lines, and taken a tremendous licking from his incensed Form-master in consequence. He had barged in to save the captain of the Remove from being spotted when Wharton, in an angry and rebellious mood, had gone out in defiance of gating. It was known, too, that he had run some risk in helping Marjorie Hazeldene and Bessie Bunter when they were in peril on the cliffs. These things

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that forbidden gate, but not quite! He had spent the afternoon in unusually good company, and he had only to call witnesses to the fact! That stout cane on Quelch's table was not going to get any exercise this time!

"Very well! I have little or no doubt on the subject, Tracy, in view of your line of conduct ever since you have been at this school!" said Mr. Quelch. "But you will have justice, Tracy!"

"Thank you, sir!" said Gilbert demurely.

"You say that you did not enter the place called the Three Fishers?"

"I did not, sir!"

"Then where did you go?"

"I came back to the school!"

Mr. Quelch's lips tightened. He was not likely, in the circumstances of the case, to believe that statement. And he could not quite understand the lurking glimmer in Gilbert's eyes.

"At what time, Tracy, did you come back to the school?"

"More than two hours ago, sir."

"Did you go out again?"

"No, sir!"

"Are you telling me, Tracy, that you have been within the school precincts for more than two hours?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Very well!" said Mr. Quelch, in a tone that implied that it was not well at all, but far from well. "Very well! In that case, you will explain to me exactly where you have been during that time. So far as I was able to ascertain, you were still out of gates when I returned. Where were you, Tracy?"

"Most of the time, sir, I was on the football ground."

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Tracy, when I returned to the school, I walked down to the football ground, and ascertained that you were not there! What have you to say now?"

"May I ask when that was, sir?"

"It was half an hour ago, Tracy!"

"I was there then, sir!"

"You were on the football ground half an hour ago, Tracy?"

"Yes, sir!" answered Gilbert calmly.

"Enough!"

Mr. Quelch rose to his feet and picked up his cane.

Gilbert viewed that proceeding with perfect calmness. He had his trump card to play—he could prove his case as soon as he liked! But he was in no hurry. The young rascal was, in fact, leading Quelch on!

"Bend over that chair, Tracy!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Am I to be caned, sir?" asked Gilbert.

"What! Most certainly! Any other boy in my Form who acted as you have done would be taken to the headmaster and in all probability expelled from the school!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "But I am aware, Tracy—very well aware—that you desire to leave Greyfriars even upon the most disgraceful terms, and that desire will not be gratified. You will be caned severely!"

"Have I broken any rules, sir?"

"What—what? How dare you bandy words with me, Tracy! Bend over that chair at once!"

"Very well, sir, if you say so! But I never knew that it was against any rule to play football on a half-holiday," said Gilbert meekly. "Wharton couldn't

have known when he asked me to play. Is it a new rule, sir?"

Gilbert asked that question with an expression of demure innocence.

Mr. Quelch, with the cane half-raised, stared at him blankly.

"Football!" he repeated.

"Yes, sir!"

"You are not telling me, Tracy, that you have been playing football this afternoon?"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"Upon my word!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

Quelch was very well aware of the terms Gilbert was on with the rest of the Remove. He knew that he had been hitherto at least barred from the Form games. Neither would he have been likely to believe, in any case, that Tracy had gone out and walked off in the direction of the Three Fishers, only to walk back and play football! Really, it sounded very improbable!

"Perhaps you didn't notice me among the players, sir?" suggested Gilbert.

"But I was there!"

"Upon my word!" repeated Mr. Quelch. Certainly, he had not looked among the players for Tracy, never dreaming for an instant that he might be among them. But Gilbert's statement seemed to him the most reckless falsehood that even that unscrupulous young rascal had ever uttered. "Tracy, I will hear no more of this! I command you to bend over that chair at once!"

"Are you going to cane Wharton, too, sir?" asked Gilbert, with cheery coolness.

"What? Wharton! What do you mean, Tracy?"

"I mean if I have done wrong in playing football, Wharton must have done wrong in putting me into his team, sir!"

Mr. Quelch gasped.

"You impertinent young rascal! You are perfectly well aware that I do not believe your statement that you were playing football!"

"Oh! In that case, sir, would you mind asking Wharton before you cane me?" inquired Gilbert meekly. "He will say the same, sir!"

Mr. Quelch gripped the cane with almost a convulsive grip.

He did not believe a word of it, and he was assured that Gilbert was simply wasting his time, and adding impudence to rascality. But he paused. If there was, after all, a remote possibility that this young rascal was speaking the truth for once, Quelch did not want to commit an act of injustice.

"Tracy! I do not believe a word you say! But I will send for Wharton—and if he fails to bear out your statement, your punishment shall be doubly severe!"

"Thank you, sir!" said Gilbert cheerfully.

Mr. Quelch, breathing hard, laid down the cane, and touched the bell. Trotter, the House page, was sent to call Harry Wharton to the study. Quelch waited for the arrival of his head boy with a frown upon his majestic countenance that rivalled the "frightful, fearful, frantic frown" of the Lord High Executioner!

Gilbert waited in cheery anticipation of Quelch's coming confusion.

The captain of the Remove was not long in arriving. He glanced at Tracy as he stepped into the study, and then looked inquiringly at his Form-master.

"You sent for me, sir?"

"Yes, Wharton! I have reason to believe that Tracy has been out of school bounds this afternoon, and he

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states that he has been playing football with you and other Remove boys."

"Oh!"

"You will tell me whether this statement is correct or not, Wharton!"

"Oh! Yes, sir! Tracy played in the pick-up, sir," said Harry.

Mr. Quelch almost staggered. Never had he been so thoroughly taken aback.

"Tracy was playing football with you, Wharton?" he stuttered.

"Yes, sir!"

"He was present the whole time?"

"Yes, sir, from the kick-off to the whistle."

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

He stared at Wharton. He stared at Tracy.

There was a lurking grin on Gilbert's face. He was thoroughly enjoying his Form-master's discomfiture.

For a long minute Quelch could only stare. He could hardly doubt the statement of his head boy. But if Tracy had played through a football match that afternoon, from start to finish, he must have come in very soon after going out; and obviously he could not be the Greyfriars junior whose cap Mr. Quelch had seen over that gate! He must, indeed, have been one of the juniors who had been playing football when Quelch got back! He must have been playing football when Quelch spotted that Greyfriars cap over the Three Fishers gate! Upon whosever's head that cap had been, it could not have been on Tracy's!

"Oh!" repeated Mr. Quelch at last.

"Am I to bend over, sir?" asked Gilbert meekly.

"Oh! No! In—in the—the circumstances, certainly not!" stammered Mr. Quelch. "No!"

"Thank you, sir!"

"You may go, Wharton! You—you—you may go, Tracy! I—I am glad that you have been able to clear yourself on this—on this occasion! You may leave my study!"

The two juniors left the study together.

Mr. Quelch was left standing and staring! After the door had closed, he heard a laugh from the passage. His hand stretched towards the cane—but he did not touch it! That cane was not, after all, going to get any exercise on the bad hat of the Remove!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Catching Coker!

"GO over!" suggested Bob Cherry. The chums of the Remove chuckled.

Really, Coker of the Fifth looked as if he was getting ready for leap-frog!

Bent almost double, Coker was moving slowly along, scanning the ground under the old Greyfriars elms, and every now and then raking over ancient dead leaves.

For several days now, Coker of the Fifth had spent a great deal of his leisure time in such occupations.

It was some days since that windy morning when Coker had slipped on the banana-skin and his fiver had blown away. It had blown away on Friday. Now it was Wednesday morning, in break.

Few fellows expected that Horace Coker would ever see it again. The high wind might have carried it anywhere. It might be anywhere within the precincts of Greyfriars School—quite an extensive tract—or it might have blown over a wall and gone on its travels in the wide world.

In either case, its recovery seemed im-

probable after the lapse of days. But Coker, naturally, still nourished a hope of picking it up somewhere. - Other fellows thought the case hopeless. But as it was Coker's fiver, probably that made a difference to Horace. Anyhow, there he was—bent double, rooting, as often and often he had rooted already in vain.

"He's asking for it!" urged Bob. "Come on—one after another—Coker's tucking in his tuppenny!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Horace Coker glanced round at that sound of merry laughter. He frowned at the Famous Five, and resumed rooting, his back to them. Really, it was a temptation to playful juniors.

"Come on!" said Bob.

"Let's!" agreed Nugent.

"Oh, all right!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Go it!"

"Follow your leader!" chuckled Bob.

He broke into a rapid run, and his chums broke into a rapid run after him, bearing down on Coker.

Coker, rooting after that missing banknote, certainly was not thinking of playing leap-frog, or anything of the kind! He was taken quite by surprise when the Famous Five started leap-frogging!

"Wha-a-a-t!" gasped Coker suddenly, as he felt a touch on his bent back, and Bob Cherry flew over.

Before Coker could realise what was happening Harry Wharton's hands were on his back, and the captain of the Remove was going over. And so utterly spellbound was Horace by this strange and unexpected happening, that Frank Nugent, who came third, was over before the Fifth Form man grasped what was going on.

Even then, Coker seemed too petrified with astonishment to stir, and he remained, as it were, rooted, while Johnny Bull, and then Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, flew over his bended back.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a yell of laughter from about fifty fellows in the quad.

"Wha-a-t!" gasped Coker.

He straightened up, staring round him blankly. It dawned on his powerful brain that the juniors had been playing leap-frog, with his unintentional assistance! He gurgled with wrath.

"Why, you—you—you—I—I—I—" spluttered Coker. "I—I'll smash you—I'll spifficate you—"

"Tuck in your tuppenny, Coker!" yelled Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker did not tuck in his tuppenny! He made a ferocious rush!

The Famous Five, howling with merriment, scattered before that rush, and dodged Coker among the elms. Coker came to a halt at last, shaking a wrathful fist after the elusive juniors.

Then he returned to his task of rooting under the trees after that missing fiver.

It was then that Billy Bunter happened!

Billy Bunter was among the fellows who had witnessed that leap-frogging performance, grinning all over his fat face. And the spirit moved Billy Bunter to go and do likewise!

It was just like Bunter!

The Famous Five had raised a roar of laughter by leap-frogging over the unwary Horace. Bunter was going to raise another roar!

It did not occur to Bunter's fat brain that Coker had been taken utterly by surprise and off his guard in the first instance, which was why the Famous Five had got away successfully with their performance—and that he was not

likely to be taken by surprise and off his guard a second time.

Heedless of such considerations as that, the fat Owl of the Remove charged at Coker, to leap-frog over his bended back.

Bunter was going to clear Coker's bended back with an active leap, and scuttle on, leaving the fellows yelling with laughter at Coker as before!

That was what Bunter was going to do! But it was not what Bunter did! For Coker was not, of course, off his guard this time, and not in the least unwary; and he straightened up when Bunter was a yard from him, and whirled round on the charging fat junior with a perfectly deadly expression on his face.

Bunter, going strong, and unable to stop in time, charged right on—into Coker's arms!

He bumped on Coker!

Smack, smack!

Coker smacked with both hands at once! They landed simultaneously on both Bunter's fat ears.

"Yaroooh!"

Bunter's yell rang from one end of the quad to the other. It was followed by a yell of laughter from the interested spectators. Bunter had intended his performance to be funny; but it was funnier than he had intended.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow! Wow!" roared Bunter frantically.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Two smacks did not content Coker! Coker was peeved! Two hundred smacks would hardly have satisfied him. He went on smacking! Bunter's fat head rang like a drum!

"Ow! Stoppit! Beast! Wow!" roared Bunter. "I wasn't going to—yow-ow-ow! I say—yarooop!"

Smack, smack, smack!

"Oh crikey! Yaroooh! Wow!" shrieked Bunter.

He made a wild bound to escape, and bumped into the trunk of the nearest elm.

In sheer desperation, the fat junior grabbed at the elm, and clambered.

He grabbed a low branch, and clambered wildly. Bunter, as a rule, was no climber. But circumstances alter cases. Even Bunter could climb, and climb rapidly, when a large and heavy hand was smacking, and landing with terrific swipes on his tight trousers!

He almost flew into the tree!

Coker smacked.

"Come down!" he roared, as he smacked.

"Urrrggh!" gasped Bunter. "Beast!"

"I'll smash you!"

"Yah! Beast! Oh crikey!"

Smack, smack!

Bunter as he clambered was really very favourably placed for smacking. Coker's heavy hand came down like a flail.

"Ow! Beast! Stoppit!" shrieked Bunter.

Smack, smack!

Hanging on to the branch where it jutted from the trunk, Bunter heaved up his weight. Smack after smack landed as he did so, and Bunter kicked out backwards.

Bang!

Coker had not seemed to expect that. Really, he might have, but he hadn't. He was taken by surprise when the heel of Bunter's shoe landed on his nose.

It landed hard! It elicited a yell of anguish from Coker, and a spurt of claret from Coker's nose. Coker staggered back, and sat down.

Bunter clambered frantically on. "Onward and upward!" was Bunter's

motto at that moment. As Coker sat down and gave him a respite, Bunter dragged himself up on the branch.

Ten feet from the ground, he clutched with both fat hands, and cast a downward blink at Coker.

Coker tottered to his feet. His hand was pressed to his damaged nose. Crimson trickled through his fingers.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

Damaging Coker's nose was satisfactory in one way, unsatisfactory in another. The look on Coker's face as he dabbed at that damaged nose was positively blood-curdling. He took out his handkerchief and dabbed again and again, spotting the handkerchief with red. He glared up at Bunter with the glare of a Gorgon.

"You—you—you——" he gasped.

"Beast!" gasped Bunter.

"Come down!" hissed Coker, still dabbing.

"Beast!"

Bunter was not likely to come down. His perch in the tree was rather precarious, but he clung on desperately. Bunter was not coming down while Horace Coker was in the offing.

"I—I—I'll spifficate you!" gurgled Coker. "Look at my nose! I'll burst you all over the quad! My nose——"

He dabbed, and dabbed, and dabbed.

Billy Bunter watched him, with terrified eyes bulging through his big spectacles. He was out of reach, and he was staying out of reach. The beast would have to go when the bell rang for third school; then, and not till then, was Bunter going to descend.

"Will you come down?" hissed Coker.

"Yah! Beast!"

Coker dabbed, and glared.

"Well, just wait!" he said. "Just you wait! I'll give you kicking a fellow's nose! Just you wait!"

And Coker, turning away, resumed his rooting after the elusive fiver, occasionally dabbing his nose as he rooted.

Billy Bunter, jammed on his branch, watched him from above through his spectacles.

Every now and then, as he bent and stooped, and rooted and groped, Horace Coker turned his head and gave Bunter a glare from the distance. He was keeping an eye on the fat Owl while he rooted after that fiver. He was, indeed, at the moment more anxious to get hold of William George Bunter than of the missing fiver. Had Bunter dropped from the tree and cut, Coker's long legs would not have been long in overtaking him.

But Bunter did not drop from the tree. Bunter hugged that branch as if he loved it!

Bunter was going to stick there till break was over and the bell rang. Then Coker would have to go, and the fat Owl would be able to go when Coker was gone. Morning break generally seemed much too short to Billy Bunter; now it seemed rather too long as he stuck in the elm, shivering in the cold wind from the sea, and waited for the bell to ring. The minutes seemed to Bunter to crawl.

And when the bell, at long last, rang, it was the first time in history that the Owl of the Remove had been glad to hear the bell for class! For the very

first time in his fat career Billy Bunter was anxious and eager to get into the Form-room!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Gilbert's Windfall!

"ONE for you, Tracy!" said Skinner.

Some of the Remove fellows were looking in the rack for letters when Gilbert Tracy came along, not very hopefully.

Time had been when Gilbert had only to drop a line to his uncle, at Oakwood Place, if he wanted something extra in the way of cash. Old Sir Giles had been all the more liberal, perhaps, as a sort of make-weight, because he could not stand his nephew at home.

But that time was over. Mr. Quelch had put his foot down firmly on it. Gilbert was now limited to the moderate sum of two shillings and sixpence a week pocket-money—which was as much as a good many other fellows had, but not much use to a sportsman with a taste for backing gee-gees.

Every day, however, Gilbert looked for a letter, in the hope that Uncle Giles might have relented, in spite of Quelch. The old gentleman was strongly attached to him, notwithstanding that he had found him too unmanageable to keep at home.

His face brightened as Skinner called to him, and he hurried up.

But his face fell as he took down the letter.

It was not addressed in his uncle's hand, neither was the postmark Surrey. It was addressed in the handwriting of his father, Captain Tracy, and the postmark was Bournemouth. It was not the hoped-for tip!

"Not from nunky—what?" grinned Skinner. "The old bean's letting you down!"

Tracy turned away without replying.

Skinner winked at Snoop, who grinned. All the Remove knew that Tracy, who, early in the term, had had more money than was good for him, was now in a chronic state of hard-up—in which state he was in danger of losing the friendship of Skinner and Snoop—for what that was worth!

Gilbert went into the Rag, with the letter unopened in his hand. It was the first letter he had had from his father that term, but it did not seem to interest him very much.

It was Wednesday, and the afternoon was a half-holiday; and had "old Giles" weighed in with a tip, as of old, the bad hat of the Remove would have kicked over the traces as a matter of course that afternoon. He would have liked to join up with Ponsonby of Highcliffe at the Three Fishers. But it was not of much use joining up with the superb Pon with only sixpence in his pockets—and to that small sum his finances were reduced.

Tracy was on much better terms with his Form of late—he was no longer an outcast in the Remove; the Famous Five were civil to him, if not exactly friendly, and other fellows followed suit. After his game in the pick-up on Saturday, there was a chance that he might find his name in the list for

a Remove fixture; Harry Wharton, having resolved to give him a chance, was not the fellow to do it by halves.

