

"DRAKE GETS HIS MAN!" Thrill-Packed Story of School and Adventure, Starring . . . **Harry Wharton & Co.**

The Magnet ^{2^D}

*Billy Brunter's
Own Paper*

1939

APRIL

1

MR. HACKER
Form Master

*With best wishes
from
Yellow Smith*

ACID
DROPS

A PRESENT *for*
the ACID DROP!



THIS WEEK BY
CEDRIC HILTON,
of the Fifth Form.

THIS shall be a page of confessions and impressions. I have no particular yearning to write either fiction or poetry, and probably could not do so, anyway. I like reading the classics, and I can admire poetry, but I have never felt the urge to write. Therefore, I have no scheme whatever for filling this page, and shall put down anything that comes into my head.

MY WORST EXPERIENCE.—I think my worst experience was when a convict escaped from prison one Christmas and got into my home, Hilton Hall. He was a desperate man, and in rifling the father's desk for money he found an old army revolver, fully loaded. When the warders arrived he went to earth in an upstairs room—if that's not an "Irishism"—and took pot shots from the window. However, the warders bagged him eventually, without any bloodshed on either side. But it was a close shave.

The experience which really seemed the worst—"My Blackest Moment," you might say—happened at Monte Carlo last Easter. I was there for a few days with my study mate, Stephen Price. And since it is part of one's education to visit the Casino at Monte, Price and I dropped in to play roulette.

There are two ways of staking at roulette. You may back the colours, red or black, but if you win you only get the amount of money you stake: thus you stake five francs to win five francs. If you back the numbers and your lucky number turns up, you get thirty-five times your stake. We chose four numbers and backed them each time, and at about the fifth game—Mille tonnerres!—Number Twelve came up, and we raked in 350 francs.

And it was just then that Price gripped my arm.

"Don't look round!" he hissed in my ear. "Go on playing—turn your collar up—don't look round!"

Not greatly perturbed, I put my stakes on Twelve and Thirty-one for the next game, at the same time shooting a side glance at the big mirror on the wall. Gosh! I nearly shot straight into the air like a rocket. I could hear somebody breathing like a grampus behind me, and the mirror showed me who it was—Paul Prout, M.A., the Fifth Form beak—my own Form-master!

Don't imagine Prout was wasting his substance at the tables. He was looking on with a black and disapproving frown because, as I say, it is part of one's education to see the Casino.

He had not spotted our identity. You must remember that we were not wearing our school clothes in the vac.—we were both dressed in evening "clobber," like everyone else. He could see the backs of two heads in ordinary evening-dress. But if we had turned round—

The next ten minutes were by far the most thrill-packed I have yet experienced. To play roulette under the very eyes of your beak is a grand tonic for the nerves. Mechanically we pushed stakes on the table—we had no idea of what we were backing. Once, I think, we won again, for the money remained on the square until it was gathered in by a jewel-covered old woman opposite, and all those round the table gazed as though expecting us to object to such arrant robbery. But if the money was ours, we know nothing about it—we didn't even know what numbers we'd backed.

Then Prout sauntered away, and a few minutes later, limp and boneless, we helped each other out of the Casino and staggered into the nearest café for a strong tonic.

If that was my worst moment I think my best was next term, when Prout was telling us in class about his holiday experiences, and

touched on the deplorable exhibition of gambling he had seen at Monte.

"How can one visit such places," he boomed, "without being sickened by the sight? At the table where I watched—indeed, just in front of me—were two players, mere boys, hardly older than most of you here who put money on the table without shaking hands and were in the last extreme of nervous excitement. Pah! It was unparalleled! I only wish I had those two youths in my Form here at Greyfriars!"

Whereat there was laughter in the Form—and none laughed louder than the two youths in question.

Before I leave Greyfriars I shall remind Prout of that incident and tell him the truth. I want to see his face.

TALKING OF CLOTHES—

Talking of clothes, I am reminded of our picture gallery at Hilton Hall. For centuries the Hiltons seem to have been Devon scoundogs of the Francis Drake brand, and most of our portraits are of Captains This or Admirals That. (You won't get me on the sea, though. I may be a Hilton, and I may be a Devonshire man, but no sea for me. It's time my family had a change, and I'm IT!)

Anyway, the family portraits show a pretty collection of costumes from early 1600 to Great-Aunt Annabel in full Victorian robes. My cousin, Captain Garratt, always laughs at my ancestors and calls them "Doooid queer old johnnies!" But I sometimes think my cousin is rather a dooid queer johnny himself.

In this little picture I've drawn you can see Captain Jocelyn Hilton (1658), with Captain Garratt (1939), and I really don't think old Jocelyn is much funnier than the modern captain do you?

You know, I don't see any reason why men should now have to dress in dull colours and plain suits. Until one hundred years or so ago a man could wear plum-coloured velvet, or pink or silver or bottle-green, and sport ruffles, laces, and fine linen. Why have we resigned

our rights in showy clothes to the other sex? Hang it, the world's quite dull enough at times without our mournful dress!

As a rule, male birds have far more brilliant plumage than females. The same is true of animals and, to a lesser degree, of flowers. Well, then, let's stick up for bright clothes. I shall have my next suit made in orange brocade, if my tailor can stand the shock. (Wonder what Prout would say—unparalleled or unprecedented?)

PLEASANT DREAMS!

Among my many quaint ideas is a belief in dreams. No subject causes greater argument than dreams. Some say dreams are merely the stored memories of the past flitting in strangled shapes through the brain while the mind is at rest; but this I can't believe. I'll tell you why I can't believe it.

One night, here at school, I dreamed I was walking towards my home in the deep dusk of an autumn night along Passfield Lane—which is a sunken way with fern-covered banks, leading to Hilton Hall. Suddenly a bright light blazed in my eyes. It turned out to be an electric torch, and was held by a policeman standing in the shadows. He switched it off and said, "Good-night, sir!" as I passed—by which I imagined a convict had escaped.

A minute later, in the narrowest and darkest part of the lane, a car swung madly round the corner with headlights gleaming. The lights seemed to leap at me—I had a second's vision of spinning wheels, and then all was blank. I woke, shivering.

It was not two months later that the thing actually happened—at least, the first part. In that very spot in the lane the policeman shone his torch at me and wished me "Good-night, sir!" But I didn't pass on.

"Look out, there's a car coming!" I muttered. And in five minutes it came—a police car—and drew up beside us with grinding brakes.

Queer things, dreams. Very queer. The policeman said I had wonderfully keen ears to hear a car a mile away.

"I didn't hear it, I dreamed it," was my reply. But he merely chuckled indulgently, and again said, "Good-night!"

If I hadn't dreamed that night at school, I wonder if I should be writing this page now? Well, that's the lot! Good-bye, all, and—pleasant dreams!



page now? Well, that's the lot! Good-bye, all, and—pleasant dreams!

Our contributor for next week is
PERCY BOLSOVER
(Major).

CEDRIC
HILTON

FIFTH
FORM



"THE SLAVE'S DREAM"
(NOT BY LONGFELLOW)

*Beside the unbroken stones
he stood,
His pickaxe in his hand,
"I could go next door," said he,
"It would be simply grand!"
And then a lump came in
his throat,
His voice grew full of tears,
Because he would not
go next door
for nearly twenty
years!*

Cedric Hilton

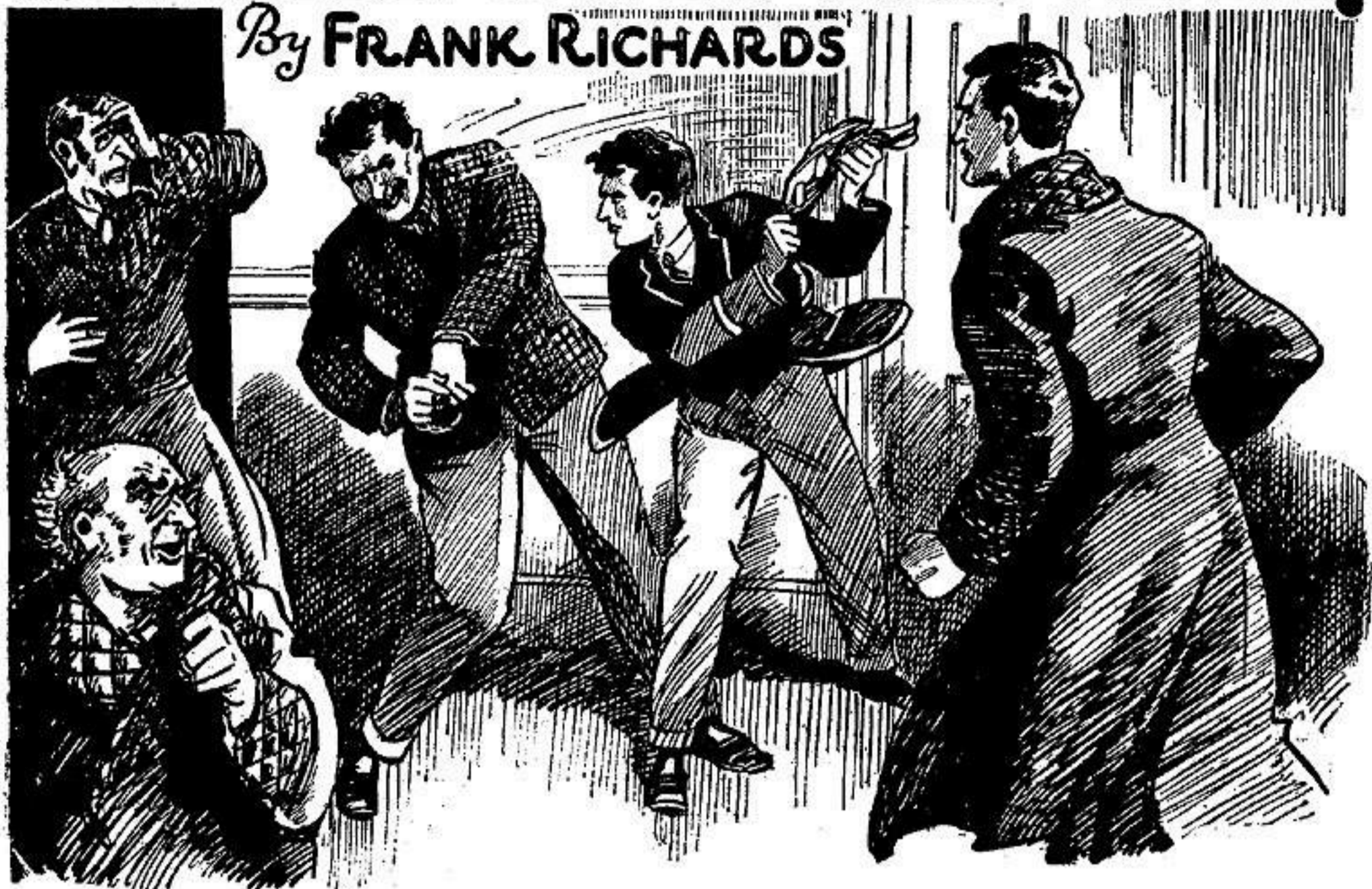
Deep down, there are the makings of a real good fellow in Hilton of the Fifth, but he is too much swayed by his studymate Price, and if he goes on following the cad of the Fifth he will end in bad trouble. Sometimes he breaks away and joins in football and cricket with Blundell, but Price keeps him pretty well under his wing, for Hilton has plenty of cash. His home, Hilton Hall, is in Devonshire, within sight of the great convict prison of Blackmoor. (Hence this cartoon.) Cedric is rather a dandy, but has plenty of sense and is, in the main, a very good-humoured fellow.

(Cartoon by H SKINNER)

THE MYSTERIOUS MARAUDER has prowled his last. It only remains for Jack Drake, Ferrers Locke's clever boy assistant, to elick the handcuffs on the rascal's wrists!

DRAKE GETS HIS MAN!

By FRANK RICHARDS



"Crocker!" exclaimed the headmaster of Greyfriars, as Jack Drake whipped the muffler from the rascal's face. "You, the prowler—you, who was expelled from this school twenty years ago for pilfering! You!"

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

First Of April!

"PLUM cake—"
"Yes—with marzipan on top!"

"Sounds nice!"

"Terrifically nice!"

"Quelch has gone out, too! What a chance!" sighed Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter, the fat ornament of the Remove picked up his plump ears. Bunter was interested.

The mention of a doughnut, or even a single, solitary bullseye would have interested Billy Bunter.

Much more, therefore, was he interested in a plum cake, with marzipan on top. Bunter liked plum cake! He loved marzipan! If there was a plum cake, with marzipan on top, somewhere in the offing, Billy Bunter wanted to establish contact with the same.

It was a sunny afternoon, the first day of the merry month of April. It was also a half-holiday at Greyfriars School. No doubt for these reasons Harry Wharton & Co. were feeling merry and bright. Certainly they had cheery, smiling faces as they talked in a group in the old quad.

They did not look round when Billy Bunter rolled up. They did not seem to observe that the fat Owl of the Remove was lending a podgy ear to the conversation. Bunter, as a matter of fact, was lending two podgy ears—both on the strain! Bunter wanted to hear more about that plum cake with marzipan on top.

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"You know those ten-bob cakes from Chunkley's—" went on Bob.

"Don't we?" agreed Harry Wharton.

"The nicefulness of those ten-bob cakes is terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But the esteemed and venerable Quelch is not fond of even such terrifically nice cakes."

"Can't be going to eat it!" said Johnny Bull.

"Hardly!" grinned Bob. "No—I

Super 35,000-word School and Detective Thriller, featuring HARRY WHARTON & CO., of GREYFRIARS, and JACK DRAKE, the Boy 'Tec.

don't think Quelch is likely to eat that cake! But he has a kid relation he sends things to sometimes, you know."

"And he's gone out?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Oh, yes! I've just been to his study to take in my lines! Of course, I saw what was on the table."

"Well, don't let Bunter hear about it!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "He would head for Quelch's study like a shot!"

Billy Bunter grinned.

He had heard enough!

Bunter had been approaching the Famous Five, with the intention of mentioning the sad circumstance that a postal order, which he had been expecting, had not yet arrived, and endeavouring to touch some member of the Co. for a bob to see him over a stony period.

Now, instead of carrying out that purpose, the Owl of the Remove revolved on his axis and headed for the House.

Then the Famous Five appeared to become aware of his fat existence; for they looked round at a podgy back and smiled—audibly.

"Is that fat fish hooked?" grinned Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wonder," went on Bob thoughtfully, "whether Bunter fancied, from what we were saying, that there's a plum cake on the table in Quelch's study?"

"I wonder?" chortled Johnny Bull.

"We certainly never said so!" argued Bob. "I said I saw, what was on the table. So I did—a pile of papers and a Greek lexicon."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"All the same, I think Bunter must have got the idea into his head," said Bob. "I can't help suspecting that he's heading for our dear Form-master's study this blessed minute! I dare say he will remember that it's the First of April when he gets there!"

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"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Co.

Billy Bunter, at the moment, did not remember that it was the First of April. His fat thoughts were concentrated on a plum cake with marzipan on top. Nobody, certainly, had actually said that there was such an article in the study of Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove. But from the remarks he had heard, Billy Bunter certainly deduced that there was!

His eyes gleamed behind his spectacles, and his extensive mouth fairly watered as he rolled into the House and headed for his Form-master's study.

That plum cake—Bunter had no doubt—was on Quelch's table. And Quelch had gone out! What could have been more fortunate?

It was known that Quelch sometimes sent such things to a kid relation somewhere or other. On this occasion that kid relation was booked to go cake-less! Bunter was not bothering about Quelch's kid relations! Bunter's fat thoughts, as usual, were centred on W. G. Bunter.

Bagging a cake from a Form-master's study was rather a risky business. Even Bunter, who would bag anything eatable from anywhere, would have hesitated had Mr. Quelch been anywhere about. But Quelch had gone out—so that was all right! Quelch would never know who had had that cake! Bunter was not going to leave any evidence! Not a plum, nor a crumb, nor a spot of marzipan, was going to remain as evidence!

He rolled into Masters' Passage. He reached his Form-master's door. He blinked cautiously up and down the passage. Then he opened the door and rolled in, and shut it behind him.

That cake—if any—was at his mercy now!

With eager eyes behind his big spectacles, Bunter rolled across to the study table. He blinked at that table! He stared at it! He beheld a pile of papers. He beheld a Greek lexicon. He beheld an inkstand. He beheld a calendar. But he did not behold a plum cake!

"Where the thump—" gasped Bunter.

He blinked round the study. Bob Cherry had described a plum cake with marzipan on top! He had said that he had seen what was on the table. What could be clearer? Yet no cake was visible! Where was that cake?

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" bawled a voice at the window.

Bunter spun round.

The window was wide open, letting in the fresh breeze and sunlight of April. Five faces looked in; a grinning row over the broad stone sill.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "I say, you fellows, where's that cake?"

"Looking for anything?" asked Bob.

"Yes—that cake—"

"What cake?"

"Oh, really, Cherry! Look here, I heard what you fellows were saying in the quad. I—I came here to—to look at that cake! I'm not going to touch it, of course! I hope I'm not the fellow to snaffle a cake! But—but where is it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" roared Bunter. "Look here, I can't hang about in a beak's study. Where's that cake?"

"Looked on the table?"

"Yes; it ain't there."

"Looked on the calendar?"

"Eh? What's the good of looking on the calendar? The cake ain't on

the calendar, you silly ass! Wharrer you mean?"

"Look on it, all the same!" chuckled Bob. "Then you'll know what I mean, old fat man!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Famous Five, chortling, strolled away from the study window—leaving Bunter to look at the calendar!

The perplexed fat Owl turned to the table again. He looked at the calendar. It was one of those calendars from which a leaf is torn daily, leaving the due date on view. Bunter looked at it. He blinked at it! And he saw:

"APRIL 1"

Then, at long last, the fat Owl understood.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "Beasts! First of April! Swabs! There—there ain't any cake! Rotters! Cads! Beasts! Oh lor'!"

Billy Bunter rolled to the window. He shook a fat fist after five heads in the distance.

"Beasts!" he roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came floating back.

"First of April, old fat man!"

"Yah! Beasts!"

Breathing fury, Bunter rolled across to the door. There was a sound of the floor creaking in the passage under an elephantine tread. Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, was passing. And Bunter, still breathing fury, waited for Old Pompons to get clear before he ventured to emerge from Mr. Quelch's study.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Who Was The April Fool?

"DUCK!"

"Yes, Smithy!"

"Looking for you, old bean."

James Duck, the new fellow in the Greyfriars Remove, was leaning on one of the old elms, his hands in his pockets, surveying the quad mildly through his steel-rimmed glasses.

Quite a little crowd of Remove fellows were bearing down on him, headed by Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars. Most of them were grinning. But there was no suspicion in the mild glance that James Duck gave them. Perhaps he, like Bunter, had forgotten that it was the first of April!

Smithy had a box in his hand. It was a small cardboard box, neatly tied with a ribbon. It bore the inscription "Acid Drops," and had evidently been obtained at the tuckshop. A label was attached to it. On the label was written, "With Best Wishes From—" a blank being left for a name to be added.

"That's a birthday present!" explained Smithy.

"Thank you so much!" said Duck. "It is not my birthday, Smithy, but I am very much obliged to you, all the same—"

"Not for you, you ass!" Smithy jerked the box back. "It's a birthday present for Hacker!"

"It's Hacker's birthday, you know!" said Skinner.

"I didn't know!" said Duck simply.

"Well, you know now!" said Vernon-Smith. "We've got a little present for Hacker, being his birthday, see?"

Whether it was the birthday of Mr. Horace Hacker, the master of the Shell, Smithy really did not know. Hacker, naturally, had a birthday every year

like other people; so there was in fact one chance in three hundred and sixty-five that the first of April was Hacker's birthday.

But whether it was Hacker's birthday or not, it was undoubtedly the first of April.

Likewise, it was a fact that Mr. Hacker, who was an extremely tart-tempered gentleman, was generally called the Acid Drop.

Hacker was aware of that circumstance, and extremely annoyed by it. The mere casual mention of acid drops, by a fellow passing him in the quad, was enough to make Hacker glare.

It was probable that the present of a box of acid drops would make Hacker do something more emphatic than glare!

"I see!" assented James Duck.

"Well, look here, we're going down to the footer," explained Smithy. "Will you cut in and leave this in Hacker's study for him? He's gone out with Quelch, and we want him to find it there when he comes in."

"Hacker's fond of acid drops, you know!" said Skinner.

"How very thoughtful of you, Smithy!" bleated James Duck. "I am sure that Mr. Hacker will be very, very pleased."

"Pleased as Punch!" said Smithy. "Leave it on his table; and by the way, fill in your name on the label. You can use Hacker's pen. Then he will know that it comes from the Remove, see?"

A dozen fellows looked at James Duck almost breathlessly, as Smithy said that.

Smithy had no doubt that James was fool enough for anything—but some of the fellows wondered whether even the duffer of the Remove was duffer enough to fall for this.

"I see!" assented Duck innocently. "I suppose any fellow's name would do, so long as it's a Remove name."

"Exactly!" gasped Smithy.

Skinner gurgled. Snoop nearly exploded. Bolsover major crammed his handkerchief into his mouth, to keep back a yell. Other fellows turned their faces away. Their emotions were almost too much for them.

What would happen when the Acid Drop came in and found that box of acid drops on his study table, with the inscription on it "With best wishes from James Duck" they really did not know. But they knew that it would be something in the nature of a volcanic eruption. Whether it was Hacker's birthday or not, that peculiar present was certain to make Hacker go off at the deep end.

Whether Hacker would seize the nearest cane and go in search of James Duck; or whether he would grab James and march him off to Quelch was uncertain. What was quite certain was that the fellow whose name was on that box of acid drops would be booked for a hectic time.

But James seemed to have no suspicion. He took the box from Smithy's hand and detached himself from the elm.

"Get on with it, old bean!" gasped the Bounder.

"I will go at once, Smithy!" bleated Duck, and he ambled off to the House, with the box in his hand.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Skinner, as he went.

"Oh scissors!" gurgled Hazeldene.

"Oh, my hat! Is he really fool enough to land acid drops on the Acid Drop, and stick his name on the box?" breathed Snoop.

"Isn't he fool enough for anything?" asked Smithy.



