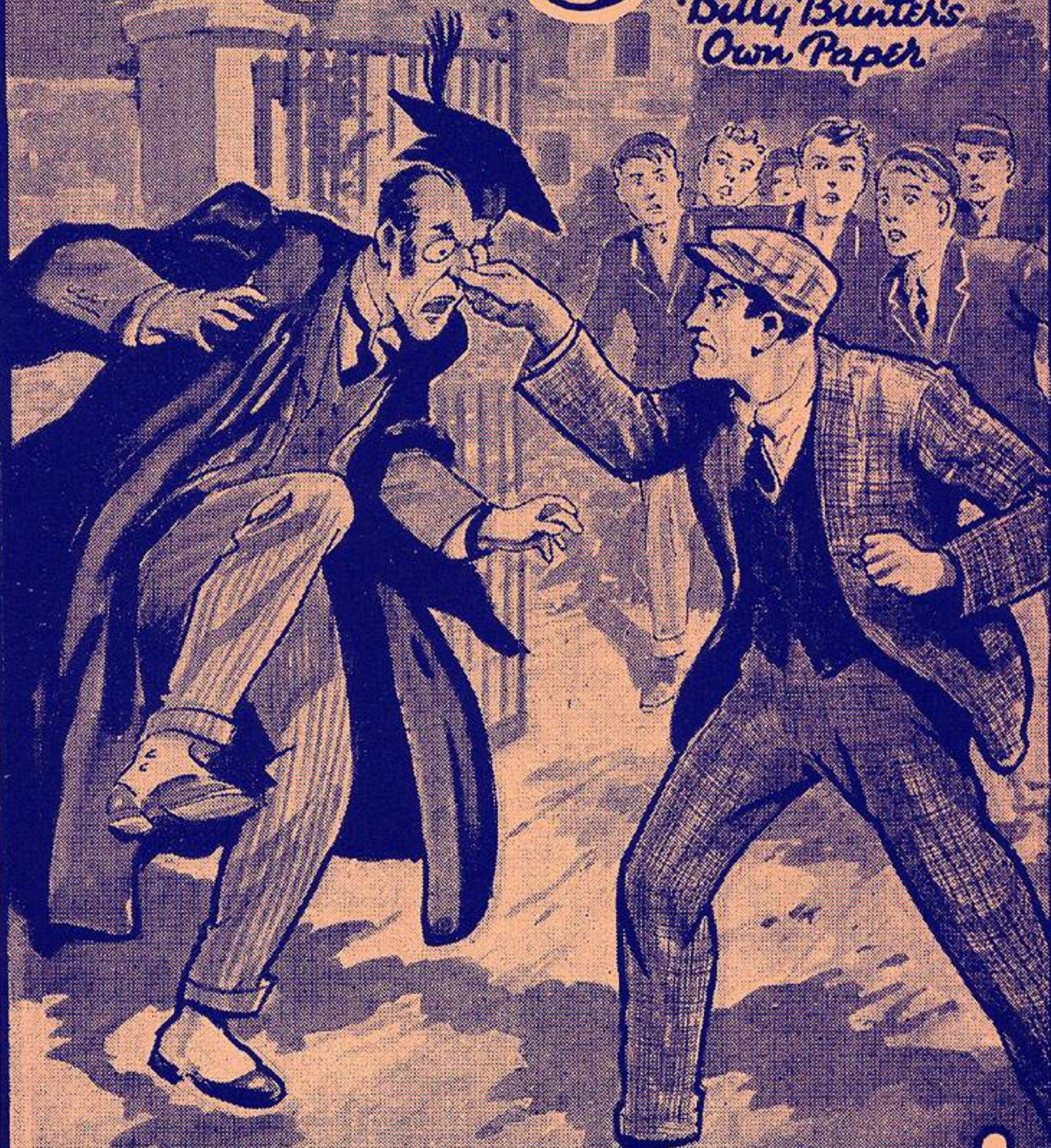


GREAT DETECTIVE-ADVENTURE YARN of HARRY WHARTON & Co.

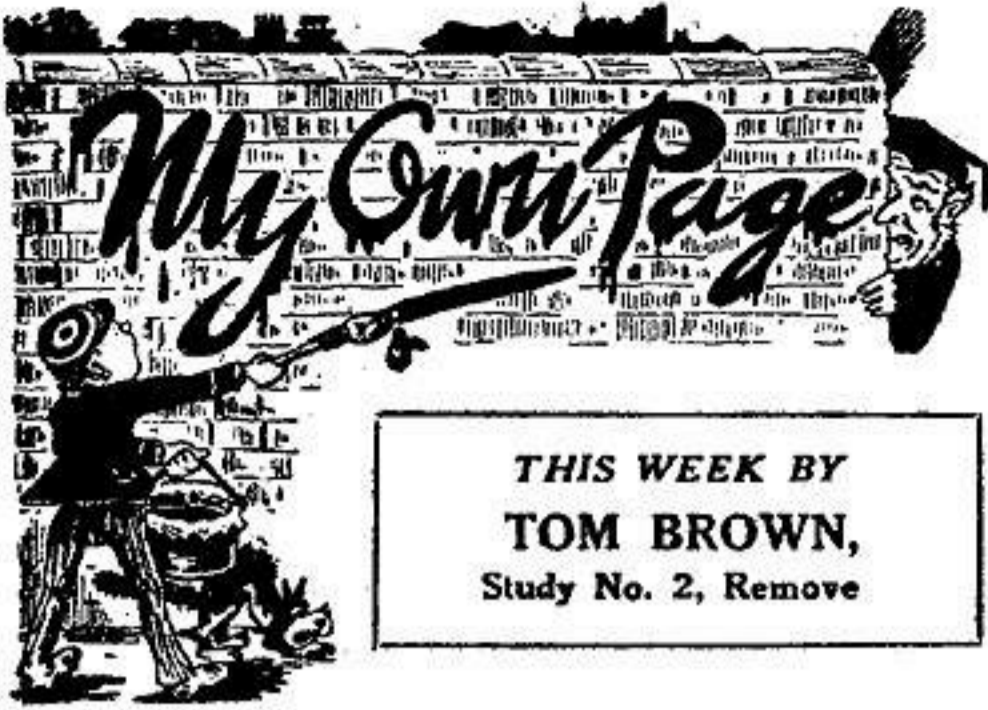
# The Magnet <sup>2<sup>D</sup></sup>

*Billy Bunter's  
Own Paper*



**AN OLD BOY'S REVENGE!**





THIS WEEK BY  
TOM BROWN,  
Study No. 2, Remove

**B**ESHREW me, but 'tis a pleasant thing to write a script withal, unless perchance 'tis lines. And if thou, O reader, think'st I talk through mine hat, I don't mind admitting that I've caught this style of speech from Shakespeare. I'm cast as Bassanio in Wibley's production of "The Merchant of Venice," and 'tis goodly sport, I' faith, though Wib bags most of the play himself.

Wib is Shylock, and I think that's wrong. He should have given that part to Fishy. If there is one part in all Shakespeare which Fishy could play to perfection, that part is Shylock. He'd only have to be natural.

What about this for the

#### TRIAL SCENE?

**PORTIA:** Is your name Shylock?

**SHYLOCK:** Yep, Shylock. Sure, bo!

**POR.:** And do you claim the forfeit of this bond?

**SHYLOCK:** I kinda guess and calculate, O Judge, That every dollar in this guy's possession Is forfeit to my suit.

**POR.:** Then must the Jew be merciful.

**SHYLOCK:** Sayest, thou! No, not this baby, For mercy, mark ye, judge, is kinda soft; And in Noo Yark we never have been left, So let this guy cough up the bond and quit.

**POR.:** Shylock, if thou wilt now forego thy bond, There's thrice thy money offered thee instead.

**SHYLOCK (joyfully):** I kinda guess that hits me where I live, For who would be a bonehead big enough

To choose a pound of flesh not worth a cent

Instead of dollars—do not make me laugh!

Yet, by my beard, I guess it's not enough

To pay a guy a mere three times his bond,

If that galoot would save his pesky flesh

I guess he's gotta pay his last red cent,

So give me all he's got, O learned judge,

And maybe I will let him owe the rest.

(Collapse of Portia.)

## HOTCHA, HOKITIKA!

Have you ever been to Hokitika? Nice little place. You take the first on the left down Friarlane Lane, and it's about 11,900 miles farther along on the right. It's in Westland, South Island, New Zealand. If you want a spot of mountaineering, try the Southern Alps. They would make you gasp "Alp!" (Joke!)

I once decided I would climb Mount Cook (12,350 feet), named after Captain Ditto, who did a lot of exploring round New Zealand until he was eaten by natives. (No, we didn't eat him—the Hawaiian cannibals did that. I don't know whether they cooked Captain Cook.) In New Zealand his name is commemorated by the Cook Strait, Cook Islands, etc. The Maoris claim to have discovered Mount Cook a few thousand years before the captain was born, and they call it Aorangi—but that's simply their ignorance.

Anyway, I climbed 350 feet up Mount Cook, and decided to leave the odd 12,000 until some other time. The scenery baffles even such a gifted pen as mine. It's simply superb. Great precipices, lakes, and glaciers—it makes an ordinary fellow feel about the size of a flea.

I expect you men have heard a lot about New Zealand's natural scenery. People may differ about our cities or our customs or our manners, but everyone agrees that our scenery is without rival in the world. Honest! There's so much of it, and it's

all so varied. There are places where you might be in England—little tree-bordered streams with cattle-grazing in the meadows. There are places where you might be in Dante's famous book "The Inferno"—great angry clefts of black rock with spurting geysers, like nothing else on earth.

South Island's my favourite, because I live there. Many people prefer North Island, with its famous Lake Rotorua and the Wairoa Geyser. I like my own alps and good old Hokitika. Hotcha, Hokitika—I'll be seeing you again soon!

That's all for to-day about New Zealand, gents—and don't blame a fellow for boosting his own country. It's good to be patriotic, if you don't become a bore!

## PUZZLE CORNER

No, I'm not going to set any puzzles, such as "How many beans make five?" or "Why did the chicken," etc. My puzzle's quite different, because I don't know the answer to it.

I'm a sports reporter of the "Greyfriars Herald." I wrote a really good report of our last match with Rookwood. Judge of my amazement when Wharton returned it with a curt note:

"The Editor regrets he is unable to use this type of bilge, and would be obliged if contributors kindly stick to the truth. Rats!—THE EDITOR."

Now, whaddya think of that? I'll print part of the report here, and if any reader can think of any reason why this particularly accurate report was turned down I'll be most impossibly obliged to him.



J. Brown

"GREYFRIARS. 4 ROOKWOOD, 1.

"Greyfriars defeated Rookwood with unexpected ease, owing chiefly to their soundness at right-back, where Brown broke up the enemy attacks with amazing skill. Kicking off with the wind in their favour, Greyfriars were soon on the attack, and, thanks to a long, accurate pass by BROWN, Vernon-Smith scored the first goal within three minutes. This goal seemed to upset Rookwood, who played wildly for a time, and were unable to get past the Friars right-back, who seemed to possess uncanny skill. After some good work by BROWN, Wharton scored a grand goal just before half-time.

"In the second half Rookwood launched a series of hot raids, and would have broken through the Friars left flank had not Brown come to the rescue of his harassed partner, Bull. Time and again he retrieved Bull's errors—due to the intensity of the attacks—but was unable to prevent CONROY getting through on the left, while Bull was out of position, and reducing the arrears. He soon opened the game for his forwards, however, and, thanks to BROWN, first Wharton and then Penfold put on goals, to give Greyfriars the victory."

There! I can't imagine why Wharton rejected a report like that, any more than I know why Johnny Bull wanted to fight me. Barmy, both of 'em—that's the only explanation!

## RADIO REPAIRS

If your radio emits an unearthly shriek and becomes dumb it means that the creature is in a bad way. First take out all its innards with a screwdriver. Then put as many as possible back and twiddle the knob. Then shut the study door and tell the radio set exactly what you think of it in a few crisp, blunt, well-chosen words. Now have a look at the condenser—if you don't know which is the condenser, look at the screened-grid or the amplifying valve or anything else—the



Brown taking a photograph of Farmer Cobb's bull.

result is just the same. Put the condenser on the floor and jump on it; at the same time, tear your hair smartly and utter any words that may occur to you. Twiddle the knob. Now gather up the set and place it carefully on the floor and retire three paces, and then kick it as hard as possible in a north-easterly direction. Now twiddle the knob. Pick it up and bash it as hard as you can on the table, and after that bisect it with a hatchet. Twiddle knob again. Now go mad and dance round and round the study, uttering West Indian yells. If the radio still doesn't go, ring up the nearest dealer.

You might as well have done that in the first place, you know.

## TOM BROWN

Tom is a cheery, lighthearted, but sensible son of New Zealand. He has as much common sense as any man in the Form, and is certainly one of the most decent and reliable fellows at Greyfriars. A mighty athlete, he is a brilliant full-back at footer and a cupping slow-medium bowler at cricket. Were he ambitious he would make quite a good Form captain—and did, indeed, fill that role for a time when Wharton had been deposed. His radio set is the only one in the Remove. Tom is keen on radio, and is always investigating his set to improve it—and sometimes does! Without being "pi," Tom does his best to keep Hazeltine, his studymate, from playing the goat—not always with success. His father owns a huge sheep farm in New Zealand, and, though Tom is not wealthy, he gets enough money "to go on with." Brown is also keen on photography.

(Cartoon by H. SKINNER.)



REVENGE IS SWEET! Kicked out of Greyfriars in disgrace, Randolph Crocker turns up again, determined to get even with Dr. Locke—the headmaster who expelled him!

# AN OLD BOY'S VENGEANCE!



By  
**FRANK  
RICHARDS**

“I have here a fragment of blade broken from a penknife which was used to force open a drawer in my writing-table, Wharton,” said Mr. Quelch. “The broken segment fits exactly with your knife. What have you to say?” The junior captain gazed, dumbfounded.

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### Bunter's Big Idea!

“**O**LD Quelch—” Mr. Quelch, the master of the Greyfriars Remove, gave a start. A frown knitted his brows as Billy Bunter's fat squeak reached his ears.

That fat squeak floated out of the open window of the Rag.

In the bright spring morning, Mr. Quelch was taking a walk in the quad after class. Slowly and majestically he peregrinated along the path under the windows of the junior room. Near one of those windows he had stopped, and, leaning on an ancient buttress, surveyed the quadrangle, the grey old school buildings, and the beauties of Nature generally—thinking of anything but Billy Bunter, the bright ornament of his Form.

The fat squeak that floated to his ears reminded him of that attractive youth.

Some Remove fellows had come into the Rag. One of them was talking—Bunter, naturally. Bunter was generally talking when he was not eating, and often when he was. The window was wide open, to let in the fresh air and the spring sunshine. Thus it happened that Billy Bunter's remarks, addressed to ears within, reached ears without.

Mr. Quelch turned his head a little and glared at the window.

He was naturally annoyed. In the first place, “Old Quelch” was a disrespectful way of alluding to a Form-master. In the second place, it was a misstatement of fact—Quelch not being old. He had, no doubt, reached a ripe

period of life, but he was not old—far from it!

“What about Quelch, fathead?” came another voice—that of Bob Cherry of the Remove.

“I say, you fellows, he was fearfully ratty in Form this morning! I say, I can tell you how to make old Quelch sit up for giving us lines.”

Mr. Quelch breathed hard; he breathed deep! His glare at the window resembled the petrifying glare of the fabled basilisk.

Quelch was strongly tempted to put his head in at that window—in which case

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Billy Bunter would have been very nearly petrified, if not quite.

But Quelch was not a man to take official note of careless words not intended for his ears. He was very particular in such matters. So he merely glared at the window; but it was a fearfully expressive glare.

He had a glimpse of five heads near the window inside. Bunter's remarks were addressed to Harry Wharton & Co. But as none of the Famous Five was looking out, none observed Quelch in the offing.

“I can tell you fellows, it's some jape!” went on Bunter's cheery squeak.

“I suppose you know why Quelch was so ratty in Form—”

“The way you did your con, old fat man!” said Harry Wharton. “It was enough to make any beak get his hair off.”

“Quelch hasn't much hair to get off. He, he, he! But I say, you jolly well know why he was shirty; it's because he's worried about that prowler who goes prowling at night and pinching from the studies. And he jolly well takes it out of us, see?”

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips hard as he heard that.

It was true—only too true—that he was worried and perturbed, and, indeed, exasperated, by the mystery of the unknown person who prowled the school at night, and had never been caught.

But he was quite unconscious of having taken it out of his Form! Possibly, of course, he had done so unconsciously.

“Rot!” came Johnny Bull's voice.

“Oh, really, Bull, you jolly well know it as well as I do! Well, look here, they've never caught that prowler, and I don't suppose they ever will. They thought it was Smithy at first, but it turned out that it wasn't, and they don't even suspect anybody else. The beaks are a lot of fatheads, you know.”

“Trot along to Common-room and tell them so,” suggested Frank Nugent. “They'd be frightfully interested to hear what you think of them, Bunter.”

“Well, look here, as they've never found that prowler don't you fellows see what a jolly good chance it is for japing Quelch, and making him sit up

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for taking it out of us in the Form-room?" said Billy Bunter eagerly. "Suppose something happened in Quelch's study—what would they think? Why, that that prowler had been on the job again. See? Safe as houses for the fellow who did it!"

"Oh!"

The Famous Five of the Remove uttered that ejaculation together. Bunter seemed to have surprised them.

"See?" repeated the astute fat Owl. "That jolly old prowler has done a lot of things already. Well, suppose he did one more? You fellows know that Quelch keeps cash in a special drawer of his desk. Suppose some of it was missing—"

"What?"

This time it was not an ejaculation, it was a yell, from the Famous Five.

Quelch, outside, jumped.

He had been about to resume his stroll, and lose the further conversation of the fat ornament of his Form. Now, however, he gave a jump, and then stood still, staring at the window of the Rag with quite an extraordinary expression on his face.

"Startled you—what?" came a fat chuckle from Bunter. "Some jape, you fellows, eh? You'd never have thought of it, I bet! I've got brains, you know!"

"The brainfulness must be terrific!" gasped Hurreo Janset Ram Singh, the dusky member of the Co.

"I think of things, you know," said Bunter. "Fancy old Quelch, when he found that drawer broken open and the cash gone! Wouldn't he raise Cain? He, he, he!"

"You potty, piffing, pernicious porpoise!" gasped Bob Cherry. "You frabjous, frumptious fathead—"

"Oh, really, Cherry! Don't you fellows see what a topping jape it is?" demanded Bunter. "Quelch would think it was that prowling pincher again, safe as houses. Stands to reason he would. He would never dream that it was a Remove man. Well, we snaffle his cash—"

"We—we—we snaffle his cash!" repeated Harry Wharton, like a fellow in a dream. "We snaffle Quelch's cash?"

"That's it! We snaffle the cash and hide it in his Sunday hat—"

"Oh crikey!"

"Well, he won't find it there till next Sunday. All the week he thinks the prowler has had it—see? Make him fearfully wild—what?" Bunter chuckled a fat chuckle. "Mad as a hatter, you bet! And fancy his face, on Sunday morning, when he puts on the topper, and all his money comes down in a shower over his napper—what? He, he, he!"

Billy Bunter went off into a roar.

Evidently William George Bunter thought that this was a fearfully amusing idea!

Bunter had that opinion to himself, however.

Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at him, not looking at all amused.

"You—you—you blithering bloater!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Is that what you call a jape?"

"Yes, rather! Jape of the season!" said Bunter. "The big idea of the term! Don't you fellows think so?"

"Oh crumbs! And suppose you were caught pinching from Quelch's desk?" shrieked Bob. "Think the beaks would believe that you were doing it for a potty joke?"

"I shouldn't be caught."

"Suppose you were, fathead?"

"But I couldn't be."

"Why couldn't you, idiot?"

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"I mean to say, I should leave that part to one of you fellows," explained Bunter. "I couldn't be copped if I wasn't there, could I?"

"Oh!" gasped Bob.

"I mean, I think the thing out—that needs brains—but you fellows could do the donkey-work," explained Bunter. "But you needn't be funky; you wouldn't be copped. You've only got to be careful. It's bound to be put down to the prowler. He pinched currency notes from the Head's study, and something from Quelch's room, so when it happens they'll all think it's the prowler again. Don't you see?"

"You howling ass—"

"Oh, really, Wharton, it's about as safe as anything could be!" urged Bunter. "I thought of it in Form this morning, when Quelch was ragging us. I suppose you want to make the beast sit up, same as I do? Now, what do you fellows think of the idea?"

"Gentlemen, chaps, and sportsmen," said Bob Cherry, "I think we'd better make it quite clear to Bunter what we think of that big idea. Don't let us leave him in any doubt about it. Bag him!"

"I say, you fellows—leggo!" came a yell of surprise and wrath from the fat Owl of the Remove. "Wharrer you up to?"

"Bump him!"

"Leggo! Yaroooh! Will you leggo?" shrieked Bunter.

Bump!

Mr. Quelch stepped to the window and looked in. No one saw or heeded him there—the fellows in the Rag were busy. Billy Bunter was wriggling and roaring in the grasp of five pairs of hands, and Harry Wharton & Co. were bumping him on the floor—leaving him in absolutely no doubt about what they thought of the big idea.

Bump, bump, bump!

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

Mr. Quelch smiled faintly. Unwilling as he was to take note of words not intended for his majestic ears, it was probable that he would have intervened, after what he had heard, to discourage Bunter from proceeding with such a very extraordinary jape. But his intervention was not needed. Bunter was getting all the discouragement that was necessary—and perhaps a little more.

Bump, bump!

"Oh crikey! Leggo! I say, you fellows—Yoo-hooop!" roared Billy Bunter. "I say—Beasts—dear old chaps—rotters—Yaroooh!"

Bump!

Mr. Quelch walked away. From the open window of the Rag wild roars followed him. The Famous Five were still discouraging Bunter—and evidently doing it thoroughly.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Goal!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! What's this game?"

"Don't you butt in!"

"But what's the game, Smithy?" asked Bob Cherry. "Palling that new kid's leg again, you ass?"

"Shut up!" snapped Herbert Vernon-Smith.

There was a little crowd outside the doorway of the changing-room, when Harry Wharton & Co. came along after dinner.

That afternoon the Greyfriars First Eleven were booked to play the first eleven from Highcliffe School, and all the footballing fellows in the Remove were going to join the crowd to watch

the game. The Highcliffe team had not yet arrived; but Wingate, the Greyfriars captain, and most of his men, were already in the changing-room.

The door stood wide open, and outside a number of Remove fellows had gathered. Among them was Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, with an old Soccer ball under his arm. A dozen other juniors had gathered round, most of them with grins on their faces.

One face, however, was quite serious—that of James Duck, the new fellow in the Remove. Duck was listening attentively to what the Bounder was saying to him, when the Famous Five came up.

