

"THE SHYLOCK OF GREYFRIARS!"

Remarkable complete story of Harry Wharton & Co.—inside.

No. 1,110. Vol. XXXV.

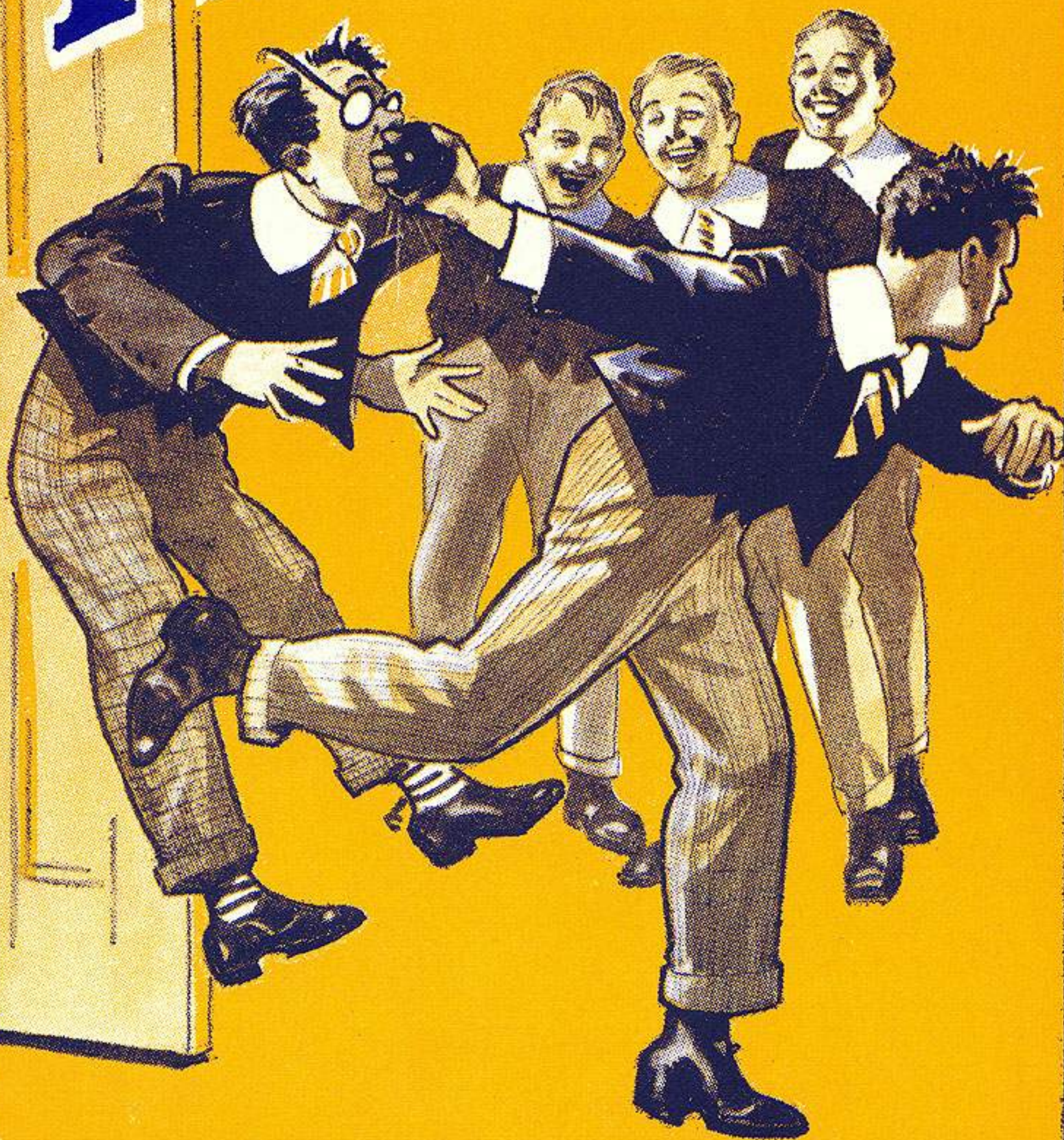
Week Ending May 25th, 1929.

The Magnet

LIBRARY

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EVERY SATURDAY.



RIGHT ON THE "WICKET"!

Inside you will find a delightful story of school life and adventure dealing with Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars. Sensation, humour and drama, blended admirably, go to make this yarn the "best of the week!"



Come Into the Office, Boys!

Always glad to hear from you, chums, so drop me a line to the following address:
The Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House,
Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

NOTE.—All Jokes and Limericks should be sent to
c/o "Magnet," 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.).

TO kick off with, chums, here's a clever limerick for which Hugh McKinnon, of 103, Rudvale Street, Glasgow, has been awarded a useful leather pocket-wallet:

In the Remove at Greyfriars School,
There's a fellow who's reckoned no fool.
He's straightforward and strong
And seldom is wrong,
When judging a fellow—that's Bull!

A peculiar fate seems to pursue me every time I sit down to write this weekly chat to my chums. Someone always seems to want to come into my office and have a yarn with me, or else show me a trick or catch. This morning it was Carney Allan, who fished out a pack of cards from his pocket.

"Take these two cards and have a look at them," he said, thrusting the nine of spades and the ten of clubs into my hands. "Seen them? Right! Put them in different positions in the pack." I did so. "Now watch!" he said, and placed the pack down on my desk. He made a pass over the pack and tapped it with his fingers. "Now take off the top two cards in the pack, and you'll find that the two cards which you placed in different positions have come together again at the top of the pack!"

He was right! And he had absolutely beaten me! How it was wangled, I couldn't tell, but I thought it would be an excellent trick to pass along to you fellows, and I got him to explain to me how it was done. The explanation is ridiculously simple. The cards he had given me were the nine of spades and the ten of clubs, but the cards he took from the top of the pack were the nine of clubs and the ten of spades, which he had previously placed there. But nine people out of ten don't notice that the suits are different. Try the trick on your chums. You'll get them guessing.

ANOTHER CLEVER TRICK

which Carney Allan showed me was this: He took a matchstick and wrapped it in a handkerchief, which he gave me to hold. "Now smash the match," he said, and when I had done so, asked me if I was sure about it. I told him I was. "Right," he said, and unrolled the handkerchief. There was the match absolutely whole. This is how this trick was done. Before he came into my office he had placed another matchstick into the hem of his handkerchief. When he flourished the handkerchief to show it was empty, I did not see the other stick, naturally, because it was in the hem. But when he threw the handkerchief over the matchstick which I had given him, he was careful to bring up the hem and give me the matchstick which was there, to break. Consequently, the second matchstick was unbroken, and was revealed to sight when the handkerchief was unfolded. But the broken pieces of the other were in the hem. It's quite a good little trick, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1110.

and I can see some of you fellows getting the reputation of being wizards—so long as you don't try the tricks on any fellows who have also read this chat of mine.

If you are

INTERESTED IN AVIATION

make a note in your diary this week against Tuesday, May 21st, for it was on this day, two years ago, that Lindbergh flew from New York to Paris. I have always admired Lindbergh. There was no hanky-panky about him! He set out to do a thing, and he did it, without any flourish of trumpets, or banging of the big drum. I reckon that flight of his will live long in history. He is only a youngster, too—young enough to have been reading the MAGNET a few years ago. I hope some of you "Magnetites" are going to do equally wonderful things in a few years' time.

Now for a laugh with R. R. Cusworth, of 12, Montague Street, Thornaby-on-Tees, Yorks, who has sent in the following amusing joke for which he has earned a MAGNET pocket-knife.

Professor (seated at his desk in front of the class): "Why don't you answer me, boy?"

Scholar: "I did, sir. I shook my head."

Professor: "But you don't suppose I can hear it rattle from here, do you?"

Are you interested in wireless? Then you'll also be interested in

ESKIMO WIRELESS

which forms the basis of a question put to me this week by Tom Gordon, of Scarborough. What is Eskimo wireless, he wants to know? It is a thing which we civilised people cannot explain, but Arctic explorers vouch for the fact that the Eskimos sometimes know a thing which is happening hundreds of miles away. Kaffirs possess the same uncanny ability, and there is a case on record of a traveller in the bush, with not a living soul within a hundred miles of his camp. Yet one of his Kaffir hunters told him that the English were going to fight the Boers. When the traveller reached civilisation again, he found that war had broken out on the very day that the Kaffir had told him. One of these days, perhaps, we shall know the explanation of "Eskimo wireless." Until then, it remains "wropped in mystery."

Really, you fellows are bowling me out this week. Here's another question which I can't answer:

WHERE DID THE AUSTRALIANS COME FROM?

I presume that Harry Donald, of Peckham, who asks the question, means the aborigines of that continent, and, if that is the case, neither I nor anyone

else can tell him. They made the journey to Australia in boats, and they took with them domesticated dogs, whose descendants survive to-day in the dingoes. They also took the boomerang with them, and the curious thing is that the boomerang was also known in Ancient Egypt. But I should not imagine that the Blackfellows of Australia have any connection with Egypt.

FREE GIFTS!

Of course, you are collecting the spanking series of coloured picture cards dealing with mechanical mysteries and

MARVELS OF THE FUTURE

which are being presented FREE with our companion paper, the "Gem Library"? This week's free picture card, No. 6 in the series, depicts a

GIGANTIC AIR LINER,

another dream of the future, and it's a real corker. Don't fail to add this card to your set, chums.

The next question this week concerns diamonds. G. T., of Walmer, wants to know if the famous Koh-i-noor diamond is

THE LARGEST DIAMOND

that has been discovered? No, it is not. That distinction belongs to the Excelsior diamond, which was discovered in South Africa. Before it was cut it weighed 971 carats, and was worth a million pounds. But the difficulty of getting a purchaser for it at that price was too great, and therefore the diamond was cut into nine smaller gems. The Koh-i-noor diamond, which was found in India, weighed 800 carats before it was cut, but had cutting brought its weight down to 103 carats.

There is just time to answer

ONE MORE QUESTION,

which comes from J. Green, of Nottingham, before we pass on to other things. This reader wants to know where he can buy a chameleon, and if it will make a good pet. He should write to one of the big London stores, for nearly all of them have a pets' department, and can usually supply any kind of pet. Chameleons are quite easy to keep in summer, but in winter their cages must be kept warm. Their food largely consists of insects.

Now for next week's record-breaking programme. Topping the list is a first-rate story of Harry Wharton & Co., the chums of Greyfriars, entitled:

"THE PREFECT'S PLOT!"

By Frank Richards.

To divulge the said plot at this juncture would, of course, be to spoil the story, and this I do not intend to do. But I will say this much that you'll all agree it's one of the finest yarns the good old MAGNET has ever published, and that's saying something!

Next, you'll meet our old friend, Dr. Birchmell, in a new and screamingly funny "Movie" series. Hold yourself in readiness for

"FILM STRUCK!"

By Dicky Nugent

and one long, continuous roar of laughter. Then comes another gripping instalment of

"SPEEDWAY PALS!"

By Carney Allan,

our thrilling dirt track serial, and the grand finale will be another cheery "Come Into the Office, Boys." See that you order this bumper bill o' fare early, chums.

YOUR EDITOR.

MEET THE CHUMS OF GREYFRIARS IN THIS SPARKLING STORY, BOYS!

THE SHYLOCK

OF

GREYFRIARS!

A complete yarn of schoolboy frolic and adventure,
By FRANK RICHARDS.



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Ungrateful!

"CRICKET?" asked Billy Bunter. His fat lip curled. From the eager buzz of talk that was going on in Study No. 1 in the Remove, at Greyfriars, any fellow might have supposed that a topic of importance was under discussion.

It was close on tea-time.

Billy Bunter, coming along the Remove passage and hearing that buzz of voices, naturally supposed that Harry Wharton was discussing an important matter—and at the approach of tea-time the only matter of importance, of course, was tea.

Bunter was quite willing to join in a discussion on that subject. It was a subject in which he was deeply interested. So he opened the door and inserted a fat face and a pair of large spectacles into the study.

His disgust may be, as a novelist would express it, better imagined than described when he found that the topic in Study No. 1 was only cricket. Merely that and nothing more!

His fat lip curled, and he sniffed.

"Our bowlers——" Bob Cherry was saying.

"Their bowlers——" Johnny Bull was remarking at the same moment.

"Their bowlfulness——" Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was beginning.

"Cricket!" snorted Bunter. "You fellows seem to talk of nothing else! I say, you fellows——"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"I say, what about tea?"

"Nothing about tea," said Harry Wharton. "Buzz off! About the bowling, you men, I don't think Highcliffe have any pull over us. We've got Inky——"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Dry up!" hooted Frank Nugent.

"And Toddy's good, and so's Smithy——" went on the captain of the Remove.

"Toddy's gone out," said Bunter.

Wharton glanced round.

"What does that matter, fathead? He will be back before we play Highcliffe next Wednesday, I suppose."

"I mean, he's gone out, and left nothing in our study for tea," explained Bunter. "You know how selfish Toddy is. He doesn't seem to think that I want any tea!" said Bunter indignantly. "Looks as if I shall have to tea in Hall, unless you fellows come to the rescue!"

"We're teaing in Hall ourselves," grinned Bob Cherry. "Nothing doing, old fat bean! Nobody to be done!"

Billy Bunter's fat face fell.

"And you're talking cricket, when there's nothing for tea!" he ejaculated scornfully. "Talk about Pontius Pilate fiddling while Moscow was burning!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I can tell you I'm hungry!" said Bunter warmly. "I was relying on you

shrieked Bunter. "Don't be so frivolous, Wharton."

"So whatter?" ejaculated the captain of the Remove.

"Frivolous! It's frivolous to discuss trifling things when there's an important matter on hand. I believe you fellows would be talking about games if the sky was falling!" hooted Bunter. "Look here, I've got an idea to get a spread for tea, and I'm not keeping it to myself. As you know, I always think of others first——"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Great pip!"

"Naturally, I thought of my old pals," said Bunter. "If you'll chuck talking rot and be serious for a moment, I'll tell you about it. I suppose you fellows don't want to tea in Hall."