"I say, any more eggs?" asked Bunter anxiously. "No, that's the lot, fathead!" answered Bob Cherry. "But there's only six here!" said the fat Removeite. "Ain't you fellows going to have any, then?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "This sure is the bee's knee!" grinned Fisher T. Fish. "I'll tell a man, this is the opossum's eyelids."

"The ass—" "The fathead—" "Hacker will scalp him—" "Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came a cheery roar. "What's the jolly old joke?"

The Famous Five, sauntering away from Quelch's study window, came on the happy group, and stopped to learn what the merriment was about. James Duck had disappeared into the House.

"It's one on Duck!" chuckled Skinner. "Smithy's pulling the blithering idiot's leg. First of April, you know."

"But what's the joke?" asked Harry Wharton. Wharton knew, if no other Remove fellow did, that the duffer of the Remove was not the duffer he looked.

Five or six voices explained. "Oh crumbs!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Even Duck isn't idiot enough—"

"Even that chump—" said Johnny Bull.

"Isn't he?" chuckled the Bounder. "He's gone to do it! I wonder what Hacker will do to him when he comes in and finds that present?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "It's rather rotten, on a benighted ass like Duck!" said Frank Nugent. "Not much of a joke getting a fellow into a row with a beak."

"Think not?" said Smithy, shrugging his shoulders.

"Hacker will be as mad as a hatter!" said Johnny Bull. "He will take the skin off Duck, or rag Quelch into doing it."

"Do him good!" said the Bounder. "He's come here to learn, hasn't he? Well, he's learning!"

"He'll learn all right when Hacker gets on his trail!" chortled Skinner. "Jevver hear of such an ass?"

"Hardly over!" "Ha, ha, ha!" "Here he comes!" murmured Hazeldene.

James Duck reappeared from the House. He came out without the box. Evidently he had landed it in Hacker's study, as requested.

The crowd of juniors stared at him, with grinning faces.

He came over to the group, his sheepish face as meek and mild as ever, and quite devoid of suspicion.

"Done it?" gurgled Skinner. "Oh, yes! I have left the box on Mr. Hacker's table!" bleated Duck. "He will see it at once when he comes in."

"You didn't forget the label?" Smithy wanted to make quite sure of that.

"Oh, no, I did not forget the label, Smithy!" said Duck. "I was very careful to write a Remove fellow's name on the label, so that Mr. Hacker would know that a nice present of acid drops, that he is so fond of, came from the Remove. You said any Remove fellow's name would do, didn't you?"

"Yes, that's all right." "I am sure Mr. Hacker will be very pleased with you, Smithy—"

"With me?" repeated the Bounder, with a stare.

"Yes, as I wrote your name on the label—"

"Wha-a-t?"

"As the present really came from you, Smithy, and as you said any Remove fellow's name would do, I thought I had better write your name on the label," bleated Duck.

"Mum-mum-my name!" stammered the Bounder. "You blithering idiot, you've written my name on that label! Oh gad!"

"Smithy's name!" shrieked Skinner. "Oh crumbs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Herbert Vernon-Smith stood as if

rooted, staring at the duffer of the Remove. He seemed dumbfounded. The other fellows yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "Your name, Smithy! Hacker will be after you to thank you for that present."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "You—you idiot—you—you chump—you—you—you—" gasped Smithy.

James Duck blinked round innocently.

"Have I done anything wrong?" he asked. "I thought it was best to write Smithy's name, as the present really came from him—"

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

"Oh, ray hat!" roared Bob Cherry. "Who's the April fool, Smithy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Vernon-Smith made a sudden rush out of the crowd. The juniors yelled as he went. Smithy had no time to lose!

If Hacker, when he came in, found that box of acid drops on his study table the label thereon was not going to read "With best wishes from James Duck"—it was going to read "With best wishes from Vernon-Smith"! Nothing would happen to Duck. Much would happen to Smithy! There was only one thought in the Bounder's mind—to get that birthday present away from Hacker's study before the Acid Drop came in from his walk. Smithy sprinted!

He had to get that birthday present away, and he had to get it away quick. He fairly flew. A howl of laughter followed him as he shot away.

Duck blinked after him in mild surprise.

"What is the matter with Smithy?" he asked. "He seems excited about something. Is anything the matter?"

But nobody answered Duck. Smithy, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,625.

going strong, vanished into the House, leaving the Removites rocking with laughter.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Quite Surprising!

BUZZ! Billy Bunter grabbed the receiver at the first tinkle. It was fearfully annoying to Bunter.

Bunter did not want to be spotted in his Form-master's study, where he had no business. Fellows were not allowed in beak's studies unless sent for. Having waited for Prout's elephantine tread to die away, the Owl of the Remove had been about to emerge when there was again a sound of footsteps outside the study.

Had he been aware that they were the footsteps of James Duck, carrying a box of acid drops to the Acid Drop's study, it would have been all right. But Bunter, of course, could not see through an oak door, even with the aid of his big spectacles.

To Bunter they were just footsteps, and he was very careful not to open the door. And then the telephone bell rang. Bunter stopped it fast enough. Quelch was out, but somebody would come to take the call if the bell went on buzzing—Prout very likely, as he was in the offing. That buzz was shut off very quickly.

"Beast!" murmured Bunter.

He alluded to the unknown person who rung up on Mr. Quelch's telephone. Who it was he did not know or care; but whoever it was he was a beast—for was he not disturbing the fat comfort and serenity of W. G. Bunter?

It was no use putting the receiver back; the bell would have rung again,

bringing somebody there before Bunter had time to clear. The only resource was to take the call and shut the beast off.

"Mr. Quelch?" came an inquiring voice—a clear, incisive, but rather pleasant voice—as the fat Owl clapped the receiver to a fat ear. "Is that Mr. Quelch, please?"

The voice sounded rather familiar to Bunter. He was sure that he had heard it before somewhere, though probably a long time ago, for he could not recall whose it was.

But whose it was did not matter so long as Bunter shut the beast off! That was easy enough by answering as Mr. Quelch, saying he was busy with examination papers and cutting off! So Bunter was about to grunt "Yes" into the transmitter when he checked himself.

He did not stop because the statement wasn't true. Considerations like that never stopped Bunter! He stopped because it occurred to him that the man at the other end might know Quelch's voice—in which case, he was not likely to mistake Bunter's for it.

But that was a difficulty easily dealt with. Bunter coughed into the transmitter to begin with. Then he snorted. This was to indicate that Mr. Quelch had a cold, which would account for a difference in the voice. Then he grunted in his huskiest tones:

"Yes; Mr. Quelch speaking. Sorry I've no time to speak now—fearfully busy with examination papers."

And Bunter replaced the receiver.

Having dealt with the caller in that masterly manner, the fat Owl rolled across to the door again. He reached it in time to hear footsteps once more!

This time, had Bunter only known it, it was James Duck returning after landing the box of acid drops in the

Acid Drop's study! Unhappily unaware of that, Bunter remained where he was, breathing wrath.

The footsteps died away. And then—buzz!

It was that beastly telephone again. Bunter sprang at it almost like a tiger and fairly wrenched the receiver off.

"Mr. Quelch," came that clear voice, "I am sorry—truly sorry—to interrupt you if you are busy, as I have no doubt you are. But I feel sure that you will excuse me when I explain—"

Billy Bunter glared at the telephone. He came near telling the man at the other end what he really thought of him! However, he remembered that he was, for the moment, Mr. Quelch, and that Mr. Quelch had a cold, and he wheezed huskily into the mouth-piece:

"Another time—I am very busy now—I have a number of letters to write—I mean, some examination papers. Good-bye!"

He cut off again. Once more he rolled to the door.

There he listened with both fat ears. If only the coast were clear he could dodge from that study and cut before that obstinate, persistent beast rang up again.

Hurried footsteps in the passageway fell on his fat ears. Bunter, of course, could not guess that they were Smithy's as the Bounder hurried to Hacker's study to retrieve that birthday present before it was too late! They were, as before, just footsteps, and they kept him a prisoner in Quelch's study.

Buzzzz!

It was that beast again at the telephone! Of all the beasts that had ever been beastly this was the most persistent beast Bunter had ever heard of.

He breathed hard and he breathed deep as he jumped at the telephone and once more hooked off the receiver.

"Look here—" he hooted.

"I must apologise, Mr. Quelch, but really the matter is urgent," came the clear voice. "I thought you would know my voice, but apparently you are unaware that it is Ferrers Locke speaking."

Bunter jumped.

He knew now why the voice had sounded familiar. He had seen Ferrers Locke, the famous detective of Baker Street, more than once. Ferrers Locke was a relative of Dr. Locke, the head-master of Greyfriars.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

He wondered what on earth the Baker Street detective could have to say to Quelch, the Remove master. He might have rung up Dr. Locke, as a relative, but he had nothing to do with Quelch, so far as Bunter knew.

"I regret very much troubling you, Mr. Quelch," went on Ferrers Locke from the Baker Street end, "but as it is a half-holiday at the school I should very much like to speak to Drake."

Bunter could only stare.

He knew the name of Drake, of course. Jack Drake had been in the Greyfriars Remove, and all the fellows knew him. He had left and joined the staff of Ferrers Locke, in London. Everybody knew that the former Remove boy was being trained as a detective by Ferrers Locke. But—from what Locke said—he seemed to think that Drake was still at Greyfriars, which, to Billy Bunter, was incomprehensible.

"Are you there, Mr. Quelch?" came the voice, as Bunter stared blankly at the telephone instead of replying.

"Yes! Groogh!" added Bunter hastily, remembering that he had to have a cold. "Urgh! Yes! Ooogh!"

"I am sorry to hear that you have a

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cold, Mr. Quelch. So many people now have a spot of influenza—"

"Urrgh! Yes! Horrid! Gorrgh!" gurgled Bunter. "Did you say Drake? He's not here now!"

Really, Bunter expected Ferrers Locke to know that without being told. Still, as he didn't seem to know, Bunter told him.

"Oh! Has he gone out?" asked Locke's voice. It had a disappointed tone. "No doubt, on a half-holiday. I am really sorry to bother you sir; but, as you know, I am a very busy man—I have only just returned to London after a rather long absence, and I should have been glad to speak to Drake. No discovery has been made yet, I presume, or I should have received a report from Drake?"

"Oh, no!" gasped Bunter. He understood this less than ever.

For some reason, far beyond Bunter's comprehension, Ferrers Locke seemed to suppose that Jack Drake was at Greyfriars School, and was expected to make some discovery there!

It was very puzzling, and it was getting rather interesting to a fat Owl who took a deep and abiding interest in the affairs of others.

"I had hardly expected Drake to be occupied so long in such a matter, Mr. Quelch. I shall not, of course, think of recalling him until he has completed his task, though I admit that I should be glad of his assistance in the task I have now in hand—searching for Rupert Crook, the escaped convict of Highmoor."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "Yes! Grooogh!" he added thoughtfully. "Oooogh!"

"I am afraid you have a very bad cold, Mr. Quelch—"

"Wurrgh! Urrgh!"

"So I will not occupy your time further. With your permission, I will ring up again on Monday—after classes, of course. It would hardly be judicious for a boy of your Form to be called away during class to answer the telephone, in the circumstances. Can I speak to Drake on Monday?"

This made Bunter feel almost dizzy.

Not only did Ferrers Locke seem to fancy that Jack Drake was at Greyfriars, but he seemed to fancy that he was still in Mr. Quelch's Form there—a schoolboy as of old. It was really astounding.

"Can you hear me, Mr. Quelch?"

"Oh, Urrgh! Yes!" gasped Bunter.

"I am sorry you have such a bad cold, Mr. Quelch. One word more—apart from Drake having as yet made no discovery—I presume that matters are going on in a satisfactory manner?"

"Oh! Urrgh! Yes! Quite!"

"I had no doubt that he would succeed in disguising his identity, well known as he is to the other Remove boys," said Ferrers Locke. "I think I can guarantee that no boy in your Form, Mr. Quelch, has any idea that he has ever seen James Duck before."

Bunter nearly dropped the receiver. "Duck!" he gasped. "Oh!"

"If you have anything to tell me, Mr. Quelch—"

"Oh, no!"

"Then, with your permission, I will ring up again at, say, five o'clock on Monday."

"Oh, yes—do!" gurgled Bunter.

He did not care a boiled bean when Ferrers Locke rang up again, so long as he rang off now.

"Thank you, Mr. Quelch! Good-bye!"

"G-g-good-bye!" gurgled the amazed Owl.

He replaced the receiver at last. He stood blinking at the telephone. His fat brain was quite dizzy with astonishment. He could not make head or tail of what Ferrers Locke had said.

Still, the beast was done with now, and that was the chief thing. The telephone bell had ceased from troubling, and the weary Owl was at rest. He rolled across to the door again.

He listened. This time there was silence, and he cautiously opened the door.

The passage was clear, and Billy Bunter, at long last, thankfully rolled out of his Form-master's study.

— — —

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

One For His Nob!

"THAT rascal—" said Mr. Quelch.

"That rogue!" said Mr. Hacker.

Quelch, master of the Remove, and Hacker, master of the Shell, were not always in agreement. They were not often in agreement. But on the present occasion it was a case of two souls with but a single thought; two hearts that beat as one. They were in complete agreement that Randolph

PLEASE NOTE!

Owing to the Easter Holidays, the next issue of the **MAGNET** will be on sale **THURSDAY, April 6th.**

Crocker, old boy of Greyfriars School, was a rogue and a rascal!

The two masters were returning from their walk. They were passing the corner of Friardale Lane, where lay the old Abbot's Spinney. And they paused, to bestow disavouring stares on a sign on the spinney fence, which announced, to all whom it might concern, that Randolph Crocker, formerly of Greyfriars School, was prepared to mend boots and shoes with promptness and dispatch.

That sign had been up for weeks—ever since that disreputable old boy had hired the hut on the spinney from the estate agent at Courtfield, and set up there—not assuredly to mend boots and shoes, but to annoy and persecute the headmaster who had expelled him twenty years ago.

From the gate ran a muddy path to the wooden hut, built on the site of the ancient abbot's cell that had once stood in the spinney. In the open doorway of that hut sat a man at a bench.

Few would have guessed him to be an old boy of Greyfriars on his looks.

His hard face was adorned by a large, bushy, straggling, untrimmed moustache, which almost hid his mouth. His chin was blue from lack of shaving. He was dressed in a dingy suit of overalls, with an old hat on his head.

He had a boot in his hand, and another lay on the bench at his elbow. But he was not at work. Nobody had ever seen Randolph Crocker at work. But when he was not at the

Cross Keys in Friardale, or at the Three Fishers up the river, or at the dogs or the races, Crocker was generally to be seen sitting at that bench, making a show of working at his pretended trade. Villagers sometimes gathered to stare at him.

For many miles round, the chief topic of local gossip was that old boy of Greyfriars, who had set up as a cobbler in sight of the gates of his old school.

Everybody round about knew that he had been expelled from Greyfriars many years ago. All the school knew that he had been sacked for pinching.

But Crocker did not seem to mind.

He seemed to like to make himself as conspicuous as possible, and to want all the countryside to know that Sportsman Crocker, once of Greyfriars School, was there.

He glanced out as the two masters paused at the gate, and grinned. He got up from the bench, and waved the boot at them.

"Any boots and shoes to mend?" he called out.

Mr. Quelch glanced at him, but did not deign to reply.

"Oh!" ejaculated Mr. Hacker. "There is the—the ruffian! Perhaps we had better walk on, Quelch."

Hacker did not like the Sportsman's looks.

Crocker stepped out of the doorway of the hut. It was more than likely that he was bored, and ready for a row to relieve the monotony. He was well known to be always ripe for a shindy.

"Come, Quelch!" murmured Hacker.

Hacker had a vivid and unpleasant recollection of an occasion when he had injudiciously stepped inside the spinney, and Crocker had dropped him over the gate like a bundle of bones. The Acid Drop wanted to walk on—quickly!

Quelch was made of sterner stuff.

The mere fact that Crocker was coming down the path with a threatening leer on his stubbly face made Quelch quite determined not to stir a step until he chose so to do.

Quelch, like Hacker, had an unpleasant reminiscence of that old boy. Crocker had once pulled Quelch's majestic nose.

That awful action had taken Quelch so utterly by surprise at the time that Crocker had got away with it, and gone off, laughing.

It was a bitter memory to Quelch.

Ever since that occasion Mr. Quelch had carried a stout stick under his arm when he took his walks aboard. Crocker was not likely to pull that majestic nose again with impunity.

"Come, come, Quelch!" murmured Hacker uneasily. "That—that detestable ruffian is ripe for a disturbance. You can see as much—"

Henry Samuel Quelch stood like a rock. The stick under his arm was ready to slip into his hand. Quelch's face was calm, but it was grim.

"Every subject of King George the Sixth, Hacker, has a right to use this public highway," he said. "I shall certainly not be deterred from exercising my right by any low, lawless ruffian!"

"Oh, no! Certainly not! But—"

"I shall remain here," said Quelch, "precisely so long as I desire to remain here, Hacker. You may please yourself."

Hacker proceeded to please himself. It pleased Hacker to walk on to the school gates only a short distance away.

In that gateway a number of fellows had collected, the famous five among them. They were looking across, with interest, at the little scene at the corner of Friardale Lane.

"That sweep Crocker looks like kicking up another shindy," remarked Bob Cherry.

"Quelch is asking for it!" grinned the Bounder.

Mr. Hacker passed the juniors and went in. Mr. Quelch remained standing exactly where he was. Randolph Crocker came slouching down the path from the hut, reached the gate in the spinney fence, and stepped out into the lane.

"Waiting for me, Quelch?" he grinned.

Henry Samuel Quelch gave him a look of disdain and scorn that ought really to have withered Sportsman Crocker. But it did not produce any withering effect on the impudent old boy. He grinned, and came nearer to Quelch, who stood like a ramrod.

The juniors, watching breathlessly, guessed his intention. He had pulled Quelch's majestic boko once. He was going to pull it again. If Quelch guessed, it did not seem to perturb him. He stood immovable.

The Sportsman made a sudden grab.

"Got him!" gasped Harry Wharton.

But Crocker had not got him. As Crocker grabbed, Mr. Quelch made a sudden backward step.

At the same instant his hand shot up, with the stout stick in it. That stick whipped through the air like lightning.

Crash!

Crunch!

"Yoo-hoop!" came a wild yell from Sportsman Crocker.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a roar from the school gates.

"Well hit, Henry!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Cosh!" gasped the Bounder.

"One for his nob!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

That bang had landed full and fair on Crocker's old bowler hat.

Quelch put a lot of beef into it. And Quelch, though bony, packed quite a lot of muscle, as fellows who had wriggled under his cane could testify. That hat was smashed down over Crocker's ears. It was badly damaged—and to judge by the Sportsman's frantic yell, the head inside was rather damaged, too.

The Sportsman staggered back two or three paces, yelling, and sat down in the gateway of the spinney. He sat and yelled, and grabbed at the squashed hat on his head!

He yelled and grabbed, and grabbed and yelled, while the Greyfriars fellows roared.

Mr. Quelch tucked the stick under his arm and walked on towards the school.

He walked neither faster nor slower than was his wont. His manner was calm. Probably his ears were on the alert, however, for a sound of pursuing steps behind him—and he was ready to turn and handle that stout stick again, if needed!

But there were no pursuing steps behind Quelch.

Sportsman Crocker, at the gate of the spinney, staggered to his feet. He stood with his battered hat in one hand, rubbing his head with the other.

He did not follow Quelch! Ripe as he was for a shindy, that terrific cosh on the crumpet seemed all the Sportsman wanted, and a little over. Clearly

he did not want the mixture as before!

He stood and stared, and glared, and uttered a series of remarks, which fortunately did not reach the schoolboys at the school gates. They were not suitable words for young ears!

"Hurrah!" roared Bob Cherry. "That's the stuff to give 'em! Hurrah!"

"Cherry!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"You should not shout at the school gates, Cherry! Take one hundred lines for shouting at the school gates!" said Mr. Quelch severely.

"Oh!" gasped Bob. "Yes, sir!"

Mr. Quelch walked in. There was a faint, frosty smile on his severe face. That tweak of his majestic nose, weeks ago, had been paid for—with interest. Henceforth, that majestic boko was safe from a clutching hand!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Suspected Man!

"LOOK here, Drake——"

"Shut up, ass!"

"Well, look here——" said Harry Wharton.

It was after third school, on Monday morning. Harry Wharton had come up to Study No. 1 in the Remove for an old footer to punt about before dinner.

But he forgot the footer as he stepped into the study.

James Duck, the new fellow in the Remove, was there. It was Duck's study, as well as Wharton's and Nugent's, so there was nothing surprising in finding him there. But his occupation was a little surprising.

He was leaning out of the study window, his elbows resting on the sill, a pair of field-glasses clamped to his eyes. The glasses were directed to some spot outside the wall of Greyfriars School.

Wharton stared at him for a moment, and then stepped to the window.

Duck's field-glasses were fixed on the hiker's hut, on the spinney; it was the quarters of Randolph Crocker that he was watching.

Greyfriars fellows were, of course, considerably interested in that old boy—he was a constant topic in the school, as well as up and down the countryside. But for any fellow to watch his place from a high window, with a pair of field-glasses, was rather singular. But in Harry Wharton's mind, was a suspicion that accounted for that singular fact.

James Duck turned quickly from the window, and snapped the glasses shut, as the captain of the Remove spoke to him. He was relieved when he saw that it was Wharton who had come into the study. Wharton already knew the new boy's secret, and was keeping it.

"If you call me Drake again, I'll jolly well punch your head!" grunted James Duck. "Do you want it all over the school that there's a detective at Greyfriars hunting for the prowler?"

"I've said nothing," said Harry, "though it's beastly keeping a secret from my friends——"

"You shouldn't have discovered it, then."

"I couldn't help that, fathead! But look here, Drake—I mean, Duck——"

"There you go again!" grunted Jack Drake. He kicked the study door shut. "If you blurted that out before Bunter——"

"That's all right; I'm careful," said Harry. "It's more than a fortnight

since I bowled you out and nobody knows yet."