The new junior, with his rather long hair, his bushy eyebrows, and his steel-rimmed glasses, had become rather a butt in the Remove, in the week he had been at Greyfriars.

Johnny Bull had remarked that, since Duck had arrived, Billy Bunter was no longer the biggest ass in the Remove. And really the sheepish simplicity of the new junior made it almost too easy to pull his leg.

"Now, what you have to do is this," said Vernon-Smith. "It's the regular test for a new man here to see how he shapes at footer. You have to pace exactly twenty paces from that doorway—got that?"

"Yes, thank you!" said James Duck.

"Then you place the ball, and kick it through the doorway. You have to send it as far across the changing-room as you can."

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bob.

"Will you shut up, Cherry? Think you could do it, Duck?"

"I think I could," said James Duck, while the juniors round him gurgled. "But there are some of the Sixth and Fifth Form in the changing-room—will they mind?"

"Oh, no! They'll like it!"

"Smithy, you ass—" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Shut up, Wharton! Now, Duck—"

"But suppose the ball struck one of the seniors in that room?" asked Duck, turning his steel-rimmed glasses on the Bounder in innocent inquiry. "Do you not think that perhaps he would be a little annoyed?"

"My dear chap, he'd just laugh!" assured the Bounder. "Now, measure off the distance and get going!"

The Famous Five, and every other fellow there, gazed at James Duck. It was really difficult to believe that the most simple and unsuspecting new kid could have his innocent leg pulled to this extent.

It was certain that any junior who sent a sudden Soccer ball whizzing among the seniors would be asking for more trouble than he could handle—especially if it banged on some high-and-mighty Sixth Form man in transit.

But James Duck seemed to have no doubt.

Under the stare of a crowd of grinning faces, he walked across to the door to measure the distance as the playful Bounder had directed him.

From the doorway he started pacing back carefully counting the paces.

"Look here, Smithy, it's too bad to pull a young ass' leg like that!" said Harry Wharton. "Give it a miss."

"Rats!" retorted the Bounder.

"My esteemed Smithy—" murmured Hurreo Janset Ram Singh.

"Shut up, will you?"

"Don't spoil a jape, you men!" said Skinner, with a chuckle. "Let the howling ass get on with it! He may land that ball in Wingate's eye—"





"Don't you fellows see what a topping jape it is?" Billy Bunter's fat squeak floated out of the open window of the Rag. "We snaffle Quelch's cash, and hide it in his Sunday hat!" Mr. Quelch stood still, staring at the window of the Rag, with quite an extraordinary expression on his face.

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "Loder's in there, too!" said Skinner. "He may get Loder in the ear! Then we shall get a spot of excitement."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Peter Todd. "I pity him if he gets Loder with it."

"It's too bad!" said Harry, laughing.

"Shut up!" snapped Smithy.

"I think that is right!" said James Duck, coming to a halt. "That is exactly twenty paces, I think. I am ready."

"Here's the ball!"

Vernon-Smith dropped the Soccer ball at Duck's feet. The juniors backed to give him room, and Duck blinked at the doorway, through his steel-rimmed glasses, and then at the ball, and prepared to kick.

That any fellow, at such a short distance, could send a Soccer ball whizzing through a large wide-open doorway seemed certain enough, if he could kick a footer at all. Nobody doubted that James Duck, duffer as he was, would bring off such an easy shot. What they were interested in was what would follow—when the ball shot among the Sixth Form men inside!

"Go it!" said the Bounder.

"On the ball!" chuckled Hazeldene.

"Put your beef into it, old man!" grinned Skinner.

Duck kicked.

But the shot, easy as it looked, did not seem easy to the duffer of the Remove. His foot grazed the leather and sent it rolling a couple of feet—into a puddle left by rain.

The foot flew into the air, past the ball, and Duck tottered, and very nearly sat down. He hopped on his left leg, and recovered his balance.

There was a howl from the onlookers.

"Ha, ha ha!"

"Some kick!"

"Good man for the Remove eleven, Wharton!" remarked Squiff. "A chap who can kick like that—"

"Ha, ha ha!"

"Oh dear!" said James Duck. "Where is the ball? Oh, here it is! I will try again. Am I allowed to try a second time, Vernon-Smith?"

"Oh! Yes. Go it!" gasped the Bounder.

"Certainly I will! My dear Uncle Percy always said to me, if at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again!" said Duck, with his simple, cheerful smile.

The crowd of Removites gurgled. But their merriment did not seem to warn Duck that his leg was being pulled. He rolled the Soccer ball, wet and dripping with mud, out of the puddle, and placed it again for a kick.

Then he took a little run and kicked. This time the leather flew from his foot.

But it did not fly at the doorway of the changing-room. Easy as that shot looked, it seemed too tough a proposition for James Duck. The ball flew at an entirely unexpected angle—almost a right angle from Duck. The next instant there was a terrific crash, as the wet and muddy football landed fair and square in the middle of Herbert Vernon-Smith's features.

Bang!

"Oh!"

"Great pip!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Smithy staggered back two or three paces and sat down, with a heavy bump. The footer rolled down him, leaving a trail of mud.

Mud clothed his face and almost hid

his features. He sat and spluttered, while the Removites howled.

It would have been funny, from the general point of view, had James Duck landed that muddy ball among the seniors in the changing-room. But it seemed funnier still—to all except Vernon-Smith—to land it in the visage of the fellow who was pulling his leg.

"Goal!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Smithy's got it!"

"One for his nob!" chortled Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good gracious!" James Duck stared at Vernon-Smith through his steel-rimmed glasses. "Did—did the ball hit you, Vernon-Smith?"

"Urrgh!" gasped the Bounder. He spat out mud. "You dangerous maniac—Urrgh! I'll boot you all over the quad—Groogh! Oh crumbs! You blithering idiot—Oooch!"

"You asked for that, Smithy!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Keep your temper, old man! You knew the chap was a silly ass—"

"I'll smash him!" howled the Bounder. He scrambled to his feet, red with rage. "Look at me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors looked at Smithy, and roared as they looked. There had been plenty of mud on the ball after it had rolled in the puddle, and the Bounder was almost smothered.

"I am so sorry!" murmured James Duck. "But I will try again! Is it allowed to try again, Vernon-Smith?"

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

Smithy did not answer the new boy's question. He was not thinking of pulling Duck's leg now; he was thinking of punching his head.



But the Famous Five promptly interposed as he made a jump at James Duck. They pushed him back.

"Chuck it, Smithy!" said Harry Wharton.

"I'll smash him!" yelled Smithy.

"You jolly well won't!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "You've got the wrong end of the joke, old man! Make the best of it!"

"Laugh!" chortled Johnny Bull. "It's funny, if you could only see it, Smithy! Why don't you laugh?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The other fellows were laughing, but Smithy did not seem disposed to join in the merriment. He charged at the Famous Five to get at Duck, and the Co. collared and held him back by main force. Smithy, in their opinion, had asked for what he had received, and he was not going to punch the new fellow if they could stop him. And they could—and did!

"Oh dear!" said Duck, blinking at the enraged Bounder, as the Famous Five held him, struggling. "I hope you are not annoyed, Vernon-Smith?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cut, you ass!" said Bob Cherry, gasping with merriment. "Hook it, fat-head! Can't hold him for ever!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And James Duck faded out of the picture, leaving the Bounder spluttering with rage—and mud—and the other fellows yelling with laughter.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### Bait!

**M**R. QUELCH stood at his study window, his eyes fixed on a junior who was coming to the House.

Other fellows, in crowds, were head-

ing for the football ground. Highcliffe had arrived, and Wingate and his merry men were on Big Side with them. The first eleven match was about to start, and crowds of fellows, seniors and juniors, were packed round the field to watch. Greyfriars fellows turned up in great force, and among them were bunches of Highcliffians who had followed their team over.

But James Duck, the new junior, did not seem interested—almost the only fellow who was not. Even Lord Mauleverer had taken the trouble to walk down to the ground; even Billy Bunter was rolling in the same direction. But Duck was sauntering towards the House, and Mr. Quelch, from his study window, watched him, with a rather grim brow.

Anyone seeing Quelch at that moment could have discerned that he was not pleased with that new member of his Form.

No one would have been surprised at that, for James Duck seemed as much a duffer in Form as out of it. His con was seldom good, and often bad, and his mistakes were many.

But no one would have guessed that it was for quite other reasons that Henry Samuel Quelch was displeased with the new junior. Nobody at Greyfriars School, excepting Mr. Quelch and the Head, knew that James Duck was, in point of fact, Jack Drake, the boy assistant of Ferrers Locke, the famous detective.

The fellows who had known Drake best when he had been a Greyfriars boy never dreamed of guessing that they had ever seen "James Duck" before. Certainly, no one was likely to surmise that the blundering duffer of the Form was, in reality, a cool-headed and keen-witted detective who had worked with

Ferrers Locke in many a dangerous and difficult case.

Mr. Quelch did not exactly frown, but he looked very grim as he watched the boy; and, as Drake passed out of his line of vision going into the House, the Remove master shook his head as he turned from the window.

A few moments later there was a tap at his door, and James Duck entered.

He closed the door carefully behind him, and then allowed the steel-rimmed glasses to slip down his nose and looked at his Form-master over them.

Quelch glanced at him with grim inquiry.

"What is it, Drake?" he asked. "I suppose you are aware that it would be judicious to avoid coming to my study unnecessarily if you are to keep up the appearance of an ordinary schoolboy here?"

Drake coloured faintly.

"I quite understand that, sir," he answered. "But everybody else is going down to the football now, and it is a good opportunity to speak to you unnoticed."

"Well?" said Mr. Quelch curtly.

"I am afraid that I have disappointed you so far, sir," said Ferrers Locke's assistant.

"I shal. not deny that that is the case, Drake," answered Mr. Quelch. "You were sent for to investigate the mystery of the unknown Greyfriars boy who prowls the House at night and commits thefts in the studies. The Head naturally shrinks from calling in official assistance from the police; but the young rascal must be detected and sent away, and it was upon my advice that Dr. Locke called you in. But—"

Mr. Quelch paused.

"I am aware that Mr. Ferrers Locke places great faith in you, Drake," he said. "On that I founded my hope that you would be of assistance here. Certainly you have succeeded in keeping your presence here unknown; you play your part as a new boy in my Form very successfully. But—"

"But—" said Drake.

"I will be frank," said Mr. Quelch. "The prowler cannot possibly suspect that there is a detective in the House watching for him; so far as that goes, you have succeeded. But nothing has come of it."

"Rome was not built in a day, sir."

"If this affair is to take as long as the building of Rome, Drake, your presence here will not be very useful!" said Mr. Quelch dryly.

Drake did not answer that. He remembered, from his schooldays at Greyfriars, that Mr. Quelch had a sharp edge to his tongue. He was getting the benefit of it.

"You have been here a week," continued Mr. Quelch. "During that time, as I fully expected, the prowler has ventured to appear again, unaware that a detective was here on the watch. He appeared in circumstances very favourable to you, actually entering the Remove dormitory to make an attempt to pilfer Mauleverer's notecase at night. Further, you were actually awakened and came into contact with him. Yet—"

"Yet he escaped, unscen and unrecognised, as he had done before," said Jack Drake quietly.

"Precisely! Such a favourable opportunity is not likely to occur again. In the meantime, the mystery is unsolved, and the matter is growing more and more intolerable," said Mr. Quelch.

His eyes glinted for a moment.

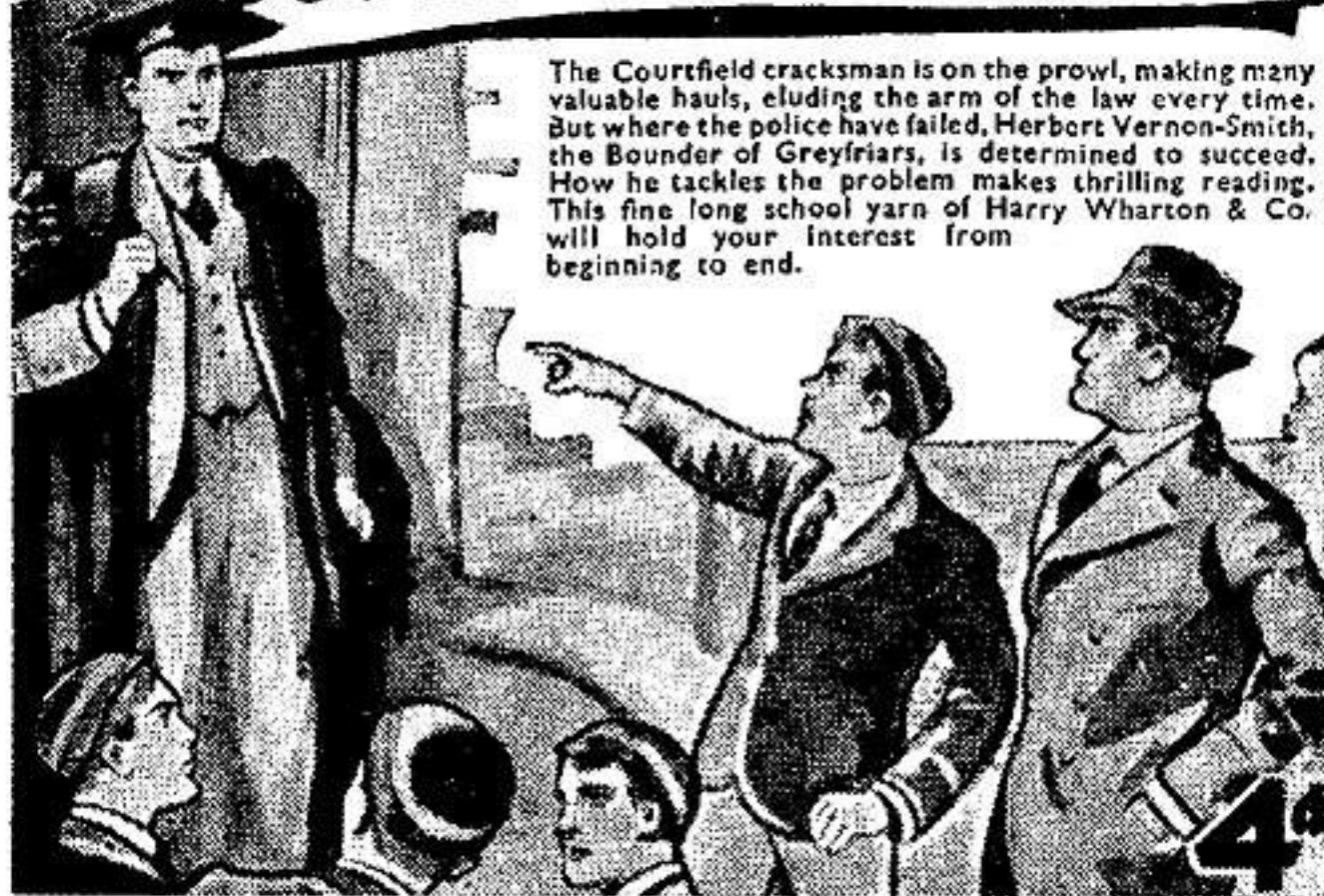
"It is possible," he went on, "that some other unscrupulous boy might take example from his successful rascality."

## VERNON-SMITH OF GREYFRIARS TAKES A CRACK AT A CRACKSMAN!

### THE MASTER FROM SCOTLAND YARD!

By Frank Richards

The Courtfield cracksmen are on the prowl, making many valuable hauls, eluding the arm of the law every time. But where the police have failed, Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, is determined to succeed. How he tackles the problem makes thrilling reading. This fine long school yarn of Harry Wharton & Co. will hold your interest from beginning to end.





There is, at least, one thoroughly bad-hearted boy here, and his identity is utterly unknown. But it is known to all the school that he has pilfered successfully and remained undiscovered. I dread what the result might be if there should be other unsuspected bad characters in the school."

"I know, sir. But—"

"Only this morning," said Mr. Quelch, "I heard a foolish boy talking of imitating the prowler for the purpose of playing a stupid jest. Only a jest was intended; but if such a thing should occur—and the same idea may have occurred to others—"

"I have already told you, sir, my conclusion that the prowler is not a Greyfriars boy at all," said Drake.

Quelch made an impatient gesture.

"That is nonsense, Drake, and I beg you not to repeat it!" he said.

"Very well, sir. But though I have disappointed you so far, you must give me a chance," said Drake. "I had a reason for coming here now—"

"Oh, certainly!" said Mr. Quelch. "But—"

He paused a moment.

"I understand, Drake, that Mr. Ferrers Locke is engaged in the pursuit of the convict, Rupert Crook, who escaped from Highmoor some time ago," he said. "It was at some inconvenience to himself that he sent you here at the request of his relative, Dr. Locke."

"That is correct, sir."

Mr. Quelch coughed.

"In that case, Drake, as you appear to be useful to Mr. Locke, and do not seem to be so here, I should raise no objection to your return to Baker Street," he said.

Drake bit his lip.

It was as good—or as bad—as a dismissal. It was clear that Quelch was convinced that he had hoped for too much from a detective who was, after all, only a boy; and that he would not have regarded the departure of Ferrers Locke's assistant as a disaster!

"I am very unwilling to go with my work undone, sir!" said Jack Drake quietly. "Neither am I willing to report failure to Mr. Locke! As you sent for me, sir, I think you are bound to let me carry on."

"Oh, certainly, certainly!" said Mr. Quelch. "I have little expectation of results, after what has happened; but if you think that your presence here will serve any useful purpose, I shall hope for the best."

He made a gesture, dismissing the subject.

"What did you wish to see me about?" he asked.

Jack Drake took a little leather note-case from his pocket. He opened it, and extracted a small wad of currency notes in an elastic band which he laid on the Remove master's table.

Mr. Quelch stared at it.

"What—" he began.

"There are five pound notes there, sir!" said Drake. "I have taken the numbers. I wish you to lock them in the drawer in which you usually keep loose cash—and leave them there; and leave your study door unlocked at night."

"A trap?" said Mr. Quelch.

"Exactly, sir! If those pound notes fall into the hands of the prowler, they will be put into circulation, and there will be a chance, at least, of tracing him through them. I shall leave them here as bait, sir."

"I am bound to accede to your suggestion, Drake. I will do as you ask," said Mr. Quelch.

"Very well, sir! Please note the numbers."

Mr. Quelch unlocked a drawer of his writing-table, dropped the little wad of pound notes inside it, and relocked the drawer.

"That is all?" he asked.

"That is all, sir!"

And Jack Drake left the study.

Mr. Quelch gazed after him as the door closed, and shook his head.

The mystery of the prowler was rather getting on Quelch's nerves—and his disappointment in the schoolboy detective was deep. And what he had heard from the fat and fatuous Owl of the Remove that morning had put new and disturbing thoughts into his mind.

If some other fellow, either in jest or in earnest, followed the example of the mystery prowler, the situation, already troublesome enough, would grow more troublesome and complicated.

It might lead—and, indeed, unless a discovery was made, must lead—to the presence of the police in the school—a thought at which the Remove master shuddered. His hope in Ferrers Locke's assistant was very faint now.

He turned to his window, and stood looking out into the spring sunshine. James Duck passed in his view again, heading for the football ground, now that his interview with the Remove master was over.

From the direction of the football field came a roar. The first eleven match was going on, and Wingate of the Sixth had put in the ball for his side.

"Goal!" came in a roar to Mr. Quelch's ears; and he saw James Duck quicken his pace.

Then, as he glanced at the crowd in the distance, Mr. Quelch's expression suddenly changed—his lips set, and his eyes glinted.

Overtopping the schoolboy crowd was a face he knew—and at the sight of Randolph Crocker, old boy of Greyfriars, within the school precincts, Mr. Quelch forgot all about Jack Drake and the secret prowler.

He crossed his study to the door, with an expression on his face that boded anything but a pleasant greeting for that old boy of Greyfriars!

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

### On The Football Field!

"I SAY, you fellows—"

"Don't bother, ass!"

"It's him!" said Bunter. "I say, it's him! What a cheek to come here, you fellows! I say, it's him!"

Billy Bunter disregarded grammar recklessly. "Him," whoever "him" was, did not interest Harry Wharton & Co. so much as the football match—and they disregarded Bunter, keeping their eyes on the field.

Wingate and his men were attacking, and the Highcliffe men strenuously defending, and an eager crowd watched. The Famous Five stood in a little crowd, with two juniors from Highcliffe School—Courtenay and the Caterpillar, who were old friends of the Co. Other Highcliffe fellows were there who were not their friends—Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Monson—standing at a little distance.

Pon & Co. were generally too slack to play football, or to watch the same; but they had come over to see this game—possibly having some bet depending on the result!

Billy Bunter was not the only fellow to notice the man who came sauntering on to the ground, though most of the crowd were too keen on the game to glance round at him.

The Famous Five did not turn their heads as Bunter squeaked the news that it was "him." Who "him" was, they did not know, and did not want to know.

"I say, you fellows," Billy Bunter blinked through his big spectacles at Mr. Randolph Crocker, and poked Harry Wharton in the ribs. "I say, he ain't allowed here, you know—"

"Don't puncture me, ass!"

"I mean to say, the Abbot's Spinney is out of bounds since that man Crocker set up there!" said Bunter. "And I know the Head's ordered him to keep clear of the school! Like his cheek to barge in!"

"Pack it up!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Don't bother!"

"Goal!" roared Bob Cherry, as the ball went in. "Good old Wingate! One for Greyfriars—hurrah!"

"Goal!"

The Greyfriars crowd roared and cheered. Bob Cherry, in his happy exuberance at seeing first blood drawn for Greyfriars, grabbed off his cap and waved it round his head—rather thoughtlessly, perhaps! There was a sharp and angry exclamation almost at his elbow as the waving cap crashed on a face.

"Oh! Oh gad! You silly, clumsy young ass! Oh!"

Bob ceased to brandish that cap at once, and stared round. It was Mr. Randolph Crocker, and he was clapping a hand to his nose, where the waving cap had smitten.

"Oh, sorry!" ejaculated Bob.

"He, he, he!" from Bunter.

"You clumsy young fool!" snarled Randolph Crocker. "Haven't you any sense? What did you bang me in the face for, you silly young idiot? Keep your cap away from my face, you fool!"

"Keep your face away from my cap!" retorted Bob.

"He, he, he! I say, you fellows, Bob

banged him right on the boko—he, he, he!" chirruped Billy Bunter.

All the Famous Five looked round now, despite the attractions of the game. They eyed Randolph Crocker far from amicably.

That old boy of Greyfriars, who had disgraced his school and had been expelled, many long years ago, for pinching, was not welcome at his old school. He was, in fact, strictly prohibited by the headmaster from entering the precincts of Greyfriars. Considering why he had been sacked, and that everybody knew why, it was really surprising that he cared to show himself there.

But here he was—lounging on the football ground, apparently having come along to watch the first eleven match.