"Not specially," agreed Bob Cherry. "Well, what's the big idea? Cut it short!"

The Famous Five of the Remove gave Bunter their attention.

Funds were low in Study No. 1, and tea in Hall never was very attractive. It was the last resource of the stony; and the fact that it could be had for nothing appealed to

nobody in the Remove, except perhaps Fisher T. Fish. If the Owl of the Remove had a suggestion to make, the Famous Five were willing to give him a hearing.

"It's a real corker!" said Bunter. "You fellows would never have thought of it. Brain, you know! It flashed into my brain——"

"There was plenty of room for it!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"Beast! Now look here," said Bunter. "Queelch's having some of the prefects to tea in his study."

"He won't ask us along with Sixth-Form men, ass!"

"I know that! He sent Ogilvy to the tuckshop for some stuff," said Bunter. "You know, he gives a fellow a note to Mrs. Mimble when he sends for things. But suppose he found that he wanted something extra—it's likely enough, with greedy fellows like Wingate and

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The loss of a penny is as painful to Fisher T. Fish as the extraction of a troublesome tooth. So you can guess what he feels like when he incurs a loss of two shillings!

fellows. I've been disappointed about a postal-order."

"For the first time in your life?" asked Bob Cherry sympathetically.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, what's going to be done?" demanded Bunter.

"Not us!" answered Bob.

"Well, I'm jolly well not going to tea in Hall!" said Bunter discontentedly. "Door-steps and dish-water disagree with me. All very well for you fellows. But a fellow who comes from a luxurious home expects something decent! I say, you fellows——"

"When it comes to batting——" said Harry Wharton.

"For goodness' sake, chuck that rot for a minute!" roared Bunter. "I keep on telling you it's tea-time! Look here, I've got an idea."

"We've got plenty of good batsmen——"

"Will you listen to a fellow?"

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Loder to tea—well, he calls the nearest chap, see, and sends him to fetch, say, a big cake——”

“Well?” said Bob. “I don’t see——”

“You wouldn’t!” said Bunter. “Well, suppose Wharton goes to the tuckshop, just as if Quelchy had sent him in a hurry—too great a hurry to stop and write another note—see? He says Quelchy has sent him for a ten-shilling cake. Mrs. Mimble is bound to think it’s all right, as Quelchy has already been sending for stuff. Wharton can say he’s dropped the note, if she asks him——”

“I can?” ejaculated Wharton.

“Yes; and the other chaps can be with you, and they can bear witness that they saw you drop it——”

“Oh, my hat!”

“Very likely she won’t ask you; but if she does that will stuff her,” explained Bunter. “I’ve thought it all out. I’m rather diplomatic, you know. In fact, I think I shall very likely go into the Diplomatic Service when I leave Greyfriars——”

“I think you ought!” gasped Bob Cherry. “I think that’s about the place for you—if you can keep out of chokey!”

“Oh, really, Cherry! I don’t expect gratitude, but you might thank a fellow for thinking about you like this!” said Bunter. “We bag the cake. Those ten-shilling cakes are ripping. Not so good as those I get from Bunter Court, of course, but jolly good, all the same. Now old Quelchy won’t find it out for days and days. By that time my postal-order will have arrived, and Wharton can go and pay for the cake just as if Quelchy had sent him with the money—see? Then Quelchy won’t find it out at all. Easy as falling off a form!”

The Famous Five gazed at Bunter. Harry Wharton seemed to experience some difficulty in speaking for a moment or two.

“You—you—you——” he gasped. “So I’m to go to Mrs. Mimble and tell her a string of lies, and these fellows are to back me up, and we’re to be found out when your postal-order doesn’t come——”

“Oh, it will come all right!” said Bunter. “I’ve been expecting it for quite a long time. I think you’d better go, Wharton. I’d go myself, only—only Mrs. Mimble doesn’t take my word! She’s suspicious! You know how suspicious and sordid these shopkeepers are!” said the Owl of the Remove sorrowfully. “Mrs. Mimble has actually doubted my word more than once—actually said so. She’d be bound to ask me for a note from Quelchy. She mightn’t ask you, Wharton, but if she does, all the other fellows can say they saw you drop it——”

The Famous Five rose to their feet.

“That’s right,” said Bunter approvingly. “No good wasting time. Strike the iron while it’s hot, you know. Seize the opportunity—— Yarooooooh!”

Harry Wharton & Co. did not seize the opportunity.

They seized Bunter.

The fat junior was swept off his feet in the grasp of five pairs of hands, and landed on the study floor with a loud concussion.

Bump!

“Whoooooop!” roared Bunter.

“Give him another!”

“I say, you fellows——”

Bump!

“Yoooooooooooop!”

“Time we got down to tea,” remarked Bob Cherry; and the Famous Five left

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the study and strolled away to the stairs. And the voice of William George Bunter followed them on its top note:

“Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow-ow!”

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Fisher T. Fish Plunges!

“SIX, I guess!” said Fisher T. Fish. That remark did not mean that Fishy was uncertain of the number and was guessing at it. He knew that he wanted six tarts. He was merely speaking the language of his native land.

Mrs. Mimble proceeded to sort out six large and luscious jam-tarts. Fisher T. Fish watched her with a thoughtful brow and a searching eye.

It was uncommon for Fisher T. Fish to stand himself anything like a spread in his study. Food at Greyfriars School was paid for, and a fellow who did not turn up at a meal was losing something for which cash had been paid—an impossible thing to Fisher Tarleton Fish. Tea in the study was all very well if the school footed the bill; but the school didn’t. Tea in the study, therefore, was of no use to Fisher T. Fish. His private opinion was that the Head allowed tea in the study in order to save expense in catering, and net a little extra profit. Fishy could understand that; it was what he would have done himself had he been a schoolmaster. What he couldn’t understand was fellows falling into so obvious a snare. But Fishy had long ago discovered that the poor little island in which he now sojourned was populated by the world’s prize boobs.

The school tea in Hall was plain and wholesome—quite wholesome and very, very plain. Every fellow above the Third was allowed to tea in his own quarters if he liked, at his own expense. It was a highly-prized privilege, and no fellow ever tea’d in Hall except in stony periods! Except Fishy! Fishy turned up to tea in Hall, not because he liked it more than anybody else, but because it had been paid for; and he always ate as much as he possibly could on the same principle. Fisher T. Fish never missed tea in Hall unless some fellow asked him to tea, which fellows seldom did, unless they owed him money and desired an extension of time on a loan.

Still, all human beings have their weaknesses. There was no doubt that Mrs. Mimble’s fourpenny jam-tarts were real corkers. Beautifully fresh and flaky, with lots of jam—real strawberry jam. Fourpence for a tart was a price that made Fisher T. Fish look very grave; but, on the other hand, there was more value in one of them than in two twopenny tarts. And they were delicious—they melted in the mouth, they glided deliciously down the gullet. Fisher T. Fish, perhaps, did not enjoy such a tart quite so much as other fellows; even while the delicate flavour lingered on his Transatlantic tongue he could not help thinking of the fourpence with a pang of regret. Seldom—indeed, almost never—did Fisher T. Fish yield to such weakness as to expend hard cash on things that merely tickled the palate and had very slight food value. But even Fishy had yielded for once, and now, with a grave, thoughtful face and a slight headache, he was expending the sum of two shillings on six of those luscious jam-tarts.

According to one authority, it was his love for fried potatoes that lost Napoleon the battle of Waterloo. Indigestion supervened at a critical moment and clouded his judgment. Like that great man Fisher T. Fish yielded to the demands of the inner man, regardless of consequences.

The consequences were likely to be serious. Two shillings was half-a-dollar, and the expenditure of half-a-dollar was enough to haunt Fishy for days to come, even if it did not spoil his sleep o’ night. Still, he had made up his mind to it. He was going to plunge for once. He was going to regale himself on those scrumptious tarts, and hang the expense.

There was one consolation for the waste of cash. It was not his own cash. He had drawn two shillings that day from Fry of the Fourth in interest on a loan he had made that youth. So for once Fish felt justified in a little extra expenditure.

Still, it gave him a pang, and he watched Mrs. Mimble as she packed the tarts in a little cardboard box, with anxious eyes. Expenditure having been resolved upon, after many heart-searchings, the American junior was keen to see that he received full value for his money. No stale tart was to be palmed off on him.

But Mrs. Mimble knew nothing whatever about American business methods, so she did not even think of palming off stale tarts.

Six of the best were packed in the little box.

It was just then that William George Bunter appeared in the offing.

Bunter had not yet gone to tea in Hall. He drifted down to the tuckshop in the hope of finding some fellows there shopping for tea. His fat face became gloomy as he saw that the only fellow in the shop was Fisher T. Fish. Getting blood from a stone was a light and easy occupation in comparison with getting anything out of Fisher Tarleton Fish.

Still, you never know your luck. Bunter had read a romantic story once, in which an American gave something away. It was barely possible—very barely—that Fishy might part with something. So the Owl of the Remove put on his most ingratiating grin as he joined Fishy at the counter.

“Standing a feed, old chap?” he asked.

“Nope!”

Fishy’s answer was short, if not sweet.

“Having somebody to tea?”

Fisher T. Fish stared. It was not likely that he was having anybody to tea.

“Don’t be a boob!” was his reply.

“I say, Fishy, I’ll carry that box for you, if you like,” said the Owl of the Remove.

Fisher T. Fish grinned.

“I guess not,” he answered.

“They’re jolly good tarts, old chap,” said Bunter; and his fat fingers strayed to the box.

A sharp rap on his podgy knuckles caused his fat hand to stray away again.

“Ow!” howled Bunter.

“Beat it!” grunted Fisher T. Fish.

Having examined the tarts with a critical eye, and assured himself beyond the possibility of doubt that not a single tart of inferior value had been palmed off on him, Fisher T. Fish placed the lid on.

Then came the most painful part of the operation. The tarts had to be paid for.

Fry’s two-shilling piece passed over the counter. Mrs. Mimble dropped it into her till quite carelessly, and its clink as it fell sounded like a knell in the ears of Fisher Tarleton Fish.

But the deed was done now. Regrets were useless. The two-shilling-piece was gone. Fisher T. Fish stifled his natural emotions at such a painful parting, and picked up the cardboard box.

“I say, Fishy——”

“Git!”



Bunter opened the lid of the box-seat under the window and proceeded to root through the lumber. A sudden grin overspread his fat face as his fingers came in contact with a cardboard box at the bottom. "Good!" exclaimed the Owl of the Remove, as he raised the lid and saw six juicy, luscious jam-tarts spread before his entranced view. (See Chapter 3.)

"But you're surely not going to be greedy, old chap," said the Owl of the Remove. "I'll carry the box for you, with pleasure. Hand it over!"

"I've told you to git once," said Fish. "Now git!"

Fisher T. Fish walked out of the tuck-shop with the box under his arm. Bunter rolled after him.

Bunter could guess that it was Fishy's intention to tea in Hall, on as much of the plain and wholesome fare of the school as he could cram into his narrow interior, and then to regale himself in his study on those luscious tarts. Obviously, he would not eat the tarts first. The keen edge of his appetite was to be taken off with what he could get for nothing, after which he was going to consume those delicious tarts at his leisure. It followed, from this, that Fishy would have to leave the tarts in his study while he went to tea in Hall. That looked like a chance for Bunter. That the loss of two shillings' worth of tuck would break Fishy's heart did not matter to Bunter. When he was on the track of tuck Bunter was as ruthless as Fishy himself on the track of a dollar.

Fisher T. Fish entered the House, and Bunter rolled in after him. Fisher T. Fish went up to the Remove passage. After him trailed Bunter. Fisher T. Fish went into No. 14 Study, and Bunter watched him through his big spectacles, his little round eyes gleaming. Fishy came out of No. 14 without the box, and Bunter grinned.

Then Fisher T. Fish locked the door of the study and put the key in his pocket, and Bunter ceased to grin.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Tarts for Bunter!

"**B**EAST!"

Billy Bunter made that remark as Fisher T. Fish came back along the Remove passage, towards the stairs.

Fishy grinned as he passed the fat junior.

Probably he read Bunter's thoughts. They were not difficult to read.

"I say, Fishy—" gasped Bunter.

"Yep?" grinned Fishy.

"I say, will you lend me your Latin dic?"

"Nope."

"Look here, I'm going to borrow Johnny Bull's Latin dic," said Bunter. "You've no right to lock up that study. Bull or Squiff might like to go in at any minute."

"I guess you're mighty concerned about Bull and Squiff, ain't you, you fat cormorant?" grinned Fishy. "As they're both gone out I guess they won't be wanting to go into the study till after tea."

"They might," urged Bunter. "Look here, I'll mind the key for you, if you like, and see that—that nobody goes into the study."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Fishy.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. I suppose you can trust me with the key, Fishy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you beast—"

"Forget it," said Fisher T. Fish, and he went on down the Remove staircase.

Bunter glared at him over the banisters. A locked door stood between

him and his prey. Even Bunter did not think of bursting in a study door in order to burgle a fellow's tarts. But he could not detach his fat thoughts from those tarts. His mouth watered at the thought of them. Something had to be done. The question was, how?

Billy Bunter's little round eyes gleamed behind his spectacles. He gave a little fat cough—the usual sign that the Greyfriars ventriloquist was just going to begin.

"Fish!"

Fisher T. Fish started as the sharp, acid tones of Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, barked at him over the balustrade of the Remove landing.

He stopped and looked up. Bunter had backed out of sight.

"Yes, sir?" answered Fish.

"Fish! You have locked your study door!" rapped out the Remove master's sharp voice. "What do you mean by it, Fish? You are perfectly well aware that junior study doors are not allowed to be locked."

"I—I—I guess—" stammered Fishy.

"Return to your study at once, Fish, and unlock the door. I am going to the games study, and when I return I shall look in at your study and ascertain whether the door is locked," barked the sharp voice.

"Yes, sir."