Harry Wharton was looking curiously at the new junior who was called James Duck at Greyfriars. Often and often, he had scanned the sheepish face, with its bushy eyebrows and steel-rimmed glasses, since he had, by accident, discovered that James Duck was Jack Drake, formerly of the Greyfriars Remove, now assistant to Ferrers Locke, the famous detective.

But he never found even a fleeting resemblance to Jack Drake in Duck's visage. None of his friends had the slightest suspicion that that new fellow had ever been seen at the school before James Duck came.

"I saw what you were watching with those glasses!" said Harry.

"Did you?" grunted Drake.

"You were watching Crocker's hut, on the spinney."

"Don't tell all Greyfriars."

"I'm not going to," said Harry, "but——"

"But what?"

"I think I'd better speak out!" said the captain of the Remove slowly.

"You're here for the prowler—the Greyfriars prowler. You've been here weeks, and you haven't put salt on his tail yet. I understand why now—— Up to a few days ago, everybody supposed that the prowler who pilfered in the studies was a Greyfriars man who had gone to the bad——"

"Not everybody!" grunted Drake.

"Not you?" asked Harry.

"No!"

"Well, all the school supposed so—— till Bunter saw him one night—and gave his description. He was not a Greyfriars fellow at all, but a man; and though he had a rag over his face, and Bunter couldn't see what he was like in features, he saw enough to prove that he did not belong to the school. There's nobody here with a big, thick, ragged moustache all over his mouth."

Wharton paused.

What Bunter had seen had come as a great surprise to all Greyfriars. Nobody had ever seen the mysterious prowler, who had prowled the school for weeks and weeks, till the fat Owl of the Remove had that glimpse of him, and it was known that the mystery man did not belong to the school.

That, to most fellows, made the mystery of the prowler deeper than ever; for, outsider as he was now known to be, the prowler had the run of the school, coming and going as he chose, and never leaving a trace behind him of entrance or exit.

"Go on!" said the schoolboy detective, with a sharp glance at Wharton. "What have you got in your mind?"

"We know now that the rotter who's prowled for weeks and pinched from the studies comes from outside Greyfriars, though how he gets in and out beats me hollow!" said Harry. "And now we know that—I rather think that I know something else, Drake."

"Well?"

"You've been found breaking bounds at the spinney—we've hooked you off the place once or twice," said Harry. "Thinking you were a silly, simple ass, falling into the hands of a rotter like Crocker, we——"

"Fathead!"

"Well, you've kept it up pretty well that you're a blithering idiot, in the Remove," said Harry. "I know why now, of course—it was part of your game to keep it dark that we had a detective here. But—that isn't all—a few days ago, when Crocker was out,



"By gum!" ejaculated Jack Drake, as the flag-stone in front of him sank from his sight. He flashed the light into the black darkness of the orifice, and there, revealed to his eyes, was the opening of an underground passage.

we found you rooting in his place——"

"Well?" grunted Drake.

"It puzzled us how you got in—as he always locks up the hut when he leaves it. But I suppose a detective knows how to handle a lock."

"I shouldn't wonder!" said Drake, with a grin.

"Well, never mind that," said Harry. "Look here, Drake! Now that we all know that the prowler is a man outside Greyfriars, it seems to me that it explains your interest in Crocker and his place."

Drake breathed rather quickly.

"Think so?" he asked.

"That man is a bad egg!" said Harry. "He was expelled from Greyfriars twenty years ago for pinching. He's set himself up close to the school to worry the headmaster for having sacked him. He's a malicious brute, I know; but it's jolly queer that even a malicious brute should have turned up, after so many years, to pay off an old grudge. Perhaps he had another object in setting up there—now it's come out that the Greyfriars prowler is a man outside the school."

"Perhaps!" murmured Drake.

"Besides, what does he live on?" went on Wharton. "He can't have means of his own, or he wouldn't be camping in a hiker's hut and living in such a way. He spends money at the races and the pubs, but he jolly well doesn't earn any as a cobbler—that's all spoof and humbug. But he gets money from somewhere."

"Quite!" agreed Blake.

"And he's got a big thick, ragged moustache that almost hides his mouth," added Wharton. "All that Bunter saw of the prowler that night would fit him."

"So you've thought of that?"

"Well, I shouldn't have, if I hadn't known that you were a detective, and taking a special interest in the man!"

said Harry. "But, since it's come out that the prowler is an outsider, and as I know you are here to trail down the prowler, I could hardly help putting two and two together."

Jack Drake nodded slowly.

"I've been wondering whether it would dawn on you," he said.

"Well, it has!" said Harry.

"I see that it has!"

"Then Crocker's your man?" asked the captain of the Remove.

"For the love of Mike, not a word about it!" breathed Drake. "Yes—you've got it right; no good beating about the bush now; he's the man. He was a pincher twenty years ago at Greyfriars—and he's a pincher now—he pays his way at that hut on what he pilfers from the studies in the school. I've got that much all cut and dried."

"Then why don't you get him?" asked Harry bluntly.

"It's not so easy as all that!" grunted Drake. "I've got to search his place, and find what I want—and, so far, I've been beaten to it."

"Blessed if I know what you expect to find there, then," said Harry. "But I suppose you've got something in view."

"It's barely possible!" assented Drake, with a grin.

"And you're sure he's the man?" asked Harry. "I mean, it's not only a suspicion? I could see that you suspected him, but——"

"He's the man!" grunted Drake. Then he laughed. "You see, he was glad to get hold of a silly ass, who was willing to back losers. He gave me a pound change from a fiver to put four pounds on a loser for me. That pound note had the same number as one that had been pinched from Quelch's study."

"Oh!" exclaimed Harry. "I—I see. But couldn't you nail him on that—a stolen note?"

"No! He might have said that he'd

got it in change—might have said that he'd got it from a Greyfriars man—it's pretty well suspected that he's had dealings with some of the sporting men here; and I know for a fact that he has, the rascal! It was proof to me—but not enough to go on. I've got to nail him in the act!"

"When he's prowling here, do you mean?"

"That's it!"

"But how the dickens will searching his hut help you there?" asked Harry.

"Oh, it might!" said Drake vaguely. "Look here, Wharton, you know more than I wanted any fellow here to know, till the case ended; but I can trust you not to jaw. What did you come up to the study for?"

"That footer."

"Take it and cut!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"All right!" He picked up the football, and went to the door, and Jack Drake opened the field-glasses again, to fix them on the hut on the spinney.

That he was watching to see whether Crocker left the hut, Wharton knew. If he did, no doubt the schoolboy detective was going to cut tiffin, and pay the hut a visit in the Sportsman's absence.

But what he hoped, or expected, to discover there, was quite a mystery to the captain of the Remove.

He went down with the footer and left Drake to it.

Once more the schoolboy detective leaned out of the study window, his elbows resting on the sill, the field-glasses clamped to his eyes.

But Drake, it seemed, had no luck after his patient watching. He did not cut tiffin; and he turned up with the Remove that afternoon in class. Ferrers Locke's assistant was still waiting for his chance.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Ducks And Drakes!

"BUNTER!"
"Oh!"

Bunter jumped at the sharp voice over his fat head.

Bunter, at the moment, was leaning—Bunter always leaned when there was any visible means of support at hand—on a buttress near the Remove master's study window.

The Owl of the Remove had a special reason for selecting that particular buttress upon which to lean his podgy back.

Bunter was chewing toffee. That toffee was Bunter's—now! A short time ago it had been Herbert Vernon-Smith's.

Smithy having gone to the school shop for supplies for tea with Redwing, Bunter had cast a glance into the vacant study and spotted toffee there.

Bunter hoped that Smithy would not miss that toffee. He hoped that, if Smithy did miss it, he would not guess that a fat Owl had had it.

But it was, as Bunter often said, simply sickening the way fellows suspected him if tuck happened to be missing.

So Bunter, for strategic reasons, selected that buttress close by his Form-master's study window to lean on while he disposed of the toffee. Quelch was in his study.

The proximity of his Form-master did not, as a rule, add to Bunter's comfort. But on this occasion it spelled safety. If Smithy did miss that toffee, and if he did suspect Bunter, and if he looked for Bunter to inquire after the toffee, which was just like the beast, he could not boot Bunter right under Quelch's window! It was a haven of refuge to the fat Owl, until the toffee had gone the way of all toffee.

But, as Mr. Quelch's sharp voice rapped from the window, Bunter jumped, and very nearly swallowed a chunk of the toffee that had been Smithy's.

He spun round and blinked up at the face looking from the window.

"Oh! Yes, sir! Groooogh!" gasped Bunter. "I'm not eating toffee, sir!"

"What?"

"I mean, it ain't Smithy's, sir!"

"Vernon-Smith's?"

"Yes, sir! I mean no, sir! I mean to say, Smithy gave it to me because—because he doesn't like toffee, sir! I—"

"Do you know where Duck is, Bunter?"

"Duck!" stammered Bunter.

A guilty conscience needs no accuser. Bunter had fancied that Quelch was interested in that toffee!

Now he realised that Quelch wasn't. It was for some other reason that Quelch had looked out of the window and called to him. It was, in fact, because he was the nearest fellow at hand.

"Find Duck at once, Bunter—"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"Tell him to come to my study at once to take a telephone call!"

"A-a-tut-tut-telephone call!" gasped Bunter. "Oh crumbs!"

Five o'clock had just chimed from the clock-tower. At five o'clock, on Monday, as Bunter knew, Ferrers Locke was to ring up, for the extraordinary purpose of speaking to a fellow who had left Greyfriars ever so long ago.

Bunter had puzzled over that mysterious matter several times without being able to make head or tail of it.

That man Locke seemed to think that Jack Drake was still at Greyfriars, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1.625.

though he was, of all men, the man who ought to have known best that Jack Drake wasn't! He seemed to be mixing him up, somehow, with the new fellow Duck, which was quite perplexing to Bunter.

In name, there was a certain similarity between Drake and Duck! There was no other similarity that Bunter knew of.

Now, it was clear, that telephone-call had come! Ferrers Locke was on the phone, asking for Drake! And Quelch was sending for Duck!

"Did—did—did you say D-dud-duck, sir?" stammered Bunter.

Mr. Quelch stared down at the fat junior. He saw no reason whatever for the goggling surprise in Bunter's fat face.

"I did!" he rapped. "Go and find Duck at once, Bunter, and tell him to come to my study to take a telephone call!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter.

He rolled away, slipping the remnant of Smithy's toffee into his pocket, out of sight.

He rolled in amazement.

In some extraordinary way, Ferrers Locke seemed to be mixing up Drake with Duck! Now Quelch seemed to be doing the same.

Quelch knew nothing of Bunter's surreptitious knowledge of the matter. But Bunter knew what he knew, so to speak.

He proceeded to look for James Duck.

He found that sheepish youth under the elms.

James Duck turned his steel-rimmed glasses on Bunter's fat face curiously as he rolled up. He could see that the fat Owl was excited about something.

"I say, Duck, you're wanted!" gasped Bunter. "I say, do you know a man named Ferrers Locke?"

Jack Drake had himself, as a rule, quite under control; but at that startling and unexpected question from the Owl of the Remove, he fairly bounded.

"What?" he gasped.

"He's a detective," explained Bunter, blinking at Duck. "A relation of the Head, you know. Ever heard of him?"

"I—I think I've heard the name!" stammered Drake. "What on earth are you driving at, you fat ass?"

"Oh, really, Duck—"

"What do you mean, you howling chump?" hissed Drake.

"I don't see what you want to call a fellow names for, Duck. I'm blessed if I can make this out!" said Bunter.

"Make what out, idiot?"

"Well, I mean to say, you're Duck, not Drake, aren't you?" said Bunter.

Drake jumped again.

"What?" he gasped.

"It beats me," said Bunter. "There was a chap named Drake here once. He was in the Remove. That was before you came, you know. But I dare say you've heard the fellows speak of him. He was in Oggy's study—"

"You burbling blitherer, what do you know about him, or about Ferrers Locke?" hissed Drake. His first natural thought was that Harry Wharton had been indiscreet and that Bunter had heard some hint of what Wharton knew.

"That chap Drake is with Ferrers Locke—a kid detective, you see!" explained Bunter. "So far as I know, he hasn't come back to the school. But that man Locke seems to think that he's here—and the funny thing is that old Quelch sends for you, when Locke wants to speak to Drake—"

"Whaa-a-t?"

"He's on the phone now," said

Bunter. "Quelch told me to send you to his study to take the call."

"Oh!" gasped Drake.

"Funny, ain't it?" said the puzzled Owl. "Mind, don't you mention to Quelch that I know it's Ferrers Locke on the phone. Quelch doesn't know that I know—and I—I'd rather he didn't. But ain't it funny for Quelch to send for you, Duck, when Locke wants Drake? Can you make it out?"

Jack Drake had no difficulty in making it out!

As Ferrers Locke was waiting on the telephone he had no time to waste on Bunter. He delayed only to grab the fat junior by the collar and bang his head against the nearest elm. That was Bunter's reward for knowing too much—in whatever way he had come by his knowledge.

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter, in indignation and anguish. "Why, you beast—leggo—I say, Duck— Whooop!"

Bang!

"Yaroooop!"

Jack Drake cut off to the House at a run, leaving Billy Bunter rubbing a fat head with two fat hands, and glaring after him with a glare that almost cracked his spectacles.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Spotted!

"HE, he, he!"

Thus Bunter.

Bunter cachinnated.

He was amused.

He knew!

Billy Bunter's fat brain moved in mysterious ways, its wonders to perform. Any other fellow, probably, would have guessed how the matter stood long ago. Really, Ferrers Locke's remarks over the wires had left little doubt on the subject to an intellect less obtuse than Bunter's.

Bunter knew now, anyhow! His fat intellect worked slowly, it worked laboriously; but it did work! When a thing was absolutely obvious Billy Bunter could see it!

Even Bunter could realise that Ferrers Locke was not likely to fancy that his assistant was at Greyfriars School, if his assistant wasn't. And he had seemed to be mixing up Drake with Duck! Now Duck was sent for, when Drake was asked for! And he had banged Bunter's head for nothing—or, rather, because Bunter had found him out!

"Duck—Drake!" Bunter chuckled. "Oh crikey! Making out he was a new fellow, and sticking specs on! He, he, he! I wonder what he's here for? He's here, all right—Locke said so. Nobody knows he's here, that's a cert! Now they've sent for Duck to take Drake's call! He, he, he!"

Bunter cachinnated, with great glee. He had spotted a secret!

That that secret had been staring him in the face ever since he had taken that call on Saturday he did not realise. He rather flattered himself on his astuteness in having spotted it.

"He, he, he! I've found him out!" chortled Bunter. "He, he, he! Ducks and drakes—he, he, he! That's why he had the photograph of that convict in his writing-case, that I saw by accident! Of course, he would, being a detective! I wonder what he's up to here? Locke said he was after that convict, Rupert Crook. I wonder if Drake's here after him? By gum, that's why he goes out on half-holidays all by himself, making out he's a school-boy here while he's hunting for that convict! He, he, he!"

Bunter chortled! He felt more astute than ever in having guessed this one!

"Locke said something about his not having made a discovery yet! Ho, ho, he! That's why he's here! And I jolly well know!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the jolly old joke, old fat man?" asked Bob Cherry.

Bob, on his way to the tuckshop for supplies for tea, spotted the fat Owl, bubbling with glee, and stopped to inquire the cause.

Billy Bunter gave him a grin. "I say, old chap, you never knew!" he exclaimed.

"Which and what?" asked Bob.

"That chap, Duck— Ho, he, he!"

"Duck! What about that duffer?" asked Bob. "Smithy been sending him with any more birthday presents to the Acid Drop?"

"He, he, he! He ain't such a fool as he looks!" grinned Bunter. "He's taken all you fellows in! He can't take me in! I'm wide!"

"You are!" agreed Bob. "Wider than most, anyhow. About two yards, isn't it?"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I say, I've found him out."

"He hasn't gone out! He's just passed me going into the House!"

"I don't mean that. I mean I've found him out—spotted him!" said Bunter triumphantly. "I say, you'd never guess! That chap Duck ain't Duck at all!"

"Wha-a-t?"

"Surprises you, eh?" asked Bunter, grinning.

There was no doubt that Bob Cherry was surprised. He stared at Bunter blankly, as if wondering whether the fat Owl had gone off his rocker.

"Duck ain't Duck?" he repeated.

"No fear! He ain't himself at all," explained Bunter. "He's somebody else all the time!"

"What?" stuttered Bob.

"Fancy that!" gurgled Bunter.

"I can't quite fancy it. Have you gone potty, or are you trying to pull my leg, or what?" howled Bob.

"I mean to say, you thought he was him, like everybody else, but he wasn't," said Bunter. "I jolly well know that he ain't him at all! He's quite another chap—not himself, at all!"

"Oh crikey!"

"You'd never have guessed that!" said Bunter.

"No," gasped Bob. "I don't think I should ever have guessed that one! A chap is generally himself, and hardly ever anybody else! Hadn't you better see a doctor?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Does this run in your family, Bunter?"

"Look here, I tell you I've found him out!" roared Bunter. "It was all through you fellows sending me to Quelch's study on the First of April—that's how I came to take the call! Ducks and drakes! He, he, he! I wonder I didn't think of it that minute, now I come to think of it. But when Quelch sent for Duck, that made it plain enough, didn't it? He, he, he!"

Bob, staring blankly at the giggling fat Owl, really began to wonder whether Bunter's brain—such as it was—was failing him.

"He banged my head," said Bunter, rubbing the same. "That was because he was shirty at me finding him out. I see that now. But I say, Cherry, fancy a fellow that we've known for weeks turning out to be another fellow, not the fellow we know at all, you know, but quite another chap, not at all like him! Fancy that!"

"You're not mad?" asked Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Sure you're not mad?"

"You cheeky beast—"

"Well, if you're not mad you're trying to pull my leg!" said Bob. "I can't quite see the joke, but I'll tell you what—sit down and think out a better one!"

Bump!

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter, as he sat.

Bob Cherry, grinning, went on to the tuckshop, leaving Bunter sitting and roaring.

Bunter sat and roared till Bob came along again, with a parcel under his arm. At the sight of that parcel Bunter realised that he could forgive him everything, and he rolled into the House after Bob, with his eyes—and his spectacles—on that parcel.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Startling Revelation!

BOB CHERRY tramped into Study No. 1 and slammed the parcel down on the table.

Four juniors were already there. Duck, who belonged to that study, had not come up, being occupied elsewhere. There was a sound of crackling as the parcel landed on the table.

"What the dickens—" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Oh, my hat! I forgot there were eggs in it—"

"Oh, you ass!"

"O.K.! Scrambled eggs are all right!" said Bob cheerily. "We'll scramble 'em! What's the odds so long as you're 'appy?"

Bob proceeded to unpack the parcel—discovering some of the eggs it contained in an exceedingly scrambled condition.

"I say, you fellows—" A fat squeak came in at the door.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Roll in and scramble these eggs, Bunter! Anybody seen the frying-pan?"

"On the bookshelf," answered Nugent.

"Franky, old man, it's frightfully untidy to keep a frying-pan among the books—"

"You left it there yesterday."

"Oh, so I did! Well, it's a handy place for a frying-pan. Here you are, Bunter. Fry those eggs; and if at first you don't succeed, fry, fry, fry again!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"And don't scoff those tarts to begin with—"

"I was only looking at them—"

"Look at them with your specs, then, not with your paws! Get going!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, old fat man! Fry!" roared Bob.

"But, I say—about Duck; you fellows will be fearfully interested to hear about Duck—"

"What about Duck?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Shut up, Bunter, and fry! Nothing about Duck, Johnny; only Bunter wandering in his mind. Bit surprising that he's got one to wander in, isn't it?"

Billy Bunter commenced operations with the frying-pan and the eggs, but he was too full of startling news to keep it bottled up, and his voice ran on, to an accompaniment of sizzling.

"I ain't, you fellows. It's true about Duck. He ain't Duck at all, but another fellow altogether. Quite a different chap entirely. What do you think of that?"

"What?" roared Johnny Bull.

"Which!" ejaculated Nugent.

"My esteemed and idiotic Bunter, is the pottiffulness terrific?" asked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Harry Wharton did not speak. He gave a sudden start and stared at the Owl of the Remove. Bunter's amazing remarks had a meaning for him that they had not for the other fellows.

"I mean it!" said Bunter, blinking round with a reddened fat face from the fire. "I've spotted him! I've got him tabbed! Not so jolly easy to take me in as it is you fellows! Fancy a fellow being a different fellow altogether, you fellows! Funny thing is that he doesn't look like himself at all—"

"He doesn't look like himself!" repeated Johnny Bull blankly.

"Not a bit?" said Bunter. "I say, any more eggs?"

"That's the lot, fathead!"

"But there's only six here!" said Bunter. "Ain't you fellows going to have any?"

"Oh crikey!"

"Well, I can do with these if you fellows don't care for eggs. But, I say, I never knew Duck wasn't Duck till I spotted him. If he'd looked like himself, you know, I should have known him at once; I'm pretty sharp. But he looks quite different. Those specs, you know—"

"Those specs!" repeated Harry.

"Yes—Drake never had specs!"

"Drake!" gasped the captain of the Remove.

"Yes. Don't you remember that chap Drake who used to be here? He went away because his people were hard up, I believe, and he had to do something— Ho, he, he! Ferrers Locke took him up. You've heard of Ferrers Locke; he's a relation of the old Beak's—"

"What is that blitherer blithering about?" asked Johnny Bull, staring at Bunter in great astonishment.

"Besides, we've seen him once this term," went on Bunter. "Don't you fellows remember he came and played football one day? I remember I waited for him at the gate when I heard he was coming, and never saw him come in— He, he, he! I know why now. I waited to see him go, too, and never saw him go. He, he, he! Don't I know why now? You see, he never came—"

"He never came—" gasped Bob Cherry.

"No fear! He, he, he!"

"You silly ass, he played football for—"

"He, he, he! I know he did! But he never came, and he never went!" chuckled Bunter. "He was here all the time! He, he, he! Pulling our leg all round! I say, he's on the telephone now, talking to Ferrers Locke in London."

"Who is?" shrieked Bob.

"Eh? Drake, of course!"

"Drake isn't paying us another visit, is he?" asked Nugent. "I've heard nothing about it."

"He, he, he! He's in this study!" gurgled Bunter. "I say, these eggs are done. I'll begin on them—"

"Jack Drake's in this study!" yelled Bob.