Members of the public were permitted to watch Greyfriars football matches if the spirit moved them so to do; and more especially, any old boy of the school was welcome. But that did not apply to Randolph Crocker—whose mere presence, in view of his record, was an offence—and was, evidently, intended to be offensive.

"What do you want here, Mr. Crocker?" asked Harry Wharton, very quietly.

Crocker gave his nose another rub, scowled at Bob Cherry, and then glanced at the captain of the Remove.

"Can't an old boy of Greyfriars watch a Greyfriars match?" he sneered. "Twenty years ago, I was playing on this ground."

At that remark, Courtenay and the Caterpillar looked at him rather



curiously. Pon & Co. caught the words, and glanced round.

Harry Wharton compressed his lips.

With the Highcliffe fellows looking on and hearing what was said, he did not want a row to start. It was bad enough for that disreputable old boy to have ever been a Greyfriars man at all, without drawing the attention of fellows who belonged to another school to him.

But the grins that came over the faces of Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Monson showed that they had heard of Sportsman Crocker, once of the Greyfriars Sixth.

Pon winked at his friends, and they edged a little nearer.

Johnny Bull opened his lips with a grim look at Crocker, but he closed them again and turned away his head. The less that was said, with Highcliffe fellows about, the better. Crocker, old Public school man as he was, was always ripe for a row—and he had had more than one row with Greyfriars men since he had set up on the Abbot's Spinney within sight of the school gates.

Rowing with him under the staring eyes of a crowd would have been playing into the hands of that peculiar old boy whose chief object seemed to be to bring disgrace on his old school.

"Ho, he, he!" came from Billy Bunter. "I say, you fellows, the Head will be waxy if he sees Crocker here."

"Shut up!" muttered Frank Nugent.

"But I say, he will be waxy!" said Bunter. "I mean to say, you know what Crocker was sacked for, donkey's years ago—"

"Ring off, fathead!"

Courtenay and Rupert de Courcy, the Caterpillar, turned to the game again at once, and very carefully avoided appearing to notice Crocker. Probably they had heard of him, for he was talked of up and down the whole neighbourhood; and they could guess that it was a discomforting matter for their Greyfriars friends.

But Ponsonby & Co. had no scruples. Pon & Co. were going to enjoy this, as it was obviously disagreeable to their old foes, the Famous Five.

"Excuse me," said Pon very politely. "Are you Mr. Crocker—the chap we've heard so much about lately?"

"Just that!" answered the Sportsman. "Randolph Crocker—I was in the Sixth Form here when I was sacked."

"What did they bunk you for?" asked Pon, with a very curious look at the old boy.

Pon had a fairly thick skin himself; but he couldn't help thinking that this fellow must have a hide like a rhinoceros.

Obviously, Crocker did not care a straw about letting the world know that he had been sacked from school. Indeed, Harry Wharton suspected that he had walked in specially to cause a scene under the eyes of strangers.

"Oh, I was a bad hat!" said Crocker cheerfully, his loud voice reaching dozens of ears. "My dear old headmaster sacked me for breaking out and backing horses, and that sort of thing—and they fancied that something was missing, so I was missing soon afterwards."

"Oh gad!" gasped Ponsonby, while Gadsby and Monson simply stared.

Johnny Bull looked round over his shoulder.

"Shut up, you rotten rascal!" he growled.

Crocker did not heed him.

"I dare say you've seen my sign up at the hut on the spinney," he went on. "I'm a cobbler now—boots and shoes  
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soled and heeled with promptness and dispatch, for cash! I've set up in business near my old school, expecting to get a good deal of trade from Greyfriars! Look at the number of boots and shoes here that want repairing now and then! But would you believe it—I've not had a single order from here."

"Oh crumbs!" said Gadsby.

"My old headmaster has put my little shop out of bounds!" said Crocker, shaking his head. "I almost think that he doesn't like to see me about the place—old boy of Greyfriars as I am."

"He, he, he!" from Billy Bunter. "I say, you fellows, here comes Quelch—he's looking fearfully shirty."

There was a struggle for the ball going on in midfield. But a good many fellows looked away from the Soccer as the tall figure of Mr. Quelch appeared in the offing. Evidently, the Remove master had spotted Randolph Crocker from the distance and had come down on his account.

Pon & Co. grinned joyfully.

A shindy between a Form-master and that blackguardly old boy would be as gall and wormwood to the Greyfriars fellows—and therefore, extremely entertaining to Pon & Co.

Fellows made way for Mr. Quelch as he strode upon the spot. Even the football was almost forgotten.

Randolph Crocker glanced at the Remove master and gave him a cool nod.

Mr. Quelch did not return his nod. He gave him a gorgon-like glare.

"Go!" he rapped.

"Speaking to me, Quelch?" drawled Crocker.

"Leave these precincts this moment!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "You are well aware that you have no right to be here! Will you go at once?"

Randolph Crocker laughed.

"I've dropped in to see my old school play football!" he explained. "To tell the truth, Quelch, I've got a quid on the match with a pal at the Cross Keys! I'm seeing it through."

"Will you go?" breathed Mr. Quelch.

"No!" answered Crocker coolly. "I won't!" And he turned his back on Mr. Quelch and stood with his hands in his overcoat pockets watching the game.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### Pulling Quelch's Nose!

**M**R. QUELCH stood, breathing hard.

He had come there to order Crocker off. Crocker declined to be ordered off.

A scene on the Greyfriars ground with forty or fifty fellows from another school on the spot was the last thing that Mr. Quelch would have desired. But he was aware that a scene was not to be avoided—for the simple reason that Sportsman Crocker had come there with the intention of causing one!

The man seemed to have no sense of shame whatever—or, if he had, he disregarded it in his malicious desire to persecute the headmaster who had sacked him so many years ago.

Few fellows who had been expelled from school would have cared to turn up there again! A fellow who had been sacked for stealing might have been expected to hide himself as deep as he could from all who had known him. Crocker, for whatever reason, seemed to want to parade his disgrace.

The whole neighbourhood was talking of him, of his cobbler's shop at the old spinney, and the signs he had set up over the fence there, visible from many windows in the school. So far from

seeking to avoid attention he drew it to himself by every possible means.

Now he had walked in for a row; a proceeding that was really quite unthinkable to a man like Mr. Quelch—and with which he was not likely to have any patience.

Quelch's gimlet eyes glinted at Crocker's back—turned on him with cool disregard. But he seemed, for a moment, at a loss.

Crocker was speaking again—and his words fell on at least fifty pairs of ears. He was addressing Pon & Co., who were grinning.

"Yes, they booted me out!" he said. "Something was missing, and they put it on me! They don't make me welcome here now! But, from what I hear, there's pinching going on in this school now."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Pon.

"Not really?" gasped Monson.

"Oh, yes—it's leaking out!" said Crocker. "Can't keep that sort of thing dark for long, you know. They don't seem so particular about it as they were in my time. From what I hear, it's been going on for weeks."

"Oh gad!" murmured Gadsby.

Mr. Quelch stepped to the cool rascal and tapped him on the shoulder. He had had enough of this—rather too much.

"Come with me!" said Mr. Quelch.

"I'm not going yet, Quelch. Haven't I told you I've got a quid on this game? I'm seeing the finish."

"You are going at once."

"Forget it!" drawled Crocker.

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips and glanced round.

"Coker—Greene—Loder—Carne!" He called to four big seniors who were at hand. "Please come here and assist me in seeing this man off the premises."

"What-ho!" said Horace Coker of the Fifth Form promptly. Coker of the Fifth had had one row with Crocker already, and he was ready for another.

"Certainly, sir!" said Loder of the Sixth.

"Shall we help, sir?" asked Bob Cherry eagerly.

"Kindly stand back, Cherry! Now, Mr. Crocker, will you come with me quietly, or do you prefer to be removed by force?" asked Mr. Quelch.

Coker and Greene of the Fifth and Loder and Carne of the Sixth drew nearer, the juniors making way for them.

Randolph Crocker glanced at them.

Crocker was a fairly hefty man, and he was said to have been a boxer at Greyfriars. But he had no chance in a tussle with four big senior men; and the whole mob of juniors were ready to join in if further help was needed. Crocker was there for a scene, but not for a rough handling.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"You haven't changed, Quelch!" he remarked. "I was in your Form here once, you know; and you were the same crusty old stick then. You were always a bit of a gorgon, Quelch!"

"He, he, he!" from Bunter.

Mr. Quelch glanced round at the cackling fat Owl.

"Bunter!" he rapped.

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I wasn't laughing, sir! I—I was coughing, sir—just coughing—"

"Go to the House, Bunter, and write me two hundred lines of Virgil!" said Mr. Quelch grimly.

"Oh crikey! But I wasn't laughing, sir—I was only sneezing—" gasped the dismayed fat Owl.

"Go!" hooted Mr. Quelch; and Billy Bunter jumped, and went.





“Put your beef into it, old son!” grinned Skinner. Duck kicked. But the shot, easy as it looked, did not seem easy to the duffer of the Remove. His foot grazed the leather and shot into the air. “Ha, ha, ha!” yelled the onlookers, as Duck tottered.

Any other fellow who had felt inclined to snigger at Crocker's impudence was very careful not to do so.

Mr. Quelch turned to Randolph Crocker again, and took him by the arm.

“Come!” he snapped.

“You're so pressing, Quelch, that I hate to say ‘No’!” drawled Crocker. “Besides, it's a pleasure to take a walk with my old Form-master! Do you still snap the fellows' heads off in the Remove-room, Quelch, like you used to do in my time?”

“Come!” repeated Mr. Quelch, dragging at the man's arm. And Crocker walked away with him, there being no help for it.

“Oh gad!” gasped Ponsonby. “I'm glad we never missed this, you men! That old boy is a credit to his school—what?”

“We don't have old boys like that at Highcliffe!” grinned Gadsby.

“Hardly!” chuckled Monson.

Johnny Bull glared round at the knuts of Highcliffe.

“Shut up,” he grunted, “or you'll get shut up!”

“Sacked for pinchin’,” went on Pon, unheeding, “and he's got the neck to show up again! I suppose they don't mind pinchin' here! From what he says, it's still goin' on.”

“This is the place for it!” grinned Monson. “Who's doin' the pinchin' here, Cherry?”

“I'm going to do some,” said Bob, with a glare at him, “like this!”

He grabbed hold of Monson's arm! The pinch he gave that arm elicited a loud and frantic yell from Monson.

“Ow! Yow! Leggo, you rotter! Oh!”

Monson jerked his arm away, squealing, and Bob made a movement towards Ponsonby. But Pon hastily moved off,

and Gadsby and Monson hastily followed him.

Meanwhile, Mr. Quelch and Crocker, side by side, were walking towards a distant gate. A good many eyes followed the two figures. Pon & Co. would have been glad for the scene to continue; but everyone else was anxious to see the last of Randolph Crocker.

They reached the gate, and Mr. Quelch opened it, and waited for Crocker to pass through to close it behind him.

“Hallo, hallo, hallo!” ejaculated Bob Cherry. “Look!”

“Oh crumbs!”

Fifty pairs of eyes, at least, were fixed on the two figures at the distant gate. So far, Crocker had gone quietly; but he was now out of reach of the Greyfriars fellows. Now he made a sudden movement towards Mr. Quelch, and, before the Remove master could guess his intention, grabbed his nose.

Harry Wharton & Co. stared blankly.

Crocker's finger and thumb closed on Quelch's nose, and pulled it! That any man, however ruffianly, and however reckless, could, or would, venture to pull the majestic nose of their Form-master, was a really impossible thought to the Remove fellows! Crocker was doing it, under their eyes!

“Oh!”

“Look!”

“Great pip!”

“He's pulling Quelch's boko—”

“Oh scissors!”

The loud and startled howl that broke from Mr. Quelch as his nose was pulled was heard far and wide.

The juniors gazed, spellbound. Mr. Quelch thrust out both hands, pushing Crocker off.

Crocker, releasing that majestic nose, grinned, and walked through the gateway.

The gate clanged after him. Mr. Quelch was left holding both hands to a crimson nose!

He seemed petrified! Amazing as it was to the Removites to see their Form-master's nose pulled, it was still more amazing and dumbfounding to Henry Samuel Quelch himself! He seemed unable to believe it!

Crocker disappeared!

Quelch stood holding his nose!

Then, as if coming suddenly to himself, Mr. Quelch walked quickly away—his face as crimson all over as his nose!

“Oh, my hat!” breathed Bob Cherry.

“Oh, suffering sardines! Did—did—did you see what he did—Quelch's beezee—”

Harry Wharton's eyes glinted.

“We'll make that brute sit up for that!” he said. “The cad would never have dared lay hands on Quelch if we had been near enough to chip in!”

“Hallo, hallo, hallo! There goes old Wingate!”

And attention was turned to the football match again; and Randolph Crocker was, for the time being, forgotten by the Removites, if not by their Form-master. Mr. Quelch, caressing a painful nose in his study, was not likely to forget Randolph Crocker in a hurry!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Remove On The Warpath!

“GENTLEMEN, chaps, and sportsmen—”

“Hear, hear!”

“On the bawl!” said Skinner.

“Shut up, Skinner!”

“Carry on, Wharton! Hear, hear!” roared Bob Cherry.



There was a numerous meeting in the Rag after class the day after the Highcliffe first eleven match.

Almost all the Remove had gathered there. Harry Wharton, captain of the Form, stood on a chair to address the meeting.

"Gentlemen, and Skinner—" he recommenced.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This meeting has been called to deal with that cad, that swab, that worm, Crocker, who once upon a time disgraced Greyfriars School by belonging to it."

"Hear, hear!"

"You all know what that rotter has done—" went on the captain of the Remove.

"No need to tell us in that case!" interjected Skinner. "Tell us something we don't know!"

"I'll tell you something you don't seem to know, Skinner! You'll get booted if you keep on interrupting. Gentlemen, that man Crocker was at this school once, and he used to go blagging—breaking out at night, and that sort of rotten thing—"

"Awful!" ejaculated the Bounder. "Thank goodness there's no naughty boys like that here now!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"In fact, he seems to have been a good deal like Smithy," went on Wharton. "Smithy all over, I believe."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But he came, at the finish, to pinching, and was spotted and turfed out," continued Wharton. "Smithy hasn't come to that."

"You cheeky ass!" yelled the Bounder.

"Eh? You haven't, have you, Smithy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the meeting, as the Bounder glared at the speaker on the chair, as if he could have bitten him.

"If he had a rag of decency he would steer clear of Greyfriars after that," said the captain of the Remove. "But has he? No, he hasn't! He's hired that hut on the Abbot's Spinney, and set up there to worry the Head—"

"And we're such nice boys, and love our headmaster so much!" sighed Skinner.

"Kick Skinner, somebody!"

"Yarooogh!" roared Skinner, as somebody obliged.

"Yesterday," resumed Wharton, "the cad came on our football ground, just to make a scene because fellows from another school were here. He disgraced Greyfriars when he belonged to it—and he's bent on disgracing it as much as he can now. And he pulled our beak's nose—"

"I say, you fellows, I'm jolly glad that man Crocker pulled old Quelch's hoko, after he gave me two hundred lines for nothing—"

"Kick Bunter, somebody!"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow! Wow!"

"We're not standing it!" went on Wharton. "It's the jolly old limit! Quelch is a bit of a Tartar in the Form-room these days—"

"A big bit!" remarked Hazeldene.

"Quite a large bit!" said Peter Todd.

"In fact, a whole Tartar, and some over."

"But that rank outsider isn't going to handle our beak!" said Harry. "The Remove are going to make that clear to him."

"Hear, hear!"

"The hear-hearfulness is terrific!"

"Has Quelch asked you to take the matter up?" inquired Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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"Quelch is our beak—" said Harry.

"And he pulled our beak's beak!" said Skinner. "Nobody here ever wanted to pull it!"

"Shut up, Skinner!"

"We're going to give the cad a lesson!" said Harry. "He can't be turned off the Abbot's Spinney, as he's taken the place from the estate-agent in Courtfield. But he can be warned off the Greyfriars ground; and we're going to warn him off. He's not going to pull our beak's nose and get away with it."

"But he never got away with it!" said Skinner. "Quelch had it on, as usual, in the Form-room to-day!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up, you funny ass! He's not getting away with this!" said Harry. "Who's game to come along to Abbot's Spinney and give that rotter what he's asked for?"

"Out of bounds, old man!" said Squiff. "Forgotten that the Head's put the spinney out of bounds since Crocker set up there?"

"That can't be helped! Who's coming?" demanded Wharton. "If Quelch gives us lines afterwards we can stand it. That cad has insulted our Form-master, and he's going to have six on the bags—"

"Oh crikey!"

"From a cricket stump! I'm going to hand them over."

"Think he'll let you?" grinned Skinner. "That chap knocked out Coker of the Fifth when he went along hunting for trouble."

"Yes, I think he will let me," said Harry. "I think he won't have any choice about it. I've got the cricket stump here, and I'm going to give Crocker six of the very best as a warning to keep his cheeky paws off our beak. Any fellow who's funky can stand out. The rest will come with me."

"Hands up, everybody who's coming!" shouted Bob Cherry.

Quite a forest of hands went up. Skinner put his hands in his pockets, but almost every other hand went up.

James Duck, the new fellow in the Form, put up his hand with the rest; even Billy Bunter put up a grubby paw, and Lord Mauleverer took the trouble to get out of an armchair to put up the whitest and best-cared-for hand in the Remove.

Evidently there were plenty of fellows ready and willing to give Sportsman Crocker the lesson for which he had asked.

Harry Wharton stepped down from the chair.

"Come on!" he said.

"Better not let Quelch know," chuckled Skinner. "I can tell you men that Quelch won't be grateful. More likely to whop you all round."

Nobody heeded Skinner, though it was quite probable that he was right. Mr. Quelch's feelings towards the old boy of Greyfriars were very likely bitter enough, but it was very unlikely that he would approve of such proceedings on the part of his Form. But the Famous Five had made up their minds on the subject, and where they led the Remove generally followed—and they followed now in a crowd.

Skinner and Snoop and Fisher T. Fish were the only Remove fellows who remained in the Rag. Even Billy Bunter marched forth with the Remove on the warpath. Bunter, however, slowed down on the way to the gates and decided on the tuckshop as his destination instead. But the rest went out in a rather excited crowd and headed for

the corner of Friardale Lane and the old spinney.

At the fence of the spinney there was a halt. Beyond that fence was out of bounds for all Greyfriars fellows, and the place was so close to the school that the eye of authority was likely to fall on transgressors at any moment.

Harry Wharton & Co. did not hesitate, however. Wharton threw open the gate and walked in, followed by the Co.; and the Bounder, who was always ready for any kind of trouble, went in with them. Peter Todd, Tom Redwing, Squiff, Russell, Duck, Ogilvy, Lord Mauleverer, Wibley, Micky Desmond, and Tom Brown followed on, but a good many of the crowd stayed outside the fence.

But sixteen fellows walked up the path to the hut that stood over the site of the ancient abbot's cell on the spinney—more than enough to handle Randolph Crocker if he gave trouble, as there was little doubt that he would.

The door of the hut was wide open, and Randolph Crocker was lounging in the doorway, smoking a cigarette.

He stared at the crowd of Greyfriars juniors.

"What the dickens do you want?" he asked. "Have you come here to have your boots and shoes mended?"

"No; we've come here to have your manners mended, Mr. Crocker," answered Harry Wharton. He drew the stump from under his coat. "Yesterday you barged in at Greyfriars and insulted our beak—"

Crocker grinned.

"How is Quelch's nose?" he asked. "Red and raw, like Marian's—what?"

"Never mind that! You're going to be whopped for your cheek," explained the captain of the Remove. "Will you bend over that bench of yours, or would you rather be chucked over it?"

The Sportsman stared at him blankly for a moment, and then burst into a laugh.

"Run away while you're safe," he suggested.

"Collar him!" said Harry tersely.

There was a general forward move, watched with excited interest by the fellows who had stayed at the fence.

Randolph Crocker threw aside his cigarette, and the derisive grin on his hard-featured face changed into an angry scowl.

"Get out!" he yapped.

"Come on, you fellows!" said Harry.

He led the way; and Randolph Crocker's clenched fist lashed out too suddenly for the captain of the Remove to guard. That fist crashed on Harry Wharton's chest, lifted him off his feet, and sent him spinning backwards.

He gave a gasp as he fell.

But even as he went down the Co. jumped at Crocker and grasped him. A quick jolt from the old boy's hefty fist sent Bob Cherry spinning; but the other three bore Crocker backwards, and he went down heavily.

Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry scrambled up and piled in, and the grasp of a dozen other hands was soon added.

Bench and chairs, boots and shoes, all sorts of things went crashing right and left as Sportsman Crocker rolled and swayed and heaved and struggled and yelled and kicked in the grasp of many hands.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Six For Crocker!

"GOT him!"

"Hold him!"

"Sit on his head!"

Randolph Crocker, still wriggling, sprawled in the grasp of the



Greyfriars juniors; he gasped and panted and gurgled for breath.

There were a good many signs of damage among the fellows who held him; but they had him at last, and they held him, and the Sportsman was powerless.

Harry Wharton, panting, glanced round for the cricket stump which he had brought for the benefit of Sportsman Crocker, but which had been dropped in the tussle; it lay on the old stone-flagged floor, among a litter of other things that had fallen from various pockets as the juniors rolled over in the struggle with the Sportsman.

Lord Mauleverer's wrist-watch—the strap broken—lay there, and a cigarette case belonging to the Bounder beside it; a big pocket-knife that belonged to Bob Cherry, and a silver-handled penknife that was Wharton's; Peter Todd's fountain-pen, and James Duck's steel-rimmed glasses; and many other small articles. In the midst of the scattered litter from many pockets lay the cricket stump, and Harry Wharton caught it up.

"Bend him over!" he said breathlessly.

"What-ho!" gasped Bob.

"Shove him across that bench!" said Smithy. "Stick that bench up and stick him across it!"

The cobbler's bench had gone over in the wild and whirling shindy. Two or three fellows grasped it and set it up again; then Randolph Crocker, swung off the floor in innumerable hands, was pitched across it face down.

He struggled and kicked and yelled; but his arms and legs were gripped, and he had no chance of getting away.

"Six on the bags!" said Bob. "It will remind him of old times at Greyfriars—what?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can fancy you're in the Remove again, Mr. Crocker," grinned Lord Mauleverer, "and that Quelch is givin' you six—what?"

"Stand clear!" said the captain of the Remove, swinging up the cricket stump.

"Go it!"

"If you dare——" shrieked Crocker. He could not wrench himself loose, but he twisted round his head and gave Harry Wharton a deadly glare. "You dare to touch me——"

"Didn't you dare to lay your paws on Quelch?" answered Harry disdainfully. "Old Quelch couldn't handle a hefty brute like you, or you'd never have dared to check him as you did. You're going to be whopped for it—and you're going to be whopped hard!"

Whop!