Fisher T. Fish ascended the stairs again.

Bunter backed round a corner. Fishy did not expect to see the Remove master on the landing, as the sharp voice had stated that Mr. Quelch was going to the games study, which was in

the Fifth Form passage. He walked along sulkily to No. 14. Bunter, behind his corner, grinned. Fisher T. Fish prided himself upon being cute, and spry, and having his eye-teeth cut, as became a youth who had been raised in Noo Yark. But there was no doubt that the cute and spry Fishy had been taken in by the Greyfriars ventriloquist. Without a single suspicion in his cute, spry mind, Fisher T. Fish walked along the Remove passage to the end study and unlocked the door, as he had been bidden by the sharp voice that W. G. Bunter had borrowed from his Form-master.

Fishy went into the study.

With the door unlocked and William George Bunter about, it was not safe to leave the tarts in the study cupboard. There was a lock to that cupboard, but it was in the state of many locks in junior studies. Johnny Bull had found it locked once, and the key absent, and he had opened it with the study poker. Fisher T. Fish took out the cardboard box and considered the matter. He could take the tarts into Hall with him, if he liked; fellows often took in things for tea. But a fellow with six jam tarts would be expected to whack out a little. Fisher T. Fish had no intention of whacking out anything, but he was not impervious to public opinion, and he did not want to sit at the table among a lot of fellows and guzzle six tarts, one after another, without offering any man so much as a crumb. He was already considered a stingy fellow in the Remove, and that really would look rather mean, even in Fishy's own opinion.

"Search me!" growled Fisher T. Fish.

He looked round the study for a safe hiding-place.

There was a box-seat under the window, in which all sorts of lumber was stowed away by the three juniors who shared No. 14. Fishy opened the lid, unpacked a quantity of lumber, and placed the box of tarts at the bottom and carefully covered it up. Then he

closed down the lid, replaced the cushions on it, threw a book and a few papers on top to give it an appearance of not having been recently opened, and left the study.

He kept a sharp eye open for Bunter as he went to the stairs, but the Owl of the Remove was not to be seen. Easy in his mind now, Fisher T. Fish hurried down to Hall to tea. He had no time to waste if he was not to lose that meal.

After he was gone the door of No. 7 Study opened, and Billy Bunter blinked out into the passage through his big spectacles.

Like Moses of old, Bunter looked this way and that way, and, like Moses, he saw no man.

He grinned, and came out of the study, and hurried along to No. 14.

He fairly jumped to the study cupboard and blinked into it in search of the box of tarts.

"Beast!" gasped Bunter.

The cupboard was in the same state as that of the celebrated Mother Hubbard.

"Well, of all the rotters!" said Bunter, in disgust. "Suspicious beast! I dare say he thinks a fellow is after his measly tarts. Just like him!"

Bunter had little time to waste if he was not to miss tea in Hall. But half a dozen jam tarts—fourpenny ones—appealed to him much more than tea in Hall. His fat brain did not work very actively, as a rule; but it would work in an emergency like this. He reflected that Fishy was very unlikely to take the tarts into Hall with him. Fellows would call him stingy for keeping them all to himself, while, as for whacking them out, that was impossible for Fishy. Indeed, if some fellow like Bolsover major or Skinner was there, he was quite likely to help himself, regardless of Fishy's anguish. Bunter shook his head. Fishy hadn't taken the tarts down to Hall. The question was, what had he done with them?

Bunter proceeded to find the answer to that riddle by searching the study.

He searched thoroughly, upsetting a

good many things in the progress of his search. He left books and papers scattered right and left, and an inkpot streaming over the carpet. Finally, he came to the box-seat under the window, and opened the lid.

Only a pile of lumber met his eyes, the odds and ends that accumulate in a junior study. But Bunter was not to be beaten. He proceeded to root through that lumber, and a grin overspread his fat face as his fingers came in contact with a cardboard box at the bottom.

Rapidly that box was cleared, and Bunter raised the lid.

"Good!"

Six juicy, luscious jam-tarts were spread before his entranced view. In an instant one of the tarts was in Bunter's mouth, and he was gobbling away with great joy.

"Beautiful!" gasped Bunter.

Fisher T. Fish was rather late for tea in Hall, and he was eating plain, wholesome fare as fast as he could, in order to get his full money's worth while there was yet time. Little did he dream of the tragedy that was going on in his study in those very moments.

Mrs. Mimble's fourpenny tarts were fairly substantial. But Bunter was the man to deal with them rapidly and efficiently. They went down like oysters.

Tart after tart vanished inside Bunter, till the last of the half-dozen had disappeared.

The cardboard box was empty almost before Bunter realised that the tarts were gone.

The Owl of the Remove gave a fat grunt of satisfaction.

He was still hungry, of course. But the tarts had been delicious. Bunter was feeling much better now.

His fat face was happy and shiny and sticky.

"Fine!" ejaculated Bunter.

After the feast comes the reckoning. Bunter was not the fellow to think of consequences till they were close at hand. Now that the tarts were gone, he realised that Fisher T. Fish would make a fuss. He might suspect Bunter. Fellows always did seem to suspect Bunter somehow when tuck was missing. Any fellow but Fishy might have kicked Bunter, and let it go at that. But Bunter knew that Fisher T. Fish would not be so easily satisfied. A tigress robbed of her cubs was a pleasant playmate compared with Fisher T. Fish robbed of half-a-dollar. Bunter began to feel rather uneasy.

However, it was certain that he couldn't replace the tarts now. They had gone on the journey from which no tuck returns. Bunter put the lid on the cardboard box, replaced the lumber with which it had been hidden, shut down the box-seat, and left the study. In the passage he met Squiff of the Remove.

"Hallo, you've had jam for tea!" remarked the Australian junior.

"Nunno!" gasped Bunter. "Nothing of the kind, old chap."

"Then you had it for breakfast," grinned Squiff. "There's a lot left over on your face."

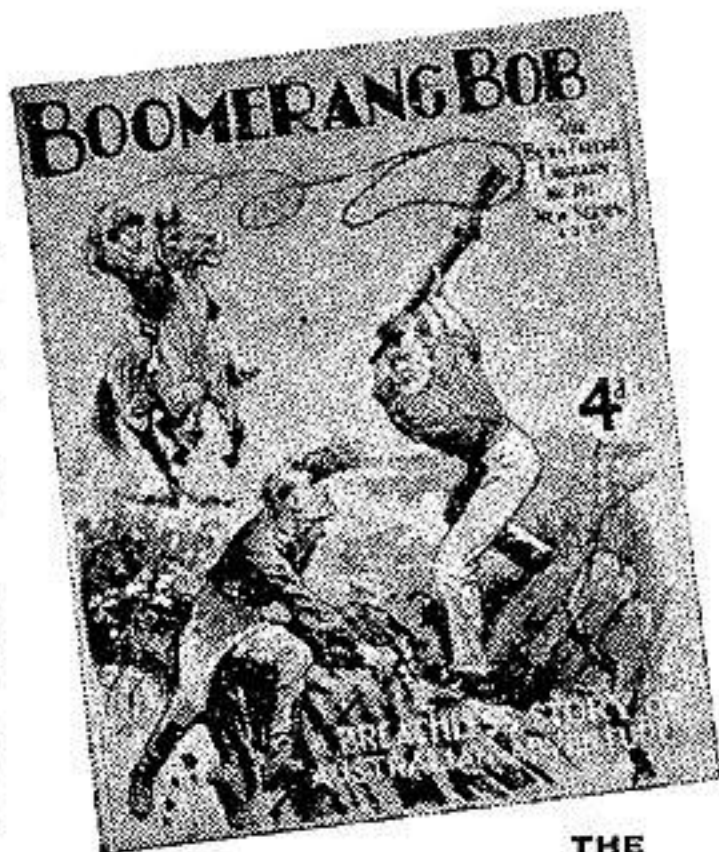
"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

He rushed away to get a wash. Bunter did not care much for washing, as a rule. But he could not afford to carry clues like this about him to meet suspicious eyes.

With a newly-washed face, Bunter arrived at Hall for tea, to find tea over and the doors closed. Fisher T. Fish passed him at a trot, eager to get to his tarts now that he had had his money's worth in Hall. Bunter blinked after him with a grin, and chuckled.

"He, he, he!"

Tales For All Tastes



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"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" The Famous Five came along from Hall, and Bob Cherry smacked the fat junior on the shoulder. "What's the jolly old joke, Fatty?"

"Ow! I say, you fellows, I've just come in from Friardale," said Bunter. "I haven't been about the House, specially not in the Remove passage. If any fellow asks you, just tell him that I was in Courtfield—I mean, Friardale—while you were at tea, will you? It's rather important."

"What have you been up to now?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Nothing, old chap. But some fellows are suspicious, you know," said Bunter. "Being at Friardale all the time, I couldn't have done it, could I?"

"You couldn't have done what?" asked Nugent.

"Nothing, old fellow. Nothing at all. Just remember what I've told you. In fact, you might mention that you saw me coming in at the gates, see? I mean, if a fellow asks you. Say that you asked me to go down to Friardale to fetch something, see? Then even that suspicious beast, Fishy, will have to take my word."

"Oh, my hat!"

"What is Fishy to take your word about?" asked Johnny Bull, staring at the fat junior.

"Nothing, old scout—absolutely nothing!"

And Bunter rolled away, leaving the Co. staring.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Fearful for Fishy!

"Like this!" said Squiff.

The fellows in Study No. 14 watched Sampson Quincy Iffley Field, who was called Squiff in the Remove because life was short.

Squiff had a cricket ball in his hand. He was illustrating the action of a bowler he had seen lately in a county match. The other fellows watched. There were six fellows in the study—Squiff himself and the Famous Five. Also, there was toffee in the study which was the original cause of the gathering there after tea. Toffee was particularly welcome after tea in Hall, and S. Q. I. Field was a dab at toffee-making. While the toffee was discussed the talk naturally turned to cricket.

Outside, in the Remove passage, Fisher T. Fish lingered like a ghost revisiting the glimpses of the moon.

Fishy had rushed up to the study after tea to enjoy that solitary feast of jam-tarts. He had found Squiff sitting on the seat under the window, busy dividing a large cake of toffee into segments. Fishy had backed out of the study, hoping that Squiff would soon depart with his pesky toffee. Fishy did not feel disposed to unearth the hidden box of tarts and devour them in Field's presence.

Like many fellows of a particularly stingy nature, Fishy disliked being considered stingy. His own view was that he was a careful, cautious sort of guy, who knew what was what, and how to look after Number One, who had had his eye-teeth cut, and who wasn't born yesterday, and had no hayseed in his hair. Keeping a feed to himself seemed to Fishy the most natural proceeding in the world. Giving away anything that cost money appeared to Fishy dangerously near insanity.

If ever Fisher T. Fish went off his Transatlantic rocker, it would not be in that direction. Still, Fishy knew that he was now living in a strange land,

where there were strange customs, and where people actually did give things away. He had seen a fellow who had two buns give a bun and a half away, and nobody but Fishy thought that it was a case for a strait waistcoat. Fishy realised that he had to walk warily in such a strange land, and so he did not like to display too openly that cautious carefulness of his, which the boobs, goobs, and jays of Greyfriars mistook for stinginess.

So he waited in the passage for Squiff to clear.

But Squiff did not clear. As a matter of fact, Squiff had tea'd with a fellow in the Fourth, and he had asked the Famous Five to come along to Study No. 14 after tea for the toffee. Naturally, they came. So, instead of seeing Squiff clear, Fisher T. Fish had the happiness, or otherwise, of seeing Harry Wharton & Co. arrive.

With growing impatience Fisher T. Fish haunted the passage. He sauntered by the open door of the study occasionally and took a quick glance inside. There was no sign of shifting. The Famous Five sat in a row on the box-seat under the window, eating toffee. If Fishy wanted to come in, he could come in. If he was waiting for them to go, he could wait. On the part

WELL WON, WAKEFIELD!

This week's MAGNET pocket knife goes to Leslie Legard, of Ruskin Avenue, Bradford Road, Wakefield, Yorks, for the following joke:

Landlady (to lodger who is just going out): "Now, look here, it was three o'clock in the morning when you came in the other night, and four in the morning when you came in last night. I'm telling you that if it's five o'clock to-morrow morning when you arrive in to-night, ye can sit up and let yourself in!"

There are plenty more useful penknives to be won, so let me have, by the next mail, that rib-tickler you've just heard.

of the Remove fellows there was a supreme indifference to Fishy and to what he might want.

It was frightfully irritating to Fishy. The Famous Five were sitting on the hiding-place of the tarts, and he could not extract the cardboard box from its concealment without revealing it to all their eyes. They would know that he had the tarts, and would know that he had hidden them away. There would be more jokes—in rotten bad taste, Fishy considered—about stinginess and closeness, and "Uncle Shylock." Fishy had to wait, and he waited like a very bony Peri at the gate of Paradise.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry suddenly, as the sharp eyes and beaky nose of the American junior appeared in the doorway for about the sixth time. "You want anything, Fishy?"

"Eh? Nope!"

"Mind taking your face away, then?" asked Bob.

"Eh?"

"It's rather a skeleton at the feast, you know."

"Oh, guff!" growled Fisher T. Fish.

But he took his face away, and Squiff kicked the door shut to keep it away.

Then the junior from New South Wales proceeded to illustrate that action with the ball that had taken his fancy, and in which the Famous Five

were all interested. The Australian junior was one of the best bowlers in the Remove—second only to Inky—and, indeed, as good as Inky himself when he was at his best.

"Like this!" said Squiff, as he swung his arm.

Outside the door Fisher T. Fish had come to a stop.

He was suspicious.

His half-dozen jam-tarts were under the window seat—at least, he believed that they were. The shutting of the door made him suspicious. It was natural, perhaps, that fellows should prefer to lose sight of his countenance; but Fishy could not be expected to understand that. It seemed more probable to Fishy that the fellows in the study had a hint of the tarts, and the thought that his treasure might be unearthed and devoured gave him an awful feeling.