"Yes, rather!"

"You potty porpoise, there's nobody in the study but ourselves—"

"I don't mean he's in this study! I mean he's in this study."

"Wh-at?"

"I mean to say he belongs to this study! You never knew— He, he, he! You see, he's Duck!"

"Duck!" roared four fellows.

"Yes! Ducks and drakes— He, he, he! I say, have you made the toast? Oh, good! Six will do for me. Don't you fellows want toast?"

"Is that fat ass quite potty?" gasped Johnny Bull. "What does he mean by saying that Drake's Duck?"

"He jolly well is!" grinned Bunter. "He's made himself look different, but he can't take me in—not now I know, you know! I fancy he put specs. on to make himself look different—not merely to improve his looks—"

"Eh?"

"Of course, a fellow looks a bit more distinguished in specs—you've noticed that. I've often thought that it's the specs, to some extent, that give me my distinguished appearance—"

"Oh crumbs!"

"But I think very likely he shoved them on just to look different," said Bunter sagely. "Besides, they don't make him look distinguished like they do me. There's a manner of wearing things, you know. Same with clothes. I can wear clothes; you can't, Cherry! If you paid twice as much for your clobber as I do you'd never look like me."

"Oh scissors! I hope not—"

"That's mere jealousy!" said Bunter. "You have to have a figure. Have you got a figure like mine?"

"Not half!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then his eyebrows—they're all bushy," went on Bunter. "He fixes that up, of course; Drake never had bushy eyebrows. And his hair, too—he wears that a bit long, like Hoskins of the Shell. Drake always had a close crop. You fellows would never have spotted him in a month of Sundays. I've got him down all right. His complexion seems different, too; I don't know how he's worked that, but he has. I say, you fellows, what are you going to have for tea? I can do with the toast and eggs, but I don't see what you fellows are going to have. Anything in the cupboard?"

There was a step at the door, and James Duck came into the study. Evidently he was through with his talk on the telephone. There was a rather worried expression on his face, doubtless caused by what Bunter had said to him when he brought Quelch's message.

"Bunter here?" he asked. "Oh, here you are, you bloated blitherer!"

"He, he, he!"

The Famous Five all looked at Duck. Harry Wharton had said nothing, and his chums did not guess that he could have confirmed Bunter's startling revelation. Not that they believed that revelation; they only wondered what had put such a fantastic idea into the fat Owl's fat head.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Come in, Ducky! Come in and hear Bunter's latest!" said Bob Cherry. "What do you think? He's discovered that you're not a duck, but a drake—"

"What?"

"So he jolly well is," hooted Bunter, "and I'm jolly well going to tell all the fellows and—"

Slam!

James Duck closed the study door hurriedly.

Then he stood, breathing hard, facing the staring fellows in the study. And the Co., as they looked at him and looked at Bunter and looked at him again, began to realise the truth. Only too clearly Duck did not want anyone outside the study to hear Bunter's latest.

"Wharton!" His eyes gleamed at

the captain of the Remove. "You dummy!"

"Don't be a silly ass!" snapped Wharton. "Do you think I've said anything to the fat fool?"

"He must have heard—"

"Nothing from me."

"Then how does he know?"

"Ask me another!"

"How does he know?" repeated Bob Cherry. He gasped. "Mean to say— Oh crikey! Is it true?"

He did not need an answer to that question. He stared round at Harry Wharton.

"You knew?" he asked.

"Yes. I've known for two or three weeks."

"Oh crikey!"

And the juniors stared blankly at the schoolboy detective in amazed silence, broken by a fat cachinnation from Bunter.

"He, he, he!"

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Keep It Dark!

JACK DRAKE breathed hard.

For once the cool and self-possessed schoolboy detective was deeply perturbed and irritated.

One fellow had known his secret—a fellow he could trust. Now six fellows knew it—five of whom, he had no doubt, he could trust, when the matter was explained, but one of whom could only be trusted to proclaim his amazing discovery from the housetops!

Anything that Billy Bunter knew was fairly certain to be known within a short time by every fellow who was willing to waste a few minutes listening to the fat Owl's chinwag. It was utterly disconcerting to the investigator whose work at Greyfriars was not yet done.

Bob Cherry spoke at last. His face was curious, but it was a little grim in expression.

"If it's true, what does this trickery mean? You came here as Duck, a new fellow, taking everybody in. Is it some sort of a jape, or what?"

"Ass!" answered Duck.

"Does Quelch know?" asked Nugent.

"Fathead!"

"If he doesn't he's going to!" said Johnny Bull grimly. "I don't know what this spoofing means, but—"

"Idiot!"

"I say, you fellows, I fancy Quelch knows," said Bunter—"I mean to say, he sent for Duck when Drake was wanted on the phone. That's how I knew."

Drake's eyes turned on the captain of the Remove again. But he realised already that Wharton was not to blame. The Peeping Tom of Greyfriars had his own ways of acquiring information.

"Sorry, Wharton!" he said quietly. "I know you'd have said nothing, of course. But how that prying porker nosed it out beats me."

"Oh, really, Duck—I mean, Drake, I— He, he, he!"

"If you call me Drake, Bunter," said the schoolboy detective in a low, quiet tone, "I'll whop you till you nearly burst!"

"Beast! Of course, I'm not going to say anything if you want me to keep it dark! I never was the man to give away a pal! I might mention it to a few friends in confidence—"

"You'll get badly damaged if you do!" said Jack Drake. "I'd better explain to you fellows now you know. I'm here on professional business. Wharton spotted me by accident, and had to promise to keep it dark. Quelch

knows, of course, and the Head; and Larry Bascelles has been told. But nobody else knows, or must know."

"Might alarm that convict if it got out!" grinned Bunter.

Drake stared at him.

"That what?" he exclaimed.

"Think I don't know?" chuckled the fat Owl. "I jolly well know why you're here pretending to be a schoolboy again, Duck—Drake! You're after that convict Crook, same as Ferrers Locke is."

Drake stared and then smiled faintly.

Bunter knew too much already. The less he knew the better. Evidently it had not occurred to his fat mind that Drake was at Greyfriars to track down the prowler, though why he fancied that Drake was there on account of Crook, the Highmoor convict, Drake could not even guess. However, Bunter was more than welcome to that fancy.

"I jolly well know!" grinned Bunter. "Locke mentioned him, and you had his photograph in that writing-case of yours, too, that I saw when it came open entirely by accident. I jolly well know!"

"How do you know anything about it at all, Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton very quietly.

"Oh, I'm pretty wide, you know!" said Bunter cheerfully. "A bit brighter than you fellows, you know. Not so easy to take me in."

"Was Bunter in Quelch's study while he was out on Saturday, do you fellows know?" asked Drake.

"No, I wasn't!" said Bunter promptly. "Don't you get making out that I took Quelch's call! Quelch would be fearfully shirty if he knew. I was out of gates at the time, miles away—"

"He was there," said Bob. "We made an April fool of him, and sent him there after a cake—"

"Rotten trick!" said Bunter. "There wasn't a cake! Not that I'd have touched it if there had been! I'm a bit more particular than some chaps!"

"Locke has just been speaking to me on the phone," said Drake. "He mentioned that he rang up on Saturday, and Quelch told him I was out. Quelch never mentioned that he had rung up before; and I wasn't out on Saturday, so it's pretty clear—"

"That fat villain—"

"By gum, Quelch would skin him!"

"I never did it!" exclaimed Bunter. "Don't you fellows get making out that I did! Mean, I call it! The telephone-bell never rang while I was there at all. Besides, I had to stop it, or somebody would have come to the study! Suppose Quelch had heard that I was there! He might have fancied that I was prying into his papers! He did before, just because he caught me reading a letter at his desk. Suspicious beast, you know!"

"So you took the call?"

"Oh, no! I wasn't there!"

"You blithering bloater!"

"You can call a fellow names, but you're not going to make out that I took Quelch's phone call!" declared Bunter firmly. "He would be as mad as a matter—I mean, as mad as a hatter if he knew. Besides, I tried to shut the beast off, and he would keep on ringing! What was a fellow to do? Lucky I thought of pretending to have a cold, or that beast Locke would have known that it wasn't Quelch! He, he, he! I took him in all right! He thought he was talking to Quelch!"

"So you own up that you took the call and pretended to be Quelch on the phone?" exclaimed Bob.



"Look here, Duck," said Bunter, "I owe you five bob. The postal order will be for ten. Suppose you lend me the other five, and take the whole postal order when it comes?"

"Oh, no! I—I went down to Court-field on Saturday afternoon!"

"Kill him, somebody!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"That fatheaded, prying fat fool has got on to it!" said Jack Drake. "It will do a lot of harm if it is babbled up and down the school! That gabbling ass has got to be kept quiet for a few days, at least!"

"Oh, I can keep a secret all right!" said Bunter. "Rely on me, old chap, if you want it kept dark! Silent as the tomb! You don't mind if I tell Toddy? He's a pal, you know—"

Jack Drake set his lips.

"If Quelch knew that you had taken that telephone call, Bunter, and spoofed Mr. Locke into thinking that he was speaking to you he would take your skin off!" he said.

"Don't I know it?" agreed Bunter. "That's why I never did—I mean—"

"Well, if you gabble Quelch will know how you found out, and you can look for the licking of your life!"

"Oh, of course, I shan't say a word—not a syllable! Rely on me," said Bunter. "I don't want Quelch to know—I mean, I'm not a fellow to gabble, I hope. I don't go about wagging my chin like these chaps! Strong and silent is my line, you know! I say, you fellows, you don't mind if I begin tea, do you? I'm rather hungry."

Bob Cherry reached over, hooked away the dish, and divided the same into seven equal portions.

Billy Bunter viewed that proceeding with rising indignation.

"If you're going to be a greedy pig—a set of greedy pigs—" he began, his voice quivering with indignant scorn. "You heard me say I'm hungry! If you're going to be beastly selfish—"

Thud!

"Yaroooh! Keep your hoofs away from me, Bull, you beast! Asking a

fellow to tea, and then— Yoo-hoop! Stoppit!"

Billy Bunter sat down to his portion of toast and eggs. His feelings were deep and his look indignant.

But the clouds rolled by as some happy thought crossed his fat mind. He bolted that meagre meal in a matter of seconds and rose. He grabbed a jam tart, crammed the major portion of the same into his mouth, and his dulcet tones came muffled through jam and pastry.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up!"

"This isn't much of a spread! Not the sort of thing a fellow expects when fellows press him to stay to tea. I'm going down to the tuckshop."

"Go and be blowed!"

Bunter annexed another tart to go on with.

"All right! If you fancy I'm keen on a measly spread like that you're jolly well mistaken! But I say—"

"Don't!"

"I say," roared Bunter—"I say, my postal order never came to-day! There's been one of those rotten delays in the post again. I think I mentioned to you fellows that I was expecting a postal order! Well, in the circumstances, I think Duck—I mean, Drake—might cash it for me! I'm not going to say a word—not because I'm afraid of old Quelch, but just to oblige Drake—and I think he might let me have the ten shillings—"

"Think again!" suggested Drake.

"I mean, the five shillings!" said Bunter, moderating his transports. "The postal order will be for five shillings, and I shall hand it to you as soon as it comes—"

The Famous Five gazed at Bunter.

Jack Drake gazed at him and

extracted two half-crowns from his pocket.

"Here you are," he said.

The two half-crowns dropped into Billy Bunter's fat palm, no doubt to be expended in the school tuckshop later.

"Thanks, old chap!" said Bunter breezily. "Rely on that postal order to-morrow, you know—"

"Rely on the biggest licking you ever had, or dreamed of, if you gabble, you silly fat chump!"

"Yah!"

Bunter rolled out of the study.

Jack Drake knitted his brows. Between the cashing of his celebrated postal order on the one hand, and his terror of a whopping from Quelch on the other, it was possible that the tattler of the Remove might be kept from tattling for a time! But it was rather a frail reed on which to lean.

Drake glanced round at five faces that were regarding him curiously.

"Now that fat chump's gone, I'll tell you fellows why I'm here," he said. "Wharton knows already. I'm after the prowler!"

"Oh!" ejaculated four fellows together.

"And—now you fellows know, and it can't be helped—you can help me, if you like. I've got to get through before that blithering idiot tells the world, and the sooner the better!"

"We'll help if we can," said Harry. "But how—"

"The helpfulness will be terrific, but the howfulness—" remarked Hurree Jamsot Ram Singh.

While they finished tea, Jack Drake explained. And after tea the Famous Five went out together, James Duck, looking as sheepish as ever, ambling after them a few minutes later.

(Continued on page 16.)

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DRAKE GETS HIS MAN!



(Continued from page 13.)

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Catching Crocker!

RANDOLPH CROCKER, lounging in the doorway of his hut on the spinney, scowled at five cheery juniors who sauntered along past the fence on the lane.

They smiled at him in return.

"The sweep's at home!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"We'll give him something to cure that soon!" said Bob, with a chuckle; and the juniors walked on.

Crocker's scowling stare followed them till they disappeared.

The Sportsman was not in a good temper. Perhaps he still had a lingering twinge from that cosh on the crummet that Quelch had handed over a couple of days ago. Perhaps the horses or the dogs had let him down. Perhaps he had other things on his mind of which the Greyfriars fellows knew and suspected nothing. Whatever the cause, he was in a scowling bad temper, and in a mood for a row—if a chance for a row came along.

For which reason he was not displeased when, about ten minutes later, Bob Cherry came back without his friends.

He had left them, it seemed, up the lane.

The Sportsman stepped out of his doorway. It would have relieved his disgruntled feelings to smack somebody's head, and he was thinking of smacking the cheery Bob's.

When the five were together, Crocker did not want trouble; the whole bunch could handle him with ease, as he had learned on the occasion when they had ducked him in a ditch. But one member of the Co. on his own was easy to deal with; and Bob really seemed to be asking for it.

Instead of passing on his way, he stopped at the gate on the spinney and smiled across at the scowling rascal at the hut.

"How's the crummet, Crocker?" he called out.

"What?" roared Crocker.

"Did Quelch damage it? Was there anything in it to damage?"

Crocker breathed rage. He came down the path towards the gate, his eyes gleaming from his hard, stubbly face. He was anxious to grab that cheeky junior before he could cut off to the school.

But Bob did not cut off to the school.

He had his right hand behind him. Crocker was not able to see that there was an egg in it! But there was!

"I've trotted back to give you something, Mr. Sportsman Crocker!" went on Bob. "Here it comes!"

His right hand suddenly appeared in view.

Whiz!

Smash!

Crocker uttered a roar of surprise and rage. That egg—not a new laid

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egg—crashed on his nose and smashed there! Eggshell and yolk plastered his features and dragged over his thick, ragged moustache.

For a moment he staggered—then, with the rage of a tiger in his face, he rushed down to the gate to get hold of Bob Cherry.

Bob ran!

Had he cut off towards the school, where there was plenty of help, Crocker, in his fury, would have followed him. But he did not cut off towards the school. He cut off up Friardale Lane towards the village.

Crocker could have asked for nothing better! He tore in pursuit of the Greyfriars junior, spluttering egg and eggshell as he tore.

Bob ran hard! What would happen to him if Crocker's hands fell on him in the Sportsman's present mood hardly bore thinking of! But every rapid step took Bob farther and farther away from the school, and the bend of the lane hid pursuer and pursued from sight of Greyfriars.

It was fortunate for Bob that he was a sprinter! Even with his best efforts, he only kept his distance from the enraged ruffian racing on his track.

He looked back breathlessly, and glimpsed the egg, infuriated face, and scrambled up the bank from the lane into Friardale Wood.

The Sportsman scrambled after him.

He could only conclude that the junior hoped to dodge him in the wood—but Bob was placing himself out of sight and sound of possible help by taking to the woodland. And the going was slower among the trees and thickets. Crocker was gaining fast now.

Suddenly Bob stumbled.

He went over, sprawling, by the edge of a thicket of hawthorns, and Crocker, with gleaming eyes, rushed down on him. He had him now!

At all events, he had no doubt that he had! But that, as it turned out, was a little error on the Sportsman's part.

As he came speeding along by the hawthorns, reaching within six feet of the spot where Bob Cherry sprawled, four figures leaped out of the thicket.

Before Randolph Crocker knew what was happening, he was over, and the four were scrambling over him. And Bob Cherry, jumping up, ran back to join them.

"Got him!" panted Johnny Bull.

"Pin the brute!"

"Bag him!"

Sportsman Crocker fairly yelled with rage as he struggled in the grasp of the Famous Five.

He had been taken utterly by surprise; but he could guess now—it was not hard to guess—that Bob had deliberately led him into an ambush where his friends were waiting.

His struggles were fierce and furious. But the Famous Five had him down—and they kept him down! They pinned the enraged rascal in the grass, with a knee in the small of his back and all hands grasping him.

They had their hands full for some minutes. He yelled and heaved, and struggled and twisted. But his efforts left him breathless, and he lay at last panting and gasping, a powerless prisoner.

"Take it easy, old bean!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "We're not going to hurt you, chappy. Only want your pleasant company for a bit."

"Wait till I get loose, I—I—I'll—!" Crocker choked with rage. "Your schoolmaster won't know you again when I'm done with you!"

"That sounds as if he's shirty!" remarked Bob. "Are you annoyed about anything, Mr. Crocker?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't keep on wriggling like that," admonished Bob, as the ruffian heaved fiercely again. "Keep still! With all thy faults, I love thee still!"

"I—I—I—" gurgled Crocker. "You mad young ruffians, what do you mean by this? Wait till I get a fist loose—"

"Do you know, you fellows," said Bob. "I fancy he would do some damage with those fists of his, if he got them loose! Ain't it lucky that I've got some whiplash in my pocket?"

"The luckfulness is terrific."

"Mind if I tie your fins, Crocker?"

"I—I—I—"

"We can't keep on holding you! You wriggle too much! Never saw such a wriggler! You're like the farmer of Hythe, who sat on a scythe, and did nothing but wriggle and writhe—"

"Will you let me go?" shrieked Crocker.

"He's tired of our company, you men—and we're so nice!" sighed Bob. "Much nicer chaps at Greyfriars than in your time, Crocker."

The Sportsman heaved again, frantically. But he was pinned down, and kept pinned down. And in spite of his breathless struggling, his wrists were dragged together, and Bob knotted the whiplash round them. Really it was a necessary precaution, for if Crocker had got a hand loose, somebody would have stopped a jolt like the kick of a mule.

But when his hands were secure, the Famous Five released him.

He sat up, glaring with almost speechless fury.

But as he attempted to scramble to his feet, Bob gave him a gentle push, and he sat down again.

"Keep sitting, old bean!" said Bob. "We're not so tired of your company as you are of ours!"

Crocker, panting, scrambled clumsily up again. Again a push toppled him over, and he sat down—hard and heavy. After that he remained sitting.

Almost as much surprised as enraged, he glared at the smiling five, who leaned on the trees near by and regarded him with smiling faces.

"What do you mean by this?" he panted. "Have you gone mad, or what? I shall go to your school about this—"

"Oh, do!" said Bob. "You're so popular there—you've made yourself popular, with your charming ways!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What do you want?" yelled Crocker. "What do you mean?"

"Keep cool, and I'll tell you the big idea!" said Bob cheerily. "You smacked a Greyfriars man's head the other day! I dare say you remember it—the fattest head at Greyfriars—Bunter's! We've sentenced you to two hours' imprisonment for assault and battery—"

"What!" gurgled Crocker.

"Without the option of a fine—"

"You mad young fool!"

"Mustn't smack Greyfriars nappers!" said Bob, shaking his head. "Just sit there, Mr. Crocker, and meditate on the error of your ways."

Randolph Crocker glared at the cheery Bob as if he could have bitten him.

That these young rascals intended to keep him a prisoner in the wood for a couple of hours because he had smacked Billy Bunter's head a few days ago, he could hardly believe. Certainly he had smacked Bunter's fat head, and

smacked it hard; but really, this was a most surprising and extraordinary kind of reprisal.

But whether the chums of the Remove were concerned about the smacking of Bunter's head, or whether they had any other reason for bagging Randolph Crocker, he found that they were in earnest.

Long minute followed minute, the Sportsman's fury intensifying all the time, till he was fairly boiling with rage. But every time he struggled to his feet, a push sat him down again; and in a state of breathless rage, he gave in at last, and sat scowling and glaring, waiting till the Greyfriars fellows chose to let him go.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Way Of The Prowler!

JAMES DUCK glanced up and down Friardale Lane, whipped through the gate in the spinney fence, and cut up the muddy path to the hut.

He had watched Bob Cherry and Crocker disappear up the lane, and lost no time.

The door of the hut was locked; Crocker never left it without locking it, even for a few minutes. But the lock did not stop Ferrers Locke's assistant more than a moment or two; then he was inside, with the door locked again after him. He cut across at once into the back room of the hut.

James Duck slipped the stool-rimmed glasses from his nose, and his sheepish face was keen and eager and alert. He had his chance at last of exploring the hut on the spinney, and discovering its secret—if, as he felt certain, it had a secret.

Randolph Crocker was out of the way for the time; Drake knew that he could rely on the Famous Five. They were going to keep Crocker out of the way till it was time to return to the school for calling-over, and that gave him ample time for what he had to do.

He turned on a flash-lamp, and, bending down, scanned the grimy old floor.

The ancient stone flags looked as if they had never been disturbed since they had been laid, long centuries ago, to form the floor of the old abbot's cell that had once stood on the spot.

More than once already the schoolboy detective had penetrated into the hut to search for the secret exit that he was sure existed. Every time, till now, he had been interrupted in his search. Now, at last, he had ample time, and no fear of interruption.

That one of these ancient flags would stir in its place and reveal the opening of a secret exit, he was assured. It was by that way that the Greyfriars prowler came and went. He was sure of it; and he was there to find it.

It was not easy to find.

From one grimy old flag to another he moved, scanning, testing; but every ancient block seemed as solid as the solid earth beneath.

But Drake's eyes gleamed suddenly, as brightly as the flash-lamp, as he stopped at a stone close by the ancient remnant of a wall that had been built into the hut:

That stone lay in a narrow space between the oil cooking-stove and the wall. To a casual glance it was exactly like the others. But Drake's glance was far from casual.