The cricket stump came down with a ringing whop that rang like a pistol shot through the hut on Abbot's Spinney.

From Crocker came a yell of rage and anguish. Probably he had been whopped a good many times in his old days as a Greyfriars man, but probably he had never liked it—and he liked it still less now. He made a frantic effort to tear himself loose, but the Removites jammed him down on the bench.

Whop!

Another yell from Crocker. He twisted his head round again, and his face was white with fury as he glared at the captain of the Remove.

"I'll make you sorry for this!" he hissed.

"At present I'm making you sorry for handling Quelch," answered Harry Wharton. "You're going to learn to keep your cheeky paws to yourself, Mr. Crocker."

Whop!

Yell!

Harry Wharton was putting plenty of beef into it. Even Loder of the Sixth had never handled the ash with a heavier hand.

Whop!

Crocker made so desperate an effort that he almost succeeded in breaking loose; but grasping hands jammed him down again, and he writhed and panted on the cobbler's bench.

Whop!

Crocker yelled again frantically. He dragged a leg loose from Lord Mauleverer, who was grasping it, and kicked out.

He did not care where the kick landed, and, as a matter of fact, it would have landed on Mauly's aristocratic features, and done considerable damage there, had not James Duck snatched at the ankle, and dragged the kicking foot down in time.

"Oh gad!" gasped Lord Mauleverer. "Thanks, old bean!" Mauly rubbed

his nose, which had been hardly an inch from Crocker's heel when Duck dragged the foot down so promptly. "Got that hoof safe?"

"I've got it!" grinned Duck.

Mauly gave him rather a curious look. Duck had acted with a promptness rather surprising in the duffer of the Remove. His glasses lay on the floor, and he seemed to have forgotten them; but he also seemed to see quite well without them. As if he read what was in Mauly's mind, the new junior added quickly:

"I say, keep an eye open for my specs, will you? I've dropped them somewhere. Don't tread on them. I've got this sportsman all right. I say, look for my specs, will you?"

"Yaas," said Mauly.

Whop!

The cricket stump came down for the sixth time with a resounding whop, followed by a roar from Randolph Crocker.

"That's six!" said Harry. He put the stump under his arm. "Roll that brute off the bench! That's the lot!"

Crocker was rolled off the bench. He rolled on the stone flags, and scrambled up with a face of fury.

His hands were clenched, and his eyes blazing. Evidently he was tempted to rush at the crowd of Greyfriars fellows, hitting out right and left.

But he knew what to expect if he did, and he controlled his fury. He stood panting, wriggling from the swipes of the cricket stump, and glaring like some savage animal.

"You young hounds, you wait a bit!" he gasped, in a choking voice. "I'll make you sorry for this!"

"Why make us wait?" grinned the Bounder. "Go ahead, Crocker!"

"Lift a finger, and we'll collar you, and give you another six, Mr. Crocker," said the captain of the Remove, with cool contempt. "There's only one way to deal with a rotter of your kind, and that's the way."

Crocker's eyes glittered at the captain of the Remove. But he made no answer. He stood leaning on the door of the inner room, panting and gasping.

Lord Mauleverer had picked up Duck's spectacles, and he handed them back to him.

(Continued on next page.)

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James Duck adjusted them, and blinked at his lordship.

"Thanks!" he said. "Jolly lucky they weren't trodden on. I say, whom do these things belong to? I suppose that cigarette-case belongs to Crocker."

"Suppose again!" grunted the Bounder. "Hand it to me, you silly ass!" he added, as James Duck picked it up.

Duck blinked at him.

"Yours?" he asked.

"Yes, fathead!"

"Oh, good gracious!" said Duck. "I was told that fellows in the Remove were not allowed to smoke."

"Idiot!" was the Bounder's reply to that.

"Smithy does things that are not allowed, old bean," grinned Bob Cherry. "He can't help being a silly ass. Hallo, hallo, hallo! That's my pocket-knife!" Bob picked up his pocket-knife.

"That's my penknife," said Harry; and Duck picked it up, and handed it to him.

Quite a lot of loose articles had been scattered in the wild struggle on the floor, and the various owners sorted them out, and picked them up, Crocker watching them with a savage scowling brow. Among other things, Duck picked up a folded, crumpled racing paper.

"That's yours, too, Vernon-Smith?" he asked innocently.

"No, idiot!" snapped the Bounder.

Even the scapegrace of the Remove did not carry racing papers in his pockets.

"That's Crocker's, I suppose," said Harry Wharton. "That's the sort of clobber he does here."

Duck gave Crocker a blink through his glasses.

"Is this yours?" he asked.

"Yes, you fool!" snarled Crocker.

Duck laid the racing paper on the bench.

"Will you young scoundrels get out of my place?" said Crocker, between his teeth. "I shall complain to your headmaster about this!"

"You can please yourself about that," said Harry Wharton, "but you'd better take that six as a warning to steer clear of Greyfriars, Mr. Crocker. You'll get some more if you ask for it!"

"Lots!" grinned Bob.

"The lotfulness will be terrific, my esteemed and execrable Crocker."

And the Greyfriars fellows trooped out of the hut, Randolph Crocker scowling savagely after them as they went, his bitter glare singling out Harry Wharton from the rest.

That look showed plainly enough what the captain of the Remove had to expect from Crocker, if a chance ever came the rascal's way. But Wharton, if he noticed it at all, did not heed it.

The Greyfriars crowd walked back to the school, quite satisfied with the way they had dealt with that old boy, though by no means sure that Mr. Quelch would be equally satisfied if he heard of it.

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

### A False Alarm!

**H**ARRY WHARTON opened his eyes in the darkness of the Remove dormitory, and turned his head on his pillow.

The captain of the Remove was not sleeping so peacefully as usual.

In the excitement of dealing with Randolph Crocker at the hut on the

Abbot's Spinney he had hardly noticed the hefty jolt that Crocker had given him. But he had to notice it later, as it had left a rather painful bruise which caused him a good deal of discomfort.

Several times that night, since the Remove had dropped off to sleep after lights out, Wharton had awakened, though he very soon went to sleep again.

Now, as he turned his head on the pillow, he heard the last stroke of twelve dying away, and, following it, a faint sound in the dark. At that sound his eyes, which had been about to close, widened, and he peered into the shadows of the dormitory.

Since the mystery man had started prowling, any unusual sound at night naturally brought the thought of the prowler into the mind of any fellow who heard it.

Only a few nights ago the prowler had visited the Remove dormitory, and Lord Mauleverer's notecase had had a narrow escape from his filching fingers.

Nothing had been seen or heard of him since, but every fellow wondered whether, and when, he would prowl again. And Wharton, certain that he had heard some faint sound of a movement, sat up in bed, and peered in the dark, listening intently.

It seemed to him, though he could not be certain, that he saw a darker patch of blackness in the gloom than moved even as his eyes glimpsed it. With the movement came a faint, barely audible sound as of a stealthy footstep.

Wharton did not hesitate. It might be a fancy, or it might be some fellow out of bed, but it might be the secret prowler. And the captain of the Remove made a swift spring from his bed, and leaped in the direction of that dim, shifting shadow.

His outstretched hands touched only empty space. If the prowler was there, he was dodging away in the darkness.

Harry Wharton ran quickly across towards the door. He was quick; but the prowler, if he was there, was quicker.

It seemed to Wharton that he heard a sound of the door softly opening and shutting. A moment later he reached the door; but it was shut and latched. If the prowler had been there, he was gone.

Instantly he tore the door open. He flung it wide, and ran into the passage. Two or three voices called from the dormitory; several fellows had been awakened by the sounds he had made.

"What the thump's that?" exclaimed Herbert Vernon-Smith.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Who's up?"

A bright flash of light came like a stab in the dark. One fellow had leaped out of bed with an electric torch in his hand. The bright beam flashed round the dormitory.

It was James Duck, the new junior, who had leaped up so swiftly at the first sound in the silence of the night.

To snatch the torch from under his pillow and flash it on as he sprang out of bed occupied Jack Drake less than a second. The light gleamed on the open door, and Drake cut across swiftly to the doorway.

"Who's that?" called out Johnny Bull. A dozen fellows were awake now.

Drake did not heed.

The door was wide open, which meant that someone had left the dormitory.

The schoolboy detective flashed the light into the passage.

He almost dropped it in his astonishment at the sight of Harry Wharton there! He was only a few moments after the captain of the Remove.

"Wharton! Is that you, Wharton?" he exclaimed.

Wharton blinked in the flashing light. He was turning back to the doorway when Drake reached it from within. He had heard and seen nothing in the passage, and the prowler, if he had been there, was gone.

"Yes—don't blind me with that light, you ass!" he answered. "Who is it—oh, you, you fathead! Nothing to be afraid of this time, you duffer!"

"What the dickens are you doing out of the dorm?"

"I thought I heard somebody—"

"Oh!"

Harry Wharton came back into the dormitory. He was uncertain of what he had seen and heard, yet he was almost sure that someone had been in the room.

Drake stepped back, and shut off the light, and Wharton closed the door.

"Is that you, Harry?" came Frank Nugent's voice.

"Yes! Show that light again, Duck—and come along to Mauly's bed," said Harry Wharton. "I'm almost sure that somebody has been here—and if he has, it's Mauly's notecase he was after."

There was a sleepy chuckle from Lord Mauleverer's bed.

"Nothin' doin' this time, old bean!" said his lordship. "I've parked my notecase in a safe spot in case that johnny calls again! If he's been rootin' through my clobber, he's had his trouble for his jolly old pains."

"Let's see!" exclaimed the Bounder, and he jumped out of bed.

Several other fellows followed his example.

James Duck turned on the light again and shone the beam on Lord Mauleverer's elegant clothes folded at his bedside.

On the previous occasion, Mauly's clobber had been disturbed and scattered by the prowling pincher. But there was no sign of disturbance now. Mauly's clothes had not been touched.

"Nobody's been here!" said Vernon-Smith. "Not after Mauly, at any rate."

"Mauly's the man he would be after!" said Skinner. "He knows that Mauly is caked with dough."

"Better look at your own togs, Smithy!" said Peter Todd. "He may have been through your pockets this time."

"Show that light here, Duck!" said the Bounder quickly.

But there was no sign of Vernon-Smith's clothes having been disturbed. There was, in fact, no sign of anyone having entered the dormitory at all. Some of the fellows were grinning.

"Nightmare!" yawned Skinner.

"Don't wake me up next time you dream that the prowler has been here, Wharton."

"Wharton's getting nervy!" giggled Snoop.

"Shut up!" growled Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton bit his lip with vexation. He was not in the least nervy, but it certainly did look as if it had been a false alarm and the juniors disturbed for nothing.

"I thought I heard somebody, and I thought I saw something move!" he said quietly. "I may have been mistaken—but if the prowler butts in here again, we want to get him, I suppose."

"Yes, rather!" said Johnny Bull. "And you needn't snigger, Snoopey—if you thought he was here, you wouldn't jump out—you'd dodge under the bedclothes."





The door of the Remove-room suddenly opened, and Wingate of the Sixth strode in. "What the dickens!" exclaimed the Greyfriars captain, staring at the startling scene. "Is this a Form-room, or a bear-garden? Stop that, you young sweeps!"

"Well, nobody's been here!" grunted the Bounder. "It's rather fatheaded to wake everybody up for nothing."

"You woke everybody up the other night, thinking it was the prowler, when Bunter was playing a fool trick!" snapped Wharton.

"Well, it was somebody, at any rate, and this time it's nobody!" sneered Vernon-Smith. "Nobody's been here, and it's just nerves—"

"Oh, don't be a fool!" Harry Wharton's temper was rising.

"I'd rather be a fool than a funk!" retorted the Bounder.

"You cheeky cad—"

"Shut up, Smithy, for goodness' sake!" came Tom Redwing's voice. "Can't you ever open your mouth without ragging somebody?"

"Rats to you!" snapped the Bounder. "There was nobody here, and Wharton knows it as well as I do, and I said it was fatheaded to wake us all up for nothing, and so it is. We'd better switch the light on, if Wharton's getting scared of the dark."

"You're asking to have your cheeky nose punched, Smithy!" said Bob Cherry. "You'd better shut up!"

"Rats!"

Vernon-Smith went back to his bed. The other fellows followed his example, and Harry Wharton turned in, in angry silence.

The Remove fellows were soon asleep again, but Wharton did not sleep soundly. That painful bruise where Crocker's knuckles had struck him was troubling him, and he was in an angry and irritated mood which did not conduce to balmy slumber. But his eyes closed at last.

It was at a later hour, though at what time he did not know, that he woke with a vague impression that somebody, or something, was stirring.

He lifted his head and listened; but if there had been a sound, he heard

nothing more—and he laid his head on the pillow again. After one false alarm, he did not want to cause another and hear Skinner's gibes and the Bounder's sneers over again.

He closed his eyes and slept again; and if, indeed, the prowler had visited the Remove dormitory, he came and went unseen and undiscovered.

### THE NINTH CHAPTER.

#### What Happened In The Night!

"DUCK!"

"Yes, sir!"

"You will go to my study?"

"Very well, sir!"

Mr. Quelch's face was set and severe. It had worn its most unpromising expression all through breakfast, and after brekker he addressed James Duck in a voice of ice.

Many Remove fellows had noted that James Duck did not seem to be in Quelch's good graces of late. They attributed that to the fact that he was—or, at least, appeared to be—rather a dunce in Form.

Now it was easy to see the Remove master was far from pleased with him, and the fact that he had ordered him to his study indicated that there was trouble ahead for the duffer of the Remove.

James Duck did not share that opinion, however; for Jack Drake had no doubt that Mr. Quelch had some communication to make to him in the study; and he wondered whether anything had been seen or heard of the secret prowler during the night. In that case, Quelch was bound to apprise Ferrers Locke's assistant—little faith as he now seemed to have in him.

While the rest of the Remove went out of the House, Drake went to his

Form-master's study, and Mr. Quelch followed him there.

His face was grimmer than ever as he closed the door and fixed his gimlet eyes on Drake's inquiring face. It was clear enough to the schoolboy detective that something had happened.

"You have something to tell me, sir?" asked Drake very quietly.

"Yes!" Quelch seemed to bite off the word.

"The prowler—"

"Yes!"

"In this study?"

"Yes!"

Drake's glance shot round. One drawer in Mr. Quelch's writing-table was open. It was the drawer in which he had placed the little bundle of currency notes on Wednesday afternoon.

The schoolboy detective's eyes gleamed. He could guess now that that wad of notes had disappeared.

"I am bound, Drake," said Mr. Quelch, in the same icy tones, "to inform you of what has occurred, as you are here on Mr. Ferrers Locke's instructions to investigate. In accordance with your request, I have left my study unlocked at night since the notes were placed in that drawer. Last night, the study was entered and the notes taken."

He paused a moment.

"I discovered this as soon as I came down this morning," he went on. "I have, so far, said nothing of the matter, and everything has been left as I found it for you to examine."

"Thank you, sir!" said Drake.

"You will find that that drawer has been forced open," continued Mr. Quelch. "Other drawers also have been forced, but nothing is missing except the notes, as no other money was left here. The thief appears to have attempted to open the drawer with a

(Continued on page 16.)



## AN OLD BOY'S VENGEANCE!



(Continued from page 13.)

penknife, as you will see that there is a fragment of a snapped-off blade there—but some stronger instrument must have been used afterwards, judging by the condition of the woodwork—probably a chisel, or some such instrument, from a schoolboy's tool-chest."

He paused again.

"Some days ago, Drake, you stated to me your belief that the prowler was some person from outside the school," he said.

"Yes, sir!"

"Some person," said Mr. Quelch, with a sarcastic note in his voice, "who contrived to enter and leave without leaving a trace behind him."

Drake did not answer that.

"I told you at the time that such an idea was nonsense," said Mr. Quelch, "and this occurrence is a proof of it, if proof is necessary. Obviously, this is the work of someone inside the House."

"I had reason for what I said, sir!" Drake's voice was cool and quiet. "The night the prowler came to my dormitory, I got hold of him, and though he escaped unseen, I know that he carried the marks of my knuckles on his nose. No such marks were found on any face in the school, and so—"

"Obviously, you were mistaken," said Mr. Quelch, "and I trust, Drake, that you will dismiss that absurd idea from your mind, and make some endeavour to discover the miserable boy who has been here. The matter is distressing beyond words. It is impossible to ascertain whether this is the work of the unknown rascal who is referred to as the prowler, or whether some other wretched boy may have followed his example—or even whether it is a foolish, insensate jest by some stupid boy like Bunter."

The Remove master breathed very hard.

He was deeply disturbed and distressed; and he evidently expected little from Ferrers Locke's assistant.

Matters had, in fact, gone from bad to worse since the arrival of Jack Drake at his old school, under the name of James Duck of the Remove.

Drake coloured a little.

"I will do my best, sir!" he said. "I am still convinced that the prowler is not an inmate of the school—"

"I have said that that is nonsense!" said Mr. Quelch grimly, "and I repeat that it is nonsense, Drake. Can you really fancy for one moment that a crook capable of entering and leaving a building without a trace would use a common penknife in an attempt to open a drawer—or that he would need to force it so clumsily as that drawer has been forced? Such men have implements for their nefarious trade."

Mr. Quelch gave an irritated grunt. "Such a man would clear out the headmaster's safe, not a drawer in a writing-table in a Form-master's study," he said. "Neither would he visit the same building half a dozen times in succession. Please do not talk

nonsense, Drake—but make any examination you wish to make here. I am bound, in the circumstances, to give you a free hand; though I frankly admit that I expect little in the way of results."

Drake, in silence, turned to the writing-table.

Every drawer in it had been forced, doubtless in search of loose cash. The one from which the notes were missing remained open.

There were papers in the drawer, but they lay undisturbed. On the top sheet lay a fragment of steel; half of the blade of a penknife. It had snapped off short, apparently in an attempt to force the drawer open with it.

Drake picked it up, and examined it curiously.

The Remove master watched him in grim silence.

In silence also the schoolboy detective continued his examination. But there was nothing more to be discovered.

"Kindly hand me that fragment of metal," said Mr. Quelch, as Drake turned from the writing-table at length. "I do not share your extraordinary belief, Drake, that this is the work of some law-breaker from outside the school," he added, with grim sarcasm. "I have no doubt that a penknife belonging to some Greyfriars boy has a portion of a blade missing, and it may be possible to discover him from that circumstance."

"I don't get it, sir!" said Drake slowly.

"What do you mean?"

Drake shook his head.

"I am afraid, sir, that you have lost faith in me; but I have worked with Ferrers Locke, and I know my business," he said quietly. "There is something here that beats me—something out of the usual; something unlike what has gone before."

"I fail to see it."

"Why should the prowler, whether schoolboy or outsider, have attempted to open that drawer with a penknife, when he had clearly some more powerful implement, which he had to use to get it open?" said Drake.

"Really, I cannot say!" answered Mr. Quelch. "Neither does it appear to me to be of any consequence. It is obvious that he did so, and that is enough."

"And why," pursued Drake unheeding, "did he leave that fragment of steel where it fell in the drawer?"

"Probably he did not even notice it," answered Mr. Quelch. "You have seen for yourself that it was left there, Drake."

"Yes; and I cannot understand why. He must have noticed that the blade snapped—why should he leave a clue behind him?"

Quelch gave an impatient shrug of the shoulders.

"A young rascal, committing such an action in the small hours, would naturally be in a state of nervous uneasiness," he answered. "He may have heard some sound, or taken alarm for some reason— Really, Drake, you disappoint me more and more, by attaching importance to such trifles."

Mr. Quelch very carefully slipped the portion of blade into his waistcoat pocket.

Drake's eyes followed it curiously till it disappeared.

"You think that that may be useful, sir?" he asked.

Mr. Quelch stared.

"Certainly I do, Drake, if the penknife can be found, from which this portion of blade has broken off," he snapped. "That is the line that my

inquiry will take, and I trust that it may lead me to the culprit."

"But, sir—"

"You have finished here?" asked Mr. Quelch, ruthlessly interrupting him. "Do you still adhere, Drake, to your belief that the thief came from outside the school?"

"More so than ever, sir!" said the schoolboy detective quietly.

"Then we need say no more. I shall conduct the inquiry into this occurrence myself, beginning with my own Form," said Mr. Quelch. "You may go."

"Very well, sir."

Jack Drake left the study. He left it in a sorely perplexed frame of mind. What seemed clear to the Remove master seemed very far from clear to Drake, and he realised, though Mr. Quelch did not, that he was in deep waters.

## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

## The Clue!

"BUNTER!" "Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"Stand out before the Form!"

"Oh lor'!"

All the Remove knew that there was trouble in the air that morning. Mr. Quelch had been in consultation with the Head, until the bell rang for class, and his face was grave when he came to take his Form—exceedingly grave. And as class did not, as usual, begin, it was clear that something else had to come first.

It was quite dismaying to William George Bunter to see the gimlet eye fixed on him specially, and to hear the sharp voice rap his name.

Bunter rolled out apprehensively.

Which of the many sins on his fat conscience had become known to his Form-master, he did not know; but he supposed that one of them had, as he was called out.

"It wasn't me, sir!" said Bunter, by way of beginning his defence. He did not yet know what was coming; but that seemed a safe opening.

"Bunter! I have to refer to words uttered by you, which reached my ears by accident on Wednesday morning!" said Mr. Quelch. "As a rule, I should take no note of such words—neither have I, so far, done so; but I am now compelled to refer to the matter."

"Oh!" mumbled Bunter, blinking at him through his big spectacles, and trying to cudgel his fat brains into remembering what he might have said on Wednesday morning that Quelch might have heard.

Bunter was not blessed with a good memory! He had already forgotten the big idea he had propounded to the Famous Five in the Rag after class on that particular morning.

Their reception of the same had been discouraging. Bunter had dropped it like a hot potato—and two days was rather a long time for Billy Bunter to remember anything.

"I refer," said Mr. Quelch, "to a harebrained, stupid, obtuse, and utterly disrespectful scheme you apparently formed, Bunter, and communicated to other boys in the junior room, after class that morning."

The Famous Five sat up and took notice at that. They, of course, knew now to what Quelch referred, though it was news to them that Quelch had heard what the fat Owl had blabbed.

"Oh!" repeated Bunter. He remembered now. "I—I wasn't in the Rag after class on Wednesday morning, sir!"



"What?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"I wasn't, really, sir?" said Bunter eagerly. "You can ask Wharton and Bob Cherry, sir, and—and other fellows—they were there, too?"

"They were there, too," repeated Mr. Quelch. "Bunter, I warn you to desist from your usual proverbs. This matter is serious—very serious."

"Is—is—is it, sir?" stammered Bunter.

"I was passing the window, and heard what you said to Wharton and his friends," said Mr. Quelch. "I was glad to see that they treated your absurd and disrespectful suggestion in a way that unmistakably showed their disapproval."