He listened intently at the door, suspicion changing to anxiety, and anxiety deepening to anguish. If they were annexing the tarts—The pesky jays might think it quite a joke, knowing that the loss of money was to Fishy like unto the loss of teeth, only more painful. The suspense was not to be borne. After all, it was his own study as well as Squiff's and Johnny Bull's, and he had a right to go in if he liked. They didn't want his company; but if it came to that, he didn't want theirs.

And Fisher T. Fish, more than half-convinced that his tarts were in danger, and, quite determined to keep a wary eye on them, opened the door suddenly and stalked in.

"And like this—" Squiff was saying.

He had his back to the door, and he threw back his arm to illustrate the bowling act, just as the narrow face and sharp nose of Fisher Tarleton Fish butted in.

Bang!

Squiff's hand, clutching the cricket-ball, smote Fisher T. Fish fairly on the point of his long, sharp nose.

It was an accident. Squiff hadn't known that Fishy was about to project his bony countenance into the study. Fishy hadn't known that Squiff was about to give a vigorous illustration of the bowling act so close to the door. It was pure accident, and nobody was to blame. All the same, it was painful—very painful. A terrific smack from a hand grasping a cricket-ball was no joke. Fisher T. Fish felt as if his long, sharp nose had been driven through his head like a spike. He let out a yell that woke every echo in the Remove passage.

Simultaneously he sat down.

Sitting on the floor he clasped his nose with both hands and roared. Squiff stared round at him and rubbed his hand. He had expected only the door to be behind him, and he was surprised to have knocked his hand on something sharp. It hurt a little, but the damage to the hand was as moonlight unto sunlight, as water unto wine, compared with the damage to the nose.

"Yooooooch!" gurgled Fisher T. Fish. "You pesky jay! Moooch! Gug-gug-gug! My nose! Wow! Wow! Wow! Wow!"

"Was it your nose I knocked?" asked Squiff.

"Wow! Yep! Wow! Sure! Wow! Wow!"

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

"Blessed if I didn't think I'd knocked it on a nail or something," said Squiff. "It felt jolly sharp."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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"The sharpfulness will not now be so terrific," chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The esteemed tip of Fishy's ridiculous boko will be as flat as an absurd flounder."

"Wow! Wow! Wow! Wow!" Fishy's vocabulary seemed to be limited; but it was emphatic, what there was of it.

"What the thump did the silly ass butt in so suddenly for?" asked Squiff. "Fellows shouldn't bolt into a study like that."

"Wow! Wow! Wow! Wow!" Fisher T. Fish mopped his nose with his handkerchief. The handkerchief came away streaked with crimson.

"You dog-goned Jay!" yelled Fisher T. Fish. "You slab-sided mugwump! You prize boob! Look at my nose!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" The juniors looked at it, and the view seemed to excite their merriment. They roared.

"Accident, old chap," said Squiff. "Your own fault, too. You butted in too suddenly. Anyhow, it won't do your nose any harm to be shortened a bit. It was too long."

"The longliness was terrific."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish struggled to his feet. Claspings his damaged nose he told Squiff what he thought of him, and added what he thought of the Famous Five. They good-naturedly allowed him to go ahead. A fellow who had had a rap like that on the boko was entitled to let off steam. Still, as there seemed no limit to Fishy's eloquence they left him to it, and adjourned to Study No. 1 with the toffee. Fishy's raucous voice followed them down the length of the Remove passage; then he slammed the door of Study No. 14.

Having dabbed and re-dabbed his injured nose, and recovered his equanimity to some extent, Fisher T. Fish proceeded to open the box-seat for the tarts. His nose was sore, and felt as if it wasn't there. But, at least, he had got rid of the unwelcome company in the study. He rooted among the lumber in the box-seat, and uncovered the cardboard box in which Mrs. Mumble had packed the tarts. At long last he was going to have his feast.

He whipped off the cardboard lid. Then a dreadful change came over his face.

The box was empty.

The tarts were gone. He gazed into the empty receptacle, bereft of speech. Not a tart remained—hardly a flake of pastry, or a daub of jam. Gone! Every individual tart, each of them costing fourpence. With haggard eyes Fisher T. Fish gazed into the box. He gasped.

"My tarts! My half-dollar—my half-dollar! My tarts!" He almost choked. "The jays! The pesky scallywags! That's what they were up to here—pretending to be eating toffee and talking cricket—scoffing my tarts! Jerusalem crickets! Six tarts at fourpence each! I—I—I—I guess I'll—I'll—I'll—"

Words failed Fisher T. Fish. He glared round for a weapon and snatched up a cricket-stump. As a rule, Fishy was not a fighting man. There was no profit to be got out of fighting. But the worm will turn. Fellows could call Fishy anything they liked, and he only smiled. But he had his Achilles' heel—the one spot where he could be hurt. That was his pocket. When he was touched in that tender place, Fisher T. Fish saw red.

Stump in hand, and vengeance in his eye, Fisher T. Fish rushed along the

Remove passage to Study No. 1, hurled open the door of that celebrated study, and burst into it like a cyclone.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for Wingate!

"HAVE some toffee, Wingate?" Six juniors addressed that question to the captain of Greyfriars all at once in the politest possible tones.

Wingate of the Sixth was a rare visitor in junior studies. And popular as old Wingate was his visits generally did not evoke enthusiasm; for often they portended trouble. Usually such a visit was official, and the Greyfriars captain came with an ashplant under his arm. George Wingate was much more popular than his ashplant. The latter was not liked. So when Harry Wharton & Co. adjourned to Study No. 1 to dispose of Squiff's toffee undisturbed by Fisher T. Fish, and found that Wingate of the Sixth had just arrived there, they assumed their sweetest smiles on the spot, and offered toffee. The great man of the Sixth was not, perhaps, keen on toffee. At all events, Sixth-Formers pretended not to care for such things, just as masters often pretended not to smoke. But the offer was calculated to mollify a prefect

WHAT NAME?

The following letters have been jumbled together purposely. Put in their proper order, they spell the name of a well-known junior at Greyfriars.

IRFHHTSESIF

Who is it? The answer will appear in next week's MAGNET.

Last week's solution was—
Harold Skinner.

who had come up to the Remove passage on the war-path.

Wingate smiled and shook his head. He stepped into the study, and the juniors followed him in. His smile reassured them. It was not for some infraction of the rules that Wingate had called upon them; and his ashplant was not under his arm. Wingate without his ashplant was wholly and completely popular, and the ohms of the Remove were glad to see him. A call from the captain of the school was an honour and distinction that they could appreciate.

"Sit down, Wingate," said Harry Wharton, pulling round the armchair.

"Thanks!"

But Wingate did not sit down. He stood just within the half-open door, so the juniors respectfully remained standing. However, they went on with the toffee. They liked Wingate; but also they liked the toffee. And there was no reason why they should not enjoy the Greyfriars captain's company and the toffee simultaneously.

"I've dropped in to speak a word to you, Wharton, as head of the Remove," remarked Wingate.

"That's jolly good of you, Wingate!" answered Harry.

"The goodfulness is terrific, most esteemed and preposterous Wingate," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The words that fall from your esteemed and absurd lips are like unto pearls of ridiculous wisdom."

"I've an idea that something's going on in the Remove that ought to be looked into," said the captain of Greyfriars.

"Oh!" said Harry. "I'm not sure—and I don't want to butt into the matter as a prefect, and cause a lot of talk," said Wingate. "As head of the Remove, you ought to be able to handle the matter—if anything's wrong."

Wharton looked a little perplexed. "Certainly," he answered. "I try to play up, as captain of the Form, Wingate. But I don't know anything—"

"There may not be anything. But if there is, isn't it rather your business to know, as captain of the Remove?"

"Well, perhaps—"

"It's a difficult matter for a prefect to handle. Fellows won't give one another away; and nobody wants to make them," said Wingate. "At the same time, if such a dirty thing as money-lending is going on in the school it's got to be stamped out—hard!"

"Oh!" said all the juniors together. And they looked serious enough now.

"Mind, I'm not saying it's going on," said the Greyfriars captain. "But there's been a hint here, and a hint there—we're not quite so sleepy in the Sixth as juniors sometimes suppose. If I ask a kid about it, he will profess to know nothing—and, I'm afraid, would rather tell a lie than give a man away—a position I don't want to put any fellow into. That's where a Form captain is more useful than the captain of the school. Your own Form-fellows will tell you things that they can't and won't tell to anyone in authority."

"Quite," assented Wharton.

"If some young scoundrel is playing Shylock games here, lending money at interest among the kids, it's got to be stopped. The fellow in question has got to be taught to be decent. It would be ever so much better to get it done without a lot of fuss, and having the matter up before the Head, and all that. You see that?"

"Yes, rather," said Harry fervently. "We don't want the Remove disgraced before all the school."

"Only, the important thing is, that it's got to be stamped out," said Wingate. "I've gathered that there's something of the kind in the wind, and that it's a Remove man who's doing it. I'm not sure; in fact, I've not gone deeply into the matter, preferring to leave it to you as Form captain. So I'm giving you the tip to look into it."

The juniors exchanged glances.

One name, of course, leaped to all their minds at once. Wingate might or might not guess who was the culprit; but the juniors knew well enough that if any man in the Remove was playing Shylock, the name of that man was Fisher Tarleton Fish.

They did not dream of mentioning that to Wingate. Giving a man away to the Beaks was impossible, even when the man was an unscrupulous and shady young rascal. But they had no doubt on the subject themselves.

Wingate smiled faintly. He could read the expressions on the faces of the Removites easily enough.

"I don't think you'll find it hard to get at the facts, Wharton," he said. "I think I can leave it in your hands."

"Certainly," said Harry. "I'll root him out fast enough; and if he's really up to that game we'll stop him. You can rely on that, Wingate."

"I'm sure I can," assented the captain of Greyfriars; and with a nod to the juniors he turned to go.

It was just at that moment that there



The door shot open with the force of a bullet, and Fisher T. Fish hurtled into the study like a cannon-ball, brandishing a stump. "You pesky rustlers!" he roared. "You gol-darned ginks! I'll give you tarts, I sure will!" "Ow!" roared Wingate, as he got the first lick of the stump. (See Chapter 5.)

came a rush of hurrying footsteps along the Remove passage.

They stopped at the door of Study No. 1.

Just as Wingate was reaching to the door to pull it open, it was hurled open from without.

Crash!

The door shot open with the suddenness and force of a bullet.

Wingate staggered back from the shock.

As he staggered Fisher T. Fish hurtled into the study like a cannon-ball, brandishing the stump.

"You pesky rustlers!" Fishy was roaring. "You gol-darned ginks! I'll give you tarts, I sure will!"

"Ow!" roared Wingate, as he got the first lick of the stump.

"Great Scott!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Look out—"

There was a roar of wrath from the Greyfriars captain, and he seized Fisher T. Fish by the collar. Fortunately, Fish recognised him in time before he delivered another swipe.

"Oh, Jerusalem crickets!" gasped Fisher T. Fish.

Shake, shake, shake!

"Ow! Wow! I guess I didn't see you, Wingate!" yelled Fishy. "Yaroo! Leggo! I sure never saw you—Yoooop!"

Shake, shake, shake!

"Oh, great gophers and horned toads!" shrieked Fisher T. Fish, as he crumpled up in Wingate's grasp, his teeth rattling like castanets. "Carry me home to die! Whoop!"

"You young lunatic!" roared Wingate. "What do you mean?"

"Yaroooh!"

Wingate hooked away the stump, pitched Fisher T. Fish on the study table, and handled the stump with vigour and rapidity.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Wow, wow, wow!"

"There!" gasped the captain of Greyfriars, tossing the stump away. "That will be a tip to be a bit more careful when you barge into a study!"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

Fisher T. Fish curled up in anguish.

"And now," said Wingate, eyeing him grimly, "just explain what you mean by barging in here with a cricket stump. I know you didn't know I was here; but what do you mean by it?"

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

Fisher T. Fish gasped for breath.

"They've lifted my tarts!" he howled.

"I guess I'm not standing for it! Two shillings—that's half a dollar! I guess I ain't standing for it, and don't you forget it! Yow-ow-ow! Tarts—six tarts—fourpenny ones! Yow-ow-ow-ow!" Fishy spluttered with wrath and indignation. "Look here, Wingate, you're a—yow-ow!—perfect. I put it to you—yow-ow!—I ain't going to be robbed—not me! Yow-ow-ow! Six tarts—Wow! Make 'em hand over my tarts or pay for them! Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow!"

mean was equally mysterious. They certainly knew nothing of his tarts. But that Fisher T. Fish had suffered a serious loss was clear. He was wildly excited; and nothing but a loss of cash could have excited him. He had lost either money or money's value; nothing else could account for his condition of foaming fury.

"You young ass!" said Wingate. "You've lost some tuck—"

"Nope!" roared Fisher T. Fish. "I ain't the galoot to lose anything! Think I was born yesterday? You figure that I'm a gink from Ginksville? No, sir! I guess I've never lost so much as a Continental red cent since I was born, sir. Not little me! Them tarts have been lifted, and I guess I want them paid for!"

"Rubbish!" said Wingate.

He made a movement to the door. The matter of money-lending in the Remove was one of which the Sixth Form prefects had to take official note; but an affair of jam-tarts was beneath the dignity of the Sixth.

"I guess I want you to take this up, Wingate," hooted Fisher T. Fish. "I'll go to Quelch! I'll go to the Head! I keep on telling you that I ain't going to be robbed."

Wingate paused again. He was bound, as a prefect, to listen to such a complaint, little as it was to his liking.

"Well, out with it, and cut it short!" he snapped.

Fisher T. Fish poured out his tale of woe. The tears were almost in his eyes as he told it. His voice broke, when he stated that he had paid two shillings for the tarts.

"Well," said Wingate, turning to the

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Not Guilty!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. stared blankly at the excited Fishy. Why he had barged into the study in a state of Berserker fury was a mystery to them. What his reference to the tarts might

juniors, "what do you fellows know about this?"