But though that prospect was very attractive to Gilbert, and though he certainly was

finding life at Greyfriars a good deal pleasanter than formerly, he was not thinking of giving up disreputable manners and customs.

His narrow escape on Saturday made no difference. He had simply chuckled over having "done Quelch in the eye" on that occasion, and dismissed the matter from his mind.

He was not specially keen on reading that letter from Captain Tracy. He had seen little of his father during the past year while his home had been with his uncle in Surrey. The fact that the captain had long been in a nursing-home at Bournemouth, laid up by trouble from an old wound received on the Somme, did not worry Gilbert unduly; he was accustomed to thinking chiefly of himself.

However, he sat down by the window in the Rag and opened the letter.

Then he gave a jump.

From the letter he drew three folded currency notes, and stared at them blankly. He unfolded them, staring in surprise and satisfaction at three one-pound notes.

"Oh crumbs!" ejaculated Gilbert.

Immediately he slipped them in his pocket out of sight. Quelch had stopped his supplies from Uncle Giles. Doubtless it had not occurred to Quelch that there was another possible source of supply to stop. Gilbert did not want Quelch to get a hint of this.

Then he looked at the letter, with a much more cheerful and amiable expression on his face.

"My dear Gilbert,—Probably you did not expect a letter from me; but the fact is, my boy, I am better—very much better—and I have hopes of getting out of this in a few weeks more. It may be possible for me to get abroad to a milder climate before Christmas, and, in that case, you may have your holidays with me at Cannes or Mentone. I think you would like that.

"Your affectionate father,
"M. TRACY."

Gilbert sat looking at that letter, after reading it, with a thoughtful shade on his brow.

He had not written to his father since he had been at Greyfriars. He had, indeed, hardly thought of him at all.

Yet his father, now that he was again able to deal with correspondence, had written him a kind and affectionate letter, and had not forgotten that a tip was generally welcome to a schoolboy.

Gilbert felt an uneasy twinge.

It was easy to see that the captain had been told nothing of the trouble he had given his uncle at Oakwood Place. He did not know that Gilbert had been packed off unwillingly to Greyfriars, and was in perpetual trouble and disgrace there.

It occurred to Gilbert that he was glad that his father did not know all that. He reflected further that he hoped his father never would know. The man who was an almost helpless invalid, as a result of having served his country, had enough to bear without his son adding to the burden.

Gilbert was thinking—rather unaccustomed thoughts. He was so deep in reflection that he did not notice a Remove fellow who came into the Rag, till Hazel—for it was Hazel—threw himself into an armchair with a sound that was very like a groan.

Tracy started and looked across at him.

Hazel had not noticed him there, sitting by the window. Most of the fellows

(Continued on page 14)



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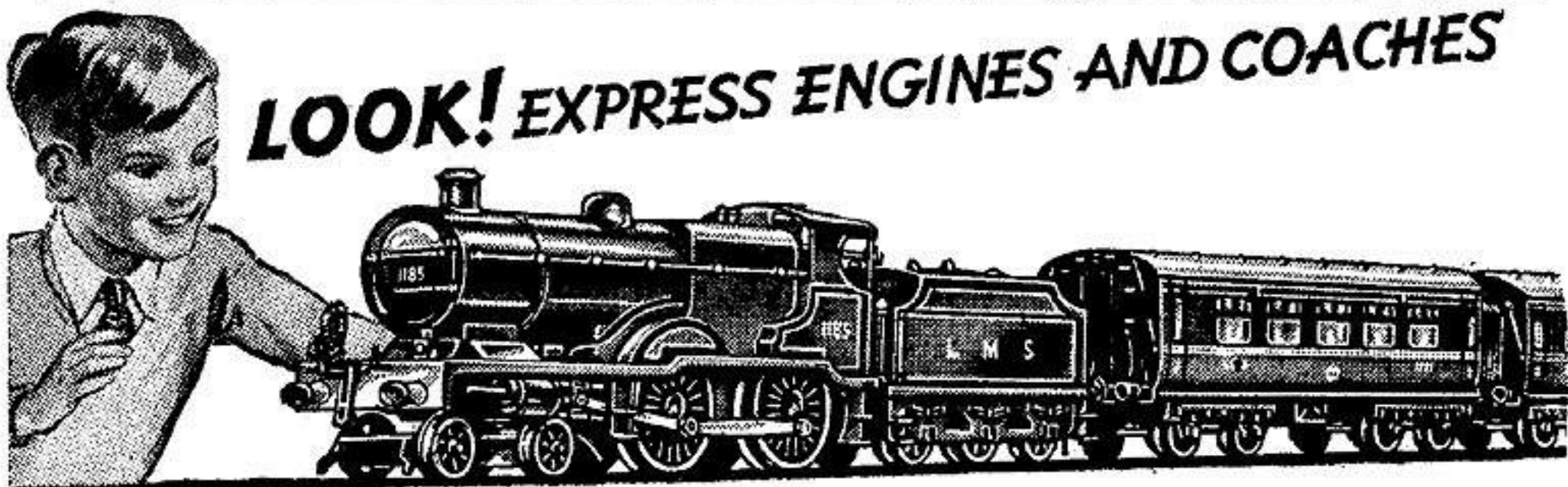
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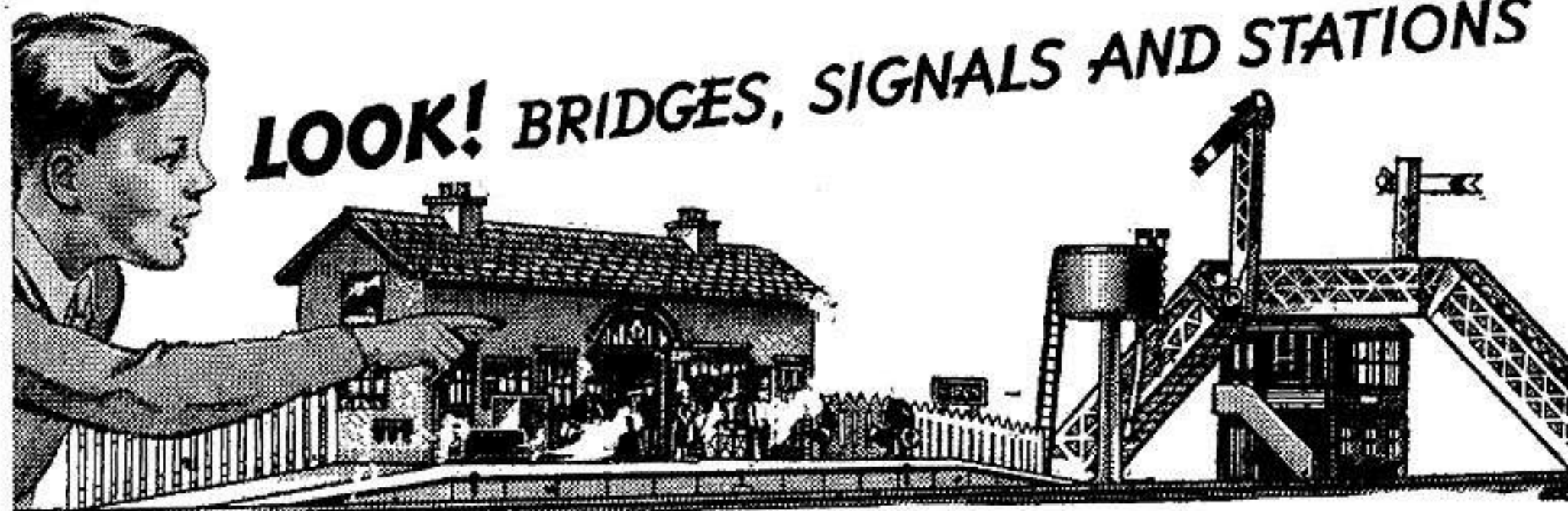
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were in the quad, in break, and no one else was in the room.

Hazel sprawled limply in the chair, staring straight before him, in an attitude of utter dejection.

"Anything up?"

Hazel gave a sudden start and sat up, at Gilbert's voice. His face flushed as he glanced hastily round.

Gilbert rose and stood looking at him.

Hazel gave him a rather evil look. He was annoyed at having been seen in that crushed and dismal state, and he pulled himself together as soon as he found that eyes were on him.

"Did you speak to me?" he grunted.

"I asked you if there was anything up."

"Find out!"

That ungracious reply was enough for Gilbert. He shrugged his shoulders and walked away to the door; but at the door he turned back.

"Look here, Hazeldene——"

"Oh, leave a fellow alone!" growled Hazel. "What the dickens are you bothering me for?"

"Has Quelch spotted you?"

Hazel stared at him—or, rather, glared.

"What do you mean, you fool?" he grunted.

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Gilbert. "Everybody knows pretty well why you didn't keep goal in the pick-up on Saturday. Quelch spotted some Greyfriars man out of bounds, and fancied it was me, only I was able to prove that I was playing football at the time. You couldn't have."

"No bizney of yours!" snapped Hazel. "Quelch hasn't asked me anything. My reputation's a bit better than yours," he added, with a sneer.

"Well, if you'll take a word of advice from me——"

"I'll ask for your advice when I want it. Keep it till then."

Gilbert's eyes gleamed, but he went on quietly:

"Listen to me, you disgruntled ass! Quelch is suspicious, and he's as keen as a razor. Keep clear of that show—for a bit, at least. What would your sister at Cliff House think if you were sacked from here for pub-haunting?"

"Sermons—from you!" sneered Hazel. "Hadn't you better leave them to Wharton? They suit him; they don't suit you!"

"Your sister Marjorie——"

"Mind your own business, confound your cheek!" shouted Hazel. "I saw you speaking to my sister Marjorie the other day, and had a jolly good mind to punch your head. I will, if you speak to her again. Shut up and mind your own business, you cheeky rotter!"

Gilbert looked at him, more than half-inclined to jerk him out of the armchair and bang his head on the table. However, he turned and left the Rag, and Hazel was left alone, to sink once more into deep, dismal despondency, and stare vacantly before him, with the look of a fellow who was utterly down and out, till he was roused by the clang of the bell for third school.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Up A Tree!

"Oh crikey!" gasped Billy Bunter.

The bell was ringing for third school.

Billy Bunter, safe out of Coker's reach so long as he was perched in the elm, ten feet up, was not going to be safe if he descended, unless Coker was gone. And Coker, still bending, still

raking over fallen leaves and scanning the earth, was not gone.

Coker, like every other fellow at Greyfriars, had to heed the bell; but he did not seem, for the moment, to be heeding it.

Billy Bunter twisted round the branch on which he was jammed, and cast an anxious blink through his spectacles in the direction of Coker, and ejaculated "Oh crikey!"

That ejaculation was caused by something that suddenly met the fat Owl's view as he twisted round the branch.

Where that branch joined the trunk there was a deep hollow in the wood, partly filled by dead and mouldy leaves. And in that hollow, protruding from the dead leaves, was a flimsy slip of engraved paper.

Bunter blinked at it. He stared at it. He goggled at it. He knew what it was at once. Bunter knew a banknote when he saw one.

It was half-buried in damp mouldy leaves. On the end that protruded Bunter could see the figure "£5."

It was a five-pound note, and evidently the one that had blown away on Friday the week before. Probably it had fluttered long on the wintry wind before it found, by chance, a resting-place in that hollow in the elm trunk just over the jutting branch.

There it had come to rest, and stayed, out of reach of the wind, and pinned down by damp leaves that partly concealed it.

Obviously it was Coker's fiver—the one for which he was rooting about at that very moment. And Bunter, by the sheerest chance, had spotted it!

"Oh crikey!" repeated Bunter.

This was rather a happy discovery. Bunter was not deeply concerned about Coker's loss, and did not, as a matter of fact, care fearfully whether Horace found his missing fiver or not. But he was deeply concerned about what would happen to him if he descended from the tree while Horace Coker was still in the offing.

But if he announced that discovery to Coker it would be all right. Coker would be glad to find his fiver. He would hardly pitch into the fellow who found it for him. Not even Coker!

Bunter did not reach out to the fiver; he needed both his fat hands to keep his rather precarious hold. He squeaked to the Fifth Form man, groping about at a little distance under the leafless trees.

"I say, Coker!"

Coker, at the distance, did not hear that fat squeak; but he heard a shout from Potter of the Fifth, across the quad.

"Come on, Coker; you'll be late!"

The bell was giving its last clangs.

Coker gave a snort. He had not found his fiver—he was not, indeed, likely to find it in the circumstances. He had to give it up.

He rose from his bending attitude, cast an inimical glare towards the tree on which Bunter was perched, and started for the House.

"I say!" squeaked Bunter.

The bell was ceasing to ring. Coker put on speed.

"Silly idiot!" grunted Bunter.

Coker disappeared within a distant doorway.

That was all right for Bunter. So long as Coker was gone it was all right. And Coker was gone!

It was high time that Bunter was gone, too. It was not healthy to be late for class with Quelch.

The fat Owl had ascended that tree rapidly—very rapidly—with Coker snacking astern. But he was not so rapid in getting down. Bunter was heavy, and he was clumsy, and three or

four times he nearly slipped, his fat heart jumping into his mouth.

He did not think of letting go his hold for an instant to secure that fiver. He was not safe with both hands clutching.

Coker could get up the tree himself and get it, when Bunter told him where it was, and be blowed to him!

All Bunter's attention was concentrated on getting down, without landing on the earth in a heap.

He did not quite succeed. With all his care, he slipped before he was quite down; and finished his descent with a whiz, sitting on the earth and roaring. But the bell had stopped, and he jumped up again and cut off to the House. He rolled breathlessly into the doorway by which Coker had disappeared.

And then——

"Got you!" came a roar.

"Oh!" howled Bunter.

He was taken quite by surprise.

Coker had disappeared—Bunter had taken it for granted that he was in the Fifth Form Room by that time!

But he wasn't!

He was standing just inside the doorway, ready for Bunter.

With a deep duplicity which Bunter had never dreamed of suspecting, Horace Coker had waited there, in ambush, as it were, for the fat Owl to come in!

Bunter, of course, had to get in as soon as he could; and was sure to do so as soon as Coker was gone! Coker knew that he would not have long to wait! He waited grimly, and the unsuspecting fat Owl rolled right into his clutches.

Smack!

"Ow!"

Smack!

"Yaroooh!"

Smack, smack!

"Ow! I say—oh crikey! You beast—yarooop!" roared Bunter. "I say, leggo my collar—whoop-hoop!"

Coker twirled Bunter round! He lifted the largest foot in the Greyfriars Fifth.

Thud!

"Yoo-hoo—hoop!"

Thud!

"Oh, jiminy!"

Bunter flew!

Coker was anxious to get into class. He did not want to be late for Mr. Prout any more than Bunter wanted to be late for Mr. Quelch. But he wanted most of all to make an example of the fat junior whose heel had landed on his nose! Coker's nose was sore! So was his temper! He made that fact abundantly clear unto William George Bunter!

Twice, thrice, his foot landed on the fat Owl's tight trousers before Billy Bunter dodged round a corner and escaped.

Even then he would not have escaped Coker's just vengeance; had not Horace been due—over-due—in the Fifth Form Room. But Coker let it go at that and went on his way to the Fifth, feeling better.

Bunter was not feeling better! Bunter fled for his fat life, yelling. He forgot even class and the frowning brow of Mr. Quelch in his anxiety to get away from Coker. Up one passage and down another flew the fat Owl, gasping and spluttering, till he made the discovery that he was not pursued.

Then, at last, Bunter headed for the Remove Form Room—arriving there no less than ten minutes late for class.

A gimlet eye fixed on him as he rolled breathlessly in.

"Bunter!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I——"



Coker was taken quite by surprise when the Famous Five started leap-frogging. "Wha-a-at!" he gasped, as he felt a touch on his bent back and Bob Cherry flew over. Before he could realise what was happening, Harry Wharton's hands were on his back and the captain of the Remove was going over.

"You are ten minutes late for class, Bunter!"

"Yes, sir! No, sir! I—"

"You will take a hundred lines, Bunter, and bring them to me by tea-time!" said Mr. Quelch sternly. "Now go to your place!"

"Oh lor'!"

Billy Bunter rolled dismally to his place. He had a collection of aches and pains, he was breathless and winded; and he had a hundred lines to write on a half-holiday! His feelings towards Horace Coker were deep!

And his fat mind was made up on one point! He was not going to tell Coker that he had found his banknote jammed up in that elm! Coker could go on hunting for that fiver, and the longer he hunted, the better Bunter was going to be pleased! Which was some consolation to the fat Owl for aches and pains and lines!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Pulling Quelch's Leg!

GILBERT TRACY grinned.

It was the sight of his Form-master, Mr. Quelch, that brought that sardonic grin to Gilbert's face.

The bad hat of the Remove was standing under a tree by the towpath on the Sark, leaning against the trunk, with his hands in his pockets, gazing idly across the shining river and the brown woods beyond.

Gilbert had been there some little time; and he was still there, thinking, when Mr. Quelch came along from the direction of the school boathouse.

With three pounds in his pockets—the first time he had been in funds for long stony weeks—Gilbert had settled, as a matter of course, that he was going to play the giddy goat that half-holiday.

He was going up to the Three Fishers, where he would meet Ponsonby of Highcliffe and some of his nutty pals and probably Bill Lodgey and Soapy Smith, the other sporting characters.

He had started at a brisk walk; but slowed down, and finally had come to a halt; and, since then, he had been leaning on the tree, thinking it over.

He was not, after all, quite sure—somewhat to his own surprise—that he was fearfully keen on playing the giddy ox out of bounds that afternoon.