"I—I—I never—"

"Your suggestion, Bunter, was that some disrespectful prank should be played in my study to give an impression that the unknown person called the prowler had been at work there. You were so utterly obtuse as to suggest that money should be taken from my desk and hidden in a hat!"

There was a chuckle among the Remove fellows.

Really, they could not help it. That any fellow could be howling ass enough to play practical jokes with money was hard to believe, except in Bunter's case. But William George Bunter was capable of that, or of anything else. It was Bunter all over.

For whole weeks the school had been disturbed and perturbed by the prowling of the mystery man. It was a serious matter—a terribly serious matter. Bunter saw in it the possibility of a jape on his beak, and he had planned to snaffle Quelch's cash and hide it in a hat. It was enough to make the Remove chuckle—indeed, it might have made a stone image smile!

But Mr. Quelch had no use for chuckles. He gave his Form a glare that caused the chuckle to die away with great suddenness.

"Bunter," resumed Mr. Quelch, "I have now to ask you whether you have ventured to carry out that insensate scheme?"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

"Answer me directly!"

"Oh, no! I—I don't know whether the other fellows did, sir, but I didn't!" gasped the alarmed fat Owl. "I—I wouldn't, sir! I—I never said anything of the kind. I—I mean, I—I was only joking—just a jig-jig-joke, sir! Besides, I never meant to do it myself, sir! I—I—I—I wouldn't!"

"Did you leave your dormitory last night, Bunter?"

"Oh crumbs! No!" howled Bunter, in terror.

All the Remove knew by this time that something had happened in the night. It was easy for them to guess that the prowler had been at work again. Billy Bunter fairly palpitated with terror. His fat jaw dropped, and his eyes almost popped through his spectacles at Mr. Quelch.

"Did you enter my study last night, Bunter?"

"Ow! No!" shrieked Bunter. "I—I never woke up at all last night, sir! I tept like a slop—"

"What?"

"I—I mean, I slept like a top! I never opened my eyes till after rising-bell, sir. Bob Cherry woke me up, lugging at my ear."

"It was your suggestion, Bunter, to abstract money from my desk and hide it. Have you done so?"

"No!" howled Bunter.

There was a thrill in the Remove. Obviously money was missing from Mr. Quelch's study. It was the prowler again.

Nobody believed that Bunter was the

man. He was ass enough to plan such a fatuous scheme for paying out Quelch, but he was not the man to carry it out. Moreover, he was a very unlikely fellow to turn out at night, and the fellows who had been awakened remembered that they had heard his snore going on, melodious and uninterrupted.

Mr. Quelch, in fact, did not think that the culprit was Bunter; but he had to ascertain whether it was or not.

"If you have done so, Bunter—"

"I—I—I ain't!" yelled Bunter. "I—I never! I wasn't—I mean, I wouldn't! I was fast asleep all night, sir!"

"If you have done so, Bunter, I shall take the view that your action was intended as a foolish jest, and if you return the currency notes immediately I shall cane you, and the matter will be at an end."

"I never!" wailed Bunter. "I'd forgotten all about it, sir! I didn't wake up once! Oh lor'!"

"Have you a penknife, Bunter?"

"Eh? Oh, yes, sir!" gasped Bunter, quite astounded at that sudden change of subject.

"Hand it to me at once!"

The astonished fat Owl fumbled in his pockets and produced a penknife.

It was not a valuable penknife. Bunter had bought it for sixpence from Fisher T. Fish of the Remove, who had given a fag a penny for it. It had originally had two blades. Now it had one and a half.

Mr. Quelch started a little as Bunter handed over that penknife. The fact that one blade was snapped off short caught his eye at once.

Grimly he opened the broken blade, but a glance at it was enough. He did not need to take the broken piece from his waistcoat to compare it with the remnant of the blade.

That fragment was less than an inch long. Bunter's blade had lost more than an inch. Moreover, the break was evidently an old one, and was sticky with the remnants of a bullseye.

All eyes in the Remove Form Room were on Mr. Quelch, as he examined Bunter's penknife. Jack Drake knew what was in Quelch's mind, and the other fellows could guess that a penknife was in some manner connected with the theft that had taken place in the Remove master's study over-night.

Quietly Mr. Quelch handed the penknife back to Bunter.

"M-m-may I go now, sir?" mumbled the fat Owl.

"For the present, Bunter, you may go back to your place."

Bunter rolled back to his place in great relief.

Mr. Quelch's gimlet eyes glinted over five members of his Form.

"Wharton, Cherry, Bull, Nugent, Hurree Singh!"

"Yes, sir!"

"From the manner in which you received Bunter's fatuous suggestion, I can hardly suppose that any of you acted upon it!" said Mr. Quelch. "Nevertheless, I must ask you if you know anything of this matter."

"Nothing, sir," said Harry Wharton.

"You will understand," said Mr. Quelch, "that if what has occurred in my study should be nothing more than a senseless practical joke to cause a foolish sensation, the sooner the matter is cleared up the better. I feel sure that Bunter is the only boy in my Form foolish enough to think of playing so insensate a prank; nevertheless, I must ask each of you to give me a plain answer."

Each of the Famous Five gave a plain answer in turn. They had never dreamed for a moment of anything of

the kind. They knew nothing of what had happened in Quelch's study, and they said so.

Satisfied upon that point, Mr. Quelch paused. But all the Remove knew that more was to come, though they did not know what it was.

"You are now aware," said Mr. Quelch, at length, "that a theft was committed in my study last night. From what I had heard Bunter say, I hoped that it might prove a less serious matter than it appeared to be. I am now driven to the conclusion that it was the work of the person called the prowler, or else of some wretched boy who has been led by his miserable example to tread the path of dishonesty, encouraged by his success in avoiding discovery."

The Remove were silent.

"Fortunately," continued Mr. Quelch, "there exists, in this instance, a clue to the perpetrator which did not exist in previous instances. This clue is in my hands, and, by Dr. Locke's instructions, I am to inquire into the matter throughout the school, beginning with my own Form."

There was a deep silence.

Only Jack Drake knew of the clue that was in Quelch's hands, and his own opinion on that matter differed from Quelch's. But James Duck sat silent, his spectacled face expressing nothing.

"Most of you, I think, possess penknives," said Mr. Quelch. "Every boy who has a penknife will lay it on his desk before him."

There was a general stirring as hands groped in pockets. Quite a large assortment of penknives came into view. They were laid on the desks.

"Wharton!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Kindly collect the penknives and bring them to me."

"Yes, sir!"

The head boy of the Remove went along the desks, collecting a harvest of penknives. He came across to Mr. Quelch's high desk and laid them down there. Then he went back to his place.

Under the breathless gaze of the Remove, Mr. Quelch examined penknife after penknife. Suddenly he was seen to give a violent start.

"Henry's on to something!" whispered Bob Cherry.

It was clear that "Henry" was.

The juniors watched him open a penknife blade. They saw that it was snapped short. They saw him take some tiny object from his pocket and fit it to the broken blade. They saw him draw a deep, deep breath.

Then, with a face like iron, he held up the penknife, the silver handle glimmering in the spring sunshine from the Form-room windows.

"Whose is this penknife?" he asked. "It has the monogram 'H.W.' engraved on the handle."

"Mine, sir!" said Harry Wharton.

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

### GUILTY!

**T**HERE was a deep, dead silence in the Remove-room.

Every fellow in the Form-room felt a thrill of excitement. Many eyes turned on the captain of the Form.

Harry Wharton had answered the Form-master's question promptly and quietly; quite unaware of what was implied in that question. But he could see that there was something in this that he could not understand, and the



look on Quelch's face was startling. The captain of the Remove felt a rather unpleasant beating at his heart.

For a long, long moment, silence reigned. Then Quelch's voice came again, hard as iron, and cold as ice.

"Wharton! This is your penknife! One of the blades is broken."

"Is it, sir?"

"You were aware of that, Wharton?"

"No, sir!"

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips. He left his high desk and came towards the breathless Form, the silver-handled penknife in one hand, a section of a broken blade in the other.

That penknife was Wharton's. It had been, in fact, a New Year's gift from a relative, and all or most of the Remove fellows had seen it, at one time or another. It had a silver handle on which his initials were engraved in the form of a monogram. One blade of the two was open—Mr. Quelch had opened it. All the juniors could see that about an inch had been snapped off it.

They did not yet know the terrible import of that circumstance; but they could all guess that something hung on it—something very serious. Mr. Quelch's face left no doubt on that point.

"Wharton! This blade is broken! Are you telling me that you were unaware that it was broken?"

"I was quite unaware of it, sir, and I cannot understand it," said Harry. "I did not notice it, as the knife was shut when I took it from my pocket a few minutes ago. The blade certainly was not broken yesterday, because I used it in the drawing-class to sharpen a pencil. I have not used it since—or looked at it, except when it dropped from my pocket after class yesterday, and Duck picked it up and handed it back to me."

"The blade is broken, Wharton."

"I can see that, sir."

"I have here," said Mr. Quelch, "the fragment that was broken from the blade. It fits exactly, Wharton! You may look for yourself."

He laid the penknife, and the broken section, on the desk before his head boy. Fellows craned on all sides to look at them.

Harry Wharton mechanically fitted the two together. There was no doubt on the subject. They fitted exactly; and the broken segment was obviously the missing part of the knife-blade.

"You do not suggest, Wharton, that this portion of a blade is not the portion broken from your knife?" asked Mr. Quelch grimly.

"No, sir! It's the piece that was broken off!" said Harry. "I don't see how it matters."

"You will see very shortly, Wharton!" said Mr. Quelch, in the same grim tone. "You can guess, probably, where that broken portion was found."

"I have no idea, sir."

"That portion of a blade," said Mr. Quelch, in a deep voice, "was found in a drawer in the writing-table in my study, which the penknife had been used to force open."

Harry Wharton gazed at him dumbfounded.

"I found it there," said Mr. Quelch, "when I discovered that the drawer had been forced open and money taken from it; a packet of five pound-notes."

Wharton could not speak. He could only gaze at his Form-master, dumb.

"That blade," continued Mr. Quelch, "was snapped off in forcing open that drawer. The broken-off portion re-

mained in the drawer. What have you to say now, Wharton?"

Harry Wharton found his voice.

"I don't understand it, sir! I never even knew that a blade of my penknife was broken! I can't understand how the piece came to be in your study! I haven't even seen the knife since Duck picked it up yesterday and handed it to me—until I took it from my pocket a few minutes ago."

"Has that knife been out of your possession, Wharton, and returned to you by another boy?"

"No, sir!"

"You have not lent it to anyone whom you can name?"

"No!"

"You were one of the boys to whom Bunter made that stupid suggestion a couple of days ago, to perpetrate some prank in my study in imitation of the prowler. Have you acted on that suggestion?"

"I'm not a fool like Bunter, sir!"

"Answer me, yes or no."

Harry Wharton's eyes gleamed.

"I've already answered no, when you asked me!" he said. "If you cannot take my word for it, you must please yourself."

"I require no impertinence, Wharton! Your penknife, which has not left your own possession, was used by the dishonest boy who committed a theft in my study last night. In view of what I heard Bunter say, and of the fact that you were one of the boys to whom he was speaking, I hope and trust that this may prove no more than a foolish and disrespectful jest—though you have not the excuse of Bunter's stupidity. Is that the case?"

"I've answered you, sir."

"Take care, Wharton! If you deny that you have been so foolish as to play a stupid prank in my study—"

"I've denied it."

"Then the only possible conclusion is that a theft has taken place, in imitation of the wretched boy who has never been discovered. You are aware, Wharton, that that is the only possible conclusion."

"I know nothing about it, sir."

Harry Wharton's face was pale, but he was calm. His heart was beating with a disagreeable excitement; but he was more angry than alarmed.

The other fellows were silent; the Co. with dumbfounded expressions on their faces.

"This," said Mr. Quelch, at last, "is a great and terrible shock to me. It was my intention to investigate until I discovered a penknife in the school with a broken blade to which that portion fitted. I never dreamed that such a discovery would be made in my own Form—least of all that it would lead me to my head boy, whom I have trusted. But there is no doubt in this matter—there is no room for a shadow of doubt."

Wharton did not speak.

"Wharton, this penknife was broken in my study last night, in forcing open the money-drawer in my writing-table. You admit that it has not been out of your possession. Have you anything to say?"

"Only that I know nothing about it, sir."

"I cannot listen to such statements as that, Wharton. That you may not have noticed the breaking of the blade at the time is possible. I have no doubt that you were labouring under excitement and fear while so engaged—and it is certain, at all events, that you overlooked the portion of the broken blade that was left in the drawer. But you

can scarcely deny that you were in my study—"

"I was not in your study, sir!"

"Wharton was not in your study last night, sir!" exclaimed Frank Nugent, his face crimson with indignation. "You cannot think that it was Wharton who—"

"You may be silent, Nugent! The known facts speak for themselves!" said Mr. Quelch. "I have no doubt that this is as great a shock to my Form as it is to me; but the facts are there. You left your dormitory last night, Wharton."

Harry Wharton opened his lips—and closed them again as he remembered the incident of the night.

"Oh crikey!" came a startled squeak from Billy Bunter. Billy Bunter had slept through the alarm in the Remove dormitory; but he had heard talk on the subject in the morning, and he knew that Wharton had been up. He goggled through his big spectacles at the captain of the Remove.

"Bunter!"

"Oh! I didn't speak, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"Do you know anything about this matter, Bunter?"

"Oh! No, sir! Nothing at all! I was fast asleep last night when Wharton got up, sir—"

"Shut up, you fat ass!" hissed Peter Todd.

"Oh, really, Toddy, I ain't going to tell Quelch—"

"Silence! Wharton, do you, or do you not, admit that you left your dormitory during the night?"

All eyes were fixed on Wharton; and there were curious looks on many faces. The captain of the Remove breathed very hard.

"Plenty of fellows here know what happened in our dormitory last night, sir!" he said steadily. "I was woke up by something, and thinking it might be the prowler again, I jumped out of bed. I thought I heard the door open and shut, and ran out of the dormitory—but I was only out a minute or so. I saw no one, and went back at once."

"You were out of your dormitory to the knowledge of the Form?"

"For about a minute."

Mr. Quelch glanced over the Remove. "Was any boy here awake when Wharton got out of bed and left his dormitory?" he asked.

Silence.

"Can any boy here tell me how long he was absent?"

Still silence from the Remove.

It was Wharton who spoke.

"Some of the fellows woke up when I ran out; I think they heard the door bang open. Duck got up with a light. He saw me in the passage, coming back—"

"Did he see you leave?"

"No. I suppose he was asleep."

"Did anyone see you leave?"

"I suppose not."

"You cannot call on any boy in this Form to substantiate your statement that you were only out of your dormitory for a minute or so?"

"No, I can't."

"I think we need say no more!" said Mr. Quelch icily. "Your penknife was used to break open a money-drawer in the night, and you were out of your dormitory. I fail to see how anything could be clearer, shocking and distressing as it is. Wharton, I appeal to you for the last time. If you have taken the money from my study for a foolish prank, tell me so while there is yet time, and restore the money, and you may be exonerated from the dreadful charge of theft. I require your answer here and now!"





"Schoolboy or not, I am a detective," said Jack Drake, coolly. "And as far as detective work is concerned my judgment must stand even before a headmaster's. I insist upon Wharton being totally exonerated from all accusation or suspicion!" Mr. Quelch gazed speechless, while Dr. Locke coloured faintly.

Harry Wharton's face set stubbornly. "I know nothing about what has happened, and I cannot restore money that I have never touched or even seen," he answered.

"That is all you have to say?"  
 "That's all, except that my friends will take my word, if you do not!"  
 "Enough! Leave the Form-room and go to my study! Remain there till you are sent for!"

Harry Wharton's pale face flushed red. He left his place quietly and, with a firm step, crossed to the Form-room door and went out.

There was a deep, deep breath from the Remove as the door closed behind him.

**THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.**  
**A Row In The Remove!**

"I SAY, you fellows, fancy it being Wharton all the time!"  
 Billy Bunter squeaked with excitement.

Mr. Quelch had left the Form-room. He had gone, as all the fellows knew, to speak to the Head—to apprise that august personage that a discovery had been made.

Quelch had left his Form, with a strict injunction to keep order and to rivet their attention on Latin papers while he was gone. Nobody in the Remove thought of doing either.

Excitement reigned in the Form-room. Four members of the Remove—the famous Co.—were utterly overwhelmed with amazement and dismay. One member, James Duck, sat silent, in deep thought—the only fellow who kept his place.

"Wharton!" said Skinner. "Our giddy panjandram! Who'd have thought it?"

"Wharton—all the time!" said Snoop.

"Blessed if I'd ever have guessed it was Wharton!"

"Well, you never know a fellow till you find him out!" said Skinner oracularly. "Still, I admit that this is rather a jolt."

"You cheeky fool!" said Bob Cherry, his face flaming. "Are you going to say that Wharton did what Quelch thinks?"

Skinner stared.  
 "Didn't he?" he asked.  
 "No; and you jolly well know he didn't!" roared Bob.

"I don't know, old bean! If you do you'd better tell Quelch and put him wise before Wharton's sacked for it!" grinned Skinner.

"By gum, it looks a clear case!" said Vernon-Smith. "Wharton had that penknife on him yesterday; he can't make out that anybody else had it. We all saw it when it dropped in that tussle at the spinney in Crocker's hut. I saw Duck pick it up."

"And he was out in the night," said Hazeldene. "He said he fancied that the prowler was in the dorm, but—"

"I guess he had to spin some yarn when we woke up and he was spotted out!" remarked Fisher T. Fish.

"I say, you fellows, fancy Wharton!" squeaked Billy Bunter. "Did you know, Nugent?"

"You blithering idiot!"  
 "Well, you're his pal," said Bunter, blinking at Frank Nugent. "Mean to say you never knew?"

"Shut up, you babbling ass!"  
 "Yaas, shut up, Bunter!" urged Lord Mauleverer. "You're askin' to be kicked, old fat man!"

"Oh, really, Mauly—"  
 "Don't you believe it was Wharton, Mauly?" asked the Bounder.

"Eh? How could any fellow believe such rot? Don't be an ass, Smithy!" yawned Lord Mauleverer

"Who was it, then?" asked Skinner.  
 "How should I know, fathead?"

"And how did Wharton's penknife come to be busted in Quelch's desk?"  
 "How should I know that, either?"

"You always were an ass, Mauly!" said Vernon-Smith, laughing. "Can't you see that Wharton's up for the sack for it?"

"Yaas. So were you a few weeks ago!" retorted Lord Mauleverer. "Loder fixed it that you were the prowler, Smithy, and he still believes that you were the man. It was as clear against you then as it is against Wharton now."

Smithy started.  
 "By gum, Mauly's talkin' sense for once!" he remarked. "I came so near the sack that it took my breath away! I wonder—"

"I don't wonder!" snapped Tom Redwing. "Wharton never did anything of the kind, any more than you did, Smithy! It's utter rot!"  
 "Quelch doesn't think so."

"Blessed if I can make it out!" said Peter Todd, shaking his head. "Wharton isn't a fellow like Bunter to play potty tricks, and still less a fellow to take cash that doesn't belong to him. But—"

"But—" said Squiff.  
 "How did his penknife get there?" asked Wibley. "How the dickens did his penknife get broken in Quelch's desk unless—"

"Somebody else had it!" snorted Johnny Bull.

"Nobody else had it," said Vernon-Smith. "Wharton had it in his pocket when he came down this morning, as we all know."

Johnny Bull snorted again. But he made no answer to that. Everybody knew that the silver-handled penknife had been in Wharton's possession, as he



had turned it out in sight of the whole Form.

"Blessed if it doesn't look a clear case!" said Tom Brown. "But I shan't believe it unless the Head says so."

"And nobody but a silly ass will believe it then!" bawled Bob Cherry. "Nobody but a prize idiot will believe it at all!"

"Is Quelch a prize idiot?" asked the Bounder.

"Oh, shut up! I'll jolly well punch your cheeky head if you don't shut up, Smithy!"

"Better punch Quelch's!" grinned the Bounder. "He's said it; I haven't. But, by gum, I wonder why Wharton raised that false alarm last night? He's not a fellow to be nervy. It looks——"

"He was coming back from Quelch's study, of course!" said Skinner.

Smack!  
Bob Cherry fairly jumped at Skinner and snacked.

Harold Skinner went staggering across the Form-room, bumped into a desk, and rolled over on the floor, yelling.

"Now get up and say that again!" roared Bob, his eyes blazing at Skinner like blue flame.

"Ow! Wow-ow!" gasped Skinner. "You rotter! Ow!"

"Is that how you're going to prove that Wharton never did it, Cherry?" asked the Bounder sarcastically. "Hadn't you better smack Quelch's head next?"

Bob glared at him. "I can't smack Quelch's head," he roared; "but I can jolly well smack yours, Smithy, and I'm going to!"

And he did, with a smack that rang like a pistol-shot through the Form-room.

Smithy yelled and staggered, but he did not go down like Skinner; the Bounder was made of sterner stuff. He leaped at Bob Cherry like a tiger, and in a moment they were fighting furiously.

The Removites gathered round in an excited crowd.

James Duck rose from his place and slipped quietly out of the Form-room, unnoticed in the general excitement.

"Go it, Bob!" roared Johnny Bull. "Whop him!"

"Back up, Smithy!" gasped Skinner, dragging himself, panting, to his feet. Johnny Bull spun round at him.

"You want some more?" he roared. "Come on, then!"

"Keep off, you fool!" Skinner backed away promptly. "I'm not going to scrap with you, you dummy!"

"You are!" retorted Johnny.

And Skinner did, having no choice in the matter, as Johnny rushed on him, hitting out right and left.

There was a wild uproar in the Remove room. Bob Cherry and the Bounder were fighting fiercely, while Johnny Bull had Skinner's head in chancery, and was punching his features, to the accompaniment of fiendish howls from Skinner. Everybody was talking all at once. The door of the Remove room suddenly opened, and Wingate of the Sixth came in.

"What the dickens!" exclaimed the Greyfriars captain, staring at the startling scene. "Is this a Form-room or a bear-garden? Stop that, you young sweeps! Take your places!"

The Removites scuttled to their places at the voice of authority; with the exception of Bob and Smithy, who were going too strong to heed even the captain of the school.

"Stop that!" roared Wingate.

And as the excited combatants did not "stop that," the prefect weighed in with his ashplant, swiping both of them impartially till they separated, yelling, and went breathlessly to their places.

After which, there was something resembling law and order in the Remove-room. But there was an incessant buzz up and down the Form.

Whether Harry Wharton had, so to speak, taken a leaf out of the prowler's book, or whether he was, as his friends were determined to believe, innocent in the matter, were exciting questions—to which the Remove fellows found many and varying answers. But one thing, at least, seemed fairly certain, even to the friends who did not think of losing faith in him—that Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove, was up for the sack!

## THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Before The Big Beak!

DR. LOCKE sat in silence with a stern and grim expression on his kind old face.