"Nothing," answered Harry Wharton.

"The nothingfulness is terrific."

"The mean, stingy, skinny worm!" said Bob Cherry indignantly. "We wouldn't touch his tuck if he offered it to us—not that he's likely to offer anybody anything."

"Not guilty, my lord!" said Frank Nugent.

"Where's the tarts, then?" shrieked Fisher T. Fish. "Don't I keep on telling you I put them in that dog-goned locker, and they're gone! Guess they walked away, or flew out of the pesky window? What?"

"You howling ass!" said Squiff. "Nobody here touched your measly tarts."

"They weren't measly tarts—they were new ones—fourpence each. I gave two shillings for those tarts just before tea," said Fisher T. Fish, his voice shaking again. "Two shillings—that's half a dollar!"

"You left them there when you went down to tea?" demanded Wingate.

"Yep!"

"Then if they've been taken, mightn't they have been taken while you were in Hall, you young ass? You've no reason to suppose that these fellows bagged them."

"They shut the door to keep me from seeing into the study——"

"Why did you shut the door?" asked Wingate.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"To shut out Fishy's face. It's not pleasant to look at."

"You gink!" yelled Fisher T. Fish. "You gol-darned geck!"

Wingate grinned.

"Why did you hide the tarts in the locker, Fish?" he asked.

"To keep them safe. That fat gink Bunter was rooting about, and when I locked the door of the study Quelch told me to unlock it again. So I calculated they'd be safe hidden in the locker."

"Like a dog hiding a bone," grinned Johnny Bull. "Serve you jolly well right if another dog dug up your bone."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You men know nothing about it?" asked Wingate.

"Nothing at all," answered the juniors.

"That settles it, then. As likely as not, Fish, some fellow bagged your tarts as a warning to you not to be such a greedy, grasping little beast," said Wingate. "Serve you right!"

And with that the captain of Greyfriars left the study.

Fisher T. Fish stared after him.

Apparently Wingate was done with the matter. It really was not so important in Wingate's eyes as in Fishy's.

"Waal, carry me home to die!" gasped Fishy. "Does that gol-darned gink reckon that I'm going to take this lying down? Two shillings——"

"Get out of this study," said Harry.

"I guess I want them tarts!" exclaimed Fisher T. Fish. "I'll take the money instead, if you like; in fact, I'd rather have the money. I guess I was plumb loco to spend two shillings on tuck, anyhow. You've had the tarts, now hand out the durocks."

"You howling ass!" exclaimed Wharton. "Can't you understand that we know nothing about your idiotic tarts?"

"Gammon! Who had them if you didn't?"

"You can find that out for yourself!" snapped the captain of the Remove. "Only clear off out of this study. You make me feel ill."

"Kick him out!" suggested Johnny Bull.

"Good egg!"

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Fisher T. Fish jumped to the door, just in time to escape leaving the study by that painful method. The door slammed after him.

But it opened a moment or two later, and the thin, narrow, anxious face of Fisher Tarleton Fish looked in.

"Say, you gecks," he said, "be reasonable! Don't go off on your ear! Jest listen to a guy! You've had the tarts——"

"We haven't!" roared Squiff.

"Look here, if you won't stand for the two shillings, how much will you stand for?" pleaded Fisher T. Fish. "Make it one and ninepence and call it a go. I lose threepence," said Fishy, almost weeping. "But I'll take the one-and-nine and say no more about it."

"You'll take a thick ear if you don't buzz off, you worm!"

"Make it one-and-nine——"

Dr. Smith's Smaller Latin Dictionary whizzed across the study, and caught Fisher T. Fish on his bony chin. The American junior flew into the passage. It was Dr. Smith's Smaller Latin Dictionary, but it felt like Dr. Smith's Larger Latin Dictionary as it landed on Fishy. Bob Cherry kicked the door shut.

There was a sound of yelling in the passage, and Fisher T. Fish rubbed the bony promontory that served him as a chin.

Then the door opened again.

"Make it one-and-six!" gasped Fishy. "I guess I'll lose a tanner on the deal—there! Make it one-and-six——"

Squiff picked up the cricket stump and jumped for the door. It slammed, and Fisher T. Fish fled.

In Study No. 1 Harry Wharton & Co. finished the tffee, untroubled by the youth from Noo Yark. They gave no further thought to Fishy, or to the missing tarts.

But Fishy could not help thinking of them. Like Rachel of old, he mourned for that which was lost, and could not be comforted.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Very Serious Matter!

HENRY SAMUEL QUELCH, master of the Remove, frowned.

He sat in his study in Masters passage, with that frown deeply imprinted on his brow.

His frown was not, like that of the celebrated Lord High Executioner, frightful and fearful and frantic. But it was dark and grim. It boded trouble.

Mr. Quelch was angry. Had he been asked, like the prophet of old, whether he did well to be angry, doubtless he would have answered that he did.

The May sun was shining on the old quadrangle of Greyfriars. To most of the Greyfriars fellows, the May sun was a sheer satisfaction. But to a middle-aged gentleman like Mr. Quelch, the May sun had its spots. With the May sun came one of those sneaking sort of chilly winds, to which youth is impervious, but to which age is very pervious indeed. While the bright May sun shone gloriously the sneaking May wind caught Mr. Quelch on several rheumatismal and sciatic points, and gave him what forty years earlier he might have described as "jip."

That afternoon Mr. Quelch had entertained three of the Sixth to tea—Wingate, Gwynne, and Loder. Heroically suppressing the little lurking twinges brought out by the sneaking May wind, Mr. Quelch had exerted himself to entertain the three prefects. They had discussed matters relating to the

government of the school, in which prefects and Form masters had common interests; and other matters more or less interesting. Mr. Quelch having touched lightly on the classics, and found a plentiful lack of interest on the part of his guests, had glided off that delicate subject and landed on cricket. Cricket was a topic that thrived anywhere at Greyfriars, and Mr. Quelch, in this instance, had struck lucky.

The drawback was that Mr. Quelch, who could have played the heads off all the Sixth at classics, was in a somewhat benighted state on the subject of cricket.

His interest in that topic was genuine, but his enthusiasm was a little forced, and now and then he dropped stitches, as it were.

The fact was, that Mr. Quelch had forgotten a lot of what he had once known about that great game, and once or twice he put his foot in it, and once he had detected a slightly ironical smile on the face of Gwynne of the Sixth.

Whereupon Mr. Quelch switched off to another subject that he knew better, feeling somewhat irritated.

Tea with a master, as a rule, was a function of which the end was welcomed by both host and guests. Fellows often went away from such a function feeling that it was awfully kind of the Beak, but that they couldn't have stood much more. Often the master was left feeling that the boys were very good fellows indeed, but that he couldn't have stood much more!

After tea, what with the effect of the May wind and three men to tea, Mr. Henry Samuel Quelch was in a somewhat edge-wise condition.

Then Fisher T. Fish happened.

Mr. Quelch, like a Form master with a strict sense of duty, had to give a hearing to Fisher T. Fish. He had to promise Fish that the matter of which he complained should be looked into. He dismissed Fish with that assurance.

Now he sat frowning.

The May wind, the ordeal of three prefects to tea, and the purloining of tuck from a study, combined to exacerbate Henry Samuel Quelch's temper.

To a Lower boy, the bagging of a fellow's tarts was a grub raid; a matter to be settled by kicking the offender, if found; but not a matter to cause the skies to fall. But to a Form master—especially to a Form master in a rather nervy state—it assumed much greater proportions. It was no longer a trifling matter of a few jam-tarts being bagged. It was the abstraction of food from a study. It was the purloining of property. It was an unscrupulous act perilously near dishonesty. It approximated to theft!

It was, at the very least, a matter on which an irritated Form master could blow off steam.

So Mr. Quelch sat and frowned, and anyone watching the frown deepen and darken on his wrinkled brow, might have supposed that something much more dreadfully serious than the bagging of jam-tarts had taken place—a burglary at least, if not a murder.

Masters had their own ways of looking at things which pupils did not always understand.

"It is too much!" said Mr. Quelch, addressing, apparently, his desk.

He paused, but probably not for a reply. At all events, the desk, on which his eyes were fixed, made no rejoinder.

"First," said Mr. Quelch darkly, "a miserable suspicion is afloat that money-lending is going on in my Form, a suspicion that it is extremely difficult to verify—a matter into which it is extremely difficult to look—yet which must

be looked into. And now food is purloined in a Remove study!"

He glared at the unoffending desk. The desk remained absolutely insensible both to his remarks and to his glare.

"Is Greyfriars deteriorating?" asked Mr. Quelch. "Are the boys losing their fine sense of honour? Are the prefects growing slack in the execution of their duty? I fear it! I cannot help fearing it! Usury practised in my Form—and petty thefts!"

He shook his head sadly.

"Wingate did not appear to me to pay great attention to my remarks on the subject of some usurious boy in the Remove. It was only too clear that he was relieved to talk about cricket instead. Fish tells me that Wingate refused to look into the matter of the stolen—hem—comestibles. This will not do!"

Mr. Quelch's gaze at the desk was now like that of a basilisk. Still, the desk did not seem to mind.

"I must look into this!" said Mr. Quelch. "I must investigate. If some wretched, greedy, grasping, usurious boy has been lending money at interest in my Form, the odious young rascal must be discovered and punished. The matter presents great difficulties. But they shall be overcome! If some boy in the Remove deliberately purloins articles of refreshment from the studies he shall be discovered, and an example shall be made of him. Fish is not an agreeable boy; but he is entitled to justice. His hiding away food in order to avoid sharing it with others shows a meanness of nature which is quite revolting; nevertheless, property is property, and the most tempting comestibles should be perfectly safe in an unlocked cupboard. The matter shall be gone into thoroughly."

That weighty decision having been arrived at, Mr. Quelch left off glaring at the desk and rose to his feet.

He touched the bell, and Trotter presented himself.

Trotter was instructed to find Master Wharton, and send him to his Form master's study at once.

The captain of the Remove arrived in a few minutes, and found Mr. Quelch standing before the fireplace, looking somewhat like the enterprising Alpine climber in the poem; that is, his brow was set, his eyes beneath flashed like a falchion from its sheath.

Wharton did not need telling that there was trouble on the tapis.

So he was very wary.

"You sent for me, sir?" he asked very respectfully, and looking as much as he could as if he thought it very pleasant to be sent for by Henry Samuel Quelch.

"Yes, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch, in a deep voice. "I have sent for you as head boy of my Form."

"Yes, sir," said Harry, wondering what was up.

"I am informed," said Mr. Quelch, "that there has been an act of pilfering—I can only describe it as pilfering—in a Remove study."

Wharton started.

"Impossible, sir."

"I am glad you think it impossible, Wharton. Nevertheless, the fact is indisputable."

"But, sir," said the bewildered junior, "it really isn't possible, sir. Nobody in the Remove would be capable of anything of the sort. I'd answer willingly for any man in the Form."

"I am not referring to anything so serious as a theft of money or valuables, Wharton. I am referring to the pilfering of food."

"Food!" repeated Wharton blankly.

"Food!" said Mr. Quelch firmly.

"But—but fellows don't keep food in

the studies, sir. I've never heard of food being kept in Remove studies."

"Food, in the nature of light refreshments," said Mr. Quelch.

"Oh!" said Harry. "You mean tuck, sir?"

Mr. Quelch certainly did mean tuck; but that was not a word he could have used. Something was due to the dignity of a Form master.

"Probably the boys would use some such term," said the master of the Remove, with a cough. "I believe the boys keep such things as—cake and—jam and such comestibles in their study cupboards, for tea in their own rooms."

"Oh, yes, sir, of course!" said Harry. "That's always been allowed, sir."

"Perfectly so, Wharton. As the juniors are allowed to take tea in their studies, naturally they must be allowed to keep in their cupboards such articles of light refreshment as are customarily consumed at such a meal. I find no fault with that, Wharton. But these articles, whether cake or jam or—or buns, are in effect food, and the purloining of food is, to all intents and purposes, as serious an offence as the purloining of any other commodity."

"Certainly, sir," agreed Wharton.

"Comestibles of this nature," pursued Mr. Quelch, "have been abstracted from Study No. 14 in the Remove."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Wharton involuntarily. He realised that he was up against Fishy's jam-tarts again.

"What? What did you say, Wharton?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"N-nothing, sir," stammered Harry.

"The comestibles abstracted from Fish's study were, I believe—hem—tarts," said Mr. Quelch. He disliked to use such a frivolous word as tarts, but there was no help for it. Tarts were tarts, and monosyllabic, and they couldn't be described polysyllabically.

"Yes, sir," said Harry. "It seems that some chap has bagged Fishy's tarts. He says so, anyway."

Mr. Quelch frowned portentously.

The abstraction of food from a study was a serious matter. The bagging of tarts was not very serious. Mr. Quelch preferred to keep the discussion to the higher plane.

"Do not refer to the matter so lightly, Wharton. A theft is a theft, even if the stolen article be of no greater value than a pin!" he said very severely.