A close and keen examination revealed that, though it appeared to touch the surrounding blocks, it was not connected with them.

Every other crack in the old floor was thick with accumulated dirt; but the cracks round that stone were clear. It would have been easy to pass the blade of a pocket-knife between it and the next.

"Eureka!" breathed Drake.

He knew that he had found the secret now.

What remained was to discover how the stone moved. Now that he had found it, that was only a question of patient and careful examination.

Close by the corner of the flag was a little hollow. It was not, as a casual observer might have expected, filled with an accumulation of grime.

Drake groped in it—and there was just room for his hand.

Something stirred under his fingers. It was the top of an iron rod, sunk in the floor, and absolutely invisible to the eye. But it moved as Drake pressed, and a low whirring sound followed.

"Oh!" he ejaculated suddenly.

He started back as the flag-stone in front of him sank from his sight—sinking down from the floor, leaving a gap about two feet in extent. There was a creaking, grumbling sound of old rusty iron in motion.

"By gum!" breathed Drake.

He flashed the light into the black darkness of the orifice.

The stone had sunk to a depth of about seven feet.

Below, revealed to his eyes, was a narrow stone arch; evidently the opening of a passage underground.

Drake breathed quickly. He glanced at his watch; he had been an hour in the hut on the spinney. But he was through now.

That subterranean tunnel led under the earth to some outlet within the walls of Greyfriars School. There was no doubt about that. All he had to do now was to follow it to the outlet at the other end; and the secret of the Greyfriars prowler was his.

He lowered the flash-lamp on a length of twine to the sunken stone, and let it lie there. Then, holding on carefully, he lowered himself till his feet touched the sunken stone.

It was firm, and evidently could move no farther. He let go, and dropped, and picked up the lamp. Lamp in hand he stepped off the sunken stone into the narrow archway.

But he had to close the stone before he proceeded, unless Randolph Crocker was to find out that his secret had been discovered. And it was no part of Drake's game to put the Greyfriars prowler on his guard.

By whatever ancient machinery the sinking stone was worked, it was hidden from sight.

Above, the pressure on the rod, a few inches from the moving stone, set it in motion. Drake had to find out how to close it.

Flash-lamp in hand, he scanned the stone shaft down which it had sunk.

In the side was a square cavity; and in that cavity, a rusty iron ring fastened to the stone.

Drake, as he scanned the ring, grinned—there were plain traces of grasping fingers to be detected in the rust. It was Crocker's hand that had left those traces.

Drake grasped the ring, in his turn. He pulled it, with no result—then he twisted it round, and again there was a rusty whirr. The sunken stone stirred, and rose slowly to its former place, in the floor of the abbot's cell. Drake was shut off from the hut; and above, all was left as Sportsman Crocker had left it.

Flashing the light before him, the

schoolboy detective pushed on through the tunnel to which the archway gave admittance.

It was narrow and low; hardly six feet wide and the stone roof only just over his head. At a short distance he came to steps that led him down; from the foot of the steps the tunnel stretched on, seemingly endlessly, into dense darkness.

Here and there, as he went on, he noted cigarette-stumps that lay where they had been thrown—here and there a burnt match. They marked the way the Greyfriars prowler had so often come and gone.

By counting his steps Drake was able to calculate the distance, and by the time he had covered two hundred yards he had no doubt that he was under the school buildings—if that tunnel led to Greyfriars, as he was sure that it did.

It ended suddenly in a flight of stone spiral steps that led upward. The spiral stair was narrow; his elbows touched on either side as he stepped up, and up, and up.

Drake was breathing a little hard when he reached the summit of the narrow stair. He flashed the light round a small square landing of ancient stone, hardly three feet across.

On the farther side was a stone wall in which was a gap. He flashed the light into it. It was closed by black oak.

He knew that he had reached the outlet into the school now.

That spiral stair was built in the thickness of one of the ancient walls, and it opened into some part of Greyfriars where the centuries-old oak panelling remained, unchanged from the days of the old abbots of Greyfriars.

With the lamp in his left hand, he groped over the oak with his right.

That there was some secret spring by which a panel opened he knew, and suddenly he found it.

With a faint click the oak panel in front of him stirred. It opened towards him like a door, and as it opened a sound came to his ears, the sound of a voice.

"Pray come in, my dear Quelch!"

It was the voice of the headmaster of Greyfriars!

Drake started and caught his breath. He pushed the panel shut, all but an inch, and listened. The familiar voice of his Form-master reached him, following the words he had heard.

"If I am not interrupting you, sir, I—"

"Not at all; pray step in."

There was a sound of a closing door. Drake could guess that it was the door of the headmaster's study. It was in Head's corridor that the secret panel opened!

He listened intently, but there was no further sound, and he drew the panel open again and stepped through. He did not need his flash-lamp now. He was standing in the alcove in the corridor, only a few yards from the door of the Head's study.

Quietly he shut the panel. He slipped the flash-lamp into his pocket. Then quietly he walked away down the corridor.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

O.K.!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed James Duck.

The new junior of Greyfriars came ambling into Friardale Wood, and stopped and stared through his steel-rimmed glasses at the strange sight of THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,625.

Randolph Crocker sitting in the grass, and the Famous Five leaning on the trees round about him.

The chums of the Remove eyed him curiously.

Even now that they knew that James Duck was Jack Drake it was not easy to get it really into their heads.

Duck, as he came mooning on, looked the duffer they had always known him to be, blinking at them in owlish surprise.

"Goodness gracious!" repeated Duck. "What is this game? Don't you fellows know that you're not allowed to speak to that man Crocker?"

He blinked at Crocker.

"Dear me, his hands are tied!" he bleated. "Have you fellows been larking with Crocker?"

"Sort of!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

The Famous Five had been prepared to keep Crocker there till it was time to return to the school for calling-over, to give the schoolboy detective all the time possible for his search of the hut on the spinney.

They understood now that Drake had not needed so long and that he had come to relieve them of their task, though certainly the Sportsman was not likely to guess that.

James Duck looked as if he had wandered to the spot quite by chance and was surprised by what he saw there.

"The larkfulness has been terrific, my esteemed Duck!" grinned Hurree Jamset-Ram Singh.

"Mr. Crocker looks very much annoyed!" bleated Duck.

That was under-stating the case! Sportsman Crocker's face was crimson and his eyes burning with rage. For considerably more than an hour he had sat there, and by that time his fury was really inexpressible in words.

Harry Wharton & Co. were glad enough to see James Duck. They were willing to oblige, but undoubtedly they were getting rather tired of keeping guard over the scowling, infuriated Sportsman.

"Duck thinks you're very much annoyed, Crocker!" remarked Bob Cherry. "Are you very much annoyed?"

If looks could have slain Bob Cherry's cheery career would probably have come to a sudden termination at the glare Randolph Crocker gave him in reply. Fortunately looks couldn't.

"Is the annoyfulness terrific, esteemed and disgusting Crocker?" inquired Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

That deadly glare turned on the Nabob of Bhanipur, without, however, disturbing his dusky equanimity.

"I don't want to butt in," bleated Duck, "but don't you fellows think this is rather thoughtless? I'm not at all sure that dear Mr. Quelch would be pleased."

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Think he's had enough, you fellows?" he asked. "He isn't really good company, and his best pal wouldn't say that he was nice to look at! Think you've had enough, Crocker?"

James Duck gave the scowling Sportsman a blink and ambled through the trees.

Crocker did not heed him.

That that ambush had been planned by that mild-looking schoolboy in steel-rimmed glasses, and that he had turned up there to give the Famous Five the tip that it was no longer necessary to keep Crocker away from the hut, he was not likely to guess.

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James Duck ambled on and disappeared unheeded by the Sportsman.

"Will you be a good boy if we let you off?" continued Bob.

The Sportsman's look was eloquent. "Mustn't smack Greyfriars chaps' heads, you know! Naughty!" said Bob.

Crocker seemed on the point of choking.

"Wait till I get my hands loose!" he gasped.

Evidently the Sportsman was ripe for more trouble once he was loose. But the Famous Five were not alarmed. There were more than enough of them to put paid to Sportsman Crocker if he hunted for more trouble.

Bob Cherry bent over him and jerked the whipcord loose from his wrists.

Crocker bounded to his feet.

He did not speak. He made a spring like a tiger, his fists clenched, his eyes blazing. In his rage he seemed to have overlooked the fact that five fellows at once were rather too large an order. But he was quickly reminded of it as the Famous Five grasped him on all sides, upended him, and landed him on the earth with a heavy bump.

He roared as he bumped.

But he was not finished yet! He scrambled up, with deadly rage in his face. This time he did not get on his feet; he was grasped again before he could gain them, and five pairs of hands swung him clear of the earth.

Crash!

With a swing the Famous Five sent him whirring into the hawthorns.

There was a frantic yell as he landed among them. How many thorns he landed on Sportsman Crocker did not know, but they felt like millions.

Yell on yell came from the hawthorn thicket as he scrambled and squirmed.

Leaving him to it, the chums of the Remove walked back to the lane and sauntered along to Greyfriars.

Once or twice they glanced back, half expecting to see the infuriated Sportsman in pursuit, asking for more. But Sportsman Crocker seemed to have had as much as he wanted. He did not appear from the wood, and the chums of the Remove saw no more of him.

At the gates of the school they overtook James Duck.

He gave them an owlish blink through the steel-rimmed glasses.

"All serene?" asked Bob.

"Quite."

"You've been in the hut?" asked Nugent.

"Sort of."

"Found what you were looking for?"

"Yes!"

"Blessed if I can guess what it was!" said Bob.

"The guessfulness is not terrific."

James Duck smiled, but did not answer.

Harry Wharton glanced at him curiously.

"Then it's O.K.?" he asked.

"O.K.!" answered Drake.

And no more was said as they went in at the gates.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter, Too!

MR. QUELCH, in second school, the following morning, glanced at one member of his Form several times.

Other fellows were glancing at James Duck.

Duck was supposed to be a dunce in the Form. The Famous Five, now that they knew who Duck was, knew that that was only a part of his game

to conceal his identity; for the Jack Drake they had known had been anything but a dunce. But, dunce as he appeared, Duck had always been, at least, careful and attentive in class.

Now he was neither.

What was the matter with Duck on that particular morning was rather a puzzle. He looked, and seemed, sleepy.

But why a fellow should be specially sleepy that morning was not evident. Duck, of course, had gone to bed at the usual time with his Form.

If he had not remained in bed, nobody knew anything about it. Yet plainly, Duck found it difficult to suppress his yawns, and every now and then his head seemed to nod, and he started like a fellow almost dropping off to sleep.

Smithy gave him one or two sarcastic looks and winked at Skinner. The Bouncer thought he knew what was the matter with Ducky!

Once, at least, it was known that Duck had left the dormitory after lights out—and what he had done once, he might have done more than once. It was rumoured that he visited the Sportsman at the hut on the spinney—and a fellow who visited the Sportsman could have only one reason, so far as the juniors knew—to back his fancy in the sporting line!

So Smithy had no doubt that Duck had been out after lights out the night before. Smithy knew what a fellow felt like in Form in the morning after having heard the chimes at midnight. Smithy had been there, so to speak!

Harry Wharton & Co. did not share Smithy's sardonic suspicion. They wondered whether the schoolboy detective had been up hunting the prowler. Yet why he should have selected Monday night specially for that purpose they could not guess.

Anyhow, it was plain that Duck was tired and sleepy, and that his Form-master's attention was drawn at last to the fact. That fact was so evident that even Billy Bunter noticed it.

"Duck!" said Mr. Quelch at last.

"Oh! Yes, sir!" bleated Duck, sitting suddenly upright and colouring a little.

"You do not seem quite yourself this morning, Duck!"

"I did not sleep very well last night, sir!" said Duck. "I—I think I missed a lot of sleep. Sorry, sir!"

Mr. Quelch gave him a rather keen look.

At one time, the Remove master's faith in the schoolboy detective had wavered—in fact, it had disappeared. But that time was past; Quelch's faith in Ferrers Locke's assistant had revived, and he was in hope every day of hearing that Drake had made a discovery—and that the prowler, who had prowled so long with impunity, was brought to book at last.

The Remove master probably guessed to what cause Duck's want of sleep the previous night was due.

"Very well, Duck, in that case you may leave the Form-room for a time," he said.

"Thank you, sir!"

James Duck rose from his place and left the Form-room.

A good many of the fellows stared. Billy Bunter cast an envious blink after Duck through his big spectacles.

Bunter would have been very glad to leave the Form-room also. The Remove were dealing with Latin grammar just then, and worst of all with deponent verbs; those miserable verbs which are passive in form, but active in meaning,



"Accidents will happen, when rat-poison is kept on the same shelf," said Bob Cherry. "What rotten luck for Bunter to get hold of that very cake!" exclaimed Nugent. Horror froze on Bunter's face as he stood listening outside the door.

and which were a blight on Bunter's young life! Bunter thought it pretty rotten to have to stick in Form, while another fellow was allowed to mooch off.

"Is Quelch getting soft?" murmured Skinner, in wonder. "First time he's ever let a fellow off for nodding in class. At this rate, Mauly ought to be let off lessons altogether."

The Bouncer shrugged his shoulders. Quelch would not have let him off like that; such signs of drowsiness in Smithy would have been more likely to cause Quelch to fix a searching and suspicious eye on him. Some fellows, the Bouncer reflected, had all the luck!

But the Famous Five understood if the rest of the Form did not. Now that they were in the secret they could guess easily enough that it was not as a schoolboy, but as a detective, that Jack Drake was let off class.

That fact, clear to Harry Wharton & Co., did not even occur to Billy Bunter's fat brain.

Bunter had noticed, like the rest, that Duck seemed half-asleep; but it did not dawn on his podgy intellect that it might be due to detective work in the small hours allowed for by Quelch.

So far as Bunter could see, a fellow had been let off class because he was sleepy—and if one fellow could get off because he was sleepy, another could, or at least might! With Quelch in this unusually gracious mood, it was worth trying on.

So about ten minutes after the Form-room door had closed on James Duck, deponent verbs in the Remove were interrupted by an unaccustomed sound.

Snore!

All the Remove started and looked round.

Mr. Quelch started and fixed his eyes on Bunter, with a most unpleasant glint in them.

"Bunter!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"Be silent! How dare you?" rumbled Mr. Quelch.

"Oh! I did not sleep very well last night, sir!" said Bunter, blinking at him. "I think I missed a lot of sleep!"

"What!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch, while a chuckle rippled along the Remove.

Bunter blinked hopefully at his Form-master. He had repeated James Duck's very words. Naturally he expected them to produce the same effect on the master. The next item on the programme was for Quelch to tell Bunter kindly that he might leave the Form-room for a time.

Instead of which Quelch glared at him.

It was horribly unfair, Bunter thought. He hadn't glared at Duck.

Duck had got by with it! It did not seem that Bunter was going to get by with it.

"I—I'm fearfully sleepy, sir!" Bunter ventured to proceed. "I'm sorry, sir, because what you're saying is so interesting. But I—I feel so sleepy, sir, owing to having missed a lot of sleep in the night that perhaps you'd let me leave the Form-room for a time, sir."

"Shut up, you ass!" whispered Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"You may be silent, Cherry!" rapped Mr. Quelch. "Bunter, you will not leave the Form-room. You will attend to the lesson, and I warn you not to interrupt it again! If you have not been listening to me—"

"I'm so—so—sleepy, sir, owing to missing a lot of sleep—"

"Have you been attending to the lesson or not, Bunter?" demanded Quelch, in a voice that made the fat Owl jump.

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter. He hadn't, but that was a trifle light as air to Bunter. "A—a—a deponent verb is—is—is—"

"Is what?" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"It's proper in form, sir, but—but improper in meaning!" gasped Bunter.

"What?" stammered Mr. Quelch.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Remove.

This was uncommonly good even for Bunter! The fat Owl blinked round him in dismay. Really, even Bunter knew that a deponent verb was passive in form, but active in meaning—if he had had time to think a minute! But Quelch's glare disconcerted him.

"I—I—I mean, sir—" gasped Bunter. He could see that he had it wrong, but he had forgotten what was right. "I—I mean—"

"What do you mean?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"I—I—I mean, it's—it's something or other in form—"

"What?"

"And what d'you call it in meaning—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! Bunter, after class you will write out a hundred times that a deponent verb is passive in form, but active in meaning."

"Oh crikey!"

"And now give your attention to the lesson, Bunter!"

Bunter suppressed a groan. So far from escaping from those putrid deponent verbs, his last state was worse than his first.

Duck had got off simply because he was sleepy! Bunter couldn't get off, though he had actually snored in class, which Duck certainly had not done. That, Bunter reflected bitterly, was the sort of justice a fellow got at school!

But Bunter was not beaten yet. For ten minutes or so he contrived to give more or less attention to Latin grammar in its most offensive form. Then Bunter's fat chin drooped on his podgy chest, and he snored again.

"Bunter!" hooted Mr. Quelch.

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This time the fat Owl did not answer. He knew a trick worth two of that. He was going to be fast asleep. If a fellow was actually fast asleep, even Quelch, surely, would let him off, after having let off a fellow merely for looking sleepy. It seemed sound to Bunter.

"Bunter!"
Snore!
"Boy!" shrieked Mr. Quelch.
Snore!
"Oh crikey!" gasped Bob Cherry.
"Oh, my only spring bonnet! Oh dear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Snore!
Bunter was going strong. The Remove were almost in convulsions. Mr. Quelch glared and glared with a gorgon-like glare. Bunter did not heed. With his little round eyes shut behind his big round spectacles, he snored, waiting for Quelch to be convinced that he was fast asleep, and to let him off class as he had let Duck off.

He was prepared to wake up instantly. Quelch said: "You may leave the Form-room for a time, Bunter!"

But Quelch did not say that. He did not say anything. He stepped to his desk for a cane, and stepped towards Bunter with the cane gripped in his hand.

Swipe!
"Yaroooh!" came a fearful yell from the fat Owl.

He awoke quite suddenly.

Swipe!
"Wow! Owl! Oh crikey! Ow!" roared Bunter.

"Are you still sleepy, Bunter?" asked Mr. Quelch in a tone of almost ferocious sarcasm.

"Oh! Yes—"

Swipe!

"Yarooop! I mean, no!" yelled Bunter. "I'm not sleepy at all, sir! N-n-never so wide awake, sir! Oh crumbs! Not a bit, sir! Oh, no—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! Bunter, if you are no longer sleepy—"

"Owl! No! Wow! No! Owl! Wow!"

"Then we will proceed!" said Mr. Quelch grimly.

And he laid down the cane, and proceeded.

Bunter showed no further sign of drowsiness that morning.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Good Thing For Bunter!

"**D**RAKE, old chap—"
"You fat fool!"
"Oh, really, Drake—"

James Duck looked at William George Bunter as if he could have eaten William George.

After class that day Bunter rounded up James in the quad. He addressed him as Drake—perhaps from forgetfulness of the fact that there was a secret to be kept. But there was a sly twinkle in the little round eyes behind Billy Bunter's big round spectacles.

"Will you keep your silly head shut?" breathed Drake.

Sometimes in the study Harry Wharton had used the schoolboy detective's real name. He was very careful indeed not to do so when other ears were about. Bunter did not seem to realise that such care was necessary. There were dozens of fellows at hand, though not exactly within hearing.

"Oh!" Bunter grinned. "I forgot, old chap! He, he, he!"

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"If you forget again I'll bang your head on a tree!" hissed Drake.

"Better not!" advised Bunter. "That would only make me forget all the more! He, he, he! But, I say, old chap, I mentioned to you that I was expecting a postal order this morning. I was going to settle that five bob out of it, you know. I'm fearfully sorry that it hasn't come!"

Drake stared at him. If Billy Bunter was sorry that he was unable to square a loan, it was the first time that such sorrow had been known to visit him.

"Is that it? Well, never mind," said Drake.

"But I do mind!" said Bunter firmly. "I'm not the sort of fellow who borrows money and forgets to pay, I hope. Some fellows ain't particular about such things, but I am—always was. I thought I'd better tell you that that postal order hasn't come yet, and you may have to wait a bit for that five bob."

"All right!"

Drake turned away.
"Hold on, old fellow! I say, don't walk away while a chap's talking to you!" hooted Bunter. "Stop a minute—Drake!"

Drake did not seem disposed to stop. But he stopped at once as Bunter forgot again not to use that name. He turned back, breathing hard.

"That's right!" grinned Bunter. "Don't clear off, old fellow, when we're having such a pleasant chat. Now, about that postal order—"

"You fat Owl—"

"About that postal order," pursued Bunter calmly—"it hasn't come. There's been one of those delays in the post. But, look here, would you mind waiting till to-morrow? It's absolutely certain to come to-morrow. It's from one of my titled relations, you know."

"You footling frump!"

"It will be for ten bob," continued Bunter. "Now, my idea is this. I owe you five bob. The postal order will be for ten. Suppose you lend me the other five, and take the whole postal order when it comes?"

James Duck looked at the grinning fat face long and hard.

Billy Bunter waited in cheerful expectation.

Slowly the new junior's hand slid into his pocket. Bunter's expectant grin grew more expansive.

Bunter, to do him justice, did not realise in the least that he was screwing cash out of the fellow who had a secret to keep. Bunter believed, more or less, in that postal order. Bunter had a wonderful way of believing anything that he wanted to believe.

He believed implicitly in his own good looks, regardless of the evidence of the looking-glass. He believed that he was the cleverest fellow in the Remove, regardless of Quelch's exactly contrary opinion. So he believed that that postal order was coming, and he saw no reason why a fellow should not oblige him by cashing it a day or two before it came, especially a fellow whose secrets he was keeping.

Two half-crowns dropped into a fat palm.

"Thanks, old chap!" purred Bunter. "I say, come along to the tuckshop and have a ginger-pop! My treat!"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Yah!"

Billy Bunter rolled off happily to the school shop. When Bunter had any cash his footsteps were irresistibly drawn in that direction.

In a few minutes Billy Bunter was happily disposing of refreshments,

liquid and solid, to the exact value of five shillings.

Five shillings' worth of tuck would have satisfied most fellows. It satisfied Billy Bunter—for a time. He rolled out of the tuckshop, looking happy and shiny and sticky.