On the table before him lay the silver-handled penknife with the snapped blade—and the fragment that had been snapped off.

Before him stood Harry Wharton, quiet and calm, though his heart was beating.

Mr. Quelch stood by the Head's table. The headmaster had been called from the Sixth Form Room. Wingate had been sent to take charge of the Remove. This was a matter that would not wait: the Remove master had placed it before his chief, and Dr. Locke was to decide and judge without delay.

"Wharton," said Dr. Locke at last, after a long silence, "I must hear what you have to say. You do not deny having left your dormitory during the night?"

"For only a minute, sir, and for the reason I have explained," said Harry.

"You admit having left it?"

"Yes, sir."

"No other boy was aware of the time you left, but only of the time you returned?"

"I suppose so; though I think it was the noise I made that woke the fellows up. But they did not see me go."

"The length of time you were absent from the dormitory, therefore, can only be known to yourself," said the Head. "Whether you were, or were not, absent long enough to go down to Mr. Quelch's study remains unknown to others."

"Yes; I suppose so." Wharton coloured. "Mr. Quelch is not in the habit of doubting my word, sir. I am his head boy, and he has trusted me."

"In other circumstances, Wharton, your word would be taken unhesitatingly; but after what has happened, it is a matter for proof, not for assertion!" said Dr. Locke. "That is your penknife?"

"Yes, sir."

"It was broken in forcing open a drawer of Mr. Quelch's desk."

"It seems so, sir."

"It had not left your possession?"

"Not to my knowledge, sir!" answered Harry. "Then it was you who used it in Mr. Quelch's study last night."

"It was not, sir! I never went down the stairs at all last night! I never went, or thought of going, anywhere near the masters' studies. I thought that the prowler had entered my dormitory, as he did once before, and followed him out, as I thought—and if I had seen anything of him, I should certainly have followed him down the stairs. But I did not."

Wharton paused a moment. "I have said that that penknife was not out of my possession to my knowledge, sir!" he went on. "But it must have been out of my possession without my knowledge, or it could not have been used in Mr. Quelch's study. It seems certain that it was there—so someone else must have taken it there."

"It was in your pocket this morning?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then, if some other boy had abstracted it from your pocket during the night, as you infer, he must have returned it before dawn."

"I suppose so."

Dr. Locke raised his eyebrows a little. Mr. Quelch's face was distressed. This statement seemed, even to Wharton himself, an incredible one! It was, and had to be, true, for Wharton knew that he had not been in Quelch's study in the

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night. Yet even in his own ears it sounded absurd; for why should any Greyfriars fellow have done anything of the kind?

"Take care what you say, Wharton!" said Dr. Locke very quietly. "Some boy—yourself or another—planned a theft in Mr. Quelch's study. You might very probably have used your own penknife before finding that a stronger implement was required, as proved to be the case. But it is extremely improbable that a boy seeking an implement would select a small penknife from another boy's pocket."

Harry Wharton stood silent.

It sounded not merely improbable, but impossible, and he knew it.

"Such a boy, seeking an implement, would have sought some tool, easily to be found in a junior study!" said the Head. "Can you suggest any reason why he should have decided to try a penknife—and yours especially?"

"No, sir!" said Harry in a low voice.

"Admitting the possibility that he might have done so, improbable as it seems, can you suggest any reason why he should have returned it to its place—taking the risk of a second visit to your dormitory?"

"No, sir!"

"You are, therefore, asking me to believe something which you admit to be improbable and unaccountable?"

Wharton did not answer that. He did not, in fact, know what to say.

A pilferer might very likely have tried his own penknife, and, failing, looked for a more effective implement. But a pilferer looking for an implement in the first place would scarcely have picked out a penknife. It seemed absurd on the face of it.

"You have nothing to answer?" asked the Head.

"No, sir! Unless——"

"Unless what?"

"Unless the fellow wanted to put it on another fellow, and picked on me," said Harry.

"You refer to the unknown person called the prowler?"

"Yes!"

"This person," said the Head, "remains undiscovered, if indeed you are not he. He has not, on previous occasions, made any attempt to place the guilt upon innocent shoulders."

"I know."

"One boy, Vernon-Smith, was suspected; but this was due to his own actions, not to any action on the part of the prowler."

"I know!" repeated Harry.

"If you are not he——"

"I must speak, sir!" said Mr. Quelch. "I am absolutely assured that Wharton is not the boy who has prowled the House at night all these weeks. On the occasion when I struggled with him in the dark he exercised a strength far beyond that of any junior schoolboy. It is quite impossible that it could have been a Remove boy on that occasion."

Dr. Locke nodded.

"On your assurance on that point, Mr. Quelch, we must take so much for granted!" he said. "Wharton is not the person called the prowler. The question is, whether he has imitated that person's nefarious acts."

"That is what I have feared might happen at any time, sir!" said Mr. Quelch. "And I fear that it has happened now. My only hope is that Wharton may yet admit that his action was intended as a stupid jest, and restore the money taken. He was one of the boys of my Form to whom Bunter made that foolish suggestion."

"Do you admit this, Wharton?"

"No, sir!"

"You deny all knowledge of the matter?"

"Yes, sir, entirely!"

"Wharton," said Mr. Quelch in an agitated voice, "I advise you, I entreat you even, to speak frankly. Cannot you see that otherwise you must be adjudged guilty of theft?"

Harry Wharton set his lips.

"I can only tell the truth, sir!" he answered. "I never knew anything about what had happened in your study till you told us in the Form-room."

"That," said the Head quietly, "eliminates the question of practical joking, however stupid, and leaves us to deal with a question of theft."

"I fear so, sir!" said Mr. Quelch.

"You have nothing to say, Wharton, except to suggest that the prowler may have taken your penknife to cast suspicion in your direction though he has never done anything of the kind on earlier occasions."

"I can't think of any other reason why he should have taken it, sir."

"You are not aware of his identity?"

"Of course not."

"You have not, therefore, given him personal offence, which might induce him to act in so wicked a way?"

"Not that I know of. As I don't know who he is, I may have had trouble with him, for all I know."

"It is established," said Dr. Locke, "that the prowler is a well-grown and very powerful person; undoubtedly, according to your Form-master, a senior. You do not come very much in contact with senior boys in your Form. Is there a senior boy with whom you are on such ill terms that he might act towards you as you suggest that he has done?"

"No, sir." Wharton spoke slowly.

"I've had lots of rows with Coker of the Fifth, but he wouldn't play a mean trick on anybody. I've had trouble with Loder of the Sixth; but he wouldn't do anything of the kind, of course—besides, we know that he got hold of the prowler once, and was knocked out by him. I can't think of any man at Greyfriars, senior or junior, who would do such a thing."

Dr. Locke looked at him.

"You ask me to believe that some Greyfriars boy has done a thing that you cannot yourself believe that any Greyfriars boy would do?" he said.

Harry Wharton crimsoned.

It was true; but it sounded simply idiotic, even to himself.

"I think," said the Head icily, "that we are wasting time. The facts are sufficiently obvious."

"I've said that I've done nothing, sir," said Harry. "I can't imagine why the prowler took my penknife, unless it was to put the thing on me—but I know that he must have—I know that I never went near my Form-master's study last night. I know now that there really was somebody in my dorm when I thought I heard him—and I know, too, that when I woke later and heard something, it was very likely the same fellow coming back with the penknife to put it back into the pocket he had taken it from. I know no more than that."

Dr. Locke raised his hand.

"Wharton——" he began.

Tap!

Dr. Locke broke off with an irritated glance at the door. It opened, and James Duck of the Remove looked in, through his steel-rimmed glasses.

"May I speak to you, sir?" he asked, in his meek voice.

Harry Wharton stared at Duck. He expected to see the junior ordered away

sharply, for having interrupted the headmaster at such a moment.

To his surprise though, Mr. Quelch looked annoyed. Dr. Locke's frown cleared away, and he signed to Duck to enter.

"I am busy at the moment" said the Head, "but—wait please in the passage, Wharton, and I will call you when you are wanted."

And Harry Wharton, in great astonishment, left the headmaster's study, and the door shut on him, leaving James Duck with Mr. Quelch and the Head.

## THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Jack Drake Puts His Foot Down!

JAMES DUCK, otherwise Jack Drake, slid off his steel-rimmed glasses, and the sheepish expression that seemed habitual to his face left it at the same moment.

It was James Duck, the sheepish new boy, who had entered; but it was Ferrers Locke's keen and alert assistant who stood before the headmaster.

Mr. Quelch regarded him grimly; but the Head's glance was kind and inquiring.

"You have something to tell me, Drake?" he asked.

"Yes, sir, or I should not have interrupted you," said Drake.

"On the subject of the occurrence in Mr. Quelch's study last night?" asked the Head.

"Yes, sir."

"Please proceed at once. You are no doubt aware that Wharton is under the suspicion, or rather the certainty, of having committed that act," said Dr. Locke. "If you have discovered definite proof——"

"Nothing of the kind, sir. I am here to state my conviction that Wharton had nothing whatever to do with it," said Drake earnestly.

Mr. Quelch opened his lips—but shut them again, without speaking.

Dr. Locke raised his eyebrows.

"If that is correct, Drake, I am more than glad to hear it," he said. "I have feared that some unprincipled boy might follow the miserable example of the prowler, encouraged by his success; but it is a very painful shock to me to find that a boy like Wharton——"

"There is no doubt in my mind, sir," said Drake. "I have not been quite idle since I have been here, and although Mr. Quelch does not agree with my conclusions, I am sure that Ferrers Locke would do so."

Dr. Locke glanced at the Remove master.

Quelch frowned.

"Drake has stated certain opinions which seem to me nonsensical, sir!" he said. "I have no doubt that you will form the same opinion, when you hear them."

"I will, at all events, hear them!" said Dr. Locke. "My relative, Mr. Ferrers Locke, has complete faith in this lad's sagacity, and he should be a good judge."

"No doubt, sir. But it is Drake's belief that the person called the prowler is not a Greyfriars boy, or an inmate of Greyfriars at all—which appears to me pure nonsense."

"That would be very welcome news, if correct," said Dr. Locke. "I should be glad to think so—if possible. But——"

"But it is unfortunately not possible, sir."

"Certainly it seems not," said the



Head. "Nevertheless, tell me why you have formed this opinion, Drake?"

"On the night the prowler came to the Remove dormitory last week, sir, I grappled with him in the dark, and struck him in the struggle. His face was, and must have been, marked. No face in the school showed any sign of damage the following morning."

Dr. Locke pursed his lips.

"In the excitement of the moment, perhaps you fancied," he said slowly.

Drake smiled slightly.

"So Mr. Quelch thinks, sir. But if I had fancies like that, Ferrers Locke would have little use for me. What I state is a fact."

Dr. Locke drummed on his table with his slim fingers. He was silent and thoughtful for a long moment.

Certainly he could have received no better or more welcome news than that the prowling pilferer was some unknown outsider and did not belong to the school. But he found it, like Mr. Quelch, hard to believe. It seemed more likely to him that a mere boy, in a breathless struggle in the dark with a fellow more powerful than himself, was mistaken as to what might actually have happened.

He broke the silence at last.

"I hope that you may prove to be right, Drake," he said. "If your investigations should lead to some culprit outside the walls of Greyfriars, I should be glad indeed that you came here."

There was a sound rather like a grunt from Mr. Quelch.

"At the moment, sir," he said, "we are not dealing with the affair of the prowler. Wharton is not suspected or accused of being that person himself, but of having followed his example."

"That is true," said the Head. "On this subject, Drake, have you anything to tell me?"

"Certainly, sir. I knew Wharton very well when I was a Greyfriars boy, and I knew him then, and know him now, to be quite incapable of anything like what has been done—"

"Mr. Quelch had the same opinion, Drake, but the evidence has forced him to change it. This is not a matter of opinion, but of fact."

"I agree to that, of course, sir! But that is not all. Last night, I was one of the first, if not the very first, to wake and jump out of bed, when there was an alarm in my dormitory. I thought of the prowler instantly, and ran to the door with a light, hoping to spot him, if he was there—the door was open. All I saw was Wharton coming in—"

"You had not seen him go?" asked the Head quickly.

"No, sir; though I think it was the noise made by the door being flung open that awakened me. I was surprised to see him, of course—"

"No doubt!" interjected Mr. Quelch dryly.

"But he explained that he had heard someone, and cut after him," continued Drake. "I had then, and have now, no doubt that it was correct. I have no doubt that the reason why Wharton, and no one else, heard him, was owing to the fact that he was close by Wharton's bed, groping for the penknife. I knew this, as soon as I knew that Wharton's penknife had been used."

"You mean you surmised—" said Mr. Quelch coldly.

"No, sir," said the schoolboy detective. "I mean that I knew—and that any detective, sir, would have known, what I know, as soon as he saw that broken fraction of a blade in the

drawer in your desk. It was placed there intentionally."

"Drake!"

"I mean it, sir!" said Drake. "A detective has to know how to spot a false clue, when it is left to delude him—and I am convinced that that was what it was."

"And why?" asked the Head.

"It seemed unaccountable that the pilferer should use so fragile a tool as a penknife to open a locked drawer when he must have had a stronger implement at hand—"

"No doubt he looked for a stronger implement, after the penknife failed him!" said Mr. Quelch.

"That would mean, sir, that he left your study after entering it, and had to return with a new implement. That he came in the first place, knowing that he had locks to deal with, and yet with nothing but a penknife to do the work. That, sir, is surely very unlikely, on the part of a person who must have been all the time in fear of discovery."

Mr. Quelch did not answer that. It seemed to give him food for thought.

"Add to that, sir, that he must have heard the snap of the blade when it broke, and known that the broken portion was there. Why should he have left it? The drawer was open, under his eyes; he took the currency notes from it. He must have had a light, and that piece of steel must have caught the light shining into the drawer. Why should he have left it lying there? It did not take me long, sir, to decide that he left it there with a purpose."

"Do you mean that the pilferer deliberately used the penknife in order to snap the blade and leave a fragment to be discovered in the morning, Drake?" asked the Head slowly.

"I mean exactly that, sir."

"Bless my soul! But why—"

"Obviously, sir, to put suspicion on the wrong track," said Drake. "What happened last night was the work of the same prowler as before, but he chose on this occasion to give the impression that it was the work of some boy who had been encouraged by his success to imitate his dishonesty."

"Bless my soul!" repeated the Head.

"I had no doubt, sir, that some penknife would be found in the school to which that piece of steel would fit," continued Drake, "and I was quite certain that when the knife was found it would belong to some fellow who was not the pilferer, but whom the pilferer has some special reason for disliking."

"Wharton has already stated that there is no boy at Greyfriars whom he himself can suspect of such treachery," said Mr. Quelch.

"Quite so, sir; and I have no doubt that he is right. I have exactly the same opinion. The rascal came from outside the school."

Mr. Quelch gave an impatient shrug of the shoulders.

"That again!" he said. "Really, Drake—"

"I will put it in a nutshell, sir, as I have worked it out—to my own satisfaction, at least," said the schoolboy detective. "The pilferer is an outsider; he has allowed a sufficient time to elapse since his last raid, and was ready to get to work again. Wharton, perhaps quite unconsciously, has given him some offence; for this reason, although he came provided with the implement with which he had to work, he crept to the Remove dormitory and obtained the penknife, snapped the blade in the drawer, and after the robbery crept back to replace the penknife where he had found it."

"Bless my soul!" said the Head. "Do you think that this is possible, Mr. Quelch?"

"I cannot say that it is impossible," said Mr. Quelch; "but it sounds to me nonsensical."

Dr. Locke drummed on the table again.

"I think, Drake," said Mr. Quelch dryly, "that you had better leave the study and leave this matter to your headmaster."

"I am sorry I cannot agree, sir," said Jack Drake coolly. "I am a schoolboy—a junior in your Form, sir—but I am at the same time the assistant of Ferrers Locke, acting under his instructions. I was to be given a free hand here, sir—and I claim a free hand. Schoolboy or not, I am the detective called in to deal with this case, and so far as detective work is concerned, sir, my judgment must stand before yours—"

"What?"

"And even before the headmaster's," said Drake.

"Boy!"

"I mean every word of that, sir," said Ferrers Locke's assistant. "I have said that the result of my investigation is to convince me that Harry Wharton is an innocent victim in this matter, and I insist—"

"You insist!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir, I insist upon Wharton being totally exonerated from all accusation or suspicion; and I am quite sure, sir, that you will be glad of it before I have finished here."

Mr. Quelch gazed at him, speechless.

The Head coloured faintly.

"I have a right to ask that, sir," said Drake.

"You have no such right!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "You are impertinent, Drake!"

"I am sorry you should think so, sir. I am a detective, and it is my duty to help the innocent even more than to discover the guilty. Wharton knows no more of what happened in your study than you know yourself, sir; and if I fail to prove that before I leave Greyfriars School I shall tell Ferrers Locke that I am no use to him and ask him to sack me. I am only asking for a chance to prove that a thoroughly decent fellow is what you have until this morning always believed him to be."

"Leave my study now, Drake," said the Head hastily. "I will consult on this matter with Mr. Quelch."

"Wharton is waiting in the passage. May I take him back to the Form-room with me?"

Mr. Quelch's expression at that question was very expressive, but he did not speak; it was for the Head to decide.

Dr. Locke hesitated.

"Drake," he said at length, "your theory seems to me very fanciful, and you have so far proved nothing—"

"I shall prove my case, sir, when I have completed it. In the meantime, I claim the free hand you promised me," said Jack Drake. "That includes handling the present incident in my own way."

Dr. Locke breathed rather hard. Mr. Quelch gazed at the boy from Baker Street rather like a Gorgon. It was a long minute before the headmaster of Greyfriars spoke again.

"I am bound to stand by an undertaking I have given," he said. "I have no choice but to accede to what you ask, Drake, in the circumstances. I can only hope and trust that you are right. You may take Wharton back to the Form-room, and tell him that for the present the matter is closed."

"Thank you, sir."





"I jolly well know that if I had five pounds, I should stand a spread in my study," said Bunter. "I wouldn't pinch the money, of course, but as Wharton doesn't mind, I should think he would spend it. What are you keeping it for, Wharton?"

"What!" roared Wharton, jumping to his feet.

Jack Drake quietly left the study—leaving Mr. Quelch with a red spot glowing in either cheek, and the Head with knitted brows.

For the time, at least, it was clear that Ferrers Locke's assistant was not popular in that study.

**THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.**

**Not Guilty!**

**H**ARRY WHARTON, waiting in the corridor, glanced round as the Head's door opened and the new junior in the Remove came out. Wharton's face was pale and harassed.

He had had time to reflect upon his position, and the more he reflected on it the more overwhelming it seemed.

What it looked like—what it must look like—to others, he realised only too clearly.

Suspicion had been cast on him and it seemed that it must have been done intentionally by a malicious hand. Yet in all the school he did not himself believe that there was one fellow capable of such an act; and yet for him to be cleared the Head had to believe exactly that.

He had the feeling of a helpless bird caught in the fowler's net. How it was going to end he could not imagine, though it was impossible to believe that innocence would be condemned as guilt.

As the new junior came out of the Head's study and closed the door behind him, Wharton made a movement towards the door, supposing that he was now wanted.

James Duck interposed. "It's all right, old chap!" James Duck, once more the sheepish new boy, blinked at Wharton through his steel-rimmed glasses. "You're to come back to the Form-room with me."

Wharton stared at him.

"Did the Head say so?" he asked blankly.

"Yes."  
"But I don't understand. They think——" Wharton choked for a moment. "I suppose you know what they think, Duck—fathead as you are! Are you pulling my leg, you ass?"

"No! It's all right, I tell you. The whole thing is done with, so far as you're concerned. Official!"

"What rot!"  
"Official, I tell you!"

"Well, if that's so, I'm jolly glad! But I'm going to hear the Head say so, at any rate," said Harry; and he stepped to the study door, tapped, and opened it.

A murmur of voices within died away as he opened the door and looked into the study.

The grim look he received from Mr. Quelch did not indicate that, as Duck had said, the whole thing was done with. Neither was the Head's glance so benevolent as usual.

"What is it, Wharton?" asked Dr. Locke sharply. "Have you not been told to go back to your Form-room?"

"Duck has told me so, sir," said Harry; "but——"

"Very well; go at once."  
The Head made an impatient gesture of dismissal.

Harry Wharton did not stir from the doorway; his face flushed and his eyes gleamed and his whole look told of stubbornness.

"Duck says that the whole thing is done with," he said; "but——"

"That is correct. Go!"

"I don't understand," said Harry; "and I've a right to understand, sir. I've been called here on a rotten suspicion——"

"What?"

"A rotten and disgraceful suspicion!" said the captain of the Remove, his eyes

flashing. "I've a right to know whether it has been cleared up or whether I'm to be considered under suspicion still!"

"That is not the way to speak to your headmaster, Wharton!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"You will excuse me, sir; but it is the way I must speak to any man, headmaster or not, who suspects me of being a pilfering rascal!" exclaimed Harry Wharton hotly.

"Silence!"

"I've a right to know!" said Wharton stubbornly. "If my headmaster believes that I have touched money not my own, he ought to kick me out of the school; but whether I'm expelled or not, I shall not stay here under suspicion."

"Wharton!" exclaimed the Head.

"Unless you tell me, sir, that I am cleared of suspicion of having touched the money in Mr. Quelch's study, I shall not go back to the Form-room—I shall go home," exclaimed Wharton, "and nobody shall stop me. I shall let my uncle know at once what I'm accused of, and I know that he will stand by me. I shall not stay here to be suspected."

"My dear chap——" murmured Duck, at his elbow.

"Shut up, and leave me alone!" snapped Wharton. "Don't barge in here, you footling ass!"

Wharton, who had been standing in the doorway, made a step into the study.

There was a very curious expression on the headmaster's face as he gazed at the angry and indignant junior—reflected on the grim countenance of Mr. Quelch.

"I want to know, and I've a right to know!" said Harry, facing the two masters. "Either I'm cleared or I'm not cleared, and I've a right to know which."

"That is certainly true," said Dr. Locke.



Locke slowly. He paused, and then went on: "There are certain circumstances, Wharton, as you know, which have to be explained, but I hope, and indeed believe, that you are innocent in this matter. Now leave my study."

"Does my Form-master say the same, sir?"

Mr. Quelch hesitated.

"I do, Wharton!" he said at length.

"Very well, sir."

Wharton left the study and shut the door.

Dr. Locke looked at Mr. Quelch, and Mr. Quelch looked at Dr. Locke.

An angry and indignant outburst from a junior schoolboy was very much out of place in the headmaster's study. Nevertheless, it had produced an effect that could never have been produced by calculation.

The Head broke a long silence:

"Mr. Quelch! I believe—I certainly believe—that Drake is right—that this boy of your Form is an innocent victim in this matter. I cannot help thinking so, in spite of the evidence."