"Oh, yes, sir! But—"

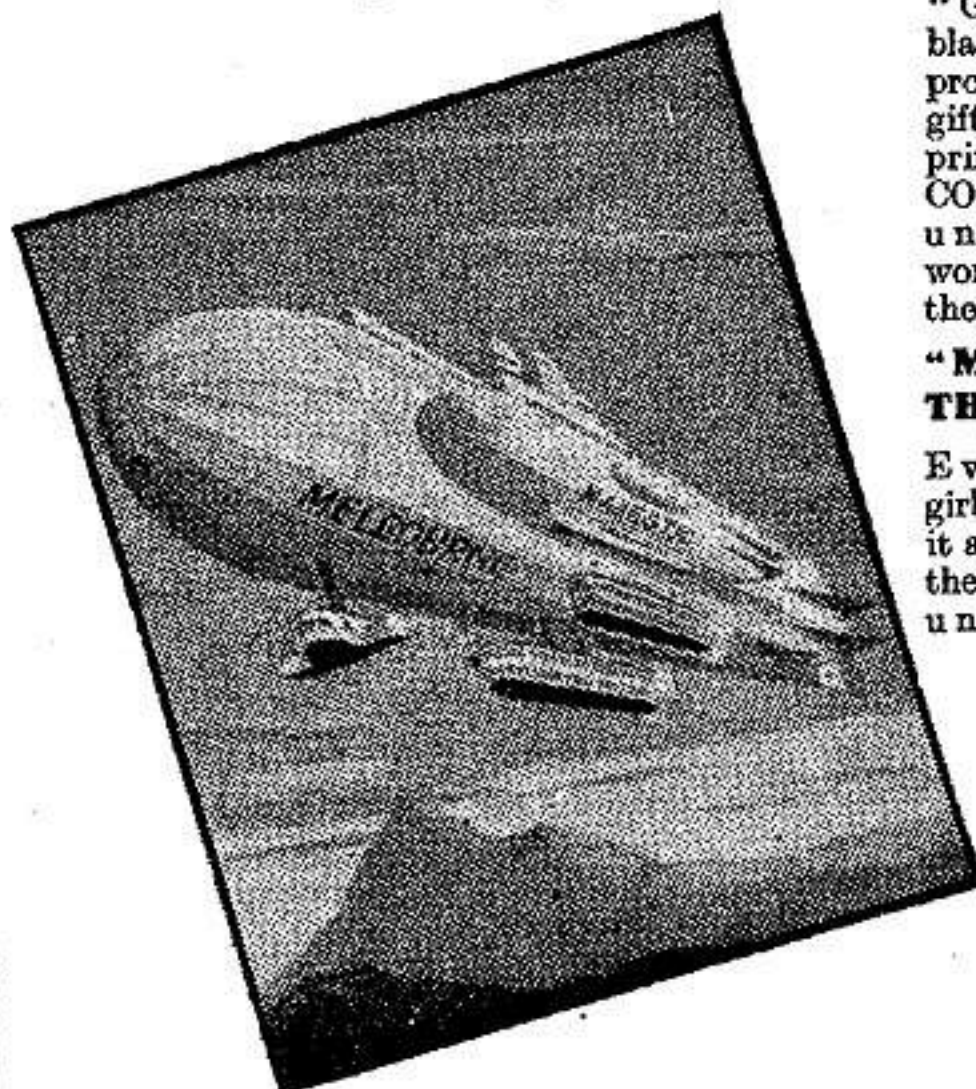
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"But what?" barked Mr. Quelch.

"Well, sir, some fellows may have bagged Fishy's tarts for a joke," said Harry. "He's so jolly mean that a fellow might think it a lark to make him sit up."

"To make him what?" boomed Mr. Quelch.

Wharton coloured.

"I mean, to make him hop, sir—that is, to make him look green—I mean, to pull his leg, sir—"

"You study English in the Form-room, Wharton?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you any objection to speaking English when you address your Form master?"

"Nunno, sir."

"Kindly do so, then," said Mr. Quelch. "I apprehend your meaning to be that some boy may have taken these tarts from a misdirected sense of humour, in order to annoy the boy Fishy."

"Not quite that, sir," said Harry. "To make him waxy, sir. I mean, to make him wild! That is—"

"It is extraordinary," said Mr. Quelch, "that a boy who has received careful instruction from me cannot express himself in his native language. Fortunately, I can guess what you mean. I cannot look on such a proceeding as a jest, Wharton—or a lark, as you are pleased to describe it. I decline absolutely to consider the matter from the point of view of humour. The matter is serious. It will be investigated to the very bottom. The boy who purloined the—the tarts belonging to Fishy must be discovered. He must be taught the error of his ways by means of necessary punishment. This punishment I am prepared to administer."

Wharton had no doubt about that. Mr. Quelch looked at the moment prepared to administer punishment to anybody who came within his reach.

"At seven o'clock," said Mr. Quelch, "you will see that the Remove are gathered in the Form-room, Wharton. I shall address the Form on the subject, and trust that I shall be able to elucidate the truth. In the meantime, I am prepared to hear the confession of the culprit, if he has the manly straightforwardness to come to my study. You may tell your Form-fellows so. That is all."

"Very well, sir," said Harry.

And he left the study.

Mr. Quelch hoped that he had impressed his head boy with a proper sense of the seriousness of the matter. As a matter of fact, he had only impressed him with an intense yearning to kick Fisher T. Fish.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Who Stole the Tarts?

"WHO stole the tarts?"

Skinner of the Remove asked that question as Harry Wharton came into the Rag.

Some of the fellows chuckled.

All the Remove knew by this time of the catastrophic occurrence in Study No. 14. Fisher T. Fish had made his wrongs known far and wide.

Nobody felt the slightest sympathy for Fisher T. Fish. Every fellow agreed that he was a mean beast to hide tuck away, a stingy beast not to whack it out, and that it served him right to have it bagged. The fact that Fishy was worried not so much by the loss of the tuck as by the monetary value

thereof, added to the contemptuous derision of the Remove men. To give Fishy a pain in his pocket was regarded as an excellent joke.

Grub-raiding was frowned on in the Remove. Many a time and oft had Billy Bunter been kicked for such proceedings. Still, a fellow who lost a few tarts was not expected to make a song and a dance about it.

Less than any other fellow had Fisher T. Fish any right to complain, as he had bought the tarts with money that did not belong to him.

But, right or wrong, Fishy's complaints were heard far and wide. He was ready to shout them from the house-tops. He was, in his own estimation, a deeply-injured youth. It had taken him quite a long time that morning to screw two shillings out of Fry of the Fourth.

With many pangs and heart-searchings he had expended those two shillings in unwonted extravagance, treating himself to tarts. And the tarts had been pinched! To Fishy, it was exactly the same as if the two shillings themselves had been pinched.

That the two shillings weren't his made no difference to Fishy. They had been in his possession—and possession was not merely nine, but ten points of the law to Fisher T. Fish. What was the good of screwing two shillings out of a fellow in interest on a loan, if he was to lose the shillings afterwards? It was a sheer waste of cuteness, spryness, and sharpness.

So far from getting over the loss and resigning himself to it, Fisher T. Fish grew more and more wrathful on the subject. Parting with money for value received gave him a pain. Parting with money for nothing was sheer torture. A fellow could not be expected to submit to torture patiently.

Fisher T. Fish still believed that Squiff and the Famous Five had surreptitiously annexed those tarts. He stated that opinion to everyone who would listen to it. He made no secret of the fact that he had laid the matter before the Remove master. Indeed, he announced that he was ready to take it to the Head, if necessary. Unless that wrong was righted he stood to lose half-a-dollar; and that any fellow could lose half-a-dollar without making the welkin ring, Fishy did not believe.

Fishy's tarts were, therefore, already a standing joke in the Remove. Skinner and his friends fastened on the subject with pleasure. They did not sympathise with Fishy in the very least; but they were pleased to have something up against the captain of the Remove. Hence Skinner's cheery question as Wharton came into the Rag.

"Who stole the tarts?" repeated Snoop, with a grin.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bolsover major.

"Who stole the tarts?"

"The head of a Form," said Skinner, imitating the tone and manner of Mr. Quelch, "is expected to set an example to the rest. He is expected to have always in mind the effect that his example may have upon other boys."

"He is—he are!" chuckled Hazeldene.

"Are we to follow this example set by our respected Form captain, my beloved 'earers?" went on Skinner.

Harry Wharton looked round.

"That will do, Skinner," he said quietly. "You know perfectly well that I know nothing about that stingy outsider's tarts!"

"How should I know?" asked Skinner blandly. "I know that Fishy says you had them. You were on the spot. You were the last man to see them

alive, as they say in the detective novels. It's up to you to prove that you didn't!"

"Hear, hear!" chuckled Snoop.

Wharton came across to the cheery group.

"Isn't my word good enough?" he asked.

"Your word isn't evidence, old bean," said Skinner, shaking his head. "Somebody had the tarts. You were on the spot."

"Who stole the tarts?" giggled Snoop.

"I think I can convince you," said Harry.

"Go it!" said Skinner. "I don't quite see how. But go it!"

"Like this!"

The captain of the Remove grasped Skinner by the collar with his right hand and Snoop by the collar with his left.

Two heads came together with a resounding crack.

Bang!

"Yoooooop!" roared Skinner.

"Whooop!" raved Sidney James Snoop.

"Are you convinced now?" asked the captain of the Remove, keeping an iron grip on the two collars, in spite of the frantic wriggling of Skinner and Snoop. "I'll keep on, if you like, until you're quite convinced. Say when!"

"Yaroooh! Leggo, you beast!" howled Snoop.

"Let go, you rotter!" roared Skinner.

Bang!

The two heads met again, and two simultaneous yells awoke all the echoes of the Rag.

"Does that make it clear?" asked Wharton.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Bang!

"Yaroooh! Leggo! Only joking!" shrieked Skinner, in anguish. "Can't you take a joke, you beast? Yarooop!"

"Do you still think I stole the tarts?"

"Ow! No! Yow-ow! No!"

"What about you, Snoop?"

"Wow! No! Oh, dear! Not at all!" wailed Snoop.

Wharton released the two collars, and Skinner and Snoop stood rubbing their heads and regarded him with looks like those of demons in a pantomime.

"I told you I could convince you," remarked the captain of the Remove mildly. He looked round the Rag.

"Anybody seen Bunter?" Nobody had, and the captain of the Remove left the Rag. As he went along to the stairs Temple of the Fourth called out to him.

"I say, Wharton!"

"Hallo!" Wharton looked round.

"I wanted to ask you somethin'," said Cecil Reginald Temple, with a cheery smile.

"Go it!"

"Who stole the tarts?"

"What?" roared Wharton.

"Who stole the tarts?" chortled Temple.

When Cecil Reginald Temple, of the Fourth, asked that question he was a neat, natty, well-dressed, dandified youth. When Wharton left him, three minutes later, he was a dusty, dishevelled wreck, sprawling in the passage, gasping for breath.

The captain of the Remove went up to the Remove passage. On the landing he met Fisher T. Fish.

"Look here, you jay!" hooted Fishy.

"I guess I want— Yarooop!"

Fisher T. Fish had no time to state what he wanted. What he got, for a certainty, was what he did not want.

Wharton went on up the passage, leaving Fisher T. Fish on the Remove



Harry Wharton grasped Skinner by the collar with his right hand, and Snoop by the collar with his left. Bang! Two heads came together with a resounding crack. "Yarooop!" roared Skinner. "Whoooop!" raved Snoop. "Are you convinced now?" asked the captain of the Remove. "I'll keep on, if you like, until you are. Say when!" (See Chapter 8.)

landing, sorting himself out. For quite a little while Fisher T. Fish even forgot the loss of his two shillings.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Alibi Wanted!

"TODDY, old chap!" said Billy Bunter.

"Was it you?" asked Peter Todd.

"Eh? Was what me?" demanded Bunter, blinking at his study-mate in No. 7 in alarm.

"Bagged Fishy's tarts," grinned Peter.

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"Well, Fishy is raising Cain about the tarts, and they must have been bagged by somebody," said Peter, "and you're looking very worried about something, my fat tulip. I suppose you had them?"

"Certainly not! I may be looking worried," admitted Bunter. "Enough to worry a fellow, I think, a cad going to a Form master and sneaking about a few measly tarts!"

Peter Todd chuckled.

"That worries you, does it—though you never had them?" he grinned. "Rather looks as if you did!"

"Nothing of the kind, Toddy! The fact is, I never knew that Fishy had any tarts. I wasn't in the tuckshop when he bought them."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at," said Bunter irritably. "I say, Toddy, old chap, this is getting rather serious, now that that worm has sneaked to Quelchy. That's what I was going to speak about, old fellow. Looks to me as if I shall have to prove an alibi."

"Oh, my hat!" said Peter.

"You know what Form masters are," said Bunter. "Quelchy will make a fuss about this, especially if he's got his rheumatism on. You know what he's like when he gets twinges. I'm as innocent as the babe unborn, of course. But will Quelchy believe that?"

"Probably not," grinned Toddy. "If you say you never had the jolly old tarts, the natural inference is that you had them. Your statements go by contraries, you know."

"Well, if my own pal can't take my word, what am I to expect, from Quelchy?" said Bunter. "The only thing is an alibi. Now, you went down to the bun shop in Courtfield to tea with some fellows, Toddy. Now, suppose you swear—"

"Bad form!" said Toddy, shaking his head.

"I don't mean swear, ass. I mean swear—"

"Besides, I don't know any words."

"You silly ass!" roared Bunter. "Is this a time for your rotten jokes? Suppose you swear that I was at Courtfield with you? That's a good alibi. Quelchy will take your word."

"He wouldn't take it long if I made statements of that sort," chuckled Peter. "Thanks, old fat bean, but I'm not looking for a chance to cultivate a reputation like yours."

"Oh, really, Toddy! Making out that you can't tell a lie, like that American in the story?" sneered Bunter. "Look here, your pater's a solicitor, and you're going to be a solicitor when you grow up. So what's the good of trying to make out that you object to telling lies?"

Before Toddy could answer that question the door of the study was kicked open and Harry Wharton came in.

"Oh, you're here!" he said, glaring at Bunter.

"Yes, old chap!" answered Bunter. "Looking for me? What is it? A feed? I'm on! I've had no tea, old fellow excepting half a dozen tarts—I mean, I haven't had any tea at all. I'm hungry!"

"You had Fishy's tarts?" asked Harry.

"Oh, really, Wharton! Certainly not! Has Fishy lost any tarts?" asked Bunter innocently. "First I've heard of it."

"Quelchy's called the Form together for seven, in the Form-room, to inquire into it," said the captain of the Remove.

"Oh, dear!"

"But if the fellow who bagged the tarts goes to the study before seven and confesses, he may get let off lightly."

Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles.

"What do you call lightly?" he asked.

"Well, bend over and six."

"You silly chump! Think I'm going to Quelchy to ask him to give me six?" hooted Bunter, in great wrath.