It was not the risk that worried him—he was as reckless as ever. He knew that the Remove master, since what had happened on Saturday, was very much on the alert—and he did not care a straw! He had warned Hazel, but he did not think of taking the warning to himself.

But somehow or other, he did not seem to care so much as of old for his old dingy pursuits.

It was partly, no doubt, because he was on better terms with Harry Wharton & Co. and other Remove fellows. Partly, too, because he now realised that he did not want his father to hear a disgraceful account of him at the school.

But he knew that the change that had lately come over his outlook was due chiefly to Marjorie Hazeldene.

He was inclined to grin sarcastically for allowing the opinion of a schoolgirl to influence him in any way. But he knew that it did!

At the time of his deepest disgrace and unpopularity at Greyfriars he had fallen in with Marjorie and Bessie Bunter on the cliff-path, and had run some risk in helping them in the hour of peril. Marjorie had thought well of him in consequence—at a time when everyone else thought ill of him—when he was barred, disliked, despised, and sent to Coventry by his Form; when he

had been a discontented and malicious outcast.

Somehow, her belief in him had roused Gilbert's belief in himself and set his thoughts on a new tack.

It was a word from Marjorie that had caused him to own up in the matter of the missing lines. That had been the first step on the right path—and it had made other steps easier; and Gilbert had made the discovery that the right path really had more attractions than the wrong path!

Now, as he stood leaning on the tree looking across the shining river he was wondering whether, after all, a fellow might not as well keep on the way he had started and make a clean cut of it.

He had not yet made up his mind when he spotted the tall, angular figure of the Remove master coming up the towpath.

Quelch, evidently, was on a walk that afternoon and his walk was going to take him past the gate of the Three Fishers.

Likely as not, he knew that Tracy was out of gates; he kept himself posted about the bad hat's movements. Probably he was thinking of him as he came past the boathouse and turned up the river.

Which caused Gilbert to grin with sardonic amusement.

He stepped away from the tree and lounged up the towpath about twenty yards ahead of Quelch.

He was quite well aware that those gimlet eyes would spot him from the rear; and he had no doubt that Quelch would jump to the conclusion that he was heading for the riverside inn—as had, indeed, been his intention when he walked out of the school.

It was rather amusing, from Gilbert's point of view, to lead Quelch on—give

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TRACY TAKES THE BLAME!



(Continued from page 15.)

him the impression that he was going to make a catch and then let him down!

Gilbert was careful not to look back. Quelch did not know that he had observed him; and he was not going to know. Gilbert was going to walk on as far as the Three Fishers—with Quelch walking behind. Then he was going to turn and walk back—laughing in his sleeve. Which seemed quite an amusing prospect to the young rascal. Pulling Quelch's leg was entertaining!

He walked at a good pace up the winding bank of the Sark. He knew that Quelch was walking behind with a gimlet eye glinting at his back. At a short distance before reaching the Three Fishers, the bank took a sharp turn, and Gilbert, walking round the curve, disappeared from Quelch's sight.

The next moment he forgot Quelch—as a voice—a familiar voice—fell on his ears.

"I can't do it, Soapy—I tell you, I can't!"

Gilbert started and stared.

Two figures were ahead of him on the path, standing under the trees. One of them, the one who had spoken, was Hazeldene of the Remove, the other was Mr. Soapy Smith, of the Three Fishers.

Neither of them, for the moment, observed the approaching junior. Hazel was standing with one hand resting against a tree-trunk, as if for support, his face pale and darkly troubled. Soapy Smith was regarding him with a threatening scowl.

"Did that 'orse win, or did that 'orse lose, young Hazeldene?" he asked.

"I know!" muttered Hazel. "I owe you the money, Soapy, but I can't—I tell you I can't square yet—not yet! In a week or two—"

"Sez you!" jeered Soapy. "I'll tell you this 'ere, if I don't see the colour of my money, I'll see that bony old bloke what was arter you on Saturday. Mebbe you'd like me to call on 'im at the school."

Hazel gave almost a whimper of terror.

"Soapy, you wouldn't—"

"Wouldn't I?" jeered Soapy.

Tracy caught his breath. In little more than a minute Quelch would be coming striding round that curve of the river bank—in full view of Hazel in talk with Soapy Smith!

For Hazel himself Tracy's feeling was only one of contemptuous indifference, but for Marjorie Hazeldene's brother the matter was quite different.

He ran forward, calling breathlessly as he ran.

"Hazeldene, out—quick!"

Soapy Smith leered round at him. Hazel gave a start and spun round and glared at Tracy with the passionate anger of a weak nature.

"You meddling fool, what are you butting in for?" he exclaimed shrilly. "Haven't I told you to mind your own business?"

"You dummy! Quelch—" panted Tracy.

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"Oh, shut up—and leave me alone!"

"He's coming—"

"Wha-a-at?"

"He's coming up the towpath; he will be here in a tick! For goodness' sake, cut!"

Hazel gave him one blank stare; then, as he realised his danger, he turned away and darted into the wood. The thickets swayed as he plunged through; he was out of sight in a moment, leaving Soapy Smith staring at the panting Gilbert.

"My eye!" said Soapy. "What—"

Tracy hurried on. He had saved Hazel—by the skin of his teeth, as it were—but he did not want Mr. Quelch to find him near Soapy Smith. If Quelch took it for granted—as very likely he would—that the bad hat had come there to meet Soapy, Tracy's jest on his Form-master was likely to turn out rather serious for himself.

Hardly a minute later Mr. Quelch came in sight round the winding turn of the river bank.

He saw nothing of Hazel—Hazel was safely out of sight in the deep wood—but he saw Mr. Soapy Smith lounging by the trees, and drew his own conclusions. His long legs whisked after Tracy, and he called sharply.

"Tracy!"

Gilbert stopped and turned.

"Oh, is that you, sir? Yes, sir?" he said mockly.

"Tracy, did you come here to meet that—that person?" Mr. Quelch made a disdainful gesture towards Soapy, leering from a little distance.

"Oh, no, sir!" said Gilbert. "I just passed him, sir—"

Mr. Quelch set his lips. It was the truth, as it happened, but Mr. Quelch was too little accustomed to truth from Gilbert to think of taking his word.

"I have little doubt, Tracy—or, rather, none—that you came here to have some dealings with that disreputable racing man!" he said sternly.

"Oh, no, sir!"

"And then you left him on seeing me coming—"

"Not at all, sir!"

"I cannot take your word, Tracy! You will return at once to the school, and remain within gates for the rest of the afternoon. You will report yourself to Gosling when you go in. I shall inquire of him. Now go!"

Gilbert Tracy gritted his teeth as he started on his walk back to the school. He was a dog with a bad name, and the thing seemed clear enough to Mr. Quelch. The bad hat of the Remove had reason to regret that he had set out to pull Quelch's leg!

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Keeps It Dark!

"I SAY, you fellows—He, he, he!" chortled Billy Bunter. "I say, look at old Coker! He, he, he!" Bunter seemed amused.

Bunter had lingering twinges where Horace Coker's mighty snacks had landed that morning; still, he was amused—distinctly amused.

The fat Owl was standing by the window of the Rag, blinking out into the quad through his big spectacles.

A drizzle of rain was falling in the quad. It had driven most of the fellows indoors, but there was one fellow who had not been driven in—that was Coker of the Fifth.

Heedless of drizzling rain, Coker was rooting after that elusive fiver—lost to sight, but to memory dear.

With his burly back bent, and rain-

drops dropping lightly on that burly back, Coker of the Fifth was rooting about industriously—which was a fearfully amusing sight to William George Bunter.

Coker had rooted over most of the Greyfriars quad already; now he was rooting over some more. But he might have rooted over the whole surface of the globe without discovering that missing fiver—which Bunter, and only Bunter, knew was up a tree!

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Old Coker's a sticker!" grinned Bob Cherry, glancing from the window. "He will have earned that fiver by the time he finds it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A crowd of fellows in the Rag looked out at Coker. Nobody supposed that Coker would ever find that lost fiver after such a lapse of time, but Coker still hoped. Hope springs eternal in the human breast.

Harry Wharton pushed up the sash. "Go it, Horace, old man!" he called out.

Coker turned his head and glared at a crowd of grinning faces, then he snorted and went on rooting.

"Sticker—and no mistake!" grinned Vernon-Smith.

"The stickfulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"He, he, he! I say, you fellows—He, he, he!" Billy Bunter was almost bursting with merriment. "Coker won't find that fiver! He, he, he!"

"Not likely!" said Johnny Bull. "Might have blown miles away by this time!"

"It jolly well hasn't!" grinned Bunter. "He, he, he!"

"How do you know, fathead?"

"That's telling!" grinned Bunter. "A fellow may have spotted it—and a fellow may not. I'm not going to tell Coker. The beast nearly cracked my nut this morning, you know! I had a jolly good mind to knock him down for—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I had to get up a tree to get away from the beast, and he smacked me on the trousers while I was climbing up—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, you can cackle!" said Bunter. "But Coker wouldn't cackle if he knew what he was getting back. Let him go on looking for it! He, he, he!"

General attention was turned on Bunter now. If the fat Owl's mysterious remarks meant anything at all, they could only mean that he knew something about Horace Coker's missing fiver. Even Hazeldene, who sat slumped in a chair, with a dark brow, deep in gloomy and despondent thoughts, turned his head and glanced at the grinning fat junior.

"You fat ass!" said Harry Wharton. "Have you found Coker's banknote?"

"That's telling!" chortled Bunter. "I ain't saying anything about it! Mind, I wouldn't mind telling you fellows: only you might let it out, and then Coker would hear of it. You fellows can't keep secrets like I can."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The keepfulness of the secret is truly terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Have you 'got Coker's banknote, you fat ass?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Have you?" roared Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Even Bunter isn't idiot enough to pinch it if he found it, is he?" asked Skinner, staring at the fat Owl of the Remove.

"Isn't he idiot enough for anything?" grinned Vernon-Smith.

"I haven't got it, you silly chumps!" roared Bunter indignantly. "A fellow might know where it is. I ain't going to tell Coker after what he did. Why, the beast waited for me when I got down out of that tree and copped me when I came in for class and booted me all over the shop! Catch me telling him after that!"

"Then you know where it is!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Don't you ask any questions, and I won't tell you any lies," said Bunter astutely. "I may know where it is—and I may not. I ain't saying anything about it—not a word! But, I say—He, he, he! Ain't it funny to see that fathead Coker rooting about like a pig rooting after acorns when his fiver's up a tree all the time? He, he, he!"

And Bunter roared with merriment.

"Up a tree!" exclaimed Frank Nugent.

"I suppose it might have blown into a tree," said Harry Wharton, staring at the fat Owl. "Was it in the tree you climbed to get away from Coker, you howling chump?"

"That's telling!" grinned Bunter. "He, he, he!"

"You got into one of the elms, I suppose," said Harry. "Which?"

"That one with the slanting trunk, nearest the wall," said Bunter. "Mind, I haven't said that I saw Coker's fiver sticking in a hollow place just where the branch I was on juts out! I'm not going to tell anybody."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'd have told Coker," explained Bunter. "I was going to tell him, of course. Then he pitched into me. Jumped on me when I came into class. After that, of course, I jolly well shan't tell him—or anybody else, either, in case they let him hear."

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the juniors.

"Let him go on hunting," said Bunter. "He can crawl all over the quad, if he likes. He, he, he! He ain't likely to look up a tree. Why should he? Look at him now! He, he, he!"

The juniors, staring from the windows at Coker, chuckled. If Coker's fiver was, as Bunter stated, up a tree, Coker was not likely to have much luck rooting about the damp earth, and in the wet grass.

"Look here, you fat ass!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "If you've really seen Coker's fiver stuck in that tree, you'd better put him wise."

"I'll watch it!" said Bunter. "Smacking a fellow's head, and booting him on the bags—"

"It may blow away again," said Hazeldene, speaking for the first time. Hazel had risen to his feet, and was looking at Bunter with a strange gleam in his eyes. "Might have blown away before now, if you saw it this morning."

"No fear!" answered Bunter. "I couldn't reach it, but I saw it plainly enough—stuck in a hole in the wood, you know, on that slanting elm, with a lot of dead leaves. I dare say it's been there for days. It won't blow away in a hurry."

Hazel went out of the Rag.

The other fellows were watching Coker, bent double, rooting. They watched him disappear round a corner of the gym in the distance, still industriously rooting about. Billy Bunter chortled as he was lost to sight. Coker had his back to the spot where the fiver was up a tree. Really, he did not look like having any luck.

"Serve him right—what?" chuckled Bunter. "Let him keep it up. He can keep on till we break up for the Christmas hols, if he likes. He, he, he!"

"You'd better tell him, you blithering owl!" said Bob Cherry.

"Catch me! I'm keeping it dark," grinned Bunter. "Coker's jolly well asked for this, and he's jolly well getting it, see? I'm keeping it absolutely dark."

At which the whole Rag yelled.

Bunter was keeping it dark, in his own inimitable way; but as nearly all the Remove knew now that he had spotted Coker's fiver sticking in the elm, it was very probable that Coker would get news. Indeed, some of the fellows were likely to visit that elm, when the rain stopped, to see for themselves.

In the meantime, Horace Coker rooted on in the rain, and Billy Bunter chuckled with happy satisfaction at getting his own back on Coker.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Spotted!

GILBERT TRACY tramped in at the school gates with a black brow.

He stopped at Gosling's lodge to report his arrival, as instructed by Mr. Quelch. Then he tramped on into the quad, scowling, heedless of the dropping rain.

But he did not head for the house.

Quelch had ordered him to remain within gates for the remainder of the afternoon. Gilbert had not the slightest intention of obeying that order.

The rebel of the Remove was in his most mutinous mood. He had done nothing—for once punishment had come unjustly his way. And he did not reflect, or choose to reflect, that it was entirely his own fault that his Form-master distrusted him so deeply, and entirely due to his own unscrupulous untruthfulness that Quelch was obliged to judge by appearances.

The Remove master had ordered him to report to Gosling when he went in, in order that there might be no doubt that he had obeyed his command to return to the school. Gilbert had done so. Having done so, he intended to go out again immediately, though taking care that Gosling's eye did not fall on him when he went.

Instead of heading for the House, therefore, he walked away under the dripping elms by the school wall that bordered the road.

In the falling rain there was no one about. It was perfectly easy to climb that wall, screened by the trees, and drop outside again. Not a fellow was to be seen in the weeping quad—even Coker, who was still rooting, had disappeared round the gymnasium in the far distance.

Quelch, when he came in, would certainly inquire of Gosling. He would learn that Tracy had returned, and reported his return. He would not learn that Gilbert had gone out again—unseen!

Gilbert's better mood had quite passed off now. He was once more the rebellious, discontented, malicious bad hat. He was going out, and he was going to join Pon & Co. at the Three Fishers, and "blow" his three pounds. His mind was made up on that now.

But he was cautious. Luckily it was raining, and no one was about. But in view of what he had to expect, if his

disobedience to orders was discovered, he could not be too careful. Owing to the peculiar conditions under which he was at Greyfriars, he did not fear the sack; but all the more, for that reason, Quelch, when he laid it on, laid it on hard. Gilbert did not want to bend over under Quelch's swiping cane, if he could help it.

He lounged away under the leafless, dripping elms, with his eyes warily about him. He stopped, at length, and leaned on one of the thick stone buttresses of the old wall, at a spot where jutting branches overtopped the coping. He waited there, watching, to make quite sure that the coast was clear before he scrambled up the wall and clambered over.

He was rather glad of his caution when he spotted an umbrella in the distance. Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, muffled in an immense raincoat, was progressing under that umbrella.

Gilbert watched Prout till he disappeared. Then, to his surprise, he saw a junior, with his coat-collar turned up, and his cap pulled down, hurrying through the rain.

It was Hazeldene. And Gilbert watched him, wondering what he was up to.

Hazel evidently had got in. No doubt he had been back long before Gilbert. Why he had come out of the House in the rain was rather a puzzle. He was not heading for the gates, so was not apparently going out again. If he had a fancy for walking in the rain in the quad, he was the only fellow who had.

Hazel came under the dripping branches and stopped there, turned his head, and looked back towards the House. Then he moved on through the old trees towards the school wall.

He was now, like Gilbert, out of sight of windows. But he was not out of sight of Gilbert who, leaning on the buttress at the wall, watched him curiously.

Hazel, so far as he knew, was not gated like himself. Yet it looked as if he had the same object in view as Gilbert—getting out of the school unseen.

Gilbert knitted his brows.

Once already that afternoon he had saved Hazel from bad trouble—not on his own account, certainly, but simply because he was Marjorie Hazeldene's brother. What he had done actually was to save Marjorie from the distress of learning that her brother was in trouble at his school.

His eyes glinted as he watched Hazel. He could only suppose that Hazel intended to clamber over the wall behind the elms, doubtless with a view to seeing Mr. Soapy Smith again, and resuming his interrupted interview with that frowsy gentleman.

But, to his further surprise, Hazel did not approach the wall.

He stopped under one of the elms near the wall, at a distance from Gilbert, and stood staring up a slanting trunk.

He did not glance once in the direction of Gilbert. Obviously he had not the slightest idea that any other fellow was out in the rain. And Gilbert under a tree, and leaning on the buttress, was almost hidden from sight.

Hazel's attention was concentrated wholly on the slanting elm.

He stood for a few moments looking up, and then clambered up the slanting trunk as Billy Bunter had done in break that morning.

Gilbert simply stared.

It was against the rules for any fellow to climb the trees. Fellows some-

times did, all the same. But why any fellow should come out in the rain to climb one of the elms was a perplexing mystery. Moreover, it was not merely tree-climbing that Hazel was after. He had picked out that special elm, as Gilbert could see.