But a little later, when the Remove fellows went up to the studies to tea, a fat face looked in at the door of Study No. 1, with a cheery grin.

"I say, you fellows—" squeaked Bunter.

"Hook it!"
Bunter had tea'd in that study the day before. Possibly his fascinating society had palled on the study. The Famous Five and James Duck were there, and six voices addressed the Owl of the Remove at once.

Bunter did not hook it. He blinked cheerily in.

"I say, you fellows, Toddy's gone out to tea!" he remarked. "You know what Toddy's like when he teas out; he never thinks of another chap in the study. I was thinking of tea-ing with Smithy; but if you fellows would like me to tea here, I don't mind."

"Buzz off!"

"Scat!"

"Oh, all right!" said Bunter breezily. "I never was a fellow to butt in where I'm not wanted, I hope! I dare say Smithy will be interested in a little chat over tea. I hope I shan't let anything slip about you, Drake. I'll try not to, but I've got a rotten memory in some things, and I never was used to keeping secrets—too syrupstigious for me!"

Billy Bunter turned away from the door.

He expected to be called back. So he was.

"Roll in, you blithering barrel!" said James Duck.

Bunter rolled in. Grim glances greeted him. Grim glances had no effect on Billy Bunter. Every fellow in the study was yearning to boot him into the passage. Bunter did not mind so long as they didn't do it. And, in the peculiar circumstances, they couldn't.

Bunter sat down cheerfully.

"Not much of a spread!" he remarked. "I'll stand you fellows a better spread than this when my postal order comes! Haven't you got any jam? You know I like jam! What about borrowing a pot of jam along the passage?" Bunter blinked round the table. "Who's going?"

Silence.

"Anybody going?" asked Bunter.

Still silence.

"Oh, all right! I'll drop in on Smithy—I dare say he won't be as mean as you fellows!" said Bunter cheerily.

Harry Wharton, in silence, left the study, and returned with a borrowed pot of jam.

A sticky fat Owl rolled happily out of the study after tea. William George Bunter was feeling quite bucked. How long Jack Drake was going to stay at Greyfriars under the name of James Duck, Bunter did not know, but he hoped it would be till the end of the term! This looked like being a good thing for Bunter!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Splash!

"**D**UCK!"
"This way, Duck!"
"Come and help us, old chap!"

James Duck glanced round through his steel-rimmed glasses with his usual

simple, sheepish blink, as his name was called. Then he ambled over to the Remove fellows standing by the fountain in the quadrangle.

All the fellows were grinning. But, as usual, grinning faces did not seem to put the duffer of the Remove on his guard. He blinked inquiringly at the Removites as he joined them.

"What is it?" he asked. "I should be so pleased to help you, my dear fellows, if there's anything I can do. But what—"

"Smithy's dropped a half-crown into the fountain!" explained Skinner. "He can't see it! See if you can spot it."

"Oh, certainly!" said Duck.

With guileless simplicity, he approached the granite rim of the basin, which was full almost to the brim.

The juniors watched him with breathless interest. Harry Wharton & Co. came along and stopped to look on—smiling!

It was the oldest of old tricks—the most palpable of catches! Duck was to lean over the water, peering into it for the half-crown that was not there! A tap on the back of his head was to dip his face in the water!

Skinner's jape was so palpable that he was not quite sure that even that ass Duck would fall for it. But Duck seemed to have no suspicion.

Knowing what they knew, the Famous Five certainly did not expect him to fall for it!

Numberless practical jokes had been played on the dud of the Form, but generally they had, somehow, turned out against the jokers—and Harry Wharton & Co. now knew why.

But to the other Removites, James Duck was still the fool he was so careful to look. Still, it seemed to the merry Removites almost too good to be true, when Duck clambered on the wide granite brim and bent his sheepish face and steel-rimmed glasses over the water.

"See it?" grinned Vernon-Smith.

"Not for the moment, Smithy!" answered Duck. "But—"

"Look a bit closer!" grinned Skinner.

"Oh, certainly, Skinner!"

Duck bent his face closer to the surface of the water. He was now in such a position that the lightest push would have sent him toppling in—and Harry Wharton & Co. could only wonder. This time it certainly looked as if James Duck was going to be the victim of the practical jokers.

"I cannot see—" Duck was saying.

"Oh! Oooogh!"

Splash!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The game had been to dip Duck's head in. Even Skinner had not thought of carrying the joke further than that. But that tap on the back of his head had the effect of Duck losing his balance, and he went head-first into the fountain, the rest of him following his head.

There was a mighty splash, as the duffer of the Remove wallowed bodily in the granite basin.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"He'll get wet!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"The wetfulness will be terrific!"

There was a wild splashing and spraying, as James Duck struggled up in the water, spluttering for breath.

"Urrgh! Ooooh! Groooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Removites.

"Ooooh! I am all wet—woooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Better get out!" chuckled Nugent.

"Here comes a pre!"

"Oh, goodness gracious!"

James Duck struggled and splashed out of the water, and dropped from the granite rim as Wingate of the Sixth came striding up. He stood drenched and dripping and blinking before the Greyfriars captain.

"You young ass!" gasped Wingate.

"What did you do that for?"

"Groooogh!"

"A precious state you're in! You young noodle, don't you know that juniors are not allowed to climb on the fountain?" rapped Wingate.

"Urrgh!" spluttered Duck.

"Gurrgh! Oh dear! Ooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Did you push that young idiot in, Skinner?"

"I!" exclaimed Skinner, in great surprise.

"I saw you touch him—"

"I was trying to save him!" explained Skinner. "I was afraid he was going to fall, and I tried to pull him back! I was just too late!"

"Groogh! My own fault, I am afraid, Wingate!" bleated James Duck.

"Thank you so much for trying to save me from falling, Skinner! It was really very, very kind of you! You are such a nice boy."

"Oh scissors!" gasped Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, stop these tricks on that silly young ass!" said Wingate, half laughing. "Cut off to the House and change at once, Duck, or you'll be catching a cold!"

"Achooh! Aytishoo!"

"Oh gad! You're catching one already! Cut off!" exclaimed Wingate.

"Yes, Wingate! Aytishoo! Groogh! Ooooh! Achooh!" sneezed Duck, and he cut off, leaving a watery trail behind him.

Wingate gave Skinner a look, and walked away.

The group by the fountain were left gurgling, as James Duck trailed off, dripping.

"Jevver see such a blithering idiot?" said Vernon-Smith.

"Hardly ever!" said Skinner. "So sad that I wasn't able to save him—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors roared.

"Of all the fools—" said Vernon-Smith.

Harry Wharton looked curiously at the Bouncer. Smithy was one of the keenest fellows at Greyfriars. But clearly he had not the slightest suspicion that James Duck was other than what he seemed; not the remotest idea that he was anything but a dud and a duffer, and that he had fallen into that palpable trap from sheer clumsiness and fatheadedness. Smithy was shrugging his shoulders in contemptuous derision.

The Famous Five walked away, leaving the other fellows laughing.

Bob Cherry glanced oddly at his chums.

"I suppose we didn't dream what that fat chump Bunter told us about Duck, you fellows!" he said.

"Fathead!"

"Well, I can't make it out! What did he let Skinner play that trick on him for? He knew what Skinner was up to, as well as we did! I suppose he can't like being tipped head-first into cold water!"

"Blessed if I make him out, either!" confessed Harry Wharton. "He must have been wise to it, and he let Skinner get by with it—blessed if I know why—unless it suits his game somehow."

"He's acted this time just as if he's the fool he looks!"

"Only we know now that he isn't!"

"Beats me hollow!" said Bob.

The Famous Five were quite puzzled. They did not see Duck again; he had hurried into the House, no doubt to get the change he needed, after that drenching to the skin. But when they went in, a little later, Billy Bunter met them, with a grinning fat face.

"I say, you fellows! Heard about Duck?" he squeaked. "He, he, he! I say, he's been packed into sanny!"

"Sanny!" exclaimed all the Famous Five together.

"He came in sneezing his head off!" grinned Bunter. "You should have heard him—going off like a foghorn! He, he, he! He's got a fearful cold! Quelch has walked him off to sanny. Poor old Duck!"

That Bunter's information was well-founded was soon known. James Duck did not appear at calling-over; his name was not called by Mr. Haeker, who took roll. And when the Remove went up to the studies to prep, James Duck did not join them.

James Duck was in the school sanatorium, and the Remove were not likely to see him again for some time.

"Rotten luck!" said Frank Nugent, at prep in Study No. 1. "Looks like putting the kybosh on Drake's detective stunts, Harry—he won't get the jolly old prowler while he's laid up in sanny."

"I wonder!" said Harry Wharton slowly.

Nugent stared at him.

"He's laid up," he said. "I've heard from half a dozen fellows that he came in with a fearful cold, after that dip in the fountain."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Why do you think he was so sleepy in Form this morning, Frank?" he asked.

"Up after the prowler, very likely, and lost his beauty sleep," answered Nugent.

"Exactly!" Wharton nodded. "And now—"

"Well, now—" asked Nugent, puzzled.

"He's got some reason for turning out at night and watching for the prowler, since he got on to something in Crocker's hut yesterday. But he can't scout at night and sit in Form by day. A fellow must have some sleep! I fancy that's why he has gone to sanny."

"Oh!" ejaculated Nugent.

"It gets him out of classes without anything being said. Fellows would jolly soon begin to wonder if he nodded in the Form-room every day and Quelch let him off class." Harry Wharton laughed again. "He's no more caught cold than I have! Bet you he was trying to think out some good excuse for cutting class without questions asked when Skinner played that jape on him, and he jumped at the chance."

"Oh!" repeated Nugent. He chuckled. "Skinner fancied he was pulling his leg, and Drake was making use of him—"

"That's it!"

Harry Wharton had little doubt that he had got it right. Skinner, quite unconsciously, had come in useful in helping the schoolboy detective to carry out his plans! That night James Duck's bed was empty in the Remove dormitory, and most of the fellows supposed him to be in an unhappy, sneezing state in sanny. Which, as Harry Wharton guessed, was exactly what he wanted them to suppose, as he waited and watched for the prowler in the silent hours of the night.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Sympathetic!

"I SAY, you fellows!"
 "Chuck it!"
 "I was going to say——"
 "Well, don't!"

"About Drake——" continued Billy Bunter calmly.

Billy Bunter had a narrow escape, at that moment, of being collared, up-ended, and landed, bumping, on the hard, unsympathetic earth!

But the Famous Five controlled their feelings. Bumping Billy Bunter was not, at the moment, practical politics. What was required from Bunter at present was silence; and bumping him would not have caused him to be silent—rather, it would have made him eloquent.

"If you say Drake again——" breathed Harry Wharton.

"Drake again!" grinned Bunter.

And still the captain of the Remove did not fall upon him and smite him hip and thigh!

They were in the quad, and there were plenty of fellows about. Indeed, Skinner was near enough to catch what Bunter said, and he was glancing towards him curiously. The name of Drake was remembered in the Remove.

"I was going to say——" resumed Bunter.

"Will you shut up?" muttered Bob. "Can't you see that Skinner's stretching out his ear?"

"Well, I don't mind!" said Bunter cheerfully. "This keeping secrets is a syrupstigious sort of thing. I dare say you fellows don't mind being syrupstigious! I don't like it myself; but then, I always was a bit more particular than some fellows. But I was going to say——"

The Famous Five moved away to get out of range of Skinner's ear.

Billy Bunter rolled after them.

"If you fellows aren't interested I'll speak to Smithy about it," he said. "It's rather important."

They gazed at him. The Famous Five were very careful to keep Jack Drake's secret, as a matter of course. They realised clearly enough the harm that might be done by the presence of a detective in the school becoming known. If it was talked of up and down Greyfriars, it was very likely to reach the ears of the suspected man, and with Sportsman Crocker thus put on his guard the schoolboy detective's task would be rendered infinitely more difficult.

Billy Bunter might, perhaps, have realised this also had he given any thought to the subject. Bunter, certainly, did not mean any harm. But it happened—as was not unusual—that Bunter's podgy thoughts were wholly concentrated on W. G. Bunter.

"I mean to say," continued Bunter, while they gazed at him in silence, "the chap's laid up in sanny now. It's a bit awkward."

"The awkwardness is probably terrific!" agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with a dusky grin. "He is now out of the reach of the borrowfulness."

"Oh, really, Inky! The fact is, I was going to ask the chap to cash a postal order for me, and I don't mind saying so," said Bunter. "I don't see why he shouldn't. It hasn't come this morning, after all, as I expected, but it will be here to-morrow, which is practically the same thing. But——"

"Is he wound up?" asked Bob Cherry.

"But I'm not bothering about that!" said Bunter with dignity. "I'm not

thinking about myself at all. Do I over?"

"Eh?"

"I'm thinking about poor old Drake, laid up in sanny!" said Bunter. "You know my sympathetic nature——"

"Which?"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I've asked Quelch for leave to see him in sanny, just to show my sympathy, you know, but he's refused. You know what a stony-hearted beast Quelch is! I can't go and see the poor chap——"

"And so the poor dog had none!" murmured Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! You fellows were pally with Drake, and you haven't asked to go and see him in sanny——"

"We don't want to borrow anything off him!" snorted Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull! Well, as I was saying——"

"Haven't you finished yet?"

"No!" roared Bunter. "I haven't. You fellows can stick about with your hands in your pockets, while a chap we know is stuck in sanny, living on gruel, and 'broth, and all sorts of mucks, and the doctor giving him medicine to make him worse. I've got a sympathetic nature. I'm jolly well going to stand by the chap now he's down on his luck! Suppose a fellow smuggled in some decent tuck for him? Plenty of time before dinner!"

"Fathead!"

"I mean to say, I know the room he's got!" said Bunter. "I've been asking Trotter. He's got that room on the ground floor, with a door on the Head's garden. I suppose that's so that he can walk in the garden when he feels up to it."

Harry Wharton & Co. made no comment on that.

They were not surprised that the invalid had a room in sanny with a door opening on the garden. They had no doubt that the schoolboy detective put in a good deal of sleep in that room in the daytime, and that the door in the garden was very convenient for him to get out at night and let himself into the House, to keep watch and ward there.

But they were not likely to put Billy Bunter wise on that subject. The less Billy Bunter knew the better.

"Well, you see, a fellow could slip into the Head's garden syrupstiously and tap at the door," explained Bunter. "See? I'd do it—for that poor chap's sake! Doctors make out that jam tarts and cakes are bad for a chap when he's ill, but that's only their rot, of course! If I were ill I should jolly well want all the cake I could get hold of, and jam tarts, too! I believe they do a chap a lot more good than medicine!"

"Ass!"

"Doctors don't know much!" said Bunter, shaking his head. "Look at the National Fitness Campaign, for instance! That's because there's too many doctors about! There never were so many doctors as there are now—and there never was any need of a National Fitness Campaign before! It wouldn't be needed now if we could only get shut of the doctors."

"Oh, my hat!"

"What a chap wants," pursued the fat Owl, "is to feed a cold! When I had a cold at home, the doctor shut off my grub at once. I'd have told him what I thought of him, only, of course, he would have put something extra on the bill if I had! Well, you can jolly well bet that the school nurse won't let poor old Drake feed his cold, if she can help it. Nurses always believe what doctors tell them, and

doctors always talk awful rot! A big cake——"

"You want one of us to smuggle in a cake to Duck?" asked Bob.

"Oh, no; I'm going to take all the risk!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, cackle! Cackle, while poor old Drake is lying fearfully hungry, and having to swallow doctor's muck!" said Bunter scornfully. "Head's garden is out of bounds, and sanny's at the lower end of the garden. It wants some nerve to cut in there and take a cake to a chap! Well, I've got the nerve, if you fellows stand the cake!"

"Now we're coming to the milk in the coconut!" remarked Nugent.

"One of those five-bob cakes at the tuckshop is my idea!" said Bunter. "It will only be a bob each for the lot of you. That's not much! I'd stand the five bob myself if my postal order had come. But it hasn't. You fellows stand the cake and I'll do the rest."

"Is that the lot?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Yes. Now let's go and get the cake——"

"Go and eat coke, instead!"

"Oh, all right!" said Bunter calmly. "If you fellows are going to be mean, all right! Other fellows ain't mean. Smithy would stand the five bob like a shot if he knew it was Drake who was in sanny——"

"If you say a word to Smithy, or anybody else, about Drake——" breathed Harry Wharton.

"I don't see how it's to be helped!" explained Bunter. "Smithy don't care two straws about Duck—but he would be fearfully sympathetic if he knew it was Drake! I shall have to tell him, unless you fellows do the right thing! Dash it all, don't be mean—after all, Drake's a pal, and five bob won't be much!"

"What about drowning him in the fountain?" asked Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Boot him all over the quad!" suggested Johnny Bull.

Bunter backed out of reach.

"I say, Squiff," he squeaked, blinking round at Sampson Quincy Itley Field in the distance, "seen Smithy?"

Squiff glanced round.

"In the tuckshop!" he answered.

"Oh! All right!"

Billy Bunter rolled off to the tuckshop.

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged glances—and followed him there! They realised that there was no help for it—if Drake's secret was to be kept!

With deep feelings, they followed William George Bunter into the school shop!

Bunter blinked over the crowd of juniors there.

"I say, you fellows, Smithy here?" he squeaked.

"Here!" answered the Bounder.

"I've got something to tell you, old chap——"

"Tell somebody else!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—— Ow! Who's that grabbing me?" hooted Bunter, blinking round as a grasp fell on the back of his fat neck. "Leggo, Cherry, you beast! I've got something to say to Smithy——"

"What about that cake?" hissed Bob.

"Oh! All right!"

Two minutes later, Billy Bunter rolled out of the tuckshop with one of Mrs. Mible's scrumptious five-shilling cakes packed under a fat arm.

It was improbable that that cake would get very near to the invalid in sanny! It was much more probable



Crocker tore himself from Mr. Lascelles' grasp, and leaped like a tiger at Jack Drake, his manacled hands upraised. "Enough!" said Dr. Locke. "Mr. Lascelles, you will be kind enough to keep guard over that man—Mr. Quelch, will you ring up the police?"

that it would tide Bunter over till the dinner-bell rang!

The fat Owl departed with the cake; and the Famous Five, with really wonderful self-restraint, did not boot him as he departed.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Beastly For Bunter!

"DON'T tell Bunter!"
 "For goodness' sake, don't!"
 "No good his seeing a doctor! He doesn't believe in doctors!"
 "Poor old Bunter!"

"Well, it can't be helped now!"
 Billy Bunter came to a halt outside Study No. 1 in the Remove. It was tea-time, and the door of that study was half-open; and the voices from within told that the Famous Five were all there.

At the words: "Don't tell Bunter," Bunter naturally thought, first of all, of lending a fat ear to that conversation. If there was something they weren't going to tell Bunter, the fat Owl wanted to know what it was.

Luckily they did not seem to have heard him coming! That was, perhaps, a little odd, for Bunter's step was not light; likewise, the ascent of a staircase made him grunt for breath, and his fat grunt announced him like a signature-tune.

Obviously, however—to Bunter—they hadn't heard him, for they were going on talking secrets, oblivious of the fact that he was just outside the half-open door—every word reaching his fat ears.

Bunter could hear through that door. But he could not, of course, see through it. So he remained happily unaware

that five faces were wreathed in grins, though the voices were serious, indeed, awfully solemn.

"But how could it have happened?" asked Nugent.

"Well, accidents will happen, when rat-poison is kept on the same shelf," said Bob Cherry.

"Yes, but how could a bottle of Killequick get mixed up in a cake?"

"Might have got upset, or something."

"What rotten luck for Bunter to get hold of that very cake!"

"Worse still, if he'd really taken it to Drake! Fancy poor old Drake scoffing a dose of Killequick."

"Sure he didn't take it to Drake?" asked Harry Wharton. "He said he was going to, you know."

"That's as good as proof that he wasn't going to."

"Oh! Yes! So it was!"

"Besides, he was all crummy at dinner! Crumbs all over him! And he didn't eat more than as much as any four fellows, so something must have taken away his appetite."

"Poor old Bunter!"

"No good telling him!" said Bob.

"It would frighten him fearfully, as he doesn't think doctors are any good."

"Mayn't do him any harm, after all! Bunter can eat practically anything!" remarked Johnny Bull. "He may get over it."

"Well, I hope so—awful to lose Bunter!"

"The awfulness would be terrific."

Billy Bunter stood outside the door of Study No. 1, rooted! Horror froze him there! This was the awful secret those beasts were keeping from him!

Not for a moment had Bunter suspected that there was anything wrong with that cake! It had been a scrump-

tious cake! It had tasted all right! If Mrs. Mimble had accidentally mixed the contents of a bottle of Killequick with the ingredients of that cake, there was nothing about the flavour to put the consumer on his guard!

Bunter had finished that cake to the last crumb and the last plum! He had enjoyed that cake! He had thought of it since with happy satisfaction. He had hoped that there would be another like it at tea in Study No. 1. If there wasn't, he was prepared to suggest that one should be added to the festive board—and to make that suggestion very firmly.

But now—

"After all, he's not been ill yet, so far as I've noticed!" said Bob. "It may be all right! Ostriches can bolt any old thing, and Bunter's a good bit like an ostrich, you know! If the Killequick was working, he would have some fearful pains—rather like daggers, I think! Well, we should have heard—"

"Yaroooh!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's that?"

"Ow! Help! Send for a doctor! Oh crikey!"

The door of the study was pulled wide open, and Harry Wharton & Co. looked out.

They stared at Bunter, staggering in the passage, with two fat hands pressed to the best-filled waistcoat at Greyfriars School.

"Anything the matter, Bunter?" asked Harry.

"Ooooooh!"

"Not ill, are you?"

"Yooooogh! Help! Send for a doctor!" shrieked Bunter. "I'm pip-pip-pip-poisoned! I'm duddid-dod-dying! Yarooop!"

"Got a pain?" asked Bob.

"Owl! Yes! Like daggers! Wow!"

"Oh crikey!"

Billy Bunter had a fertile imagination. Hitherto, he had felt no pains as a result of eating that cake! But with the belief in his fat head that he had consumed Killequick along with the cake, he immediately imagined pains.

"Like daggers—burning daggers!" yelled Bunter. "Yaroooh! I say, you fellows, help! Will you send for a doctor? Owl! Wow!"