"It may be a regular licking if you give Quelchy the trouble of rooting you out. A dozen or more."

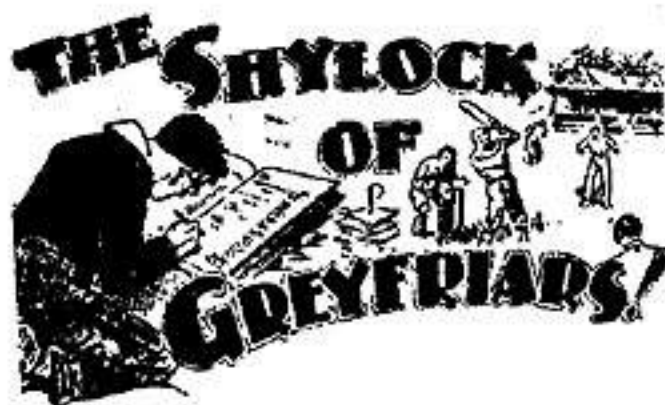
"Quelchy's a beast, like all Form masters," said Bunter. "But even Quelchy won't wallop a perfectly innocent chap—not even when he's got rheumatism. Being perfectly innocent, I—"

"You fat idiot! You had the tarts."

"I never even knew Fishy had any tarts. I hope I'm not the fellow to bag a fellow's tarts, even if I knew. Besides, what a rotten fuss to make over a few tarts!" exclaimed Bunter indignantly. "Mauleverer missed a ten-bob cake the

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(Continued from page 13.)

other day, and never said a word. Who ever heard of a man going to a Form master about a few measly tarts?"

"You silly owl. Fishy would raise Tophet if he missed a bad farthing. You should leave Fishy's stuff alone."

"Well, so I did leave it alone," said Bunter. "So far as I know, it's still in the locker in his study. Not that I knew he put it there, you know," added Bunter cautiously. "I never searched his study for those tarts while he was in Hall."

"Ain't he a beauty?" said Peter Todd admiringly. "Ain't he a prize-packet? George Washington was a fool to him!"

"Besides, I was down in Courtfield at the time," said Bunter. "I was at tea with Toddy in the bun shop at the time I took the tarts from Fishy's study—"

"Oh, great Scott!"

"I mean at the time I didn't take the tarts," said Bunter hastily. "That's what I really meant to say. It's perfectly sickening, the way fellows jump on me when there's any tuck missing. Even Toddy thought it was me when he missed his bulls eyes yesterday. You needn't deny it, Toddy. You did!"

"I did," admitted Peter.

"What do you mean, Wharton, by coming to me with this—this degrading accusation?" demanded Bunter warmly. "Making out that I'd pinch a few measly tarts! I'd jolly well lick you, only—only, being an old pal, I'm letting you off. But I expect an apology."

"You benighted idiot!" said the captain of the Remove. "I guessed it was you, of course and now I know it was. The best thing you can do is to go to Quelch and own up before there's any trouble."

"Rats!" said Bunter. "Quelch's a beast, but he's a just beast! He won't suspect me when he knows that I was at tea in Courtfield at the time. I was with you there, wasn't I, Toddy?"

"No!" answered Peter cheerfully.

Bunter snorted.

"Call that pally?" he demanded. "After all I've done for you, too. I never get any gratitude. But this really is rather thick. Look here, Wharton, you know I was at Friardale at the time—"

"What!" gasped Wharton.

"I told you so just after tea. You mention to Quelch that, to your certain knowledge, I was at Friardale. That will settle it."

"But you weren't at Friardale!" shrieked Wharton.

"I wish you'd keep to the point," said Bunter peevishly. "I can tell you that this is a jolly serious matter now that a Form master is sticking his silly nose into it. Be serious, old chap."

"Are you going to Quelch to own up?" demanded Wharton.

"Certainly not! It would be untruthful to say I had the tarts when I never had them. I hope you're not suggesting that I should be untruthful, Wharton."

"Oh dear," said Harry, "why did they send him here instead of to a home

for idiots? Do you want me to swear that you were at Friardale and Toddy to swear you were at Courtfield at the same time?"

"Well, no," said Bunter. "That wouldn't do, of course. One of you. It doesn't matter which. The important thing is to keep Quelch from suspecting me. The end justifies the means, you know. That's a proverb. Only don't muddle it. Tell the same story and stick to it. That will settle the matter. The whole thing is rather sordid, and the sooner I hear the end of it the better I shall be pleased."

"Well, Form-room at seven," said Harry, giving it up. "Quelch is sure to bowl you out, Bunter. You'd be wise to own up in time."

"Not if you swear—"

"Fathead!"

"Or if you swear, Toddy—"

"Ass!"

"Well, what's going to be done, then?" demanded Bunter anxiously. "Very likely Quelch will suspect me. He's a suspicious beast. He doesn't even know that it's ungentlemanly to doubt a fellow's word. The real trouble," said Bunter sorrowfully, "is that Quelch's no gentleman."

"Better tell him so," suggested Peter. "That may put him into a nice gentle temper—perhaps."

"Well, I never tell a master what I think of him," said Bunter. "It's not safe. Come to that, I never tell you what I think of you, Toddy. It wouldn't be polite."

"Form-room at seven!" said Harry, as he turned to leave the study.

"I say, old chap—"

But the captain of the Remove was gone.

"Look here, Toddy! What's going to be done?" asked Bunter anxiously.

"You are!" answered Toddy. "Done brown!"

"A fellow never knows what his pals are like till he needs them," said Bunter bitterly. "It's a bit sickening. I've been kind to you, Peter, ever since you came to Greyfriars. I've never had it up against you that your pater's a shady solicitor. I've never mentioned what I think of your face or your manners. And now— I—I—I say, Toddy, what are you going to do with that cricket stump?"

Toddy did not say what he was going to do with the cricket stump. Bunter, fortunately, guessed in time, and made a jump out of the study.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Before the Beak!

MR. QUELCH rustled into the Remove Form room at precisely seven.

Every member of his Form was already gathered there.

It was known in the Remove that Mr. Quelch was in a tantrum. When Mr. Quelch was in a tantrum he had the most careful and obedient Form that a Form master's heart could desire. Even Lord Mauleverer had turned up on time. Nobody ventured to be a second late. Everybody was grave and attentive and well behaved. Skinner had hastily devoured cachous to obliterate all clues to his latest cigarette. Not a fellow in the Remove wanted to catch his Form master's glittering eye. A Form master's wrath was like unto the lightning. It had to strike somewhere, and nobody knew just where it would strike. Nobody wanted to be the happy victim.

A slight redness in Mr. Quelch's somewhat prominent nose was taken as

a bad sign. It implied indigestion. The fact was that Mr. Quelch, who cultivated bonhomie when he had fellows to tea, had rashly ventured on a sticky pastry while entertaining Wingate, Gwynne, and Loder. Dry toast was more in his line. That chunk of indigestible pastry was now taking its revenge on Henry Samuel Quelch. It affected his temper. The crimson gleam of his nose was matched by the baleful glitter of his eye.

Not that Mr. Quelch, a very just gentleman, would have been guilty of any injustice, even when suffering from a happy combination of indigestion and rheumatism. Nothing would have been further from his thoughts. The innocent had nothing to fear. But the guilty needed to be very wary indeed. And Mr. Quelch was in a mood to track down the guilty with the ruthless persistence of a bloodhound, or an officer of the C.I.D. He was in a mood to take an extremely serious view of matters that in brighter times might have seemed trifling.

The Remove knew the signs well, and a thrill of uneasiness ran through the Form.

That uneasiness did not decrease when Mr. Quelch addressed them. The bagging of Fishy's tarts by this time had developed into the surreptitious and dishonest purloining of food. It had become a threat to the rights of property. It smacked almost of Bolshevism. It indicated that Greyfriars was no longer what Greyfriars once had been. It marked a downward step in the deterioration of the old school. That deterioration Mr. Quelch was determined to arrest, so far as in him lay. He was there to ascertain the identity of the offender, and to visit upon his devoted head just punishment—punishment just and severe. Mr. Quelch left no doubt whatever that the punishment would be severe as well as just.

When he ceased there was silence in the Form-room.

Many glances turned on Bunter.

Most of the fellows took it for granted that Bunter had had the tarts. In such a matter, evidence really was not needed. If tuck was missing, and Bunter wasn't missing, the natural inference was that the tuck had disappeared inside Bunter.

Bunter sat tight.

If Bunter had had any idea of owning up, the glitter in Mr. Quelch's eye would have banished it.

"Last time of asking, fatty!" whispered Vernon-Smith.

Bunter sniffed.

"And now"—Mr. Quelch's deep voice rolled through the Form-room again—"now I pause, to give the offender a last, a final chance of standing out before the Form and owning up frankly to this offence."

Silence.

"In the event of a frank confession being made a caning will be administered," said Mr. Quelch. "The caning will be severe. It is my duty to make it severe. But in the event of the culprit persisting in a contemptible and pusillanimous silence I shall proceed to ascertain his identity, and report him to the headmaster for a flogging."

"Oh dear!" gasped Bunter.

"Go it, Bunter!" breathed Peter Todd.

But Bunter did not go it.

Perhaps he thought a caning in hand was worse than a flogging in the bush. At all events, he understudied Brer Rabbit, and lay low and said nothing.

There was a long, long pause. Nobody stood out to make that frank confession. It was, as Mr. Quelch said, his duty to make the caning severe.

Nobody doubted that he would do his duty. The crimson glow in his nose, the glitter in his eye, showed that he was not only ready to do his duty, but, indeed, eager.

Deep silence reigned in the Form-room.

Obviously the culprit was going to persist in a contemptible and pusillanimous silence. So it was necessary for Mr. Quelch to proceed to ascertain his identity.

"For the last time!" rumbled Mr. Quelch.

Silence again.

"Very well!" said Mr. Quelch, almost biting off the words as he uttered them. "Very well! It appears that I cannot rely upon my Form to be frank with me. Very well! The matter will now be investigated, and, on the discovery of the offender, it will pass from my hands into those of the headmaster. I shall now question the Form."

For the next ten minutes the Greyfriars Remove went through a process that was almost scarifying.

But nobody knew anything.

Nearly every fellow in the Form guessed who the culprit was. But guessing was not knowing. Certainly no fellow was disposed to mention what he guessed.

Every fellow was able to state, with perfect truth, that he knew absolutely nothing about the matter, except Bunter, who made the same statement without bothering about perfect truth. Truth and Bunter had long been strangers, and were not likely to strike up an acquaintance just then.

Squiff, certainly, had seen Bunter coming from the direction of Fishy's study with jam on his mouth; but he did not feel called upon to mention that circumstance. Mr. Quelch did not ask him if he had seen a fellow with jam on his mouth. Squiff answered what questions were asked, without stating any opinion of his own. Harry Wharton and Peter Todd could hardly have any doubts left in their minds, after their talk with Bunter in Study No. 7. But Mr. Quelch did not ask them anything about conversations in junior studies. Neither would they have told him, had he asked.

Nobody was asked to state suspicions. He was asked to state what he knew. Nobody knew anything, except Bunter, and Bunter was prepared to state anything and everything except what he knew.

Some of the fellows were perspiring by the time Mr. Quelch was done.

But he was done at last.

And the guilty party had not transpired.

Fisher T. Fish retained his original opinion that the Famous Five and Squiff had had the tarts. But Mr. Quelch took their word on the subject without question. What had become of the tarts remained a mystery. So complete and utter was the ignorance of the Remove on the subject that it might almost have been supposed that the tarts had melted into thin air. Yet it was certain that some fellow present had had the tarts, or, as Mr. Quelch expressed it, had surreptitiously abstracted them.

Mr. Quelch had to admit defeat.

But only for the time.

The Remove laboured under a happy delusion that when the investigation drew blank, so to speak, the whole thing would drop. Nothing was further from Mr. Quelch's thoughts than that.

It had now become a personal matter with him. His dignity was involved. He had set out to track down the offender, and announced his fixed intention to all the Form. From that position it was impossible to retreat.

"The matter does not end here," said the Remove master at last. "For the moment it remains in abeyance. You are dismissed. But the inquiry will be pursued. It will be pursued until the offender is discovered and duly punished. For the moment I have no more to say."

Which was a relief, at least.

The Remove filed out of the Form-room, glad that the ordeal was over—for the time. In the Form-room passage several fellows kicked Fisher T. Fish to relieve their feelings. There was some comfort in that, though Fishy, of course, did not share it. After which the Remove dispersed, and until bedtime that night they had the pleasure, or otherwise, of hearing repeated, incessantly, a question by fellows in other Forms—a question of which the Removes grew quite sick and tired. The question was, "Who stole the tarts?"

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

What About It?

"WHO stole the tarts?"

It was ridiculous, absurd; but it was distinctly irritating. It was so undignified. Really, a fellow would rather have been accused of holding up a bank than of pinching a few miserable tarts. There was hardly a man in the Remove who was capable of pinching tarts. There were fellows capable of worse things, perhaps, but in such a proceeding as pinching tarts there was

(Continued on the next page.)



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a lack of dignity. Skinner did not mind being suspected of smoking in his study; the Bouncer did not object to fellows surmising that he broke school bounds after lights out. Bolsover major rather gloried in his reputation of being a bully. But all three of them grew wild with wrath when some Third Form fag howled round a corner, "Who stole the tarts?" and fled for his life.

Probably, in all the Remove, Billy Bunter was the only man who would have pinched tarts. And Bunter would only have done so because he was too obtuse to realise that it amounted to pilfering. Bunter's fat brain moved in mysterious ways, and performed wonders. It always seemed clear to Bunter that if there was any tuck about he ought to have it, or, at least, the lion's share in it. Bunter was quite incapable of anything dishonest, if he understood that it was dishonest. The trouble was that his understanding did not always work. Besides, Bunter had, in this case, a good defence under three heads.

First: It was only a lark to pinch Fishy's tarts, and make him sit up.