In utter wonder, Tracy watched. Hazel was on a branch about ten feet up, and seemed to be groping at the trunk, where the branch joined it. He looked like a fellow hunting for something that had been hidden in the tree, and it crossed Gilbert's mind that he might possibly have hidden a packet of smokes there.

Hazel was not more than two or three minutes in the tree. Gilbert saw his hand go to his pocket, as if to thrust something out of sight there. Then he dropped from the tree.

Gilbert had a glimpse of his face again—so white that it made him start as he saw it.

But it was only for an instant. Hazel hurried away, and disappeared from his sight.

Gilbert was left wondering. Hazel had come out in the rain to climb that special tree, and had then cut off almost at a run, with a face like a ghost.

What it meant was a mystery to Tracy. But Hazel was gone now, and his searching eyes discovered no one else in sight in the dropping rain. He turned to the wall and clambered.

With the help of the jutting buttress, he climbed swiftly. In a few moments he was over the wall and dropping in the road outside.

"Tracy!"

"Oh!" gasped Gilbert, taken utterly aback.

From within he had not been seen—he knew that. From without he had to take his chance; but there was little danger, especially on a rainy day. But as it happened, it was the rain that caused the danger! It was the rain that had caused Mr. Quelch to cut short his walk!

Gilbert spun round, gasping. Hardly fifteen feet from him, coming down the road, was the angular figure of the Remove master! Gilbert had dropped from the wall fairly under his eyes.

"Oh!" repeated Gilbert, gasping.

"Tracy! So this is how you carry out my instructions!" said Mr. Quelch, grimly and bitterly. "Tracy, follow me in at once!"

Gilbert, with deep feelings, followed his Form-master along to the gates and followed him in.

Gosling, from his lodge, blinked at him in surprise—quite astonished to see him come in again, after coming in a quarter of an hour ago and reporting himself!

WINTER FUN!

What's your hobby this winter, lads? If you are building a model railway, go to your local dealer and ask to see Hornby trains and accessories. You'll find the 1938-9 Hornby Book of Trains helpful and interesting, and besides splendid railway articles, it contains a catalogue of locomotives, coaches, wagons, track, and accessories. This book is price 3d. from your dealer, or 4½d. from the address on page 13.

Perhaps you like model building. Have a look at the latest Meccano outfits at your favourite shop. There is no end to the thrills in building bridges, cranes, aeroplanes, and your own inventions, and Meccano parts make them all. If you'd like a copy of the 72-page Meccano catalogue, either ask your dealer or write to the address on page 9 for a copy, but don't forget to mention the names of three of your chums.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,606.

Mr. Quelch walked on to the House—Tracy at his heels. He went directly to his study and Gilbert followed him in. He picked up a cane from the table.

What followed was painful—to Gilbert! When he left Mr. Quelch's study Gilbert was not in much of a mood to think of joining Pon & Co. for a high old time at the Three Fishers! For quite a long time after leaving his Form-master, Gilbert was understudying the young man of Mythe, who was shaved with a scythe, and did nothing but wriggle and writhe!

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Sudden Shock!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! It's stopping!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

There was a gleam of wintry sunshine in the quad. The rain, which had pelted down for a couple of hours, was clearing off at last.

It was absolutely rotten to get rain on a half-holiday. Still, it was something to get a spot of fine weather before the early dark set in. Bob, looking from the windows of the Rag, welcomed that gleam of sun.

"Thank goodness!" said Harry Wharton.

"The thankfulness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh. He looked from the window and grinned. "There is the esteemed and ridiculous Coker."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Rain or shine, apparently, made no difference to Coker! He was in sight again—wandering in the wet quad, peering round corners, stooping and scanning drenched grass—evidently still in determined, but hopeless quest, of that elusive fiver!

"Poor old Coker!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"He, he, he!" from Bunter, curled up in an armchair before the fire. "I say, you fellows, is Coker still going? He, he, he! I jolly well ain't going to tell him! He, he, he!"

"Still keeping it dark that you spotted his fiver?" asked Bob, chuckling.

"Yes, rather!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The darkness will not continue to be terrific!" chortled Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "As soon as the ridiculous rain stops, we are going to look for that absurd fiver, my esteemed and idiotic Bunter!"

Billy Bunter sat up.

"I say, you fellows, don't you do anything of the kind!" he exclaimed. "I tell you, I ain't going to let Coker know! Smacking a fellow's nut—"

"Coker's got to know, ass!" said Harry Wharton. "Something might happen to his banknote—it won't stay stuck up in that tree for ever."

"It's safe enough there," said Bunter. "That's all right. Besides, what does it matter about Coker's fiver? Blow Coker!"

"Fathead! We're going to get it down and hand it over to Coker!" said Bob Cherry. "You ought to have told him—"

"He smacked my head!" roared Bunter.

"Nothing in it to damage, was there?"

"Beast! He kicked me—" Bunter heaved himself out of the armchair, excited and wrathful. "I say, you fellows, you leave that fiver alone! Let Coker go on hunting for it. Serve him right! I tell you it's safe enough up

in the tree, and I don't care whether it is or not, see?"

Gilbert Tracy, who was leaning by the window, staring moodily out into the quad, glanced round at Bunter.

The effect of Quelch's cane was wearing off a little by that time; but Gilbert was not disposed to sit down yet. He had been standing there, scowling into the rain, for some time in silence—the expression on his face not encouraging other fellows to speak to him.

But Gilbert came out of his black and gloomy meditations now. He had forgotten about that curious incident of Hazel coming out in the rain and clambering up the elm. It came back into his mind now. So far, he had heard nothing of Bunter's discovery, and now that he heard it startled him.

"What's that about Coker's fiver?" he asked, coming away from the window.

"Haven't you heard?" grinned Bob Cherry. "Bunter spotted that fiver sticking in one of the elms this morning in break—"

"Oh!" exclaimed Gilbert.

"He's keeping it dark to pay Coker out for smacking his head! He's kept it dark by telling about fifty fellows!" explained Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh!" repeated Gilbert. "But how could Bunter have seen it if it was up a tree?"

"He got up the tree to get away from Coker, it seems," said Harry Wharton, "and while he was in it he spotted the fiver—so he says."

"Oh, does he remember which elm it was?"

"That slanting elm near the wall, according to Bunter. Anyhow, we're jolly well going to see whether the fiver's there or not."

"You jolly well ain't!" roared Bunter, in great wrath. "Look here, you beast, you leave that fiver alone! Coker can go on hunting for it, after smacking my head and booting a fellow on his trousers—"

"Coker's done enough hunting, old fat man. Besides, something may happen to the banknote," said Harry.

"Jolly likely, I think, now that Bunter knows it's there!" chuckled Skinner.

"Why, you beast, Skinner!" roared the fat Owl. "Think I'd touch Coker's fiver? I could have snaffled it, if I'd liked—only I couldn't let go, or I should have fallen down—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You fellows jolly well leave it alone—"

"You howling ass!" roared Bob Cherry. "It might blow away again! Think we can let Coker lose five pounds?"

"Blow Coker!"

"Blow Coker as much as you like—but he's got to have his fiver, you fat chump! That is, if it's there!"

"It's there all right—I saw it—"

"Well, you're such a blind owl and such a silly ass—"

"Beast!"

"Anyhow, if it's there, Coker's got to have it," said Harry Wharton, "and the sooner it's safe, the better. Come on—the rain's nearly stopped."

"I say, you fellows—" yelled Bunter.

"Rats!"

"I say, hold on!" roared Bunter. "I tell you—Beasts! I say—Rot-ter! I say—"

Billy Bunter rolled after the crowd of juniors as they streamed out of the Rag in a state of great excitement and wrath.

Every fellow was glad to get out of doors after the rain, and most of them were curious to learn whether Coker's fiver really was stuck up in the tree.

Gilbert Tracy followed them more slowly.

Hazel was not among the crowd of fellows—he noticed that. Hazel did not need to look to learn whether that fiver was in the tree or not! Hazel knew!

Gilbert did not need telling now why Hazel had cut out of the House in the rain to pick out that special tree to climb—he did not need telling what it was that Hazel had shoved hastily into his pocket in the tree, or why his face had been so ghastly as he ran from the spot afterwards.

Gilbert's own face was a little pale as he went out into the quad after the crowd of Remove fellows.

They were going to investigate, now that the rain had stopped. Gilbert knew that it had been left too late. That fiver, he knew, was no longer in the tree, where Bunter had seen it—it was in the pocket of Marjorie Hazeldene's brother! That was the only possible explanation of what he had seen under the elms in the rain.

Was it possible that Hazel had taken it to hand it back to Coker? He was hardly the fellow to take so much trouble for a fellow in another Form whom he hardly knew! Besides, Coker was still searching for that lost fiver—obviously, it had not been handed back to him!

Gilbert remembered that talk on the towpath that he had interrupted—Hazel's terror and Soapy's jeering threats! Hazel owed the man money, which he could not pay—he was in mortal dread of Soapy carrying out his threat to see Mr. Quelch! It was easy for Tracy to follow the wretched fellow's thoughts when he had heard of Bunter's discovery—he had seen a way—a dreadful way—out of his overwhelming difficulty.

Gilbert Tracy was a bad hat—he was the "worst boy in the Remove"—Hazel's reputation, as the fellow had sneeringly told him, was very much better than his. But Gilbert, in his very worst moment, could never have done a thing like this!

He could hardly believe, indeed, that Hazel had done it! If he had, he must have been almost out of his wits with funk. If he had taken the banknote, surely he would have decency enough, sense enough, to realise what he was doing, before he parted with it.

Marjorie Hazeldene's brother—a thief! Found out, perhaps, and expelled—on such a charge! Gilbert felt sick at heart. He could picture Marjorie's face, when she heard such news as that—he could imagine her feelings—that frank, kind-hearted girl, to whom he owed it that he was no longer an outcast in his school. Had Hazel done this?

Gilbert knew that he had—what he had seen left no doubt—and, "worst boy at Greyfriars" as he was, there was little he would not have given for that banknote to turn up where Billy Bunter had seen it.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

No Fiver!

"I SAY, you fellows!"
 "Shut up, you fat ass!"
 "But I say—" yelled Bunter. Unheeding the yelling fat Owl, Harry Wharton & Co. went on their way, a dozen other fellows going with them.



Hanging on to the branch, Bunter heaved up his weight. Smack after smack landed as he did so, and Bunter kicked out backwards. Bang! "Ooooooch!" Coker was taken by surprise when the heel of Bunter's shoe landed hard on his nose.

Billy Bunter rolled after them, his fat face crimson with wrath and indignation.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's jolly old Coker!" grinned Bob Cherry.

Coker of the Fifth loomed up in the distance, stooping over the chain of the Sixth Form green—trying his luck in a new quarter.

"Give him a yell!" said Johnny Bull. "He's got to know—"

"Beast!" howled Bunter. "I tell you, Coker ain't going to know—"

"Fathead!"

"Ass!"

"Ring off, Bunter!"

Unheeding the indignant and spluttering Owl, Bob Cherry put his hands to his mouth to form a trumpet, and roared:

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, Horace, old pippin!"

Coker glared round. Then he came towards the juniors with an expressive expression on his rugged features.

He was not in a good temper! Rooting in the rain for something that could not be found was not calculated to improve any fellow's temper. He still had painful twinges in his nose. And he did not like being yelled at by a fag in the quad—especially by the name of Horace, and as an old pippin! He came striding towards the Removites with the intention, plainly indicated in his face, of strewing Bob Cherry over the quad in an extremely damaged condition.

"You cheeky little sweep—" he hooted, as he came.

"Pax, old thing!" grinned Bob. "We've got a clue to the fiver, Coker!"

"Oh!" said Coker. "Seen it?"

"Bunter has! Cough it up, Bunter!"

"Beast!"

"You've seen my fiver, Bunter?" exclaimed Coker. He forgot his intention of strewing Bob Cherry over the

quad. He was very, very keen for news of that lost fiver.

"Oh, no! How could I have seen it, Coker? I haven't the faintest idea where it is!" squeaked Bunter. "Not the foggiest! I certainly never saw it sticking in that elm—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Nothing of the kind!" declared Bunter. "I say, you fellows, there's nothing to cackle at! I don't know anything about Coker's fiver—my mind's a perfect blank!"

"Have you got my fiver?" roared Coker.

"No!" roared back Bunter. "Blow your fiver, and you, too! I say, you fellows, keep that beast off!" Bunter dodged round the Famous Five.

"You howling ass!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Can't you get it into your fat head that Coker's got to know about his fiver?"

"I tell you I don't know anything about it!" howled Bunter. "I never saw it in that tree, and I wasn't keeping it dark to pay Coker out—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You saw it in a tree!" ejaculated Coker. "That tree you shinned up this morning, you potty young ass?"

"Yes; I mean, no! Certainly not! I never saw it, and it wasn't stuck in a hole in the trunk—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You spotted it and never told me!" roared Coker.

"Catch me telling you, you beast, when you pitched into a chap!" hooted Bunter. "I'm jolly well not going to tell you now, either!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, I'll smash you!" gasped Coker. "Here I've been hunting all over the shop, and you knew all the time!" He made a rush at the fat Owl and grasped him by the collar. "Now show me where the fiver is, you young scoundrel!"

"Yaroooooh!"

"Where is it?" roared Coker.

"Leggo! I don't know! Ow! Leave off shaking me, you beast! I don't mind telling you where it is!" howled Bunter. "I—I was just going to! Wow!"

Even Bunter realised that the secret of that fiver was not to be kept dark any longer! Coker's grasp on his fat neck convinced him of that!

Spluttering in Coker's grasp, he led the way to the slanting elm by the school wall.

The juniors followed with grinning faces.

"Now, where is it?" snorted Coker.

"Up that tree!" gurgled Bunter.

"Leggo! There's a hollow place in the wood, just over that branch— Ow! It's sticking in among a lot of dead leaves— Wow! Will you leggo, you beast?"

Coker glared at him doubtfully, and then stared up into the tree. The trunk was wet with recent rain, and drops fell from the branches. It was not a pleasant climb for any fellow. It was worth it, certainly, to recover a five-pound note. But Coker did not feel at all sure that Bunter really had seen that lost banknote sticking in such a place.

"Well, I'll see!" he said, at last. "If you're trying to pull my leg, I'll smash you—"

"Beast!"

Coker released Bunter's collar, and turned to the elm. The juniors watched him as he clambered up. It was wet and clammy and unpleasant, but it was an easy enough climb for Coker.

He straddled the branch that Bunter

indicated, and scanned the trunk. There was a hollow in the old wood, as Bunter had stated. It was half-full of damp, dead leaves. But there was no sign of a banknote there.

Coker breathed wrath.

That fiver might have blown anywhere. Certainly, it might have blown into a tree and stayed there. Still, it was an unlikely place. And no fiver was to be seen. It was natural, in the circumstances, for Coker to conclude that his leg had been pulled.

"Got it, Coker?" called up Bob Cherry.

"No!" roared Coker. "It's not here!"

"Bunter says he saw it there!" said Harry Wharton. "Is there a hollow over that branch?"

"Yes; and a lot of dead leaves in it!" snorted Coker. "There's nothing else!"

"Bunter, you ass—"

"Bunter, you fathead—"

"Bunter, you chump—"

"I say, you fellows, it's there!" exclaimed Bunter. "At least, it was in break this morning! Perhaps it's under the leaves!"

Coker, breathing hard, groped in the hollow in the elm wood. He disinterred damp dead leaves—but nothing else!

"Can't you find it?" asked Bob.

"It's not there, as you jolly well knew!" roared Coker. "You wait till I get down! I'll give you sending me up a tree for nothing!"

"Bunter, you chump—"

"Bunter, you blithering owl—"

"I suppose the blind Owl saw something there, and fancied that it was the fiver!" said Vernon-Smith. "If he'd seen it, it would be there now!"

"I say, you fellows, I saw it all right!" exclaimed Bunter. "I saw the figure £5 on it! It was a fiver—"

Coker dropped from the elm, damp and grubby and worse-tempered than ever.

His face was red with wrath. There was no fiver in that hollow over the branch in the elm trunk. Coker did not believe that there ever had been a fiver there. He believed that the playful juniors were pulling his leg—setting him to climb a tree for nothing! Which was more than enough to rouse Coker's deepest ire.

"I jolly well knew that it wasn't there!" he gasped. "I thought I'd look—but I knew it wasn't. If you think you can jape a Fifth Form man like this—"

"You silly ass!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "We thought it was there—Bunter said— Yaroooooh!"

Smack!

"Coker, you silly fathead—" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

Smack!

"Collar him!" roared Bob.

Coker, in his wrath, was smacking heads right and left. He seemed to find solace in it! Coker's leg was not to be pulled with impunity—not if Horace Coker knew it! Coker would probably have gone on smacking heads for quite a long time had he not been interrupted.

But he was—promptly and efficiently! Coker was grabbed on all sides and bumped down at the foot of the elm! He was rolled over, his cap was stuffed down the back of his neck, and he was left, finally, with his features reposing in a puddle left by the rain.

In a dizzy, dazed, breathless, and bewildered state, Coker was left to sort himself out. He sat up, wet and muddy and rumpled, his face streaming with mud from the puddle, and gurgled.

When he resumed the perpendicular, at last, Coker decided to go in and get

a wash before he resumed rooting after that elusive fiver!

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

On The Brink!

HAZEL moved to and fro restlessly in his study.

Every now and then he paused and glanced from the window. The rain had stopped; there was a glimmer of sunshine. But it was not the rain that had kept him indoors. He had not decided what he was going to do—and he could not decide.

There was a damp, crumpled banknote in his pocket. But whether he was going to hand over that banknote to Soapy Smith or not, Hazel did not know.