"But you don't believe in doctors, do—"

"Beast!" roared Bunter. "Get a doctor, you rotter! Owl!" Bunter's disbelief in doctors seemed to have vanished all of a sudden! "I say, you fellows, do get a doctor quick! Quick!"

"What on earth's the row?" asked Vernon-Smith, looking out of Study No. 4.

A dozen fellows came out of the studies at Bunter's frantic yells.

"I'm ill!" yelled Bunter. "Smithy, you ain't a beast like those beasts, go and get a doctor, will you?"

"I don't think!"

"Beast! Rotter! Yaroooh! I'm dod-did-dud-dying! Yoo-hoop! Help!" yelled Bunter. "I say, you fellows—Coooooogh!"

"Is anything the matter with him?" asked Skinner.

"Nothing that I know of!" answered Bob Cherry.

"Beast!" roared Bunter. "You know there was Killequick in that cake—I heard you say so! You weren't going to tell me, you beast! Owl!"

"Killequick!" gasped the Bounder.

"Owl! Yes! Mrs. Mible mixed it in the cake! Wow! Owl!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Help! Send for a doctor!" shrieked Bunter. "Owl! I wish I hadn't eaten that cake now! What are you cackling at, you beasts? Help! I'm pip-pip-poisoned! There was Killequick in the cake—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors. They were not likely to believe that statement.

"Owl! Help!"

There seemed to be no help for Bunter on the spot. The Removites were doubled up with merriment. Even the Famous Five, who knew the tragic circumstances, were yelling with laughter like the rest.

Bunter made a rush for the stairs. He had to have help; he had to have a doctor. He careered across the landing yelling.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob. "Bunter, hold on—"

"Beast! I'm going to Quelch— Yaroooh! He will get a doctor— Owl! Wooooo! Ooooh! Beast!"

"Stop, you fathead!" roared Bob.

But Bunter did not stop. He did the Remove staircase two at a time and tore down the lower stairs. There was no stopping Bunter. In his haste he did the last half-dozen stairs in one, and landed with a bump and a roar at the bottom.

But he picked himself up and flew on. It was only a matter of seconds before he was hurling open the door of his Form-master's study; and Mr. Quelch fairly bounded as the door crashed open and a fat Owl hurried in.

"Bunter!" Quelch almost roared.

"Bunter, what—"

"Help!"

"What?" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"I'm pip-pip-pip-pip-pip—"

"Are you out of your senses, Bunter?"

"Owl! No! I'm pip-pip-pip-poisoned—"

"What?" shrieked Mr. Quelch.

"It was in the cake!" howled Bunter

"Mrs. Mible's cake. She mixed a bottle of Killequick with the kik-kik-kik-cake—I've swallowed the lot! I've got burning daggers all over me. Yaroooh! Send for a doctor, sir! Oh, send for a doctor—quick! Owl!"

"Silence!" roared Mr. Quelch.

"Yaroooh!"

Mr. Quelch did not clutch at the telephone to ring up a doctor; he clutched at a cane. He came towards Bunter with that cane in his hand and a perfectly terrifying expression on his face.

"Bunter, you have, as usual, been

eating too much, and you fancy that you are ill—"

"Owl! No! There was Killequick in the cake—"

"Nonsense!" roared Mr. Quelch.

"I heard the fellows say so, sir! Owl! Wow! A whole bottle! Owl!" yelled Bunter. "It was mixed up in the cake—a five-bob cake. And I—I ate it all. Owl!"

"You have eaten a whole five-shilling cake!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "No wonder you feel ill! Be silent!"

"Yaroooh!"

Whack!

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!" roared Bunter. It was not an imaginary pain that he felt when Quelch's cane landed.

"Now be silent!"

"Yooo-hooooop!"

Whack!

"Owl! Oh crikey! Leave off whopping me when I'm pip-pip-pip—"

"There is nothing the matter with you, Bunter, but over-eating," said Mr. Quelch. "Such an accident as you have described cannot possibly have happened; and if you heard anyone say so, it was obviously only a thoughtless jest on a greedy—indeed, disgusting—boy! Now be silent—"

"But—but—but— Oh, really, sir, I—I—" gasped Bunter. "I—I—I wonder if those beasts knew I was outside the door all the time? Oh crikey! Pulling a fellow's leg, the beasts—"

"If you have eaten a whole five-shilling cake, no doubt you do not feel well," said Mr. Quelch. "You must have no tea, Bunter—nothing till supper—"

"Eh?"

"And in order to make sure that you eat nothing for a time I shall give you a detention—"

"What?"

"Come with me!"

"But, I—I—I say, sir, I—I feel better now!" gasped Bunter. "I—I'm hungry, sir. I—I was going to tea with some chaps, sir. They're waiting for me now; they'll miss me, sir—"

"Come with me at once!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh lor'!"

The Remove master marched the fat Owl out of the study and along to the Form-room.

Billy Bunter sat down at his place there in the lowest of spirits. He no longer fancied that he had consumed a bottle of Killequick with that cake; but really his last state was almost as bad as his first.

"I—I—I say, sir—" gasped Bunter.

"You need say nothing, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch. "You will write out the whole of the conjugations of four Latin verbs, one in each conjugation."

"Oh crikey!"

"You will remain in the Form-room until you have done so."

"Oh crumbs!"

"And if you eat anything again before supper I shall cane you most severely!"

"Oh scissors!"

Harry Wharton & Co. did not enjoy Billy Bunter's company at tea. But perhaps they enjoyed his absence; so that was all right.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Lagged At Last!

JACK DRAKE listened, his heart beating quickly. He stood in the blackest darkness.

It was nearly midnight, and the school was silent and sleeping. Long ago the last door had closed, the last light had been extinguished.

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In all the great building no one was wakeful but the schoolboy detective, and perhaps another—another who came with creeping footsteps.

Drake stood in the alcove in Head's corridor, his elbow leaning on the end of the settee there. There was no glimmer of light; he would have been invisible at a foot's distance.

Since the hour of eleven had struck he had been there—silent, patient, watching, wakeful, and making no sound, no movement.

It was the third night that he had kept such a watch. So far it had had no result. But he was prepared to keep it up night after night till the result came—knowing that it must come.

The discovery of the secret passage from the hut on the spinney had made all the difference.

Now he knew the spot at which the prowler entered the school; now he was able to guard the one spot at which the mystery-man broke cover.

Only by that way could the rascal come, and sooner or later he would come—probably rather sooner than later, for with every day that elapsed since his past prowl the secret pilferer was likely to be in more need of pilferings.

He would come; and when he came Drake would be on the spot—now he knew! Two nights he had watched in vain, but now—

That cold which had caused James Duck to be sent into sanny was, as Harry Wharton had guessed, camouflage. In that room in the sanatorium the schoolboy detective slept by day—as he had to watch by night.

From that room, at a late hour, he let himself out by the door on the Head's garden and entered the House by the door on Masters' Passage with a key that made no sound.

Of what he planned and what he expected Mr. Quelch and the Head, so far, knew little; but they gave the schoolboy detective a free hand—all the more willingly because they knew that Ferrers Locke's assistant had made some discovery that gave hope of getting the prowler at last.

Long hours of waiting and watching in the dark were tiresome enough, but Drake had learned patience. Two long nights had crawled by without result. But the prowler would come again—sooner or later he would come—and only patience was needed.

And now, as he stood listening in the dark, Drake heard a faint sound, and knew that his patience was to be rewarded.

It was a faint scuffling sound behind the old oak wall at the back of the alcove. It might have been a rat scuttling; any other ear that had heard it would have taken it for that.

Drake knew that the sound was at the secret panel, and he knew that it was not a rat behind the oak—or, at all events, that it was a human rat! In his mind's eye he could see Randolph Crocker dropping from the cavity in the floor of the old abbot's cell, stealing along the underground passage, mounting the spiral stair in the thick old wall of the corridor, pausing behind the oaken panel, and groping for the spring.

Click!

It was a faint sound, but it was unmistakable. The secret panel in the alcove wall had opened.

The darkness was unbroken; but in the darkness a darker shadow seemed to loom, flitting past the schoolboy detective.

The Greyfriars prowler was on the prowl again.

Drake made no sound, no movement. The shadow flitted by; there was a soft sound of a stealthy footstep.

It died down the corridor; and then Drake stirred, and, without a sound, followed even more silently than that stealthy shadow.

It was not the Head's study that was the prowler's objective this time. He turned from the Head's corridor into the adjoining passage, where the masters' studies were.

Drake stopped at the corner, watching and listening.

A tiny gleam of light from a small flash-lamp sparkled on a door a little way down Masters' Passage—the door of Mr. Prout's study.

The master of the Fifth, so far, had lost nothing to the prowler; now it seemed that he was going to have his turn. If there was anything of value in Prout's study—as very probably there was—it was at the mercy of the prowler.

A faint clicking sound reached Drake. Prout's door was locked—but the lock did not stop the prowler.

The light was shut off; the locked door opened and shut again after the man who had passed into the study. Prout, in his room above, sleeping the sleep of the just, may have been dreaming—but certainly he was not dreaming of what was happening below in his study.

But for the watchfulness of the schoolboy detective, there would have been another pilfering in the night—another spot of exciting news in the morning! But this time Ferrers Locke's assistant was watching, and it was going to be the prowler's last prowl.

Drake tiptoed down the passage towards Prout's study door.

From the keyhole there was a faint glimmer. The light had been turned on in the study. Drake could guess that the window had been carefully covered first. He heard sounds within—faint sounds, but easily recognised—the wrenching open of a locked drawer.

He listened!

Locks did not stop the prowler! Suspicion had once fallen on the Bounder because he had abstracted the key of the Head's study, and that study had been opened with a key by the prowler. But more had been learned since that time. Drake knew that the prowler had opened at least one lock with a skeleton key—though the prowler did not know that he knew.

Just as easily, he could have picked the lock of the desk-drawer that he was now forcing. But he did not choose to do so; his game being to give the impression that the prowling and pilfering were the work of an inmate of the school.

A Greyfriars fellow might have abstracted, or found keys that would open study doors. But no Greyfriars fellow could be supposed to possess keys that would unlock private locks on desk-drawers. Such a fellow would have had to force locks. It was for that reason that the prowler did so. He was leaving no trace behind him that the work was the work of an outside hand!

Crack, crack, came from within the study.

Drake put his eye to the keyhole. He could see across Prout's study—to the figure that was bending over Prout's desk.

That figure was wrapped in a long, dark coat. The face was almost hidden by a muffer bound across it, from the forehead to the upper lip, with eye-holes cut for sight. Under the edge

showed a thick, bristly, ragged moustache that almost hid the mouth.

No one could have recognised the man, if seen. No one could have identified him as the man Drake knew him to be. Secret and stealthy as were his midnight prowlings, the mystery man was on his guard against a sudden flash of light, an eye falling on him by chance.

Bending over an open drawer in the desk, the prowler was groping in its contents.

Drake caught a sudden gleam in the eyes through the cycholes in the muffler.

The thievish hand came out, with a bundle of currency notes in it—and the mystery man stood flicking the edges with his fingers, counting them.

Most of the Greyfriars staff were careful not to leave cash in their studies since the prowler had prowled. But it was like Mr. Prout to be forgetful. It was an unusually rich prize for the prowler. So far as Drake could see, there were fifteen or twenty notes in the wad—possibly intended for Prout's expenses in the Easter vacation, now close at hand.

The little wad of notes disappeared into a pocket. Then the prowler turned to another drawer of the desk, and again there was a cracking sound as it was forced open.

Drake stepped aside from the door. His plans were cut and dried; and there was nothing like fear in his heart. He knew exactly what he was going to do—when the prowler emerged from that study in the dark.

He waited. There was silence in the study again. The glimmer faded from the keyhole; the light had been shut off.

The study door opened softly.

The passage was in thick darkness. In the darkness, there was a loom of a black shadow before the eyes of the schoolboy detective. A clenched fist shot to a stubby chin, and the prowler, taken utterly by surprise, went over backwards with a heavy crash.

He had no time to recover. The schoolboy detective was on him even as he crashed, grasping wrists and dragging them together.

Click!

The man hardly knew he was handcuffed for the moment. Utterly dazed by that sudden jolt from the dark that had up-ended him, he sprawled, panting, gasping, spluttering.

Drake leaped up.

Swiftly he switched on the passage light.

Bright light filled Masters' Passage, dazzling the eyes that glared from the cycholes in the muffler. There was a savage wrenching of manacled hands, and the prowler staggered up—panting, wrenching, wrenching madly.

But he wrenched in vain. The Greyfriars prowler was caught at last, and there was no escape for him.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

The Last Of The Prowler!

"CROCKER!"

"Randolph Crocker!"

"That rascal Crocker!"

The Greyfriars prowler stood leaning against the door of Prout's study, panting. Close by his side stood Larry Lascelles, the games master of Greyfriars, with a hand on his arm.

A call from Drake had brought the games master quickly to the spot.

Then Mr. Quelch had been called—and he had called the Head from his house, with the welcome news that the Greyfriars prowler had been caught. The rest of Greyfriars slumbered on.

Jack Drake whipped the disguising muffler from the rascal's face—revealing Randolph Crocker, the old boy of Greyfriars, white with rage.

"Crocker!" repeated the Head. "Randolph Crocker!"

"Me, you old fool!" snarled Crocker. "Silence, rascal!" said Mr. Quelch sternly.

"Hang you——"
The games master compressed a grip on his arm.

"That will do!" he said. "You!" said the Head. "You, the prowling pilferer—you, who were expelled from this school twenty years ago for pilfering! You!"

Crocker's eyes turned on Jack Drake, with volumes of rage and fury in his look.

Yet he was as much amazed as enraged.

To his eyes, this was James Duck, the sheepish new boy at Greyfriars—yet it was Duck who had lagged him—had clicked the handcuffs on his wrists.

"Crocker!" said Mr. Quelch. There was a grim satisfaction in the Remove master's face. "So the prowling pilferer was Crocker! Drake, I once gave you a detention for visiting that man's hut——"

Drake smiled.

"You did, sir!"
"I had no idea—no suspicion—My dear boy, I must suppose now that you were then on the rascal's track——"

"Yes, sir!"
"You have done well, Drake!" said the Head. "Ferrers Locke will be glad to hear what you have done."

Crocker gave a violent start. Both those names, it was clear, were quite familiar to him.

"Drake!" he repeated hoarsely. "Ferrers Locke! Who is this boy?"

"No secret now, Mr. Crocker!" said Drake, with a cheery grin. "Jack Drake, assistant to Ferrers Locke—at your service!"

"Trapped!" muttered Crocker.

"Quite!" agreed Drake.

"But how," said Mr. Quelch, "how, Drake, did this rascal obtain admittance to the House? Have you discovered how this pilfering rascal was able to come and go undetected?"

"I recall," said Dr. Locke slowly, "I recall, that in Crocker's days here, he was suspected many times of breaking out at night, before the end came—but it could never be proved—and after-

wards I suspected that he might be acquainted with some secret way, one of the secrets of this ancient place, unknown to others. Is that the case, Crocker?"

"Find out!" snarled Crocker.

"No need to find out!" said Jack Drake. "It's found out already. There is a secret passage from the abbot's cell on the spinney, sir, to this House—I searched the hut and found it, on Monday——"

Crocker gritted his teeth.

"On Monday! While——" He choked.

"While my friends kept you in Friar-dale Wood!" smiled Drake. "Exactly, Mr. Crocker! Every night since I've been waiting for you to call."

"If I had my hands loose——" breathed Crocker.

"Shall I ring up the police station at Courtfield, sir, to take this man into custody?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"Certainly!" said the Head.

Crocker gave a sudden start. His voice came hoarsely:

"Dr. Locke, stop! I am an old boy of Greyfriars! You will not hand me over to the police! Think of the name of the school! I will go! I will go at once! You shall never see me again! This very night I will go! Give me this chance!"

Dr. Locke paused. Mr. Quelch's face set grimly. Crocker started forward, his eyes fixed on the headmaster. The rage in his face had given place to terror. He was white as chalk.

"Think of the school!" he panted.

"So long as I go—so long as I never return—is not that enough? Give me one chance! Order that boy to take these handcuffs from my wrists! You shall never see me again—never hear my name!"

The Head looked at Mr. Quelch.

"I—I think——" said Dr. Locke slowly.

The three masters had for the moment forgotten Jack Drake. Now they were reminded of the assistant of Ferrers Locke.

"This man must be handed over to the police, sir!" said Jack Drake, quietly and distinctly.

"Drake!"

"Not only for pilfering in the school, sir," said Drake. "For that alone he must pay the penalty like any other rascal caught breaking the law. But that is not all."

"What else? What do you mean?"

"This man, sir, is Randolph Crocker, an old boy of Greyfriars," said Jack Drake. "But what else he has been in the twenty years since he left the school you do not know—and I do not

know yet. But the police may know when he is in their hands——"

"But——"
"You have believed, sir, that it was from sheer malice, to persecute you for having expelled him so many years ago, that this rogue returned here and set up near the school gates," said Drake. "But I have never thought that that was all. That was a part of his motive——"

"Silence, you!" hissed Crocker.

"But that was, I am assured, only a part," said Drake. "He had more reasons than that—much more powerful reasons—for making himself conspicuous and causing the whole neighbourhood to talk about Randolph Crocker. And his chief reason was that everybody should know that he was Randolph Crocker, so that nobody should guess that he was someone else."

The Head stared.

"I do not understand you, Drake. He is certainly Randolph Crocker, who was well known to me as a Greyfriars boy, and is well known to me now."

"Quite so, sir. But if he has been known in other places under another name—a name by which he is known to the police—you will see why he was so eager to make the name of Randolph Crocker known far and wide."

"Oh!" exclaimed the Head.

"If the police," said Drake, "are looking for a man of another name he is safe from them as Randolph Crocker, and living in a place where a crowd of people know him as Randolph Crocker. And I suspect—more than suspect—that that was his chief motive in coming here at all."

"Oh!" repeated the Head.

"If Mr. Quelch will ring up the police station——" said Drake.

"Certainly!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Once in their hands, they will get at the facts," said Drake. "He would look very different, for instance, with that big moustache shaved off, and——"

Crocker, with a yell of rage, tore himself from the games master's grasp and leaped like a tiger at Drake, his manacled hands upraised.

But he was grasped at once and dragged back, struggling and panting and kicking.

"Enough!" said Dr. Locke. "Mr. Lascelles, you will be kind enough to keep guard over that man. Mr. Quelch, will you ring up the police?"

An hour later Randolph Crocker left his old school once more, and for the last time—sitting in a car, with manacled hands, with a police constable at his side.

And the desperate rage in his face as he went told—if Drake had not suspected it already—that he had a secret which would remain a secret no longer once he was in official hands.

Disaster on the Iron Road!

The crest of the slope swooped up to Dick and Timber, and they topped it with a fierce rush. Then, staring ahead, both gasped at the same moment—and Dick smacked the regulator handle back to zero.

In front was Six-Mile Bridge—and its middle was a tangle of wreckage! They could see the last coach of old Bill's train dipping down into the gap. The engine itself lay on its side, half in water, the remnants of one crushed coach showed back of it.

"Brake!" Dick yelled. "Brake—or we'll be into it!" He grabbed at the vacuum brake lever and smashed it round its little black dial. Nothing happened. The brake was not working!

That's just an extract from the great railway story:

THE WRECK AT SIX-MILE BRIDGE, by Alfred Edgar

You'll find this and five other first-rate stories in this week's MODERN BOY. Remember, that's the paper you've got to ask for—

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THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

The Man Who Was Wanted!

"I SAY, you fellows——"
"We've heard!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"But I say——"
"Don't tell us what we know!"

Greyfriars School was in a buzz of excitement that morning. The Greyfriars fellows had come down to hear startling news.

Everybody knew by this time that the Greyfriars prowler had been caught during the night, and that he was Randolph Crocker, the disreputable old boy of the hut on Abbot's Spinney. The Famous Five knew—or, at all events, they could guess—that it was Jack Drake who had got him. So when Banter rolled up in the quad they did

not want to hear the news from Bunter—they really knew more than Bunter did.

"But I say—" persisted Bunter.
"Don't," grinned Bob. "We know."
"The knowfulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Will you let a fellow speak?" yelled Bunter. "I say—"

"Oh, we know! They've got the prowler," said Johnny Bull.

"And he's jolly old Crocker," said Nugent.

"And he bagged something out of Prout's study, and Prout's no end bucked at getting it back," said Harry Wharton.

"And they've hiked him off to the police station," said Bob.

"And we're done with him for good," said Nugent.

"And the donefulness is a boonful blessing—"

"Will you let a fellow speak?"

roared Bunter. "I wasn't going to tell you about the prowler! Blow the prowler! I was going to ask you about Drake." Bunter got it out at last. "I hear that Duck—I mean, Drake—is out of sanny. Fellow said he saw Drake—I mean, Duck—this morning. Well, if he's out I want to see Drake—I mean, Dake! I want to see him specially!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
The Famous Five roared.

Billy Bunter was still happily unaware that Drake had been at Greyfriars after the prowler. He still had the idea firmly fixed in his fat head that Drake was after that elusive convict, Rupert Crook.

So Billy Bunter was as yet unaware that his knowledge of the schoolboy detective's identity was a chicken that would no longer fight.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" hooted Bunter. "I don't know whether Duck—I mean, Drake—will

come into Form, so I want to see him before the bell rings. It's rather important!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"I mean to say, my postal order won't be here before break," explained Bunter. "So I want to see Drake—"
"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's jolly old Duck!" roared Bob Cherry.

James Duck came out of the House, a cheery grin on his face, and a twinkle in the eyes behind the steel-rimmed glasses.

"You've heard the jolly old news?" he asked.

"Yes, rather! Gratters, old chap!"

"The gratterfulness is terrific!"

"I say, you fellows, do let me speak to the chap! I wish you wouldn't butt in when I want to speak to a chap! I say, Drake—I mean, Duck, of course—he, he, he!—I say, can you let me have

(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.

"HOW many letters do I receive during the week?" asks a MAGNET reader, who signs himself "Inquisitive."

Well, chum, the number varies; but when I tell you that most of the office boy's time is occupied in opening letters, it will give you some idea as to the number that passes through my hands during the course of a week.