"The evidence is conclusive, sir," said Mr. Quelch. "Yet—"

"Not to Ferrers Locke's assistant, Mr. Quelch; and, boy as he is, we are bound to respect the judgment of one in whom the most famous detective of our times places his trust!"

"I agree, sir!" said the Remove master slowly.

"Drake was sent for to elucidate this strange mystery," said Dr. Locke, "and if he is the means of preventing injustice, I shall be very thankful indeed that you advised me to call him in."

"And yet—" said Mr. Quelch, "and yet—"

"If Drake is right, the matter becomes more mysterious and inexplicable than ever—and I almost despair of discovering the facts!" said Dr. Locke. "But I shall take the view he has taken, that Wharton is innocent in the matter—and I trust that you will do the same."

And, after a pause, Mr. Quelch nodded.

"I shall do so!" he said.

Meanwhile, Harry Wharton and James Duck were going to the Form-room together. There was a faint smile on Duck's face as he walked by the side of the captain of the Remove—who hardly glanced at him and seemed to have forgotten his existence.

"All serene now, old bean!" murmured Duck as they reached the Form-room door.

"I suppose so," said Harry. He stopped and looked at Duck. "I can't make it out—they seem to have changed their minds while I was waiting in the passage. I don't know why. I suppose you can't have had anything to do with it."

"I!" ejaculated Duck.

"Well, I suppose you can't have—but they seem to have changed their minds while you were in the study; and I'm blessed if I know what you barged in for!" said Harry. "Still, I suppose the Head wouldn't listen to anything from a duffer like you, Duck!"

"Is it likely?" murmured Duck.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Hardly," he said. "Still, you seem to have brought me good luck—I jolly well believe I was up for the sack before you butted in. Anyhow, I suppose it's all right now."

Wharton went into the Form-room and Duck followed him in.

There was a general buzz from the Remove at the sight of the captain of the Form.

"Keep your places, you young

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sweeps!" called out Wingate from Mr. Quelch's desk.

But four members of the Form did not keep their places. Frank Nugent, Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh rushed, or rather, bounded, to meet their chum as he came in.

"Is it all right?" exclaimed Bob.

"Right as rain!" answered Harry.

"Oh, what luck! But what—what do they think—about that mouldy penknife?" exclaimed Nugent.

"Blessed if I know! But it's all right—right as rain! I suppose you fellows never thought—"

"Don't be an ass!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Did the Head send you back here, Wharton?" asked Wingate, with a very curious look at Harry's bright face.

"Yes, Wingate."

"Well, I'm glad! Perhaps you kids will allow me to mention that I'm supposed to be keeping order here!" remarked the Greyfriars captain, with a pleasant sarcasm. "Are you going to take your places, or are you waiting for the ash?"

The juniors took their places.

Ten minutes later, Mr. Quelch came in, and Wingate went back to the Sixth Form-room.

Harry Wharton's eyes fixed on his Form-master.

He was amazed, indeed bewildered by the happenings of that morning, and he did not know what to expect from Quelch.

But Mr. Quelch had decided in consultation with the Head on the line he was going to take; and it was, in point of fact, a relief to him to take that line. His manner to his head boy was the same as of old; and no one could have guessed from it that there had been any occurrence out of the usual that morning.

When the Remove were dismissed for break, the head boy remained behind for a moment to speak to his Form-master.

"What is it, Wharton?" asked Mr. Quelch. His manner was quite kind.

"Only—only just a word, sir!" said Harry, colouring. "I—I hope you do not think me disrespectful for speaking as I did in the Head's study—but—but I give you my word, sir, which you always used to take, that I never knew anything about what happened in your study last night."

"I believe you, Wharton!" said Mr. Quelch quietly.

And Harry Wharton went out into the sunny quad with a face as cheery as the spring sunshine.

## THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Was It Wharton?

"I SAY, old chap!"

Billy Bunter was waiting for the captain of the Remove when he came out of the House.

He grabbed Harry Wharton's arm with a fat and grubby paw and grinned at him with a fat grin.

"You got by all right?" he asked.

"Eh—yes! Let go, fathead!"

"But I say, what have you done with them?" asked Bunter.

"Done with what, ass?"

"The pound notes, of course!" Bunter blinked at him. "I say, have you hidden them in Quelch's Sunday hat, as I suggested?"

Harry Wharton stared at the fat Owl. Bunter favoured him with a fat wink.

"I say, you were a silly ass to try your penknife on Quelch's desk," he said. "Anybody could have told you that was no good. You could have got

a chisel out of Bob's tool-chest—in fact, I suppose you did, after your knife busted, as you got the drawer open all right. Still, it was fatheaded—"

"You piffing, pie-faced, pernicious porker!" gasped Harry Wharton. "I had nothing to do with it!"

"Oh, don't be an ass, you know!" urged Bunter. "That's all right for Quelch and the Head—but I suppose you can trust a pal. Blessed if I know how you pulled through, after leaving a bit of your penknife there; still, I'm glad you did! But about the pound notes—Quelch said there were five pound notes gone, you know—what have you done with them?"

"Are you asking me to boot you, you podgy idiot?"

"Eh? Nothing to get shirty about, is there?" asked Bunter. "What I mean is this—it's no good sticking them in Quelch's topper now it turns out that he knows—he'll look there first thing! See?"

Harry Wharton drew a deep breath. Evidently the fat Owl of the Remove was under the impression that he had carried out that rag on Quelch, and was responsible for what had happened in the Form-master's study.

"Did you stick them in Quelch's topper?" asked Bunter.

"No, ass! No, fathead! No, chump!"

"Well, that was sensible, as he seems to have heard me talking to you in the Rag the other day!" agreed Bunter. "But you needn't call a fellow names. I only want to know wher you put them! I won't tell Quelch, of course—as if I would!"

"You blithering chump! I never had anything to do with it! It was the prowler who busted Quelch's desk last night—can't you get that into your silly head?"

"Ho, he, he!"

"What are you sniggering at, you gurgling gargoyle?" hooted Wharton.

"Well, don't be a silly ass, you know!" grinned Bunter. "It would have been put down to the prowler, just as I said, if you hadn't been ass enough to give yourself away—but every man in the Remove knows that you did it. If you'll take my advice, you'll—"

"Idiot!"

"If you'll take my advice, you'll let Quelch find those pound notes pretty quick!" said Bunter. "I mean to say, now he knows you did it, it ain't safe to hang it out too long! You see that?"

"Dummy!"

"When are you going to let him find them?" asked Bunter.

"Idiot!"

"I say, you don't mean that you ain't going to let him find them at all?" exclaimed Bunter, with quite a jump. "I say, old fellow, that's too awfully thick. Why, it's pinching!"

"You—you—you—" gasped Wharton.

"You can't do it, old chap!" said Bunter, shaking his head. "Dash it all, it's fearfully thick! I mean to say, if it was a cake, or a bag of doughnuts, it would be different—but you can't snaffle cash! You can't, really!"

Two or three Remove fellows, listening to the fat Owl, chuckled. The expression on Harry Wharton's face rather entertained them.

"Keep your hands from picking and stealing, and all that, you know!" said the fat Owl seriously. "You can't do it, old chap! I suggested this as a jape on Quelch, to pay him out for ragging us in the Form-room! Of course I never meant that his money was to be pinched—"



"You babbling, burbling owl!" yelled Wharton. "Can't you understand that I know no more about it than you do?"

"You didn't do it for a jape on Quelch?" asked Bunter.

"No, you potty owl!"

"Well, I wonder you've got the cheek to own up to that!" declared Bunter. "Do you really mean to pinch the pound notes?"

"Oh, my hat! I—I—I'll—"

"You needn't yell at a chap!" said Bunter warmly. "I'm speaking to you for your own good! I say, was it you who did the prowling all the time? It looks like it now, if you're going to keep those pound notes you bagged last night—"

Billy Bunter got no further.

Wharton's patience was exhausted; which was not, perhaps, surprising. He grabbed the fat Owl by the collar.

"Ow! I say, leggo!" yelled Bunter.

Bang!

A fat head banged on the wall of the House, and the bang was followed by a fiendish yell from the fat Owl.

"Yaroooh!"

Bang!

"Yarooop!" roared Bunter. "Beast! Leggo! I say, you leggo—I won't tell Quelch you've pinched his pound notes if—"

Bang!

"Yoooo-hooooop!"

"Now, you potty chump!" howled Wharton. "Can you understand that I never touched anything in Quelch's study?"

"Ow! No—"

Bang!

"Wow! Yes! Ow! Wow! Yes!" roared Bunter. "Oh crikey! Yes! Of course! I know you never did what you did last night, old chap—yaroooh! Leggo! Oh, my napper! Yow-ow! Whooop!"

Harry Wharton released the fat Owl's collar and tramped away with a face crimson with wrath.

Billy Bunter was left roaring and rubbing the fattest head at Greyfriars School.

"Ow! Yow! Wow! Ow!" howled Bunter, as he rubbed that fat head. "I say, you fellows, did you see that? Yow-ow-ow! Banging a fellow's head because a fellow was giving him good advice! Wow! Owl! Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at! Owl! Wow! My napper! Owl! I say, you fellows, he never did it for a jape on Quelch—he's snaffling the cash—fancy that! Sticking to it! Wharton, you know—"

"I wonder!" murmured Skinner.

"Don't be an ass, Skinner!" said Tom Brown.

"Don't be a cad, you mean!" said Lord Mauleverer. "Shut up, Skinner! You're not a fool like Bunter—"

"Oh, really, Mauly—"

"I know what Quelch thought, when he nailed Wharton!" retorted Skinner.

"And you know he's been up to the Head, and it's all right—"

"I can't make that out! But—"

"I say, you fellows, we all know that Wharton had it!" howled Bunter. "Now he owns up that it ain't a jape on Quelch! So it's plain enough!"

"Looks like it to me!" said Skinner, with a nod.

"Wharton banged Bunter's head for saying that, Skinner!" remarked Lord Mauleverer. "He's not here to bang yours, so I suppose it's up to me to do it for him!"

"You silly ass, let go!" yelled Skinner; as his lazy lordship, displaying sudden and very unusual activity,

caught him by the neck. "You cheeky fool, you— Oh! Owl! Leggo!"

Bang!

"Leggo!" shrieked Skinner.

"Yaas—but shut up! You talk too much, old bean!" said Lord Mauleverer, and he walked away.

Skinner made an infuriated stride after him—but stopped. Skinner and Bunter were left rubbing two banged heads; and the other fellows laughing.

But the banging of heads did not stop the wagging of tongues; rather, it accelerated the same. That day, Harry Wharton's name was bandied up and down the Remove, with all sorts of surmises; and many fellows gave him peculiar looks. James Duck had pulled him through, with the Head; but in the Remove he did not seem likely to have a happy time—until the prowler was discovered. And of that, there seemed as little hope as ever.

## THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Light At Last!

"DON'T worry, old chap!"

"Easier said than done!" muttered Harry Wharton.

And Bob Cherry was silent.

The Famous Five were at tea in Study No. 1.

James Duck, who was a member of that study, was there—hardly noticed by the Co. The sheepish new boy was tolerated good-naturedly in the study, but he was a fellow of no consequence; and even his existence was often forgotten.

Harry Wharton's face was clouded.

His friends did not look their usual cheery selves.

Wharton had taken it for granted, when he so unexpectedly pulled through with the Head and his Form-master, that the wretched episode was at an end; but he had very soon realised that he had taken too much for granted.

It was very far from being at an end.

Billy Bunter—not in the least cured by the banging of his fat head—babbled and burbled up and down the Form. Skinner made the most of it, with the assistance of Snoop. Bunter did not matter very much; neither did Skinner and Snoop; but better fellows than these were, at least, puzzled and dubious.

Some members of the Co. showed signs of recent warfare. Bob Cherry's nose was red and raw—but Bolsover major was groaning in his study over a tremendous licking. That had been the outcome of an argument on the subject.

"It's all rot!" said Frank Nugent uncomfortably. "I shouldn't bother about it, old chap."

"I think you would, Frank!" said Harry Wharton, with a faint smile. "The fact is, I can see what it looks like, as clearly as any other fellow can. And I can't begin to understand it."

"Somebody else bagged that pen-knife!" said Johnny Bull. "That's clear enough."

"To us—but not to other fellows!" said Harry. "Why should any fellow do it? It was the prowler, of course—but why should he want to stick it on me? I haven't the foggiest idea who he is—he must be an awful toad, but why should he be specially down on me?"

"Goodness knows!"

"I know now that I heard somebody in the dorm last night," went on Harry, "and I know, too, that I heard him sneaking back later. But why should he do it—it beats me hollow!"

"The beatfulness is terrific!" said

Harree Janset Ram Singh, shaking his dusky head dismally.

"I've not trodden on any fellow's corns to that extent that I know of," continued Harry, "and even if I had, I can't think of any Greyfriars man who would be mean worm enough to play such a rotten trick."

"Blessed if I can, either!" confessed Bob. "Still, there's some Greyfriars man who's a fearfully mean worm. The prowler is a Greyfriars man, you know, though nobody knows who he is."

"But why should he pick on me?"

"I give that one up."

"I say, you fellows!" A fat face looked in at the door. "I suppose you fellows have got a pretty good spread here?"

"No, ass! Get out!"

Billy Bunter blinked at the tea-table. That table was, as a matter of fact, rather frugal, as funds were a little short in the study—a thing that often happened in junior studies.

"Ain't you having a better spread than that?" he asked.

"No, blitherer! Travel!"

"Well, I should have thought that Wharton would stand something pretty decent, now he's got plenty of money," remarked Bunter.

"What?" roared Wharton.

"You needn't yell at a chap," said the fat Owl peevishly. "I jolly well know that if I had five pounds, I should stand a jolly good spread in my study."

Harry Wharton rose to his feet. The expression on his face was quite alarming, had not the Owl of the Remove been too short-sighted to observe it.

"I mean to say, I wouldn't pinch it, of course," said Bunter. "But as Wharton doesn't mind that, I should think he would spend it. What are you keeping it for, Wharton?"

James Duck caught Wharton by the arm as he jumped towards Bunter. It seemed to him that the fat Owl was in danger of sustaining considerable damage at that moment.

"Let go, you fool!" roared Wharton, wrenching at his arm.

"Cut, you fat idiot!" exclaimed Bob Cherry hastily.

"Oh, really, Cherry, is Wharton shirty about something?" asked Bunter, blinking at the captain of the Remove. "I say, what are you getting into a temper about, Wharton?"

Harry Wharton did not answer that question. He gave James Duck a shove that sent him staggering, and jumped at Bunter.

Then the fat Owl realised his danger, and turned to flee.

A boot landing on his trousers shot him through the doorway like a bullet from a rifle.

There was a terrific bump as he landed in the passage, and a still more terrific yell.

Harry Wharton slammed the study door after him, and went back to his chair, crimson and breathing hard.

"Ow! Oh! Beast!" came an infuriated roar from the Remove passage.

Then there was a fat squeak through the keyhole:

"Yah! Beast! Pincher! Yah!"

That Parthian shot was followed by a rapid patter of footsteps in hurried flight. Having thus hurled defiance through the keyhole, Billy Bunter fled for his fat life!

The Famous Five finished tea in silence, and left the study, Bob Cherry remarking that there was still enough light for a spot of football.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,620.



James Duck was left alone in Study No. 1.

He closed the door after the chums of the Remove, and sat at a corner of the table, with a pencil in his fingers, and a sheet of paper before him.

There was a worried frown on his brow.

The schoolboy detective was at Greyfriars to discover the prowler, but he was more concerned at the moment to clear the captain of the Remove of the cloud of suspicion that was growing intolerable for him. But it seemed that one depended on the other.

But, though to the Head and Mr. Quelch the incident of the penknife seemed to make the mystery deeper and darker, it did not seem so to Ferrers Locke's assistant. From the detective's point of view, that incident narrowed down the field of search.

Drake proceeded to scribble on the paper:

"The prowler is an outsider, not belonging to Greyfriars.

"The prowler is a man who has a special down on H. Wharton.

"The prowler is a man who knows that he carries a penknife in his pockets, and crept into the dorm specially to get it."

Having written this much the schoolboy detective sat staring at it. He had now three facts to work upon.

The first he had known for a week.

The second and the third had come to his knowledge only that day.

Some man living in the neighbourhood was the man he wanted, for the prowler had prowled for weeks on end. That man had been given bitter offence, in some way, by Harry Wharton. That man had seen a penknife in his possession. What man was it?

The thought of Ponsonby of Highcliffe passed vaguely through Jack Drake's mind, but he dismissed it with a shake of the head. It was no junior schoolboy who had handled Loder of the Sixth on one occasion, and Mr. Quelch on another. Moreover, rotter as Pon was, he could hardly be suspected of theft—and the prowler was a thief.

But who?

Harry Wharton had excited his bitter animosity—how, and when? Recently, it appeared, for the prowler had prowled half a dozen times before without playing any such trick, when it would have been just as easy as last night. In the last few days, most likely.

"By gum!" gasped Drake suddenly. He jumped to his feet, his eyes glinting with excitement.

"By gum!" he repeated.

He crumpled the sheet of paper and tossed it into the study fire. Then he left the study and stopped to speak to Peter Todd, who was on the Remove landing.

"I say, Toddy, when did that prowler start prowling about the school?" he asked. "Do you happen to know? It was before I came, wasn't it?"

"Yes, ass," answered Peter politely. "Long before—quite a month ago. First week in February."

James Duck went down the stairs. He sauntered down to the gates, where he found Gosling in the doorway of his lodge.

"I say, Gosling, is that man Crocker still at the spinney?" he asked.

"Which he is," grunted Gosling. "And don't you go along there, neither. It's put out of bounds by the 'Ead."

"Has he been there a long time?" asked Duck.

"Weeks," answered Gosling. "And wot I says is this 'ere, if I was the 'Ead I'd shift 'im somehow."

"Did you see him when he first came, Gosling?"

"Which I did."

"I've heard that it was in the first week in February. Was it?"

"Yes, it was," answered Gosling.

James Duck strolled out of gates, his hands in his pockets, his face as sheepish as usual. But there was a gleam in the eyes behind the steel-rimmed glasses.

In the first week in February, Randolph Crocker had taken up his abode at the Abbot's Spinney, and the prowler had begun prowling in the school.

Harry Wharton had whopped Crocker with a cricket stump, and in the struggle in the hut on the spinney the silver-handled penknife had fallen from his pocket, and Crocker had seen it picked up and handed back to him.

It seemed to Ferrers Locke's assistant that he saw land at last.

## THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Number XOOIX 2470!

**R**ANDOLPH CROCKER, lounging idly against the cobbler's bench in the hut on the spinney, with a cigarette in his mouth, and a haze of bluish smoke about him, glanced through the open doorway at the figure that came up the path from the lane.

He grinned as he looked.

He had seen James Duck before, two or three times, but had taken no particular notice of him. But he thought that he had never seen so silly and sheepish-looking a young ass as that particular new boy at Greyfriars.

Duck was blinking round owlishly through the steel-rimmed glasses as he came up to the doorway. There he stopped and blinked in.

"May I come in, please, Mr. Crocker?" he asked timidly.

"Boots and shoes to mend?" grinned Crocker.

"Oh, no! Something else, if you don't mind."

"You can trickle in, if you like," grunted Crocker.

He was wondering what the sheepish junior could possibly want there; but he remembered that he had been with the raiding-party, and was more than half-inclined to boot him out as soon as he stepped in.

Duck cast an uneasy blink over his shoulder, as if nervous of being seen entering a place out of bounds for Greyfriars fellows. Then he stepped in, and moved out of sight from the lane.

"Thank you, Mr. Crocker!" he said. "Urrrgh!" He coughed in the cigarette-smoke that clouded the room. "Excuse me; I am not used to tobacco."

"What do you want?" grunted Crocker.

"I thought that perhaps you would do something for me, Mr. Crocker," said Duck, with an owlish blink at him. "I have heard a lot of talk about you in the school, of course, and I have heard that you know all about horses and racing, and such things."

Crocker stared at him blankly.

He had known "all about horses, and racing, and such things," from an extremely early age, and that knowledge had chiefly been his undoing. It had caused Sportsman Crocker to come a mucker at school, and many another

mucker since. If James Duck wanted to hear anything on that subject, he had come to the right shop. But it astonished Crocker to hear such a topic from that simple and sheepish new kid of Greyfriars.

"I thought you wouldn't mind telling me if you know anything about Blue Pigeon," bleated Duck.

"Oh gad!" said Crocker.

"Of course, you won't mention to anyone that I came here and asked you," said Duck, stammering nervously. "It would get me into a row, you know. But I heard a senior man in the school talking about Blue Pigeon, and he said he was running at Wapshot at five to one. Do you know?"

"Oh gad!" repeated Crocker.

He could not help grinning; but his manner became more cordial at once. If a silly young ass was heading for trouble, Sportsman Crocker was not the man to stop him on his way.

"Right as rain!" he said. "Blue Pigeon is running to-morrow at five to one, at Wapshot. What about it?"

"You—you don't mind my asking you?" stammered Duck.

"Not at all—go ahead!"

"I mean, you know all about it, from what the fellows say," said Duck. "I—I should like to put something on him, but I don't know how. I suppose you know?"

Crocker chuckled. He did know—only too well!

"I could manage that for you, if you liked," he said, with a very curious look at Duck. "I shall be at Wapshot to-morrow afternoon."

"Oh! That is very kind of you, Mr. Crocker!" exclaimed Duck. "Would you really do it for me?" He smiled with simple satisfaction. "You see, Mr. Crocker, I have had a five-pound note from my Uncle Percy. If I put four pounds on Blue Pigeon, and he wins, I get twenty pounds, at five to one, don't I?"

"Just that!" said Crocker.

"I should like to win twenty pounds," said Duck. "I should be able to buy a new bicycle for the summer, and a camera, too—I have always wanted a camera. And the fellow I heard speaking said that Blue Pigeon was sure to win."

Randolph Crocker suppressed his merriment. If this young fool was eager to throw away four pounds, the Sportsman was the man to relieve him of that sum. In his career as a rolling stone the Sportsman had gathered very little moss, and all was grist that came to his mill.

"I've heard that it's a sure thing," he drawled. "I'll get your money on, if you like. You'll have to leave the cash with me—you can't do these things on the nod."

"Oh yes, of course," said Duck beaming. "I have my five-pound note in my pocket, Mr. Crocker. Of course, you will not say anything about it, will you? I should get into trouble in school if you did."

"Rely on me!" said Crocker.

James Duck fumbled in his pocket and produced a little notecase, from which he extracted a crisp five-pound note—all it contained.

Crocker's shifty eyes fixed on it greedily.

He was more than ready to take money off a young fool like this; though he certainly had no intention of putting it on Blue Pigeon, a gee that had not the remotest chance of getting anywhere. All he had to do on the morrow was to tell Duck that Blue Pigeon had lost—as he was quite certain to do, and that would be that.