The wretched junior's brain was in a whirl! He had come back from that interview on the towpath in a state of miserable despair. He had had a narrow escape, and he owed it to Tracy—a fellow he disliked. But he gave that little or no thought. Quelch might as well have copped him on the towpath with Soapy Smith—if Quelch was going to know!

He had sat in the Rag, in a state of moody misery, when he heard Bunter's talk, and it had seemed to him, at the moment, like a gleam of light. That fool, Coker, had fivers to throw about, and he needed only half as much to see him through with Soapy—three pounds, to be exact. Coker might never have found that fiver—and he could afford to lose it, or twice as much, while another fellow was in danger of being kicked out of the school for want of a miserable three pounds!

It was not till Hazel had climbed the elm, taken the banknote from the hollow, and cut off with it in his pocket, that he quite realised what he was doing. Since then he had been wandering restlessly about his study in a state of mental torment that was a full punishment for his dingy rascality.

Would Soapy carry out his threat? He had had two pounds from Hazel; he had to have another three! He would get nothing, if he gave the wretched fellow away! Most likely it was an empty threat; but Hazel, shuddering, knew that he dared not take the chance.

He owed the money. He had put five pounds on that wretched horse—two in cash, three on his word. His word was worth nothing—unless Soapy would wait till something turned up!

Marjorie might be able to help him, as she had helped him before, given time. Or he might be able to borrow the money up and down the Remove. He had been through this kind of trouble before, more than once, and something or other had always turned up. But Soapy would not wait any longer, and if he saw Quelch—

At that awful thought Hazel turned to the door, his mind almost made up! But he stopped again!

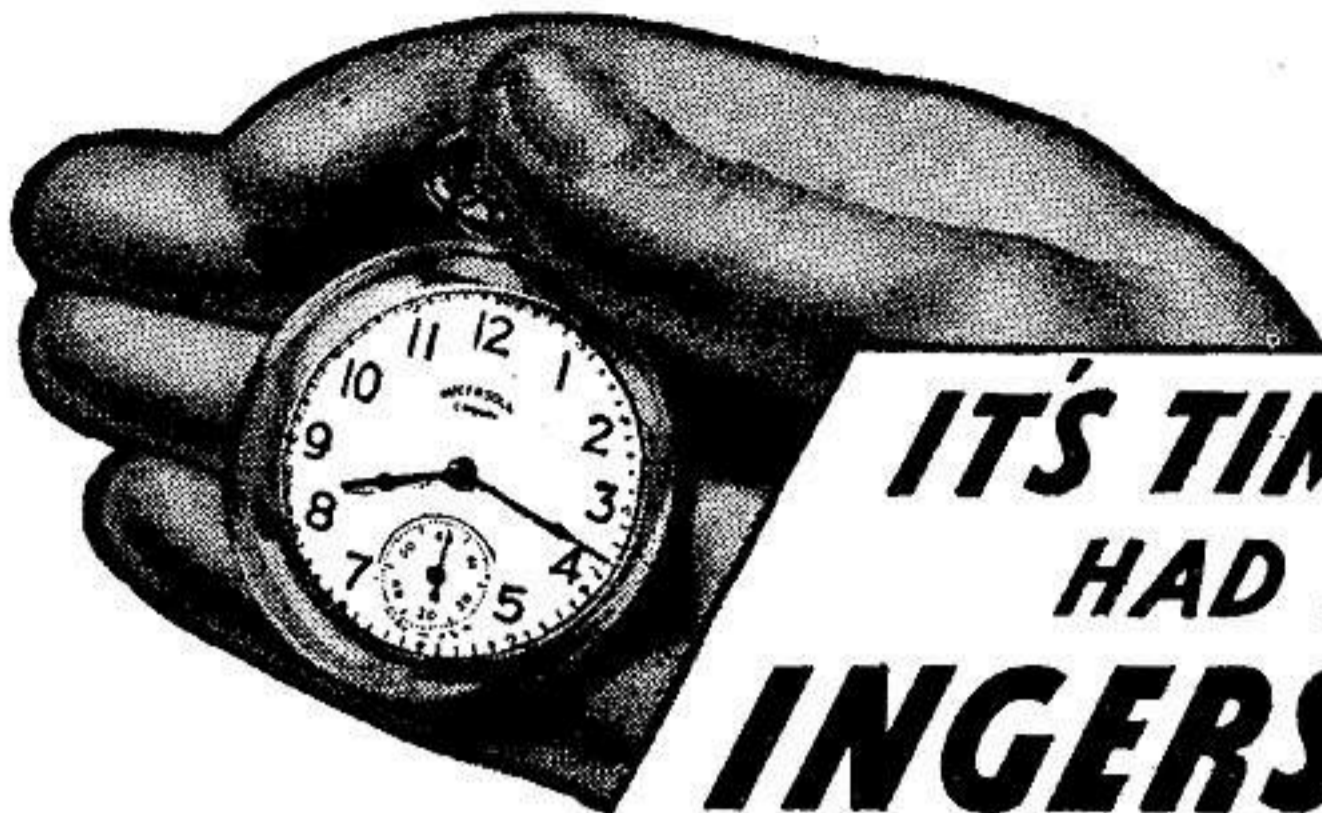
So long as that banknote was in his pocket there was still time to hand it over to Coker—and he was not a thief! Once he had parted with it—

On the other hand, Soapy— His mind tossed to and fro in torment!

Already it was too late to get to Soapy, at the Three Fishers, and get back for lock-up. He would have to get out after calling-over and before prep—easy enough, in the dark—if he went at all! But was he going? He could not tell!

He wished that he had never heard Bunter's silly cackle. He wished that he had left the banknote where it was—and yet, if he had, he was lost, if

(Continued on page 24.)



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Soapy did give him away. He had the money now, at any rate, though it was not his own. Nobody would ever know!

How could anybody know? Most likely the fellows would think that Bunter had made one of his usual idiotic mistakes when the fiver was not, after all, found where he had seen it. Anyhow, who was going to guess that Hazel had gone out in the rain and secured it? Nobody! Nobody would know—only himself. It was his own conscience that he had to fear!

What was he going to do? He simply did not know! But at the bottom of his heart was a shuddering conviction that that five-pound note would find its way into Soapy Smith's hands!

He gave an angry snarl at the sound of a footstep outside the door. He supposed that it was his study-mate, Tom Brown, coming up. He did not want Brown's company—or anybody's—just now.

But there was a tap at the door. It was not Brown! Hazel stared angrily and savagely at Gilbert Tracy as he came in.

"What do you want?" His voice was shrill, almost hysterical. "Get out of my study. I don't want you here!"

Gilbert, unheeding, shut the door. He stood with his back to it, looking at Hazeldene.

The winter dusk was beginning to fall; the study was growing dusky. Hazel's face showed white as a sheet.

"You cheeky fool! What do you want? Who asked you here?" shrilled Hazel. "Get out, before I pitch you out!"

"I've come to speak to you," said Gilbert quietly.

"Another sermon—from you!" said Hazel savagely. "I told you in the Rag this morning to mind your own business!"

Gilbert's lip curled.

"Did you want me to mind my own business on the towpath this afternoon?" he asked sarcastically. "Quelch would have had you in another minute."

"No bizney of yours!" snarled Hazel.

"The old ass fancied I was there to meet that man Smith, as you were safely out of sight!" sneered Gilbert. "He sent me in—gated for the afternoon."

"Did he? I don't care if he did!"

"No, I suppose you don't," agreed Gilbert. "Precious little you care about, except your rotten self, you worm!"

Hazel panted, clenching his hands.

"If you don't get out of my study I'll—" he muttered thickly.

"Oh, shut up!" said Gilbert roughly.

"I'm not here on your account, Hazeldene. You could get yourself sacked, or sent to Borstal, if it was only you. But your sister—"

"My sister! What do you mean?"

"Do you think I don't know what Marjorie Hazeldene would feel like if her brother was sacked from Greyfriars for stealing?" snapped Gilbert.

Hazel's heart stood still.

"Stealing! Are you mad? What do you mean?" he asked huskily.

"I mean that I saw you take Coker's banknote from where Bunter saw it," snapped Gilbert, "and I mean that I've come here to stop you! I mean that your sister did me a good turn—a better turn than she ever understood—and that I'm going to see that you don't disgrace her!"

Hazeldene staggered.

"You—you saw—"

"Yes."

"It—it's a lie! A lie!" breathed Hazel. "I never— Where were you, if you saw— But you did not—"

His voice trailed off. He leaned on

the study table—he would have fallen but for its support—and stared across it at Gilbert Tracy, trembling from head to foot.

He had told himself that nobody knew—that nobody could know. And Gilbert Tracy knew—he had seen him!

"You've got that five-pound note in your pocket now," said Tracy quietly. "You're not going to take it out of the school, Hazeldene!"

Hazel's lips parted for a denial. But he could not speak. He could only stare in fear and horror at the fellow who knew! The contempt in Tracy's face did not affect him much.

He was hardly conscious of anything but fear. He leaned weakly on the table, feeling as if every ounce of strength had deserted his limbs, his eyes fastened on Tracy's face.

"Have a little sense!" went on Gilbert, more gently. "I can guess what you've taken it for, after what I heard that racing man saying on the towpath. That frowsy rascal would never dare to go to Quelch! Have a spot of sense!"

Hazel did not speak.

"Look here—" Gilbert paused, but he went on. "Look here, you must have been mad to think of such a thing. You needn't be afraid that I'm going to give you away. I think too much of your sister for that. But you've got to stop! See? I'm going to stop you from being a thief—though I'm the worst fellow at Greyfriars!" added Gilbert, with a sneer.

"I—I—"

Hazel's voice cracked.

"You can't use Coker's money, Hazel, whatever sort of fix you're in! Suppose it came out—it might, even if I said nothing! Haven't you decency enough to think of your sister? Do you think she could ever hold her head up again if—"

"You rotter!" muttered Hazel. "I—I never—"

"Oh, cut that out!" interrupted Gilbert contemptuously. "You've got that five-pound note in your pocket now. You're going to hand it over to me to take to Coker before I leave this study. But—" He paused, and went on: "Look here, I can help you through! I'm in funds, for once, and I'm willing to help. How much do you want?"

Hazel caught his breath.

He did not speak—he only stared blankly at the "worst boy at Greyfriars."

"Cough it up!" snapped Gilbert. "Look here, I've got three pounds—a tip from my pater—Quelch never knew, or he'd have stopped it—but I've got it, see? Will it see you through?"

Hazel found his voice.

"Yes!" he whispered. "I—I had a fiver on Peep o' Day—and—and—and he lost—but—but I've paid two pounds off it—I could only manage that much, and Soapy's had that—"

"And it whetted his appetite for more?" sneered Gilbert. "He thinks that if you squeezed out two quids, you can squeeze out three to follow—if he frightens you enough? You're pretty easy to scare."

Hazeldene winced.

Gilbert thrust his hand into his pocket. Hazel watched him in amazed and doubting silence. Tracy laid three pound notes on the table, and Hazel stared at them, hardly able to believe his eyes.

All the Remove knew that Tracy was hard up in recent weeks; but if he had been as wealthy as when he first came to the school, Hazel would never have dreamed of getting help from him. He stared and stared at the currency notes.

"Is that all right?" asked Gilbert.

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Hazel nodded.
 "It will see you through?"
 Another nod.
 "Shove it in your pocket, then—and give me that fiver!"
 "I—I—" Hazel stammered, with a burning face.
 "You fool!" snapped Gilbert. "I'm going to see that Coker gets it! Hand it over and let me get out of this!"
 Hazel, crimson, drew the damp, crumpled banknote from his pocket. He did not want it now—he was, indeed, glad to get rid of it! But his face burned with shame as he dropped it on the table.
 "I—I wasn't going to—to—" he stammered. "I—I think I—I should have taken it to—to Coker—I—I never meant to—"

"Well, it's going to Coker now," grunted Gilbert. He dropped the crumpled note into his pocket, and turned to the door. "All right now?"
 "Yes," breathed Hazel, "and—and—I—I say— Thanks!"
 "Oh, rot!"
 Gilbert left the study.
 Hazel, with shaking fingers, picked up the three pound notes, and stowed them in his pocket. A mountain seemed to have rolled from his mind and his heart. Why Tracy had done this, he could hardly imagine. But he had done it—stopping him on the very brink. It was all clear now.
 Gilbert, as he went down the passage, grinned sarcastically—at himself!

The bad hat of the Remove was stony again; there was going to be no high old time with Pon & Co. out of school bounds. But he had saved Marjorie's brother from becoming what, when his terror was once past, Hazel would have shuddered to think of. Marjorie would never know; Hazel, in a few days, would forget all about it. The worst boy at Greyfriars had played, for once, the part of the "good angel"—and Gilbert grinned at the idea with sardonic amusement.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.
Finding A Fiver!

"I SAY, you fellows—"
 "You fat ass!"
 "I tell you it's there—"
 "Coker's looked, you owl!"
 "Well, you know what a fool Coker is," said Billy Bunter. "It's jolly well there! I jolly well know that! One of you fellows climb up and look!"
 "Fathead!"
 No fellow was likely to clamber up a wet and clammy tree to look for something that was not there. Coker had looked. He had found the hollow in the old elm wood; he had groped among the dead leaves packed therein; and he had failed to find any banknote among them. Obviously, if the fiver had ever been there at all, it was no longer there.
 "Well, it's there!" declared Bunter. "I saw it there! Coker can leave it there if he likes—he, he, he! But it's there all right."
 "If it ever was there, it's blown away again!" said Bob Cherry.
 "But it couldn't!" said Bunter. "I tell you it was jammed among the leaves. It's jolly well there, unless somebody's found it and pinched it!"
 "You blithering owl!" roared Bob.
 "Oh, really, Cherry—"
 "You burbling bandersnatch—"
 "Oh, really, Wharton—"
 "You terrific idiot—"
 "Oh, really, Inky—"
 "Might as well have a look, to make sure!" drawled Gilbert Tracy. Gilbert had come out of the House and joined the Remove fellows in the quad.
 "What rot!" said Bob. "Think even an ass like Coker would have missed it, if it had been there?"
 "Well, Bunter thinks—"
 "No, he doesn't; he's got nothing to do it with!"
 "Beast!"
 "Well, I'm going to look!" said Gilbert; and he walked away towards the slanting elm by the school wall.
 Billy Bunter rolled after him, and three or four other fellows followed. Nobody was keen on scrambling up into a tree dripping with rain; but if Gilbert was prepared to do so, they were willing to see the result. Nobody, certainly, expected him to find the fiver there. Coker of the Fifth was well known to be a fathead; but even a fathead like Coker could hardly have missed an object right under his nose.
 Gilbert, however, knew what he was about!
 Bunter, at least, knew that the banknote had been there, and that it could not have blown away from where he had seen it. Already he was declaring that, if it was not there, it must have been found and pinched—as, in fact, it

(Continued on next page.)

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had been. The less that was said on that subject, the better, in the circumstances. The banknote had to go back to Coker—and this was an easy way!

Gilbert scrambled up the dripping trunk, with half a dozen pairs of eyes, and one pair of spectacles, fixed on him.

He clambered on the branch, and there was a gurgle from Billy Bunter as a shower of raindrops scattered over his upturned fat face.

"Oooooogh!"

The winter dusk was falling, and it was deeply shadowy in the tree. No one was likely to observe that there was something folded in Gilbert's hand as he thrust it into the hollow in the trunk over the jutting branch.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Gilbert.

"Found anything?" called up Bob Cherry.

"I say, you fellows, it's there——"

"Fathead!"

"Look here!" called out Gilbert, and the fellows under the tree stared up in blank astonishment as he held out a hand with a slip of flimsy paper held between finger and thumb!

"What——"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Is that Coker's fiver?" yelled Bob.

"Great pip!"

"I say, you fellows, I told you——"

"Looks like a fiver!" drawled Gilbert.

"Not likely to be anybody's but Coker's, I suppose?"

"It's Coker's all right, if it's a fiver!" said Bob Cherry. "My only hat! Mean to say that it was there all the time, and Coker left it there? Well, if that ain't the jolly old limit!"

"Well, it's a fiver."

Gilbert scrambled down the tree—rather wet and grubby, but grinning. He held up a banknote for the general inspection.

The juniors stared at it blankly. It was a five-pound note—obviously Coker's missing fiver. A dozen fellows gathered round to stare at it.

"Well, that takes the whole cake!" said Johnny Bull. "Coker's a blithering idiot, but fancy——"

"Fancy even Coker——"

"Even that ass——"

"Even that footling fathead——"

"It's the fiver all right!"

"Right under his nose——"

"And he missed it——"

"Ha, ha, ha! Good old Coker!"

"I say, you fellows, I told you it was there! I jolly well knew it was!" squeaked Billy Bunter. "I jolly well saw it——"

A laughing crowd of juniors trooped off to the House.

Horace Coker—newly washed—was coming out to have one last look round for that elusive fiver before lock-up. He bestowed a deadly glare on the laughing Removites. He was more than half-inclined to charge that merry crowd and recommence smacking heads all round.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Coker!"

"Still looking for that fiver, Coker?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cheeky fags!" began Coker.

"I—why—what—what—what's that?"

He stared as Gilbert Tracy held out a damp and crumpled banknote. "Oh!

Ah! Is—is—is that the fiver?"

"Sort of!" assented Tracy.

"Oh!" gasped Coker.

He took the banknote and stared at it. It was the lost fiver; there was no mistake about that. The truculent glare faded from Horace's face. Undoubtedly he was very glad to get that fiver back.

"Where did you find it?" he gasped.

"Guess!" said Gilbert, and he walked

away, leaving Coker with the banknote in his hand, still staring at it.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you fags cackling at?"

grunted Coker. "Nothing to cackle at in my fiver being found, is there?"