Letters reach me from every corner of the earth, some from readers who have newly become "Magnetites," and others from readers of very long standing, and all of them pay tribute to the jolly old paper.

The top letter on to-day's batch comes from "Jimmy" Glead, who writes from Alexandria. Certainly it was most cheery to get his letter. "Jimmy" informs me that he feels it his duty to let me know how popular the MAGNET is in Egypt. "It is appreciated everywhere," he says, "but you have to place an order in advance to make sure of getting a copy!"

Talking of ordering the MAGNET in advance reminds me of the fact that next week's issue will be on sale Thursday, April 6th. This is owing to the Easter Holidays. Make a note of this in your diary, chums!

By the way, have you made up your mind what you are going to do this Easter? Some of you who are fortunate enough will be going away to the seaside or country for a few days. Here's hoping it will keep fine for you! For those less fortunate, who have not the wherewithal to pay for a holiday on these lines, there is no better way than going on

A HIKING TOUR!

You need have no baggage to

bother you. All you want is a haversack in which to carry a few necessities—such as toothbrush, washing utensils, etc.

I well remember when I was a youngster and set off on a long hike. The weather was absolutely ideal, with the result that I slept out for a few nights. The very first evening I ran against a farmer who put me up for the night in a barn. He was a real good sort, and invited me into his house the next morning for breakfast. As a matter of fact, I spent the rest of the day with him, and helped him in the work. His one regret was that I could not stay on with him for a week. No; I had set my mind on hiking, and that was an end to it!

It is fine to see the country like this, chums, and especially to listen to the birds in the early morning. And if you've got your bathing costume with you, and there's a river near at hand, what's better than a dip? It will certainly give you an appetite for breakfast.

During my hike I hardly saw a main road, but stuck to the byways all the time. When I saw a footpath I took it. I knew that the owner of the land would not object, providing I was careful where I walked, and did no damage to his property. It was the cheapest holiday I ever had, and when I at last returned home, I was feeling fit for anything. A walk in the country is about the best reviver to be found. You can take your time over it and enjoy the scenery, while you are taking in fresh and helpful ideas at every turn of the lane. If you only manage to get on the fringe of the country, you can still enjoy a ramble. Put the idea up to a pal and

see what he thinks about it—unless you do as I did and go on your own.

In last week's Chat I gave you the names of the juniors in the Greyfriars Remove. This week I am publishing the names of those in the Fifth Form. Here they are: George Blundell (captain of the Form), Bertram Bland, Horace James Coker, Terrence Fitzgerald, William Frederick Greene, Cedric Hilton, George Potter, Stephen Price, Edward William Smith (major), Thomas Tomlinson, and Frank Wavery. Watch out for the names of the juniors in the other Forms in later issues.

Next week will see the first of a rattling new series of yarns dealing with the Easter Holiday adventures of Harry Wharton & Co., which I am confident will surpass any yet published in the good old MAGNET.

"BILLY BUNTER'S EASTER TRIP!" By Frank Richards

tells of how the Owl of the Greyfriars Remove, by amazing trickery, succeeds in hooking on to Vernon-Smith for the holiday, only to find himself landed and stranded—together with Harry Wharton & Co.—on a desolate island off the Cornish coast. You'll find fun and thrills galore in this grand holiday-adventure yarn.

Dicky Nugent, you will be pleased to learn, has fully recovered from the "writer's kramp." In next week's special edition of the "Greyfriars Herald," you will find another of his thrilling and dramatic tales of the famous characters, Jack Jolly & Co., and Dr. Alfred Birchmell, of St. Sam's. You'll roar with laughter when you read it. Our opening feature under the heading of "My Page," will be taken over by Percy Bolsover, so you can expect something unusual in the way of literary work. Don't miss this tiptop issue, chums! And don't forget the publishing date is Thursday of next week.

Till then, cheerio!

YOUR EDITOR.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,625.

ten bob till break—till my postal order comes, you know?"

"Not at all!" answered Drake, while the famous Five chortled.

"I mean five bob?" said Bunter.

"Not at all!"

"Look here, Drake——"

"Not at all!"

"You silly ass!" hooted Bunter. "Look here, if you ain't going to oblige me, Drake, I ain't going to oblige you! You can't expect it! It's pretty syrupstigious, anyhow——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do stop cackling, you fellows! Now, let's have this plain, Drake! Are you going to oblige me in this small matter, or are you not going to oblige me in this small matter?" demanded Bunter categorically.

"Not at all!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then I'm jolly well not going to keep your syrupstigious secrets!" roared Bunter. "If you can't lend a fellow five bob on a postal order he's expecting in break I shall jolly well go to Smithy, and say—— Yarooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Leggo my ear!" yelled Bunter. "You beast! Leggo my ear! I say, Smithy—Toddy—Oggy—Squiff—I say, Dake's Druck—I mean, Drake's Duck—I mean—— Yarooooop!"

"You can tell the jolly old world now, if you like, old fat man!" chuckled Jack Drake. "While you're about it, mention that I booted you!"

"Ow! Leggo!"

Jack Drake twirled the fat Owl round by a fat ear. Then a boot landed on the tightest trousers at Greyfriars with what a novelist would call a dull, sickening thud.

Bunter flew.

"Don't go!" roared Bob Cherry. "Have another with me, Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter did not stop for another. "So it's all right now, old bean!" said Harry Wharton. "Case complete—and everybody satisfied—excepting Crocker!"

"Right as rain!" said Drake. "The police have got him now—and I've a pretty strong suspicion that he will turn out to be somebody they've been wanting—under some fancy name that he

dropped when he came back here as an old boy! Anyhow, I'm through here—sorry to say good-bye to you chaps—I've got to get back to work while you fellows play."

"Play!" said Bob Cherry indignantly. "It's maths this morning——"

Jack Drake chuckled.

"Then I've wound up the case just in time!" he said. "By the way, I've asked Quelch if my friends can see me off at the station—so if you fellows aren't fearfully keen on first lesson——"

"Are we, you men?" asked Bob.

"First lesson being maths, of course we are!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "But we'll cut it!"

"The cutfulness will be terrific!"

"Yes, we'll cut even maths, much as we love 'em, to see you off, old bean!" said Johnny Bull.

Which the Famous Five did, to the general satisfaction.

Jack Drake's task at Greyfriars was done; and James Duck was no longer seen in the Remove.

In the Form-room that morning his place was vacant—neither was he seen when the Remove came out in break.

Billy Bunter had told his startling tale far and wide—and everybody wanted to see Duck; but there was no Duck to be seen. By that time, Jack Drake had rejoined his chief in Baker Street—ready once more to take the trail of the elusive Rupert Crook—but finding, to his surprise and satisfaction, that that trail was already at an end.

HARRY WHARTON & Co. got the news on Tom Brown's radio.

Brown had his radio in the Rag, after class, and turned on the news, which made the fellows jump when they heard it.

"The convict Rupert Crook——" came through in the announcer's voice.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"I say, that's the man Drake was after—I told you so——"

"Fathead!"

"The convict Rupert Crook has been captured!" went on the drone from the radio. "It transpires that for a considerable time past he has been living

in a quiet corner of Kent, under the name of Randolph Crocker——"

"What!"

"Great pip!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Phew!"

"Crocker!"

"Shut up and listen!"

"Crocker appears to be the man's real name!" went on the radio. "It was under the name of Rupert Crook that he was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment at Highmoor for burglary and other offences! His disappearance since his escape from prison is explained by the fact that he returned to a place where he was known under his real name, and he was apparently caught pilfering under that name——"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Listen!"

"Once in the hands of the police, his identity as Rupert Crook was established, and he has now been sent back to Highmoor. We shall now give the speech of Mr. Diddle, the honourable member for Doodlebury——"

Tom Brown shut off the radio. Nobody wanted to hear the speech of the honourable member for Doodlebury.

"Crocker!" said Bob. "Crook! So that was his game! And nobody knew—and Drake got him. Ferrers Locke was after him, but Drake got him—he came here after the prowler, and got the jolly old convict!"

"Oh, he was after the convict!" said Bunter. "I told you so! I jolly well know——"

"Fathead!"

"I tell you I jolly well know——"

"Ass!"

"I jolly well—— Beast! If you buzz that cushion at me, I'll—— Yarooooop!"

Whatever Billy Bunter had, or hadn't jolly well known, there was no doubt on one point—the schoolboy detective had got the wanted man!

THE END.

(Don't miss "BILLY BUNTER'S EASTER TRIP!" by Frank Richards, the opening yarn of a grand new series dealing with the exciting Easter holiday adventures of Harry Wharton & Co. You'll find it in next Thursday's MAGNET.)

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YOUR EDITOR— HARRY WHARTON— CALLING!

Are you any good at solving codes, chums? If you are, I could certainly have done with you in the editorial office this week!

The puzzle began when I received the following message on a slip of paper from an anonymous correspondent:

*"Midplay sure sand pal I says the
wee mayor home,
Beat a vree oh hum bull the snow
plays lie comb."*

I read and re-read that mysterious message. Puzzle over it as I would, I could not read sense in it. And yet there was something about it that was vaguely familiar. What was it?

Before I had arrived at the solution I received another strange note which read as follows:

*"The boasted oh nether burn in
dyke,
When Saul butt hymn add fayed,
Thief lame the tell litter bat till's
reck
Shown row dim oar herd head."*

I pondered and pondered over that remarkable effusion. Not a ray of light could I get on it, and yet again there was something vaguely familiar about it!

Then came this third weird and wonderful composition:

*"Ever alpha the will yum, they
hangman's head,
Aren't yore hairy speak umber
he wait;
Auntie ate chewing Sesame's tandem
you red—
Jew thing cat you ray jitters
vute?"*

Where had I heard those lines before? Somewhere, I felt sure—

and yet they seemed just completely mad!

In a state of irritation and bewilderment I showed all three notes to my editorial assistants.

Bob Cherry, Tom Brown, Frank Nugent, and Dick Russell puzzled over them for a long time without arriving anywhere. Even Nugent minor, who takes plenty of liberties with the English language himself, had to admit defeat.

And then I dragged in Vernon-Smith.

The Bounder can always be relied on to see things in a twisted way. He glanced at the notes and grinned.

"Can't you think of anything harder?" he inquired.

"You don't mean to say you've rumbled them already?" I asked, rather nettled. The Bounder nodded.

"Why not? The first, of course, is 'Home, Sweet Home!'"

"Wh-a-a-at?"

"Mid pleasures and palaces though
we may roam,
Be it ever so humble, there's no place
like home."

"Quite simple," grinned Smithy. "You just take the sound of the words and turn them into other words. See?"

"Great Scott!" I gasped.

I glanced through the first note again. I could see at once that Smithy was right. "Midplay sure sand" was "Mid pleasures and"—and so on! I could see now why it had been so familiar to me!

"The second one," went on Smithy, "is, of course, 'The Boy



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April 8th, 1939.



LOOKING BACKWARD—A GREAT FOOTER SEASON!

By VERNON-SMITH

Now that the tumult and the shouting have died down, and we've got used to being League champions, we can look back on the past season with a calm, judicial eye and size up its most interesting points.

The most noteworthy feature about the completed championship table, I think, is the wide discrepancy between the records of the teams at the top and those at the bottom.

Greyfriars, at the top, finished up with 30 points. Clarendon, at the foot, had a mere 8. The difference is quite a startling one and its reality is confirmed by the respective goal averages of the two teams.

Another matter of great interest to students of footer form is the remarkable consistency with which runs of good or bad luck tend to persist once they get started. In the middle of the season, for instance, St. Jude's played seven losing games right off the reel. Yet out of their last eight games, they lost only one!

Abbotsford, again, played their first seven games without earning themselves a single point. Yet they lost but one game out of the next eleven matches!

Abbotsford, by the way, share with Clarendon the distinction of having drawn one-third of their matches. At the other end of the table, St. Jim's played only one drawn game out of the eighteen.

The biggest score of the season was our 8-0 against Abbotsford on Little Side. Next best was also ours, on the occasion when we defeated Redclyffe to the tune of 7-1 on the Redclyffe ground.

The most dramatic reversal of form was probably Rylcombe's 2-1 win over the Greyfriars team at Greyfriars—a result that staggered everybody and nearly cost us the championship!

One of the most promising teams in the first half of the season was Bagshot. Out of their first eight games, Bagshot collected no less than 13 points—a total that would have gained them first place in most league tables and only failed to do so in this case because of the non-stop run of successes achieved by St. Jim's and ourselves. Bagshot deteriorated a little during the second half of their league programme and suffered a number of somewhat heavy defeats that sadly altered the look of their handsome early-season goal average. They finished up an easy fourth on the table with 21 points—which may be regarded as very satisfactory, due allowance being made for the high percentages achieved by Greyfriars and St. Jim's.

Rookwood finished up third with 24 points and their record speaks for itself. They made a moderate start, losing three games out of the first five on their fixture list; but a smashing 4-0 win at Rylcombe put them in the winning vein and after that they never looked back.

Looking through the season's results, I find that on the whole the old rule still held good—teams mostly won at home and lost away. I should mention, however, that not one team in the league remained unbeaten on their own native heath.

Three teams were beaten only once at home—Greyfriars by Rylcombe Grammar School, St. Jim's by Greyfriars, and Rookwood by St. Jim's.

Well, that's about all there is to be said about it, you sports! We now ring down the curtain on the footer season. Looking back on it, I think we can truly say that it was a great one.

Stood on the Burning Deck!"

"Yo gods! Is it?"

"The boy stood on the burning
deck,
Whence all but him had fled;
The flame that lit the battle's wreck
Shone round him o'er the dead."

"Got the idea?" grinned Smithy. "My hat! And the third?"

"Oh, that's from 'Alice in Wonderland,'" Smithy answered carelessly. "You remember the lines:

"You are old, Father William,"
The young man said,
'And your hair has become very
white;
And yet you incessantly stand on
your head—
Do you think, at your age, it is
right?'"

HOBBIES UP TO DATE

Cigarette Cards Is One of 'Em Says HAROLD SKINNER

To start a collection of cigarette cards, all you have to do is to stand at the bottom of the School House steps, poorly clad, and ask the passers-by: "Please, sir, have you got any cigarette cards?"

Within half an hour, you should

"Great pip! I see it all now!" I gasped. "Thanks very much, Smithy. You're awfully clever."

"Don't mention it!" grinned the Bounder. "I wonder who sent them in?"

I wondered, too, for a time. Eventually I decided that it must have been Vernon-Smith himself! Of course, he wouldn't admit it. He only said, "Now, I wonder why you should think such a thing as that?"

Smithy shows a weird sense of humour at times, but never has he shown a weirder sense of humour than on this occasion!

Try working out one or two for yourselves, now. It's quite a lark—but there are no prizes offered. I'm afraid!

More chinwag next week, chums!
HARRY WHARTON.

have the basis of a good collection in your pockets!

It's really surprising how easily old-boiled beaks fall for this innocent plea. It must remind

them, I think, of their long lost youth.

When I tried it on one day, the first person that chanced along was the Head himself.

"Please, sir," I whined, "have you got any cigarette cards?"

The Head stopped. I saw a kindly tear glimmer in his eye.

"Why, certainly, my little lad," he said; and his lips trembled as he spoke. "Take it and wolf it!"

He dropped a card into my open palm, patted me on the head, and then hurried away, sighing deeply, as he went.

A little later, Mr. Quelch appeared.

"Got any fag cards, guv'nor?" I asked. "Give us one. Go on!"

I saw a lump rise in his throat—saw it with my own eyes!

"Granted as soon as asked!" he muttered, with a strangled sob. "Here—take them both!"

He detached a couple of cards from his notecase, pressed them into my hand, and fled.

After years of patient effort, I now have cigarette cards in my desk, locker, study cupboard, trousers pockets, and almost everywhere else I can think of.

The value of them must be enormous. I have refused more than one offer of five shillings. But money doesn't come into it when you get a collection like mine. I shall turn every offer down, unless someone comes along who's prepared to go up to seven-and-sixpence.

Look out for more thrilling articles on hobbies from my inspired pen!

THEY TELL HIM HE'S WILLIAM TELL!

Is Fifth Bowman A Wonder-Shot?

William Greene of the Fifth has been practising like mad with his bow and arrows.

The Fifth say he's an absolute wonder at it.

"Man's a marvel—no getting away from it!" Bland told a "Greyfriars Herald" representative last week. "Talk about William Tell shooting an apple off his young hopeful's napper! Why, William Greene could knock spots off him!"

"Draw it mild!" our representative protested. "Why, dash it all, man, William Tell's exploit stands supreme as the world's greatest feat of marksmanship! You're not seriously saying that Greene's as good?"

"Absolutely!" replied Bland, quite cheerfully. "If you don't believe me, trot down to Big Side this afternoon and see for yourself. Just to prove it, he's going to shoot an apple off Potter's head!"

The invitation was too good to be

declined. That afternoon, our representative duly turned up to watch the wonder bowman.

Surrounded by admiring friends, Greene was examining his bow. Potter had already taken his stand about 50 yards distant.

To listen to Greene's friends, you would have thought there was no possible chance of Greene missing his mark. But Potter had taken precautions just in case of accidents. He was dressed in a suit of armour, with the visor pulled well down over his face.

Greene swaggered forward, simply oozing self-assurance. He lifted his bow, fixed an arrow, drew it back, took careful aim, and then fired.

The arrow whistled through the air amid an admiring buzz from Greene's pals.

It would be nice to say that it



went through the apple like a knife going through butter.

But truth compels us to state that it didn't!

Amazing as it must have seemed to Greene's friends, that arrow actually missed the apple—missed it completely!

Of course, it wasn't far out. Well, not very far, anyway. To be accurate, it finished up in the trunk of a tree about 20 yards to the right of Potter.

Leaving Greene busily preparing to fire another shot, our representative hurriedly left. It occurred to him that he might be safer indoors.

Greene may be a wonder-bowman—but you never can tell!

BEAKS DISLIKE EASTER EGGS? BOSH!

Declares BILLY BUNTER

When chaps tell me that schoolmasters don't like Easter eggs, it really makes me lark. You can take it from me, dear readers, that such a statement is sheer bosh!

I've had one or two illuminating eggperiences lately, and I can speak with a nollidge of the facts. And you can take my word for it that there is nothing in which the greed of our so-called masters is more clearly shown than in this matter of Easter eggs.

Take Quelch. Now the average Remove chap will tell you that Quelch suffers from india-gestion. Nothing on earth, he will assure you, would induce Quelch to touch a chocklit Easter egg.

Bosh! That's my answer! When Quelch caught me fetching one of Uncle Clegg's threepenny chocklit cream eggs out of my desk the other morning, the greed in his eyes was positively sickening.

He faredly licked his chops when he came slinking over to me. He pounced on that Easter egg like a tiger pouncing on its prey.

"This article of konfiscation is konfiscated, Bunter!" he said, with a gloating leer. And he took it back to his desk in triumph and proceeded to gobble it up ravenously!

The other fellows all say he didn't touch it. They tell me that what he was gobbling up was an india-gestion tablet. They can tell that to the marines! I know better!

Then there's old Prout. One day last week, when I was in the tuckshop, trying to eggplain to Mrs. Mimble how grate businesses have been built up on credit, in comes Prout and buys a whacking grate egg filled with simply scrumptious sweets. Bolcove it or not, he paid seven-and-sixpence for it!

"It's for my young nephew, Mrs. Mimble!" he said. "I intend to send it on to him by post!"

His young nephew, you know! What a yarn! I followed him to his study, just to prove to myself that he wasn't sending it off to this vaunted nephew of his. Did he emerge later on, with the egg tied up in a parcel, ready for posting? Not likely!

When he came out, his hands were empty. "You greedy old fogey!" I murmured to myself. "Fancy inventing a blessed nephew, just to cover up your own greed-iness! You jolly well deserve to lose that egg!"

And, just to teach the old josses a lesson, I ventered into his study and nabbed the egg!

A lass! Before I could get away with it, old Prouty returned—and copped me properly!

You'll never konvince me that any sane man would go into the fearful rage that seized Prout just then merely on account of an Easter egg intended for his nephew! When a chap loses his temper like Old Prout did, you can bet your life he's thinking of his own tuck—not his blessed nephew's!

Prout marched me off to Quelch with a merciless grip on my ear. Quelch gave me six. I suppose he had a fellow feeling towards old Prouty. It was a case of one Easter egg skoffor simperthising with another!

Since that unforchunit affair I have made it my business to find out the attitude of the beaks generally to Easter eggs. What I have discovered, dear readers, is enuff to shock the conscience of the civilised world. In the last fortnite, there is not a Greyfriars master who has not konfiscated at least a cupple of Easter eggs a day!

Using Up Your Hot Cross Buns!

What do you do with your surplus hot cross buns, after the season has finished? Be honest, now!

Eh? You sling them away into the waste-paper basket? Coward! Why don't you face up to your dilemma like a man and make up your mind to find a use for these discarded delicacies?

Let your Uncle Bob bring his mighty brain to bear on the problem and offer you some bright solutions. Here goes!

Solution No. 1. Use them as paper-weights. Tastefully painted and varnished, hot cross buns make a sensible

What do you suppose has happened to that vast haul? I wouldn't mind betting, if you had peeped into Masters' Common-room any nite in the last two weeks, you would have seen the beaks gorging away to there harts' content on konfiscated chocklit eggs!

Beaks dislike Easter eggs, indeed! It makes me lark to think about it—a grim, hollow, merthless, sardonick lark! That yarn may be all right for some chaps; but for a braney chap like me, it's not quite good enuff!

When he came out, his hands were empty. "You greedy old fogey!" I murmured to myself. "Fancy inventing a blessed nephew, just to cover up your own greed-iness! You jolly well deserve to lose that egg!"

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and ornamental addition to any fellow's desk.

Solution No. 2. Cut slits in the surface of the bun, which can then be utilised as a pen-nib wiper.

Solution No. 3. Store them in heaps on the study mantel-piece, and you will always have something to throw at Coker when he calls.

Solution No. 4. Stick them on the wall round your dart-board. They will provide useful protection for the wallpaper.

Solution No. 5. Nail them to your shoes. They make a ripping substitute for rubber heels.

Solution No. 6. Soak them in paraffin and use as fire-lighters.

Well, I think that will do to go on with.