"You will put four pounds on for me



and take the winnings for me," said Duck. "I should like to put on the whole five pounds, but I have to pay for some things, so I cannot do that. Will you give me change, Mr. Crocker?"

"Here you are!"

The Sportsman jerked a wallet from his pocket and detached a pound note from four or five that it contained.

Duck, beaming, handed him the five-pound note, and took the pound note in exchange. It was an exchange equally satisfactory to both parties.

"I am so much obliged to you, Mr. Crocker!" bleated Duck.

"Oh, don't mench!" drawled Crocker. "Drop in here any time after five to-morrow, and I'll let you know the result."

"Thank you so much!"

James Duck ambled out of the hut, beaming with fatuous satisfaction. He left Randolph Crocker grinning. Four pounds was a very welcome addition to the Sportsman's funds for his visit to the races on the morrow.

But glad as the Sportsman was to tuck away that fiver in his wallet, he was not so glad as James Duck was to walk off with a pound note from the hut on the spinney.

James Duck ambled away, the pound note in his pocket. He went down to the towpath, and, out of sight of all eyes behind the boathouse, took the pound note from his pocket and a fragment of paper, on which was written a list of numbers. Those numbers were:

XOOIX 2468  
XOOIX 2469  
XOOIX 2470  
XOOIX 2471  
XOOIX 2472

These were the numbers of the five pound notes that had been placed in Mr. Quelch's desk.

Duck compared the note from Crocker, with the list. Crocker's note had the number XOOIX 2470.

It was, therefore, one of the pound notes that had been taken from Mr. Quelch's study the previous night.

Jack Drake's eyes gleamed over James Duck's spectacles.

The note was one of five he had placed in his Form-master's hands, and which Mr. Quelch had locked in the drawer.

The stolen note had been in Crocker's possession.

Suspicion was now certainty.

Jack Drake knew now that the latest theft in the school had been committed by that disreputable old boy of Greyfriars, who had schemed to throw suspicion on Harry Wharton in revenge for the thrashing with the cricket-stump.

On that point there was no shadow of doubt. Hitherto, the prowler had prowled not only undetected, but unsuspected. That base scheme of vengeance had given Ferrers Locke's assistant the clue he wanted—and now he knew! The wretch's own unscrupulous wickedness had brought about the discovery.

"By gum!" murmured Drake.

His eyes were gleaming.

How the man came and went in his prowlings was still a mystery; one that the schoolboy detective had yet to elucidate. He had yet to catch the rascal in the act, and prove his guilt beyond the shadow of a doubt—to pin him down beyond the possibility of lying and shuffling and wriggling. But his eye now was on the man he wanted—and the time was at hand when the prowler of Greyfriars would prowl no more.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise For Quelch!

MR. QUELCH did not look pleased when James Duck tapped at his study door and entered.

His hope that the schoolboy detective would succeed in solving the mystery of Greyfriars was growing fainter and fainter. His own opinion was that the

sooner Jack Drake rejoined his chief and lent his assistance in the search for the elusive Rupert Crook, the better.

He gave the junior a glance of sharp inquiry.

"Well?" he rapped.

Duck closed the door and came across to his Form-master's writing-table.

"Please look at that, sir!" he said.

He laid a pound note on the table.

(Continued on next page.)



COME INTO the OFFICE,  
BOYS - AND GIRLS!

Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. Write to him: Editor of the "Magnet," The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

SORRY, chums, my little corner was crowded out of last week's issue of the MAGNET. I know how you all look forward to this little pow-wow, and, after all, it's the only chance we have of keeping in touch with one another. Times come, however, when Mr. Frank Richards' yarns run out a little longer than usual. To cut these yarns to squeeze in a Chat might please some readers, but it offends others. In future, then, when there's no Chat, you'll know the reason why.

Believe me, chums, it's not all honey being an Editor. Fortunately, "Magnetites" as a whole are a grand circle of loyal pals—realising that in the MAGNET they always get their money's worth—as the vast number of appreciative letters that reach me prove. Of course, there is an occasional "grouse," say, when somebody's favourite character has not been mentioned for a week or two. Again, there is the type of reader it seems impossible to please, although they stand by the Old Paper year in and year out.

"Old soldiers never die," so the saying goes, and neither will such popular characters as Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, and Tom Merry & Co., of St. Jim's. They've come to stay!

Talking of Tom Merry & Co. reminds me of the super story featuring these cheery chums in this week's "Gem." It's entitled:

"THEY CALLED HIM A DUFFER!"

and I have no hesitation in saying that it is one of Martin Clifford's real masterpieces. If you are not already a reader of the "Gem"—I know most of you are—take my tip and sample this week's issue. In addition to the grand long yarn of Tom Merry & Co., it contains a splendid series of stories telling of Frank Richards' school-days. You'll absolutely revel in 'em, believe me! There are other interesting features as well, but space precludes me from giving the details here. Anyway, the proof of the pudding's in the eating; get a copy of the "Gem" to-day; you'll be more than pleased with it.

An old reader of the MAGNET—Jack Bonny, of Windsor—writes to tell me that he is shortly going out to Australia, where he intends to take up farming. It will be a bit of a wrench to leave England, he says, not to mention parting with all his friends. I feel sure all "Magnetites" will wish Jack a "bon voyage," and every success in his new venture. But, Jack, don't run away with the idea that you will have to lose all your chums. One of your pals—namely the MAGNET—will be with you "down under," as staunch and as strong as ever. When you've settled down in your new quarters, chum, maybe you'll find time to drop me a line and let me know how things are progressing with you. It shouldn't be long before you chum up with some of our Colonial readers you'll find plenty of them in Western Australia where you say you're bound for.

Time is getting short—as the wireless announcer often remarks—so I must get down to next week's programme.

"WHO SACKED HACKER?"

is the title of famous Frank Richards' next yarn of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars. And it's a top-notch! Horace Hacker, master of the Shell Form, and more commonly known as the "Acid Drop," takes a delight in upsetting other people's "applecarts." But this week he receives something for his pains—and he just can't grin and bear it!

When I tell you that Fisher T. Fish has been detailed to take over the "My Page" feature, you'll realise that you're in for some real good "stuff." You remember how well the guy from "Noo Yark" did his work when he "took over" the "Herald" during Harry Wharton's absence. You'll roar with laughter when you read his contribution next Saturday. The "Greyfriars Herald," with its interesting nutshell news of Greyfriars, is well up to standard. Don't tail on the end of the queue, chum; be one of the first to get your MAGNET next Saturday morning.

Until then, chin-chin,

YOUR EDITOR.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,620.



Mr. Quelch looked at it. "Well?" he repeated. "Look at the number, sir," said the schoolboy detective dryly. "You noted the numbers on the currency notes locked in the drawer on Wednesday. Look at that number."

Mr. Quelch did so, and gave a start. His face became very keen.

"This is one of the missing notes!" he said.

"Yes, sir."

"You discovered it in the school?"

"I discovered it outside the school."

"One of the boys—"

"No!"

"Not Wharton?"

"No!"

"Not a boy belonging to Greyfriars?"

"No!"

Mr. Quelch breathed hard, and he breathed deep.

It was not palatable to him to give up a fixed belief. It was not palatable to him to realise that he had judged ill—while a boy in his Form—detective as he was, and trained by Ferrers Locke—had judged correctly.

At the same time he was conscious of a feeling of great relief.

"The other notes?" asked Mr. Quelch, at last.

"They are in the possession of the same man. I have no doubt that I saw them in his possession, though I have been able to get hold of only one—proof enough, sir! From one, the rest may be deduced."

"Quite so! And the man?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"For the moment, sir, I should like to say no more—I have not pinned the rogue down yet."

"You know him?"

"I know him! He might be able to wriggle out of this, but he will not be able to wriggle out when I get him fair and square!" said Drake, with a sudden grimness in his look.

"Please leave that to me, sir! But I think, sir, that you will now accept my assurance that the prowler is not a Greyfriars man at all, but a man outside the school—the

man from whom I have obtained that stolen note."

"I must accept your assurance now, Drake, though I do not understand," said Mr. Quelch.

"And amazing as this is to me, the best news I could hear is that the wretched pilferer does not belong to the school."

"May I use your typewriter for a few minutes, sir?"

"Eh? What? Certainly."

Jack Drake sat at the typing desk, and the machine clicked under his nimble fingers.

Mr. Quelch watched him, silent, in surprise as he tapped the keys.

Drake drew the sheet from the machine and placed it before the Form master at his table.

"If you will sign that, sir!" he murmured.

Mr. Quelch looked at him, and looked at the typed paper. Quelch often typed a paper to be put on the board. Now Drake had done it for him. It ran:

"The currency notes abstracted from a drawer of my desk on Thursday night have now been traced outside the school. It is now known for certain that no Greyfriars boy was concerned in the matter. Signed."

Slowly Mr. Quelch took up his pen, dipped it in the ink, and signed "H. S. Quelch" to that paper.

"I should have preferred, as a detective, that nothing should be said!" explained Drake. "But that much is due to Wharton!"

"Quite so!" said Mr. Quelch.

"With your leave, sir, I will pin this paper on the board—as, if you had called me into your study to give it to me for that purpose!" said Drake, smiling.

"Do so!" said Mr. Quelch.

The Remove master sat in deep thought after Drake had left his study. He had been wrong—all Greyfriars had been wrong—and Ferrers Locke's assistant had been right!

"WHARTON!"

"Yes, fathead!"

"I've got a paper here," said James Duck, with a blink through his steel-rimmed glasses.

"I'm not blind, ass!" said the captain of the Remove politely. "I can see that! What about it?"

"Mr. Quelch wants it put on the board! Perhaps you'd better put it up, as head boy!" said Duck.

"Oh, all right! What is it—a notice from Quelch?"

"I—I suppose so."

Harry Wharton took the paper. Without even glancing at it, he went to the notice-board to pin it up.

Half a dozen fellows gathered round to look at it.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "I say, that's news! Look at that, you men!"

"Great pip!" ejaculated Harry Wharton, staring at the paper he had pinned up. "That's jolly good news!"

"The jolliffulness of the idiotic news is terrific!" exclaimed Hurreo Jamsot Ram Singh.

James Duck ambled away, leaving a crowd of fellows buzzing with excitement at the notice-board.

Harry Wharton did not even glance at him—little dreaming how much he owed to that sheepish new boy in his Form.

Wharton's face was very bright. What had seemed like a black and overwhelming cloud had rolled suddenly away; and all, so to speak, was calm and bright! The mystery of Greyfriars was still a mystery, but so far as the captain of the Remove was concerned, it was all clear.

THE END.

("WHO SACKED HACKER?" is the title of the next yarn in this powerful series. Be sure you read it next Saturday, chums!)

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**IRON NERVE WANTED WHEN HIKING WITH FAGS! Enough's As Good As a Feast**  
—says PETER TODD

Last Saturday afternoon, when out hiking on my lonely own, I fell in with Nugent minor and Gatty and Myers, the bright young leaders of the Second. "Coming my way, kids?" I asked them, genially. "I'm making for Courtfield Common, and then back through Friardale." "That'll do us," grinned Dicky Nugent. "Sure you don't mind being seen with Second Form chaps?" "Not a bit. People will tell at a glance that I'm looking after you youngsters and keeping you in order," I answered, "Step it out, kids!" And off we went.

Now, my idea of hiking is a nice, steady four miles an hour, enjoying the scenery and chin-wagging on all manner of things to one's companions. That was what I had in mind on this occasion—with a notion also that I should be able to do most of the talking myself, to the edification and improvement of a trio of respectful young listeners. But it didn't happen that way at all. My three fellow-hikers, I soon discovered, had quite other ideas of what a hiking expedition should be.

For instance, the speed they favoured was not four miles an hour, but about

four miles a day—performed in sudden spurts and starts, varied by long pauses and bouts of wrestling by the wayside. Then again, their idea of cheery conversation en route was to yell rude remarks and catcalls at all the pedestrians we passed. When we came across some cows, grazing peacefully in a field, nothing would satisfy my young colleagues but to mount three of the beasts and go rough-riding. When we spotted some sheep a



few moments later, they had to hold sheep-dog trials, taking the part of the sheep-dogs themselves. When we met a solitary angler,

thoughtfully fishing in the Sark, they felt it up to them to creep as near him as they could under cover and throw stones into the water. The angler lost his temper and chased them; and, in preference to stopping and explaining that I really didn't belong to them, I took flight, too.

A dashed undignified and unpleasant experience, that; but worse still was to follow. After leaving the river, we ran into P.-c. Tozer. The Friardale village constable was sitting on a stile, writing in his official notebook. Young Nugent and his pals found him irresistible.

"What's the betting he's making out his football coupon?" asked Dicky.

"Might be a crossword puzzle," Gatty said, cautiously.

"Can't be much more," grinned Myers. "Old Tozer doesn't have a case from one year's end to another."

"Yes, it's sad about Tozer," sighed Nugent minor. "We should be doing him a good turn if we gave him a case to put down in that notebook. Think we might do it?"

"Look here, you young idiots!" I gasped.

"Let's knock off his helmet and punt it down the lane," said Nugent minor, unheeding. "Quietly does it."

**I LET THE SIDE DOWN!**  
Deplores H. Vernon-Smith

It's a sorry story I have to tell this week—and I'll admit right away that the villain of the piece is myself! Whoever could have foreseen Rylcombe School Grammar kicking us, just when we were well on the way to making our place at the top of the table really secure? Why, the idea would have been laughed to scorn at Greyfriars a week ago; but lowly-placed Rylcombe licked us all the same—and on our own ground in the bargain!

Just to rub salt into the wound, St. Jim's went and beat Higheliffe and displaced us from the position we had fondly hoped to hold without a break for the rest of the season! It's a black week for the Greyfriars Lower School, this, pals, and no mistake about it! When I admit to being the villain of the piece, I am not shouldering the responsibilities of the rest of the team. Others contributed to our downfall as well.

Rylcombe caught us, in fact, on one of our rare "off" days, and the whole team fell lamentably short of the high standard they had previously maintained since the Christmas vac.

The pitch was heavy from recent rains and our slick short-passing game was seen early in the game to be less effective than the vigorous, hard-kicking methods of our opponents. Rylcombe, who seem to be born mud-larkers, found their feet in no time,

while we were still trying to overcome the difficulties of playing the same style of football as we have played with such success on drier pitches.

When Gordon Gay put Rylcombe one up in the first ten minutes, we began to get rattled. Our play degenerated and for a quarter of an hour we were on the defensive. By degrees, we began to regain our composure; but even so, Rylcombe still had the upper hand, and we could hardly complain when Frank Monk scored a second goal just before half-time.

In the second half, we went all out to make up arrears. Play improved, and after ten minutes, Tom Redwing scored for Greyfriars. Our hopes began to rise.

But Rylcombe had made up their minds not to yield an inch; and as we forced them more and more into their own territory, they made a real job of it and brought back almost the entire team to keep us out! Again and again we attacked, and each time they came through the ordeal successfully.

And then, five minutes from time, came the incident where I let down the side. Wharton, hard-pressed by three Rylcombe men, tapped the ball over to me. I trapped it, beat the Rylcombe right-back, and ran for the goal. The goalie came out, I swerved, and left him standing, then kicked the ball at an open goal.

And, believe it or not, I missed by miles! Gentlemen, chaps and fellows! May I remind you that to err is human—to forgive divine? I frankly admit that there is positively no excuse for that appalling miskick; but, on the

other hand, I have seen professionals do exactly the same thing!

That goal, had I scored it, would have saved us a point and kept us in the top place on goal average. As it is—well, I'm wearing sackcloth and ashes now and shall keep on wearing them till I make up for what I have done!

We are left now with two "away" games—at Abbottsford and Bagshot—and the last game of the season, against St. Jim's, on Little Side.

Can we win these three formidable games and regain our lost leadership? After what has happened this week, I dare not prophesy. I can only hope!

**RESULTS.**

(Home teams are shown first.)

Table with 4 columns: Team, Goals, Points. Rows for Bagshot vs Redclyffe, Claremont vs Abbottsford, Greyfriars vs Rylcombe G.S., and St. Jim's vs Higheliffe.

**Saturday.**

Table with 4 columns: Team, Goals, Points. Rows for Claremont vs Rookwood and Higheliffe vs St. Jude's.

**CHAMPIONSHIP TABLE.**

Table with 5 columns: Rank, Team, P, W, D, L, E, F, A, PTS. Lists top 10 teams including St. Jim's, Greyfriars, Rookwood, Bagshot, Higheliffe, Abbottsford, St. Jude's, Rylcombe, Redclyffe, and Claremont.

No. 334.

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

March 4th, 1939.

*The* GREYFRIARS HERALD



**YOUR EDITOR TO DEFEND THE TITLE OF REMOVE BOXING CHAMPION!**

To the small army of readers who have written me lately, inquiring when I propose to defend the title of Remove boxing champion which I won some time ago from Bob Cherry, I am at last able to give a satisfactory reply.

A Form meeting was held this week to discuss sports matters generally, and when boxing came under review I asked Mauly, who acted as chairman, to call for the names of men who were willing to box in eliminating contests with a view to selecting a challenger to meet me.

Mauly at once put up the idea to the meeting, and amid loud cheers five fellows promptly nominated themselves for the honour—namely, Russell, Bulstrode, Vernon-Smith, Bolsover major, and Bob Cherry.

At this stage Mark Linley rose to suggest an amendment to the effect that the meeting should regard Bob Cherry as the legitimate challenger without any eliminating contests, but Bob, in his customary sporty way, would hear nothing of this and even threatened to withdraw his name if the amendment was carried. Linley, therefore, dropped the idea, though, speaking for myself, I must say I think that Bob has prior claims to anybody else to be regarded as the proper challenger.

Before we went on to pair off the candidates for the first contests, there was a sensation. Billy Bunter rose and asked the chairman to add his name to the list of challengers!

When the laughter had died down sufficiently for Bunter to be heard, Bunter said that only modestly had prevented him from taking this step before, but he had now decided that the time had come to teach a lesson to those jealous beasts who had hitherto refused to recognise him as the best boxer in the Form. He added that when the scraps started, they would all jolly well see that his claims had some weight—a piece of unconscious humour that simply convulsed the Remove!

The ballot was then taken and resulted in the following pairings:

Table with 3 columns: Challenger, Opponent. Rows for G. Bulstrode vs H. Vernon-Smith, W. G. Bunter vs P. Bolsover, and R. Cherry vs R. Russell.

Looks as if Bolsover has been given a "walk-over" for this round! As for the other contests—well, with all due respect to Dick Russell, who is certainly a fine fighter, Bob Cherry should beat him, while the Bulstrode-Smith affair will be anybody's fight. I wouldn't like to attempt a forecast of the result of this particular battle!

There is a good deal of interest in the school generally over this new effort to solve the problem of who is the best boxer in the Remove, and many fellows belonging to other Forms have stopped me to tell me they think my days as Form champion are numbered. Why so many perfectly pally people should seem so cheery at the prospect of my losing my title I really don't know, but I can assure you that's how most of them react to it!

I intend to do my best to hold the championship, anyway—whichever proves to be my opponent. Whether I can do so or not remains to be seen!

Tom Redwig, our Assistant Sporting Editor, will report on the eliminating contests in next Saturday's "Herald."

All the best, chums!  
HARRY WHARTON.

**SCENE-SHIFTING FOR WIBLEY NO JOKE!**  
Declares MICKY DESMOND

Sure, and it's no joke being a scene-shifter for Wibley at all, at all! It's myself that's wishing I'd never signed on for the job. And I never would have done it, either, if I hadn't had at the back of mind that it might one day lead to the name of Micky Desmond shining in bright lights all over the West End of London!

It was the lure of the footlights that went to my head early this term, boys. Says I to myself, "Micky, my boy," I says, "you'll always find in the end there's nothing like beginning at the beginning. If that spalpeen Wibley won't make you a star, then it's no use mooning around over it. Away you run and tell him you'll take any other job that's going!"

So I ups and sees him; and that's how I started on the scene-shifting job!

And what a job it is, to be sure, boys! Carrying of this and that here and there—fixing up cardboard trees and canvas hedges and goodness knows what else besides! It's a rough old

life, boys, is the life of a scene-shifter—and there's more kicks than ha'pence in it when you're working for Wibley!

Sure, I never knew a boy so particular. If it's the wrong side of the stage I put a chair, he's rapping like a man demented! If it's upside-down I fix a canvas hedge, he'll shout enough to burst any ear-drums!

At a dress rehearsal this afternoon I had to balance myself on a ledge over the stage and sprinkle paper down on the actors to make it seem like snowy weather. Was it my fault my painful of paper dropped on to Wibley's head? Dickens of a bit of it! Was it my fault I leaned over in my excitement and pitched down on top of the company? Well, boys, ask yourselves!

But there's no arguing with Wibley. Little mishaps like these are all in the day's work to me; but Wibley's tho' had for taking life seriously.

Sure, it's a fine actor he is, and he's the broth of a boy at that; but scene-shifting for Wibley's no joke!

**SQUIFF'S BROADCASTS ARE REALLY UNIQUE!**

**Eye-Opener for Johnny Bull**

When I dropped into Study No. 14 to get my cap, the other afternoon, I had quite a shock. The furniture had all been rearranged, strange-looking gadgets were lined up on the table, and Squiff's gramophone, which has lain at the bottom of the cupboard for a couple of terms, was installed on a home-made stand that moved about on rubber runners.

From the ceiling hung a cardboard sign bearing on it the laconic notice: "SILENCE." In a middle of the room, standing in front of a microphone, was Squiff.

I stood in the doorway, blinking. While he did so, Squiff spoke into the "mike."

"That, ladies and gentlemen, concludes the broadcast from Study No. 14, Remove Passage, Greyfriars School," he said in accents just like those of the B.B.C. announcers over the wireless—only much more so! "I hope that you have enjoyed the programme, and would

like to remind you to tune-in again on Friday evening for another half-hour of mirth and melody, starting at seven-thirty.

"I shall be happy to have reports from listeners as to reception. Postcards should be addressed to S. Q. I. Field, Greyfriars School, Friardale, Kent, England.

"That concludes the programme and the station is now closing down. Good-afternoon, everybody!"

Squiff turned a switch from "On" to "Off," then greeted me with a satisfied nod.

"Hallo, Bull! Been listening long?"

I rubbed my eyes to make sure I wasn't dreaming. As the room remained unchanged, I concluded it was quite real.

"Look here, what's the idea, Squiff?" I asked. "How long has this been going on?"

bean," Squiff replied casually. "I've made a pretty good job of it, don't you think?"

"You've made a nasty mess of the study, if that's anything to do with it," I said frankly. "But who told you you could run a giddy broadcasting station from this study?"

"Nobody!" Squiff



answered cheerfully. "Then all I can say is you're asking for trouble. Why, it's a punishable offence to broadcast without a Government licence. You'll be getting six months in chokoy—that's what people get for it!"

"Oh, that's all right!"