"Well, just a few!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "You see, Tracy found it up that tree, where Bunter told you it was——"

"Rot!" said Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I looked!" hooted Coker.

"With your eyes shut?" asked Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good old Coker!"

"Good old fathead!"

And the Remove fellows left Coker, staring at the fiver in his hand, glad that it was found, but very much surprised to learn that it had been found up that tree where he had looked for it.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

In The Dark.

HAZEL suppressed a whimper of terror.

It was very dark in the quad; long past lock-up.

All Greyfriars fellows were supposed to be in the House. Any fellow found out of the House after lock-up, without special leave, was booked for trouble. But Hazel was out of the House—on his way out of the school—when a murmur of voices from the shadows startled him almost out of his wits, and he crammed himself close to the damp trunk of an old elm, shuddering with terror.

Two voices reached his ears—one that of Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars; the other the dreaded voice of the Remove master. The latter struck a chill to his heart.

After calling-over, Hazel had looked for a chance of getting away unseen. There was plenty of time, between lock-up and prep, to make his expedition to the inn up the river, and get back—and little danger, if he was cautious, of getting spotted. Most of the Remove fellows were in the Rag, some in the studies, when Hazel crept away to the back box-room and slipped from the window and down from the leads below it.

It was a fine night after the rain of the afternoon, but very dark, with hardly a star glimmering in the winter sky. Hazel was glad of the darkness, when he heard footsteps and voices at hand.

He trembled as he crouched by the tree in the darkness.

What had brought a Form-master and a prefect out of the House he did not know. He was sure that he was not suspected. Quelch had learned, certainly, that the fellow whose cap he had spotted over the gate of the Three Fishers last Saturday was not Tracy; but he had no idea who it was. Hazel, thanks to Marjorie's bicycle, had got in before Quelch, and had been watching the football when he came in.

He was not suspected, but some sort of suspicion was in the air; he realised that. He crouched and shivered and listened.

He had to get to the Three Fishers without a moment's delay. If Soapy carried out his threat, he might carry it out at any moment; and now he had the money he needed to settle with the sharper. He had to see Soapy Smith without the delay of an unnecessary moment. He dreaded that the blow might fall before he could see him, even now.

But as that sharp, metallic voice came to his ears, he almost forgot Soapy in his terror of discovery. What would

Quelch think if he found him out of the House now? He would hardly need telling the name of the junior he had almost caught on Saturday.

He crammed himself close to the damp trunk, and listened feverishly for the voices and footsteps to pass on.

But they did not pass on. To Hazel's utter horror they came to a halt in the shadow of the tree under which he was hidden.

Only the trunk of that elm was between him and his Form-master. Even in the darkness he would have been discerned but for that. He tried to suppress his breathing.

"The matter is serious, Wingate!" It was Quelch's voice. "I am sorry to take up your time——"

"Not at all, sir!"

"That the boy will make some attempt to break bounds, I am practically certain. I have every reason to believe so."

Hazel's heart almost died within his breast. Did Quelch know?

"This afternoon," went on Mr. Quelch, "I came on him on the tow-path, going in the direction of that disreputable establishment which it is known that he has visited before."

Hazel breathed again. This could not refer to him.

"I kept him under observation, as I was going in the same direction," said Mr. Quelch, "and I came upon him suddenly, with a very bad and disreputable character—a man named, I believe, Smith—a habitue of the Three Fishers—a disreputable hanger-on at the races."

Hazel knew now of whom the Remove master was speaking.

"I've seen the man, sir," came Wingate's voice. "If the young rascal has had dealings with him——"

"I can have no doubt of it, Wingate. As I did not find him in actual conversation with the man, I simply sent him back to the school, with orders to remain within gates. Owing to the rain, I turned back from my walk, and on my return actually saw Tracy dropping from the school wall, under my very eyes. He was, of course, punished."

There was a grim note in Quelch's voice as he said that.

"But in the circumstances I have little doubt—no doubt—that the boy will make some fresh attempt to get into communication with that rogue," went on Mr. Quelch. "He has been twice prevented this very day, and he is so reckless, so insubordinate, so unscrupulous, that I entertain not the slightest doubt that he will take the first opportunity of breaking bounds to carry out his purpose."

"I quite understand, sir."

"I desire some observation to be kept, Wingate, and——" Mr. Quelch broke off suddenly. "What was that?"

Hazel's heart missed a beat. Some faint sound—perhaps his hurried breathing—had caught the ear of the Remove master.

"I heard nothing, sir."

"I am sure I heard something. The boy may be out of the House at this very moment, Wingate. Have you your flash-lamp?"

"Yes, sir; here it is!"

Hazel made a desperate spring to escape. In another moment the pocket-lamp would have been flashing through the darkness.

There was a sharp exclamation from Mr. Quelch as he heard the running footsteps.

"Listen! Upon my word! Wingate, the light!"

A sudden beam of light shot through the dark. Master and prefect had a moment's glimpse of a running figure

before it vanished round the angle of a building.

"Tracy!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "Wingate, follow that boy—quick!"

Hazel bounded on frantically. He was not thinking of getting out of bounds now. Any Remove fellow who was out would be missed immediately. Quelch went in. He was only thinking of getting back into the House before he could be caught, and before his absence could be discovered.

In a few minutes he was scrambling breathlessly up to the leads under the box-room window. A light flashed on his heels as he clambered. Wingate was not far behind.

"Wingate!" came Quelch's calling voice.

"Here, sir. He has climbed the leads."

"Did you see him?"
"Only his heels as he went, sir. It was a junior."

There was a sound of a slamming window above.

Mr. Quelch set his lips in a hard line.

"That is the Remove box-room," he said. "It was a Remove boy, and I cannot doubt which. You see, Wingate, that I was not mistaken. The boy was actually out of the House while I was speaking to you."

"He has got in, sir."

Mr. Quelch nodded and hurried away. Nearly, very nearly, had he caught that young rascal, and he had no doubt of that young rascal's name. He hurried back to the House.

Meanwhile, Hazel, breathless, had cut down from the box-room and scuttled to his study.

He threw himself into the armchair and picked up a book—to be thus innocently occupied if an official eye looked in. But he was not reading. He was listening, with beating heart, for the dreaded sound of his Form-master's footsteps in the Remove passage.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

No Catch!

"WHARTON!"
"Yes, sir!"
"I require to see Tracy at once! Do you know where he is?"

"I think he's in the study, sir!"
Gilbert Tracy was sitting at the table in Study No. 1 in the Remove. He was writing—an answer to his father's

letter. But he laid down the pen as he heard the voice of Mr. Quelch.

The study door was half-open. Some of the Remove fellows were talking on the landing when Mr. Quelch came up. His voice sounded breathless, as if he had been in haste.

"In your study, Wharton?"
"I think so, sir! I haven't seen him for some time."

"Probably not!" said Mr. Quelch grimly.

He whisked on up the Remove passage, leaving Harry Wharton & Co. staring. His tread came swiftly up the passage—a sound of terror to the wretched junior in Study No. 2, but bringing only a scowl of sullen defiance to the brow of the rebel of the Remove.

Quelch was after him—why, Gilbert did not know! The rebel of the Remove had an unusually clear conscience at the moment. Quelch possibly suspected that he was out of bounds—it was likely enough after the happenings of the afternoon, and was going to make sure.

A sneering grin crossed Gilbert's face. It was plainly visible there when, a few moments later, Mr. Quelch looked into the study.

(Continued on next page.)

IS YOUR NAME HERE?

303 READERS WIN FREE FOOTBALLS!

September "Footer-Stamps" Result

THERE was another fine entry for the second "Footer-Stamps" (September) prize-giving, and readers are to be congratulated on the many good scores of "goals" made.

Actual winning scores proved to be all those of 38 "goals" and over, and their senders' names are given here. A Prize Football was sent off promptly to each of these winners.

We are now getting ready for the October prize-giving, and that list of winners will be given in our earliest possible issue.

R. Addison, Flixton; R. Adkins, Wallington; D. Allen, Urmston; J. Anforth, Burnley; G. Appleton, Leeds; F. Archer, Crayford; H. G. Armitage, Hitchin; H. W. Ashford, Birmingham; K. B. Ashton, Wembley; C. Athay, Weston-super-Mare; J. Atkins, Mersham; F. Ayling, Portsmouth; R. G. Baker, Croydon; R. N. Baker, Pulborough; W. Baker, London, W.; D. Ball, Bristol; E. Banks, Sheffield; A. Barber, Rochdale; R. Barker, Harrow; R. Barton, Woolton; I.O.W.; A. Batten, Ipswich; W. Beecham, Northfleet; H. Bennett, Edgware; J. Bennett, Barnet; C. Berry, Twickenham; E. F. Bianchi, Orpington; D. Bird, Birmingham; R. M. Blakeman, Witely; R. Blinman, Bristol; L. Blogg, Sutton; O. Borrow, Barmoor; J. M. Bray, King's Lynn; W. Braybrook, London, W.; H. Briggs, Nottingham; G. W. Bromage, Staines; A. Brooker, Reigate; C. C. Brown, Warboys; D. W. Brown, Whitley Bay; H. Brown, London, W.; P. S. Budge, Canterbury; G. Buxton, London, N.W.; S. Byrne, Liverpool; R. Campbell, Swansea; A. S. Carey, Leeds; D. Carter, London, S.W.; D. Carter, Upminster; G. Chapman, Northwich; J. Chapman, Bugbrooke; H. Chapple, Penzance; D. Charles, Plymouth; G. H. Clark, London, S.W.; L. Clark, London, E.2; R. Clark, Edinburgh; D. Cohen, Airth; J. Collins, Worcester; L. Collins, Enfield; J. M. Connock, West Byfleet; G. Constable, Willenhall; E. Cooper, Gt. Missenden; R. Cooper, Newton Abbot; F. Cother, Moreton-in-Marsh; L. Court, Croydon; J. W. Cox, Pontefract; P. W. Cracknell, Feltham; F. Crawley, London, N.; H. Creed, Sheffield; W. Crew, Chard; P. R. Cusack, Manchester; P. Dare, Honiton; F. Davies, Bushey; S. A. Davies, Llanelly; K. Davis, Hastings; R. J. Davis, Swindon; D. Dean, Hemel Hempstead; K. R. Denton, Clacton-on-Sea; V. Dicker, Newmarket; A. J. Dilley, Shefford; S. Dockerty, London, S.W.; G. K. Dodson, Newton-le-Willows; R. Downie, Liverpool; D. Dunphy, Epsom; W. H. Dymond, Hr. Shillingford; S. Eastment, Wolverhampton; K. Edge, Ashton-under-Lyne;

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Good "shooting" if you are a winner of a football; if not, see what you can do this month. 250 more Footballs are waiting in the November contest on page 2.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,605.

"Tracy! You are here!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

Gilbert lounged to his feet. His manner was as impertinent as he could venture to make it.

"Yes, sir! Did you want me?"

The gimlet eyes almost bored into him.

Quelch had hurried in after the escape of the breaker of bounds. He had not lost a moment. He had arrived almost breathless at the Remove studies. But he had little hope of intercepting that breaker of bounds before he cut down from the box-room. The fellow had had at least five minutes—and he could hardly have needed more than one.

Tracy was in his study—but Quelch had not the slightest doubt that he had been there only a few minutes—only since that breaker of bounds had cut down from the box-room, in fact!

He did not guess that in the very next study a scared junior was listening, with palpitating heart!

"How long have you been in this study, Tracy?"

"About twenty minutes, sir!"

"Tracy! Not more than five or six minutes ago a Remove boy was seen out of the House!"

There was a murmur in the passage. The juniors on the landing had followed their Form-master up the passage to see what was up.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Some fellows ask for it, and no mistake!"

"They do—they does!" grinned the Bounder.

"Have you been out of the House since lock-up, Tracy?"

"No, sir!"

"A boy—certainly a Remove boy—was seen by the head prefect and by me!" said Mr. Quelch. "He succeeded in re-entering the House by the window of the Remove box-room only a few minutes ago, Tracy."

"Did he, sir?" said Gilbert indifferently.

"You deny that it was you, Tracy?"

"Oh, certainly, sir! If you saw him, you know that it was not I!" said Gilbert coolly.

"What! You know very well, Tracy, that it was impossible to identify any person in the darkness. He was seen to climb in at the box-room window. It was a Remove boy! I cannot doubt that it was you, Tracy!"

The Remove fellows in the passage exchanged glances.

They had little more doubt on that subject than Mr. Quelch had. The wretched fellow trembling in Study No. 2 could have told them differently—but from Hazel there was no sound.

"Then you did not recognise him, sir?" asked Tracy.

He was thinking at once of Hazel. He was aware, if no one else was, that Marjorie's brother had urgent business out of school bounds. He had no doubt that it was Hazel who had been spotted out of the House, and it was a relief

to him to learn that the breaker, of bounds had not been identified.

Owing to that circumstance, Quelch's suspicions were concentrated on him. But for that, the rebel of the Remove did not care one straw—indeed, he preferred Quelch's suspicions to take the wrong direction.

That weak-kneed swab, who dabbled in vicious ways without having the courage to face the music, would have crumpled up and given himself away under the glare of those gimlet eyes.

"It was impossible to recognise the boy in the darkness, but I have no doubt on the subject!" said Mr. Quelch sternly.

"Indeed, sir!"

"Twice to-day you have been caught communicating, or attempting to communicate, with a disreputable racing man, Tracy! I have not the slightest doubt that you were making another attempt after lock-up!"

"Not at all, sir," said Gilbert coolly. "I haven't been out of the House since lock-up!"

"You do not expect me to take your word, Tracy?" snapped the Remove master contemptuously.

Gilbert set his lips. It was true that his word was worth little or nothing. But the contempt in his Form-master's face and tone stung him, all the same. Moreover, as it happened, he was telling the truth for once.

"If you won't take my word, sir, it's no use my saying anything!" he said sullenly. "I haven't been out of the House!"

"Some Remove boy has been out of the House, Tracy, and I can have no doubt that you were the boy!" said Mr. Quelch grimly. "I have no doubt that you climbed in at the box-room window and reached this study only a few minutes before I came here. But—" Mr. Quelch paused. "As the boy was not seen clearly enough to be identified, I shall not deal with you, Tracy!"

"Thank you, sir!" answered Gilbert, without taking the trouble to disguise a sneer.

The gimlet eyes glinted.

"But I warn you!" said Mr. Quelch, in a grinding voice. "I warn you that if you should be detected in such conduct, your punishment will be most severe—so severe that I think it will be a lesson even to you! I warn you to reflect upon that, Tracy!"

"Oh, certainly, sir!" said Gilbert. "Thank you so much, sir!"

Mr. Quelch seemed on the verge of choking. But he turned away without another word, and swept out of the Remove passage.

Gilbert shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, you must be a thumping ass, Tracy!" said Harry Wharton. "Why the dickens can't you be decent?"

"No good telling you that I haven't been out of the House?" asked Gilbert.

"Oh! If you haven't—"

"As it happens, I haven't!"

"Somebody has!" said Harry Wharton dryly. And he turned away—evidently not disposed to value Gilbert's word much more highly than Quelch did.

Gilbert gave another shrug and sat down to finish writing his letter. When he had finished it, he left the study and looked into the next—and met Hazel's startled glance.

"You fathead!" he said. "You'd better be a bit more careful! Next time Quelch may not think that it was I!"

And without waiting for a reply, the bad hat of the Remove walked away.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

After Lights Out!

HALF-PAST ten had chimed through the dim November night when Gilbert Tracy opened his eyes and lifted his head from his pillow.

He peered round him in the dimness of the Remove dormitory.

He had not been sleeping soundly. There were lingering twinges from the severe caning in Quelch's study that afternoon. Several times his eyes had opened—and now they opened again; but this time he had an impression that he had heard some sound of movement in the sleeping dormitory. The impression on his mind was that he had heard the soft and cautious closing of a door.

He sat up in bed.

If Smithy, or Skinner, or some other black sheep was "breaking out," it was no concern of his. But another thought was in his mind—Hazel! It had crossed his mind that Hazel, prevented from getting out before prep, might think of trying it on again after lights out. That thought had been in his mind when he had dropped off uneasily to sleep, and it came back at once as he awoke with the faint sound of a closing door in his ears.

There was barely a glimmer of light from the high windows. He could see nothing but the dim shapes of a long row of beds. No sound came to him now but the steady breathing of many sleepers and the rumbling snore of Billy Bunter.

It was not likely—surely it was not likely that Hazel would be such a fool! It was not much use saving Marjorie's brother from one disaster if he proceeded immediately to stumble into another. But surely Hazel would not be such a fool! With Quelch on the watch like a cat for a mouse, and the prefects warned to keep their eyes open for a breaker of bounds in the Remove—surely he would not take such a risk!

Gilbert laid his head on the pillow again. But once more he raised it. He slipped out of bed, sorted a tiny electric torch from a pocket of his jacket, folded his clothes at the bedside, and moved softly along the beds till he reached Hazel's. It was easy to make sure.

The tiny beam of light gleamed out on Hazel's bed.

Gilbert shut it off the next moment. He had seen enough. Hazel's bed was empty. His clothes were gone.

He stood breathing hard.

The fool—the utter fool!—was his reflection. Ten to one eyes were on the watch outside the House; a hundred to one Quelch would visit the dormitory if he had the slightest hint that a breaker of bounds was up.

True, his suspicion was fixed on Tracy, not on Hazel; but that would make no difference if he came to the Remove dormitory and found Hazel absent.

Gilbert shrugged his shoulders savagely.

He had done all he could for the wretched scapegrace; he could do no more. Let him take what was coming to him!

He moved back to his own bed.

But he did not turn in. He sat on the edge of the bed, thinking.

Hazel, on his own account, could take his chance: he cared nothing for him. But another thought was in his mind—another face rose before his mind's eye—a kind, friendly face; the only face that had been kind and friendly at a time

(Continued on page 30.)

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when he had been down and out, barred by his Form, an outcast in his school.

Hazel did not matter—but he was Marjorie's brother! He thought of Marjorie—if her brother was sacked from Greyfriars.

And it was the sack. Gilbert, owing to the peculiar terms on which he was at the school, was not in that danger; to him it was not a danger, but a chance of release. His punishment in such a case would be severe enough, but he would not leave Greyfriars. Had it been possible to get away by such means, he would have done so long ago.

But for any other fellow it was the sack. At Greyfriars, at every school, "breaking out" at night was a dire offence, unsparingly punished. If Hazel was caught he would be up before the Head in the morning to be expelled. What would Marjorie think of that?

That was the risk he was taking, in his miserable fear and terror. He had not dared to leave it till the morrow, and he had taken this risk!

But Gilbert realised that, to Hazel, it did not seem so much of a risk. He was not under suspicion.

If danger came it would not be on his own account, but on Tracy's. It was because Quelch suspected Tracy, that Hazel was in danger. And the wretched junior, concentrated on his own troubles and terrors, had not thought about that—probably he had forgotten all about Tracy.

But for Quelch's suspicion of Gilbert, he might have gone and returned in safety. But now—now there was dire danger.

Between lock-up and prep he had been almost caught because watch was kept for Gilbert. And now—

To follow him, to warn him, was impossible. Already he was out of the House—out of the school, most likely, speeding on his way to the Three Fishers. There was nothing that Gilbert could do.

But if Quelch, as was only too likely, was taking a walk round the House, with a keen eye and ear open, could Hazel have got away unseen, unheard?

The merest hint would be sufficient to bring Quelch up to the Remove dormitory, to ascertain whether a bed—especially Gilbert's bed—was empty. But there was nothing that Gilbert could do.

It crossed his mind to fix a dummy in Hazel's bed, to give the appearance of a sleeper there. But he knew that it was useless.

If Quelch had reason to believe that someone was out of the House, he would come up to investigate. If he found every bed occupied, he would not be fooled by so simple a device; he would look at every bed to ascertain whether every boy was present. A dummy in a bed would pass at a casual glance, not in a close and suspicious investigation. That was useless. If Quelch came up he would know.

"The fool!" breathed Gilbert. "The fool!"

Again he was tempted to go back to bed. He could do nothing; he was powerless to help Marjorie's brother now.

But he did not go back to bed. He sat on the edge, thinking and listening. Hazel might have got clear, unseen, unheard. He would be back in an hour or little more. But if Quelch came—

Some faint sound from the distance came to his listening ear. He rose, trod silently to the dormitory door, and opened it a couple of inches with hardly a sound, and listened again. The passage outside was dark, but from the direction of the landing at the end

came a glimmer of light. Faintly up the passage came a voice—Wingate's:

"... no doubt whatever, sir! I am sure I saw someone dodging round the corner by the Cloisters—"

"Very well, Wingate!" That was Quelch's grim voice. "I shall ascertain whether a boy is missing from the dormitory. I have little doubt."

Gilbert closed the door silently. There was no doubt now. Quelch was coming, and in another minute he would be opening the door and switching on the light.

Gilbert cut back towards his own bed. Then he stopped. Again he moved on, but it was not to turn into his bed. He gathered up his clothes, folded on a chair by the bedside, moved swiftly to Hazel's bed, and laid them down where Hazel's clothes should have been.

For one instant he hesitated. But it was only for one instant. Then he turned into Hazel's bed and drew the bedclothes over him.

He laid his head on the pillow, tucked the edge of the sheet round his neck, and arranged it to screen his face, half-buried in the pillow.

A dummy in the bed would not have deceived the Remove master. But a head on the pillow would be enough if he did not see the face.

Close investigation would reveal the trick, but close investigation was not to be feared if Quelch found an empty bed—Gilbert's.

It was Gilbert that he suspected—it was Gilbert's bed that would draw his first glance; and if he saw it empty, any further examination would only be cursory.

Marjorie's brother was not going to be sacked for breaking out at night! The "worst boy at Greyfriars" was going to face the music instead.

THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER.

One Man Missing!

MR. QUELCH opened the door of the Remove dormitory.

He pressed the switch, and a sudden flood of light illumined the long apartment from end to end.

The Remove master stepped in, with a grim face.

Some Greyfriars boy was out of bounds that night. It might be—he hoped it was—a member of some Form not his own. But he had little doubt.

He stepped directly towards Gilbert Tracy's bed.

One glance was enough.

That bed was empty—the bedclothes turned back as Tracy had left them when he got out—and Tracy's own clothes were gone!

Mr. Quelch stood looking grimly at that empty bed.

He had been prepared to find a dummy sleeper arranged there to deceive his eyes—which certainly would not have been deceived. But the young rascal had not even taken that trouble.

There was a stirring in some of the beds, and eyes opened and blinked in the light owlishly. Billy Bunter's snore went on uninterrupted; other fellows slept on undisturbed. But five or six of the Removites awakened. Some of them sat up in bed, blinking in astonishment at the Remove master.

"Is anything the matter, sir?" asked Harry Wharton.

Mr. Quelch glanced round.

"Yes, Wharton," he answered quietly. "Something very serious is the matter. A boy of this Form is missing."

"Oh!" exclaimed Harry.

More of the juniors awakened at the sound of voices.

Billy Bunter snored on; Lord Mauleverer slumbered peacefully; and the occupant of Hazel's bed did not stir. But most of the Removes were awake, rising on their elbows or sitting up, all staring towards the empty bed by which the Remove master stood.

"I am sorry to disturb you, my boys," said Mr. Quelch. "But a boy was seen out of the House at this late hour—"

"Oh gad!" murmured the Bounder.

Smithy was glad that he had not selected that particular night for one of his own little excursions!

"Tracy is missing!" said Mr. Quelch, in a deep voice. "His bed is empty, and his clothes are gone! Tracy is out of bounds!"

"Oh!" murmured the juniors.

Nobody in the Remove dormitory was much surprised.

Gilbert's manners and customs were well known in his Form. It was not the first time by half a dozen or more that Gilbert had broken out after lights out, as all the Removes knew. This time he was caught—that was all!

"The ass!" breathed Bob Cherry.

"The rotter!" murmured Harry Wharton. His lip curled as he looked at the empty bed! It was nearly eleven o'clock, and Tracy was out of the House! This was the fellow he was trying to help to make a fresh start!

"You may go to sleep, my boys!" said Mr. Quelch. "I regret that I had no choice but to disturb you at this hour."

He left the dormitory, shut off the light, and closed the door. If his glance had fallen on a head on Hazel's pillow, as doubtless it had, certainly it had never occurred to him that that head was not Hazeldene's. He left the dormitory, nothing doubting.

On one face in the darkness was a sarcastic grin! Gilbert had "trouble to face for this—bad trouble; but at the same time, he derived a sardonic amusement from deluding his Form-master.

There was a buzz of excited voices in the dormitory after Quelch had gone.

"The ass!" said Nugent.

"The dingy swab!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Well, it's a fair cop this time!" said Skinner. "Tracy's the man to ask for it! Perhaps he hopes he will be turfed out this time—he wants to go."

"He won't be turfed out," said Vernon-Smith, "but he will get a record flogging—by gum, I don't envy him when he sees the Head!"

"The flogfulness will be terrific!"

Gilbert, silent, grinned as he listened. It was rather entertaining to Gilbert!

The talk ran from bed to bed for ten minutes or more. Then the Remove fellows settled down to sleep again.

But there was one who was not likely to sleep!

After there was silence, and all other eyes were closed, Gilbert Tracy's were wide open.

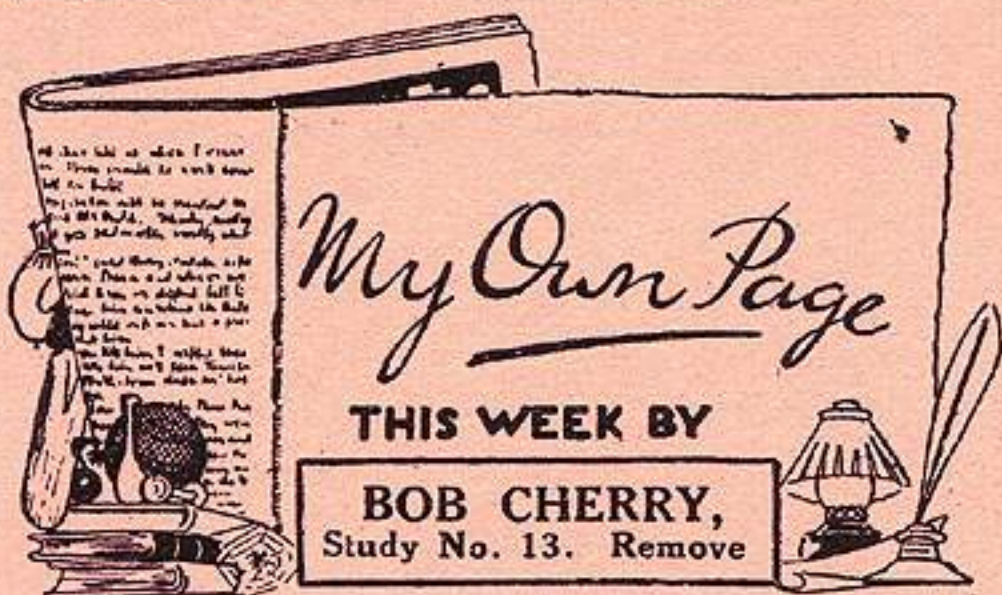
Not till he was sure that the rest of the Form were fast asleep did Gilbert step silently from Hazel's bed and slip on his clothes silently in the darkness.

Gilbert was not finished yet. He had succeeded so far: Quelch had left the dormitory in the fixed belief that it was Tracy who was out of bounds, and not thinking of Hazel at all. But all that he had done would go for nothing if the breaker of bounds was caught as he returned.

He knew, of course, that Quelch would wait up for him: the Remove master would not think of going to bed while a Remove boy was out of bounds at night.

(Continued on page 32.)

INTERESTING NEW FEATURE



In a whacking great car driven by a chauffeur.
(The metre of that last line's a bit wonky; but the rhyme's not bad for me, is it?)

When Coker is wagging his chin,
Poor Potter and Greene bear the din!
One night after dark
They'll go down to the Sark
And push the old jabberwock in!

"Have you any money?" hissed Price in his ear.
Dick nodded happily.
"Yes; I am in the clutches of a money-lender named Fish," he replied. "He lent me a tenner on my note of hand alone."
The villains exchanged grinning glances. With a pack of marked cards they soon took poor Dick's tenner off him, and after that about a ream of IOU's.
Then they showed themselves in their real colours.
"If you don't pay us in full by Wednesday," snarled Loder, "look out for the sack!"
Dick sat stunned. Penniless, disgraced, deep in debt, and at the mercy of a flint-hearted moneylender—what could he do now?
(There won't be any more instalments of this, but Dick goes crackers, and the rotters are all sacked. Serve 'em right!)

H ALLO, hallo, hallo! Here I am with a page to myself, and nothing to write on it. 'Smatter of fact, I've been sitting here, thoughtfully rubbing my boko, for the last ten minutes, trying to think. Luckily I've nothing else to do—except prep, which isn't so important.

To start with, here are some questions suggested by the Ed. as the sort of things readers would like to know.

MY FAVOURITE SPORT.—Boxing comes first, then footer, running, cricket, rowing, then everything else—including Ponsonby-punching.

MY FAVOURITE INDOOR GAME.—Ragging Coker of the Fifth. Second favourite.—Ragging Temple of the Fourth.

MY PET AVERSION.—Doing nothing. Some fellows like to be thoroughly lazy for a change, but I always get fidgety when I've nothing to do.

MY GREAT AMBITION.—To wake Mauly up and make him a live-wire member of the bloated aristocracy—but I sometimes despair. Likewise, I hope to convince Bunter that

Life is real, life is earnest,
And the grub is not our goal;
Think of that next time thou turnest
To devour a sausage roll!

MY BEST PAL.—Sorry! That's asking too much. I've plenty of friends, and glad of it. Wharton, Nugent, Johnny Bull, Inky, Mark Linley, and Squiff are the fellows I pull with best.

MY BEST ENEMY.—Haven't one, unless you count Gosling, who thinks I should have been "drowned at birth," like a kitten.

MY FAVOURITE JOKE.—Coker of the Fifth.

WHAT I HOPE TO BE.—100.

MY HOME

The Ed. suggests I should say something about my home, but there's not much to say. I live at Cherry Place, near Dorchester.

The house is close to the sea, and I have a small sailing dinghy, which my pater, Major Cherry, picked up for a few pounds. It's about as watertight as blotting-paper. But who cares?

Cherry Place is only about a hundred years old, so there are no secret passages or hidden dungeons, as in Mauleverer Towers or Bunter Court. (At Bunter Court, of course, everything's hidden, including Bunter Court.) Wharton and the others have stayed there with me at intervals, and we've had some pretty good times, and that's all I can think of about my home.

LIMERICKS

We ought to have some poetry on this page, even though Dick Penfold's having a holiday. So here goes, and if I'm not as good as Pen—don't throw things! I does me best, gents!

A frabjous fat fozzler named Billy
Has ways that are odd, but not silly,
For he guzzles away
As he knows that some day
He'll be living on dry bread and skilly!
(W. G. B. takes warning!)

When Mauly, our elegant loafer,
Gets really fed-up with his sofa,
He takes some exertion
By way of excursion

THE ROAD TO RUIN!

Super Serial Story, By **BOB CHERRY**

(NOTE.—I wrote this originally for the "Herald," but the Editor, who calls himself a pal of mine, eagerly thrust it into the wastepaper-b. I fished it out, and I'm going to print a chunk of it here.)

SPECIAL NOTE.—All the characters in this story are entirely fictitious and have no reference to any living person. This is important.)

FIRST (and last) CHAPTER.

"Hallo, youngster! Have a smoke?" Dick Dodger turned, with a start, as he was spoken to by Loder, the rascally prefect of the Sixth at Birchingham College. As a mere fag in the Third, he was flattered to be spoken to by a prefect, though he knew Loder had the name of being a black sheep and a shocking worm.

"Oh, thanks awfully, Loder!" he said gratefully, accepting the proffered cigar.

He thought the prefect a thoroughly decent chap, for Dick was a trustful, unsuspecting youngster, and not likely to spot a snake in the grass which was wearing sheep's clothing.

"Doin' anythin' this afternoon?" asked Loder casually. "What about a game of banker at the Three Fishers?"

Dick's eyes glistened with pleasure. He had never been to the Three Fishers, but Skinner and Vernon-Smith, the cads of the Remove, had told him how jolly it was.

"Yes, rather, Loder!" he said eagerly.

Thus was a decent youngster started on the road to the bow-wows. He walked down to the dingy tavern with Loder and Carne of the Sixth, and a worm named Price of the Fifth, and a toad named Angel of the Fourth.



This is Wharton and me, rounding up the slackers. I'm not good at drawing, so I have made 'em all niggers. Hope you don't mind.

DR. CHERRY'S HEALTH GUIDE

On compulsory practice days I often have to help Wharton heal the sufferers who can't attend games practice by reason of their awful ailments. Here are details of my special treatments, discovered after long research and laboratory work—I don't think!

COMPOUND LUMBAGO OF THE SPINAL CORD. (Patient: W. G. Bunter.) SYMPTOMS: Severe pains like red-hot daggers, with double pneumonia of the right kneecap. TREATMENT: Place patient face-down on study table and apply vigorous massage with a cricket stump. Patient may also be rolled downstairs and jumped on.

GENERAL BREAKING-UP OF THE SYSTEM. (Patient: H. Skinner.) SYMPTOMS: A pallid complexion, a shifty eye, and a smell of tobacco. TREATMENT: Rub chalk off patient's face with a hard and bristly hairbrush. Then slew sufferer round and administer sharp shock to the system with a football boot. Cure guaranteed, or money back.

SLEEPING SICKNESS. (Patient: The Earl of Mauleverer.) SYMPTOMS: Uter prostration on a sofa. TREATMENT: Apply a strong dose of soda-water externally by means of a siphon. Up-turn sofa and frog's-march patient downstairs.

INGROWING AVARICE. (Patient: F. T. Fish.) SYMPTOMS: A desire to count dollars and tell football captains to scam. TREATMENT: Stuff dollars down back of patient's neck in the form of a poultice. Then give him a cold bath in the nearest fountain.

BOB CHERRY

The most famous of the Famous Five is, perhaps, Bob Cherry. His energy in getting up at rising-bell and routing out slackers with a wet sponge is as well known as his light curly hair and cheerful grin. "Hallo, hallo, hallo!" he roars, like the Bull of Bashan, and fellows stop their ears when he whistles or sings. His cheerfulness never fails. He is tough and sturdy, first-class at games, and fond of bright colours. He is the best boxer (and has the biggest feet) in the Form. His love of rags and japes is notorious. Bob is not brilliant in class, but he's no duffer, either. Everyone likes Bob Cherry, even Harold Skinner—who has, however, treated Bob's grin rather unkindly in this cartoon.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,606.



It was easy enough for Tracy to guess what Quelch would do. He would investigate till he discovered by what door or window the breaker of bounds had left the House; and at that door or window he would wait for the young rascal to return. And the breaker of bounds, unless he was warned in time, would walk straight into his hands—astonishing Mr. Quelch by the discovery that it was not, after all, Tracy, but another Remove fellow! But Quelch was not going to make that discovery!

With hardly a sound, Gilbert crept out of the dormitory.

He could guess which way Hazel had gone—a familiar way. And a few minutes later he knew as he crept up the Remove passage in the darkness to the box-room stair at the end.

Quelch was there!

There was no light! But Gilbert, peering up the stair, could see that the box-room door was open; and he could hear faint sounds of someone who stirred restlessly as he waited with angry impatience.

Quelch, evidently, had discovered that the box-room window had been left unfastened for the return of the breaker of bounds. He knew how the absent junior had gone; and he was waiting for him to come back the same way.

Gilbert crept softly away.

It was now nearly half-past eleven, and the whole House was in silence and darkness; the last light was out by that time, the last door had closed. Gilbert groped his way downstairs in the dense darkness with scarcely a sound.

Few fellows would have had the nerve to creep past the Sixth Form studies at that hour, but the bad hat of the Remove did not lack nerve. He reached the lobby at the end of the Sixth Form passage, where there was a door on the quad, and slipped out, leaving that door on the latch behind him; then he flitted silently round the building in the shadows.

THE TWENTY-SECOND CHAPTER.

Caught!

QUIET!"

Hazel jumped—almost out of his very skin.

In the silence, the darkness, that whisper was as startling to his ears as a thunderclap could have been.

He tottered, peered round him with dilated eyes in the deep shadow of the wall. There was a rainpipe on that wall, by which he had intended to climb back to the leads under the box-room window, when that whisper from the darkness startled him.

From the dark shadows a half-seen face glimmered, with a sneering grin on it.

Hazel gasped as he saw Tracy.

"You!" He caught his breath.

"You fool, you startled me! What—"

"Quiet!" whispered Gilbert. "If

Quelch heard you—"

"Quelch!" breathed Hazel.

"He's up!"

"Oh!" Hazel leaned on the wall panting. The terror in his white face

deepened the sneering contempt in Tracy's. "Oh, does he know—"

"No."

"Not that I—I—"

"No."

"Oh!" Hazel breathed more freely.

"All right, then. I can get in. You—

you came to tell me—you—"

He peered at Gilbert in amazement and

doubt. "How do you know—"

Gilbert grinned.

"Quelch came up to the dorm—"

Hazel gave another gasp and reeled

against the wall; his knees almost bent

under him.

"Then he knows—he must know—"

"No."

"But he must have seen—"

"He saw my bed empty, not yours.

He thinks that I am out of bounds; he

hasn't thought of you. Got that?"

"Your bed—" Hazel gazed at him,

not understanding.

"Don't you catch on, you ass?" mut-

tered Tracy impatiently. "I heard

him coming and nipped into your bed,

and left him mine to see empty."

"Oh!" gasped Hazel.

"You're all right—but not if you get

in by the box-room." Gilbert gave a

low chuckle. "Quelch is waiting

there."

Hazel gave a low moan of sheer

terror. Quelch waiting in the box-

room—and he had been about to climb

up to the box-room window when

Tracy's whisper stopped him!

"Brace up!" Gilbert's voice was

half-friendly, half-contemptuous. "I

tell you you're all right. Quelch hasn't

even thought of you. He's waiting in

the box-room for me."

"You!" breathed Hazel.

"Yes—and he will get me after

you're safe in." Gilbert was grinning

again. "I got out by the Sixth Form

lobby. I've left the door on the latch

for you—you can get in there—"

"Oh!" breathed Hazel.

"Lock it after you and get back to

the dorm. I'll give you a quarter of

an hour before I go up."

"But you—you—" stammered

Hazel, peering at him. "You could get

in the same way without Quelch—"

"Fathead! Haven't I told you

Quelch found my bed empty and knows

I'm out? If his man gets back any

way but the box-room window he will

know that some other fellow turned out

to let him in. Do you want to start

him asking questions—"

"Oh, no, but—"

"I'm for it, anyhow; may as well be

hung for a sheep as a lamb. Quelch

has got to go on thinking that it was

I who broke out, or he will get you.

There won't be much room for doubt

when he nails me in the box-room—

what?"

"But—but—why—"

muttered Hazel, his head in a whirl.

"Never mind why!" snapped Gil-

bert. "Get going!"

Hazel paused a moment, looking at

him. Then he disappeared into the

shadows.

Gilbert leaned on the wall—where he

had waited for Hazel a considerable

time, before the breaker of bounds

returned. He waited again—giving the

wretched junior plenty of time to get clear.

There was a grin of mockery on his face while he waited.

Hazel was glad to save himself at anybody's cost. Hazel was all right!

He had seen Soapy, and paid him; he was clear, and once safe back in bed in

the Remove dormitory, he was all right!

Gilbert had seen him through—and now it only remained to face the

music; he had called the tune, and now he had to pay the piper!

Midnight chimed from the clock tower. He stirred at last. Hazel had

had ample time—he was back in bed; his going and his returning, utterly unsus-

pected by the beak who waited and watched in the box-room.

Gilbert clambered up the rain-pipe.

He crept across the leads to the box-room window, left unfastened by Hazel

when he went out. He found it unfastened, and pushed up the sash.

As he dropped into the box-room the light came on; and he turned and stood

face to face with his Form-master.

Mr. Quelch's eyes fixed on him; grimly, contemptuously.

"So you have returned, Tracy?"

"Yes, sir!" answered Tracy quietly.

"Where have you been, Tracy?"

"Only for a walk round, sir," said

Gilbert demurely.

The gimlet eyes glinted.

"Will you tell me where you have

been, Tracy?" asked Mr. Quelch,

raising his voice a little.

"I've told you, sir."

The Remove master compressed his

lips.

"Come with me!" he said curtly.

He fastened the window, shut off the

light, and Gilbert followed him from

the box-room.

One fellow was awake in the Remove dormitory when the door opened and

the light was switched on. Hazel was in bed, but he was not likely to be

sleeping. But several fellows awoke as Mr. Quelch came in, followed by

Gilbert Tracy!

Many eyes fixed on Gilbert. Quelch had "copped" him as he came in; as

most of the fellows had expected he would, after discovering his absence!

"You will now go to bed, Tracy!"

said Mr. Quelch quietly, but with a note in his voice that boded ill for the

bad hat of the Remove. "To-morrow you will be dealt with by your head-

master. Lose no time!"

Gilbert turned in without a word. The Remove master turned off the light

and left the dormitory.

"Rough luck, old bean!" said the Bounder. "But you asked for it, and

no mistake!"

"Right on the wicket!" drawled Gilbert. "I did!"

He laid his head on the pillow, but it was long before his eyes closed. On

the morrow he had to face the music.

THE END.

(Tracy has saved a scapegrace, for a schoolgirl's sake, and now he's in worse trouble than ever! Do not miss "THE MYSTERIOUS NIGHT RAIDER!" the next yarn in this exciting series.)

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Peter Todd Describes— MY NIGHT OUT WITH THE GHOST-HUNTERS!

I have always been fascinated by ghosts, phantoms, spectral shapes, and disembodied spirits. Anything that might be termed psychic or p-supernatural has invariably exercised a compelling influence over me.

So naturally, when Dick Rake invited me to help the Remove Spook-hunting Society to track down the Ghost of Greyfriars, I jumped at the chance.

We met at midnight in a box-room near the dorm. Everything was very weird and mysterious. The moonlight streaming through the window seemed decidedly unearthly. The brooding silence that enfolded the School House was distinctly uncanny. The deep, black shadows that lurked in the corners obviously concealed unfathomable horrors of a supernatural—pardon, p-supernatural—kind. It would not have surprised me in the least to see black vampires flapping up and down the stairs and witches riding by the window on broomsticks.

When we got to the box-room we put our heads together and held a confab. In hushed whispers.

"Are we all here?" breathed Rake.

"Yes, rather!"

"S-sh! Not so much noise!" hissed Rake. "The secret of success in spook-hunting is silence. Ghosts vanish into thin air if you kick up a row!"

"Quite right, old bean!"

"S-sh!"

"Quiet!" begged Rake. "Remember that our object to-night is to track down the giddy Ghost of Greyfriars. Several fellows claim to have seen it on recent evenings. We want to find out whether it's true or not. S-sh!"

Rake paused. In the silence that followed we heard sounds that made our hair stand on end—a kind of velvety footfall and a strange, indes-

cribable something that told us something was moving in the very room where we stood!

I felt something soft touch my leg. I leaped into the air with a strangled cry. The members of the Spook-hunting Society recoiled, uttering terror-stricken gasps.

Rake relieved the tension. "All serene, chaps!" he whispered. "It's Mrs. Kebble's cat. Must have been shut in the box-room by mistake!"

"Oh, good!"

Considering they were all investigators of the psychic or p-supernatural p-side of life, the spook-hunters seemed remarkably glad to get a common or garden reason for the phenomenon that had manifested itself to them.

They pushed the cat out of the box-room and resumed the confab.

Rake proposed getting out of the House by one of the back windows and scouting round some of the older portions of the school buildings to see if we could spot any spooks. The proposition was agreed to and we all crept down the stairs and lowered ourselves out of a ground-floor window at the back of the House.

Everything looked awfully ghostly out of doors. The silence was sinister.



The GREYFRIARS HERALD

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EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

November 26th, 1938.



HARRY WHARTON CALLING ALL PALS!

Hobson of the Shell remarked to me over a ginger-pop in the tuckshop this week how little we hear nowadays of Bunter as a ventriloquist.

Quite true, when you come to think of it. And the explanation is quite simple.

The fact is that Bunter's ventriloquial powers are too well known nowadays for success. He no longer gets the scope that he did when Greyfriars was full of unsuspecting victims.

When Bunter first acquired the ventriloquial art, he could pull off japes on anybody in the school with impunity. I have many times seen him hoax Quelch in the Form-room. He would set a fictitious bee buzzing round the room to ease the tension during a difficult Latin "con"—or even call Quelch away in a lifelike imitation of the Head's voice, appearing to come from the other side of the door. But those days are gone—unhappily, in the opinion of most Remove chaps!

Still, we do, at occasional intervals, catch the Porpoise at his old tricks, infrequent though the intervals are in comparison with the old days.

Among strangers, he is just as keen a ventriloquist as ever. We saw that during our trip to the South Sea Islands, when he got out of several tight fixes with the aid of his ventriloquial powers.

By a coincidence, Hobson and I saw a further example on our way back to the School House after the chat I have just mentioned.

Temple of the Upper Fourth—for excellent reasons, no doubt—was chasing Bunter across the quad, and the short-sighted Owl, not seeing where he was going, butted somebody in the chest and bowled him clean over.

The "somebody" happened to be a Somebody—no less a person, in fact, than Sir Hilton Popper, a Greyfriars governor and a very big shot in the county! Sir Hilton was purple in the face when he staggered to his feet again. Temple wisely made himself scarce. Bunter, who couldn't get away so quickly, wobbled in his tracks, as Sir Hilton glared at him.

"Boy!" rasped Sir Hilton. "Young fool! Dolt! Idiot! How dare you?"

"I—I—" gasped Bunter.

"Silence, sir!" barked the irate baronet. "Apologies are useless! Nothing will satisfy me, but your headmaster's assurance that you will be flogged for this outrage!"

The next instant, to Sir Hilton's surprise, the Head's voice joined in the confab—seemingly coming from the direction of his study window.

"Rest assured, my dear Sir Hilton, that I shall make a point of punishing Bunter most severely for this disgraceful assault. Bunter! You will report to me for a flogging in an hour's time!"

"Ye-es, sir!"

"Hah!" snorted Sir Hilton, starting slightly when he noticed that there was no sign of the Head at his study window. "Very well, then!"

But it wasn't very well after all—from Bunter's point of view, anyway. The voice which Sir Hilton had taken to be the Head's was in reality Bunter's. Bunter was hoping to get out of the fix by this little trick. Unfortunately for him, however, the Head happened to be watching and listening behind the curtains in his study window; and the next instant, to Bunter's horror, the Head's real voice sounded from above.

"Pray come into the House, Sir Hilton! Bunter! You will report to me at once!"

Poor old Porpoise! He was still moaning and groaning an hour after his visit to the Head's study that day.

HARRY WHARTON.

The school buildings looked weird and grotesque. The trees and shrubs had a kind of nightmarish appearance. When an owl hooted over in Friardale Woods I felt my flesh creep.

We kept in the shadows and started scouting round to see what we could find.

Suddenly, Morgan pointed a trembling finger towards a patch of moonlight near the school wall.

"Look!" he cried hoarsely. "The gig-gig-gig—"

I began to think he had got the giggles till I looked. Then I knew what he meant.

"Gig-gig-ghost of Greyfriars!" finished Morgan, coming to the point at last.

It was the Ghost of Greyfriars. There was no mistaking it, in the opinion of the experienced spook hunters who watched it. It was dressed in the costume of a monk, just as I should have expected it to be. It was moving from the school wall across to the House.

We watched it in dumb, fascinated horror. Then we realised that it was coming straight towards us. We decided that discretion was the better

part of valour. I headed for our open window and double and got back into the Ha. in great haste.

From inside the window we looked again. It was coming straight towards the window!

At the foot of the stairs we looked round again. A ghostly visitor was inside the House and was moving towards us once again! We bolted up the stairs. At the top we leaned over the landing to see another look.

The Ghost of Greyfriars was moving steadily up the stairs in our wake! After that were really hardly surprised when it showed us into the dorm. What did surprise us, however, was to hear like to us in the familiar voice of our tame actor, William Wibley.

"What's the idea, you men?" asked Wibley, laying some sort of a game?

"Wibley! Mat!"

"Why not?" asked Wibley, beginning to take off his hasty clobber and removing stage padding from underneath in process. "Who else did you think was?"

We explained we had taken him for the Ghost of Greyfriars. Wibley was tickled.

"You're potty," he grinned. "I've been to Courtfield Friar Tuck in the Courtfield Scouts production of Rookwood. We've done it three times in last week. Last performance that I've broken bounds for it, it's been worth it. I've changed each time after lights out and of the Courtfield chaps has run here and back in his pater's. Yaw-aw! I'm tired!"

Wibley, donned pyjamas and slid into bed.

The Remove hunters followed suit—feeling not pleased to find that there was a natural explanation of a somewhat supernatural affair!

HOW TO DO IT?

Many readers are up, asking how it is that our jobs are always so good. Well, you see, we always put them through the sworn test. As soon as a new joke comes, we try it on Coker. If he laughed, it's usually good for a laugh almost anybody, and we publish.

If he laughs, it's in the waste-paper basket.

So-long all!

TO ALL DEAR OLD IS

I wonder if you would send me your Xmas cards as early as possible? So, titled friends and relations are being me to honour them with maintaining society during the Festoon that I shall be quite and consider late applications.—Honorable W. G. BUNTER, St. 7, Remove Passage.

SPEED, SPILLS AND THRILLS! Remove Find Ice-Hockey Tough

By kind permission of the proprietors of the Courtfield Ice-rink, the Remove had their first game of ice-hockey this week.

It would be nice to be able to report that we all took to it like a duck takes to water. Truth compels us to state, however, that we did nothing of the kind!

There are quite a number of very good skaters in the Form. But ice-hockey, it seems, requires something more than the ability to keep balanced or to cut figures of eight. Two minutes at the game found us all at sea—and most of us stretched out on the ice!

To race down a rink, pushing a rubber "puck" before you with a hockey stick, looks quite simple when you're watching it. Try it and see if it's as simple as it looks!

Wharton, who was first away after the "face-off" ("kick-off" to you footer fans!), tried it and made a complete hash of it. Finding the puck dallying behind him, he reached back to field it and forgot where his feet were going. The result was that he finished up on his neck, with half a dozen other eager novices piled on top of him!

That incident was reproduced many times before the gum-chewing Canadian instructor who was teaching us the game pointed out our error.

"What's wrong with you kids is you're play-acting—just trying to dance around the way you've seen the professionals do it, see?" he grinned. "You gotta look on this as a job of work, and the job is to get that puck into the goal. Do it in slow motion first and the speed will come. If you feel you just wanna pose like the guys who've been playing it all their lives, forget it!"

That was horse sense from a man who knew what he was talking about, and most of us took due note of it.

The result was gratifying. By playing at a pace that left us with proper control over our movements we were able to do something with the puck. And if the game bore little resemblance to the ice-hockey you see on the pictures, it was at least ice-hockey of a kind and not just a game of "all-fall-down"!

Towards the end of the session we did begin to develop a little speed, but—ye gods!—what a tough game it is when you play it fast! Not one of our bunch came off the ice without an injury of some kind. Most of us had cuts and bruises galore,

Bunter, who insisted on being goalminder ("goalkeeper" in footer parlance), raised technical problems. The goal in ice-hockey is small, and when Bunter turned out, padded fore and aft with mattresses, cushions, and other balloon-like odds and ends, it was found that he covered the entire goalmouth.

The opposing forwards overcame the difficulty by hooking their hockey sticks round the fat goalminder's neck and forcibly dragging him away before proceeding to score!

There is a lot of doubt as to whether this would be allowed in a game played strictly according to the rules. But there is no doubt about our having had a rattling good time out of our first attempt to play ice-hockey. We are looking forward keenly to more games—perhaps even a trial game against another school, if it's possible.

What are the odds about our finishing up the season with an exhibition game at Wembley? Sounds optimistic—but there's nothing like aiming high!

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

"FILM PRODUCER" (Study No. 6, Remove).—"I'm looking for a fellow with protruding teeth."

You'll stand a much better chance of finding him if you look with your eyes!



CONSTANT READER (Third).—"What did Bunter think of Coker's tuck-hammer last week?"

He described it afterwards as simply "gorge"-ous!

DONALD OGILVY (Remove).—"Wibley says he wants a musician for his Christmas Pantomime; yet he won't let me play my concertina."

We can only tell you to act "accordingly."

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