Second: The tarts weren't really Fishy's, as he had bought them with Fry's two-shilling piece.

Third: He hadn't pinched them.

Bunter regarded this defence as absolutely sound, and covering all possible objections to his conduct.

He was justified in pinching the tarts, or, alternatively, as the lawyers say, he hadn't pinched them. That was a pretty complete defence, in Bunter's opinion.

On one point, at least, the Remove men agreed with Bunter—that an awful lot of fuss was being made about a very trifling matter. Grub raids had occurred in the Remove before. They could hardly fail to occur when Bunter was a member of the Form. There had been occasions when fellows had laid in a handsome spread, to entertain a few friends, and when they got there the cupboard was bare. On such occasions Bunter had generally suffered for his sins. But there had not been all this fuss about it.

The pinching of Fishy's tarts was like unto the rolling of the small stone in the Alps, which begins that landslide—like the snowball that starts the avalanche. A mere trifle was growing and growing, like the little peach in the orchard, and now there was no telling where it would end.

In view of the tremendous fuss that was being made Bunter would willingly have restored the tarts, had that been possible. But that, of course, was impossible now. He would have paid Fishy the two shillings, the loss of which caused such deep and searching anguish to his Transatlantic soul; but, unfortunately, his postal-order, long expected, had not yet arrived, and Bunter was in his usual stony state. He suggested to Toddy to pay Fishy the two shillings, but Toddy did not seem to see it, somehow.

Meanwhile, the Removites wondered what would be Quelch's next step. Quelch was not the man to admit defeat. Even when his indigestion ceased from troubling, and his rheumatism was at rest, he was certain to keep his teeth in the bone, so to speak. He was a determined gentleman, and, having taken up the matter, he was not the man to let it drop. His next step was made known that evening after prep.

When the Removites came down from their studies they found a notice on the board in Mr. Quelch's hand.

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It announced that until the surreptitious purloining of food was made known, the whole Remove would be detained for one hour every day after class. That extra hour would be devoted to Latin prose.

There were fellows in the Remove for whom Latin prose had its attractions, but they were in the minority.

Most of the Form got enough Latin prose in the regular way of business, as it were, and did not want any more. Very much, indeed, they did not want any more.

"It's too thick," was Bob Cherry's opinion.

"The thickfulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "It is time for the esteemed and rascally Bunter to own up."

"It's time for the pincher to own up, anyhow," remarked Skinner.

"It was Bunter, of course," said Vernon-Smith.

"I don't see putting it on Bunter," answered Skinner, feeling quite virtuous in the role of champion of the oppressed. "Bunter wasn't seen in the study. Other fellows were."

"Bunter's got to own up!" growled Johnny Bull.

"We'll make him!" grunted Bob.

"I don't think Bunter ought to be bullied," remarked Skinner pleasantly.

"Hardly playing the game, is it?"

"Fair play's a jewel," said Snoop, shaking his head.

"You two know such a thumping lot about fair play, and playing the game, don't you?" said Bob Cherry, with a glare.

"Well, I think——" said Skinner.

"I think——" said Snoop.

"The thickfulness is too terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The bangfulness of the esteemed napper is the proper caper."

Skinner and Snoop hastily retired from the discussion. The Famous Five and several other fellows discussed the matter; and it was agreed that this couldn't go on. Now it had come to official detention, it was altogether too thick, and something had to be done. A fellow whose misdeeds landed the whole Form in trouble, was bound by all laws, written and unwritten, to own up. It was up to Bunter; and in the Rag Bunter was cornered, and this was explained to him, emphatically, and at full length.

He shook his head.

"If I'd had the tarts, old chap, of course I'd own up like a shot," he said. "I hope I'm an honourable fellow. Leave it to me to play the game, every time. But I never had them."

"You've as good as admitted that you had!" howled Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"It's only a licking, you fat freak!" said Peter Todd.

Bunter blinked at him.

"Only!" he said. "I like that! Six, at least—and perhaps a flogging—just for a few measly tarts! If you hadn't gone out and left me without any tea, I shouldn't have touched them. You know that!"

"Then you did touch them?"

"Oh, no! Not at all. Nothing of the kind!"

"You fat idiot——"

"Oh, really, Toddy——"

"You've got to own up!" hooted Nugent.

"You did it, so take your licking like a man!" said Squiff.

"I say, you fellows, I'll make a suggestion, if you like," said Bunter. "As you say, it's only a licking. A fellow

ought to be able to take a licking. After all, what's a licking?"

"That's right," said Harry Wharton. "That's the way to look at it. A man soon gets over a licking."

"That's so," agreed Bunter. "Well, my idea is this. You go to Quelch and own up, Wharton——"

"What?"

"As you say, a man soon gets over a licking," said Bunter. "Once Quelch has licked somebody, he will be satisfied. That's all he wants. Well, let him lick you and get it over."

"Wha-a-t?"

"I shall be jolly glad to hear the end of it," said Bunter. "I can tell you I'm sick of the subject. I forgot that Fishy was a mean, vengeful rotter when I bagged the tarts. Not that I bagged them, you know; I don't mean that at all. What about it, Wharton?"

"What about it?" repeated the captain of the Remove dazedly.

"Yes. Are you game?"

"Game?" gasped Wharton. "Do you think I'm going to Quelch to be licked for nothing, you fat idiot?"

"You keep on telling me that a licking is only a licking, and that a man soon gets over it. Well, then, what are you grousing about?" asked Bunter. "I hate a licking myself; but you fellows seem to think there ain't much in it. Go to Quelch and get the licking over, and let's hear the end of all this. What about it?"

Obviously, William George Bunter was not to be reasoned with. So they bumped him on the floor of the Rag and left him roaring. Then they visited Fisher T. Fish, and kicked him, and left him yelling. After which there seemed nothing more to be done, and they let it go at that.

— — —

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Bribery and Corruption!

THE next morning the mystery of the missing tarts was still a mystery. Bunter had not owned up. His objections to a licking seemed as strong as ever. Nobody had adopted Bunter's brilliant suggestion of owning up in his place, and getting the licking over. All the Remove looked forward, with anything but happy anticipation, to an extra hour at Latin prose after class that day. The poet assures us that distance lends enchantment to the view; but that prospect ahead did not seem to enchant anybody in the Greyfriars Remove.

Mr. Quelch was in a better temper that morning.

Indigestion had passed away; rheumatism was giving him a miss. He had recovered from the ordeal of the prefects to tea.

But though his temper was decidedly improved, his determination remained unshaken. He could not recede from a position he had taken up. What he had said, he had said!

He was no longer angry; but he was as sternly fixed as the decrees of Destiny. He turned upon the Remove a countenance like that of Hamlet's father, more in sorrow than in anger. But he had not changed his mind in the very least. The Remove were booked for an hour daily of detention, till the mystery of Study No. 14 was cleared up.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Quelch was punishing himself as well as his class. He had to be detained along with the Remove; for had he left his Form alone in the Form-room, the detention hour would have been much more



"You can't sneak about a man to a master!" snapped Wharton. "Can't I?" hooted Fish. "I ain't losing two shillings; I guess. No, sir! Not this infant, sir! I guess I ain't growing hayseed in my hair, sir. I'm going to the Beak!" As Fisher T. Fish started towards the Form-room Bob Cherry put out a foot, and the American junior stumbled over it and reached the passage floor in a sudden nose-dive. (See Chapter 13.)

probably, devoted to leap-frog than to Latin prose. But Mr. Quelch was one of those dutiful gentlemen who know how to suffer and be strong. Unless the culprit owned up, it looked as if Remove and Remove master would be detained, one hour per diem, for the rest of the term. And it was certain that the culprit never would own up. Bunter's objections to a licking were not to be overcome. He disliked the idea at the very first, and the more he thought of it the more he disliked it. Moreover, a threatened licking was not one of those things that grew feeble with age. The longer Mr. Quelch had to wait, the harder he was likely to lay it on. His wrath, like wine, improved in strength with keeping.

Bunter fairly shivered at the thought of letting Quelch, as he expressed it, have a go at him.

There were discontented faces in the Remove that morning. Fisher T. Fish looked very morose. He was detained along with the rest of the Form, although he was the injured party. He almost wished that he hadn't raised such a shindy about the tarts. But not quite! Two shillings were two shillings; and if the loss was not recovered, it was likely that when Fishy died, those words would be found written on his Transatlantic heart. Fishy's anguish at the loss of money was such as could scarcely be understood by a fellow born on the inferior side of the Atlantic.

In morning break Harry Wharton & Co. looked for Bunter, to try the effect of persuasive eloquence upon him again.

They were guided to him by the sound of wild yells under the elms across the quad.

Bunter's head was being banged on a tree by Skinner and Snoop.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's this game?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as the Famous Five arrived on the spot.

"Yarrah! Rescue!" howled Bunter.

Bob took Skinner by the collar, and Johnny Bull paid the same attention to Snoop.

"Look here, he's got to own up!" snarled Skinner. "I'm jolly well not going to be detained this afternoon for that fat freak!"

"Sits the wind in that quarter?" chuckled Nugent. "What about fair play, and playing the game, and so on?"

Skinner and Snoop, apparently, had changed their minds on that subject, now that detention was drawing nearer. Their objections to bullying Bunter seemed to have disappeared.

The Famous Five, however, still retained all their objections to bullying; and they proceeded to make this clear to Skinner and Snoop.

Two dusty wrecks fled yelling from the elms, what time William George Bunter rubbed his head and grinned.

"I say, you fellows—"

"My esteemed and fatheaded Bunter," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "the bullyfulness is not the proper caper; but it is up to you to go to the ridiculous Quelch and own up."

"Oh, really, Inky—"

"You deserve to be hanged, drawn, and quartered!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Look here, you fat villain—"

"Oh, really, Bud—"

"Do the decent thing, Bunter!" urged Harry Wharton. "You know jolly well that it's up to you."

Bunter shook his head.

"Quelch's too jolly dangerous," he

said. "Besides, it's a flogging now. The Head will be waxy at being bothered, and he will lay it on hard. The fact is, you fellows—"

"What about an esteemed feed at the absurd tuck-shop?" asked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Bunter's round eyes glistened behind his glasses.

"I say, old chap, you're talking like a pal now," he said. "Come on!"

"On condition—" added the nabob of Bhanipur.

"Eh?"

"That you own up to Quelch, my esteemed fat Bunter."

"Oh!"

Bunter looked very doubtful.

"Bribery and corruption," grinned Bob Cherry.

"I say, you fellows, let's talk it over in the tuckshop," suggested Bunter.

"I've had hardly any breakfast, and nothing since except some toffee I found in Ogilvy's study. Let's—"

"We'll talk it over first, you fat burglar," said Bob. "Look here, you know jolly well that you ought to own up. Any fellow would, when the whole Form gets landed. But we'll stand you spread if you'll go to Quelch and do the right thing."

"Tarts?" asked Bunter cautiously.

"Yes, cormorant."

"Six?"

"Yes, you bird of prey."

"Fourpenny ones?"

"Yes."

Bunter's mouth watered.

"And a ginger-pop?" he asked.

"And a ginger-pop," said Bob.

Bunter hesitated a moment or two. He was torn both ways—desire for a feed contending with dread of a

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licking. Like Desdemona, he perceived here a divided duty.

But his fat mind was soon made up. "It's a go!" he said. "After all, what's a licking? I'm not the man to be afraid of a licking—not soft, like you fellows."

"Oh, my hat!"

"You leave it to me," said Bunter valiantly. "I'm not afraid of Quelch, and I'll jolly well show him, too. When we go in for third school, I'll stand up and put it to him. I shall say 'I'm the man!'"

"That's right, old fat bean!"

"I shall say: 'I did it!'" pursued Bunter, evidently rather fancying himself in the attitude of Ajax defying the lightning. "I shall say: 'Sir, I own up to save the other fellows from unjust punishment. I feel it's up to me. Do your worst!'"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"That is how I shall put it," said Bunter. "Owning up in a frank and manly way, you know, regardless of consequences. That's me all over."

"Fan me!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"It will be rather dramatic, you know," said Bunter. "One fellow rising up from the class, with undaunted courage, and all that, to face the music. Quelch may realise that such a fellow ought not to get it very hard. He may admire my manliness, and go easy."

"He may!" murmured Nugent.

"The mayfulness is terrific."

"Anyhow, I'm going to do it," said Bunter recklessly. "I'm the fellow to let himself be out in pieces rather than let his friends get landed in trouble. You know me!"

"The admirableness of the preposterous Bunter is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "This way to the absurd tuckshop."

And Bunter, heroic and hungry, was led into Mrs. Mumble's little establishment in the corner behind the elms, and his fat face glowed with joyful satisfaction over a dish of tarts—as luscious as those he had fished out of the locker in No. 14 the previous day, and washed down with ginger-pop.

Happy and jammy and sticky, Bunter beamed on his friends.

"Rely on me, old beans," he said. "I'm not the man to let you down. Did I ever let a pal down?"

"Hem! Stick to that, old sticky bean!"

"I'll stick to it all right! Some fellows would be afraid to stand up to Quelch in class," said Bunter. "You fellows would, frinstance."

"Hem!"

"Not me, though! Brave as a lion, you know—that's me! I shall fix my eye on his calmly, and say—grooogh-ooooooh!" Ginger-beer following jam-tarts rather too hurriedly, impeded Bunter's utterance for a few moments. "I shall say—oooooggggh! I mean I shall say—ggggrrrrhh! I shall say 'I'm the man! Alone I did it! Get on with the punishment! See?'"

"Bravo!"

The bell for third school interrupted. Bunter hastily finished tarts and ginger-pop, choked a little, and followed the Famous Five from the tuckshop in a gurgling state—but still heroic. In the Form-room passage Bob Cherry passed the word that all was well—that Bunter was going to own up. And when Mr. Quelch came along to let his Form in, the Remove followed their master in, much relieved in their minds. They took their places for third lesson, and waited for Bunter to own up.

They continued to wait!

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THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

No Go!

BILLY BUNTER coughed. The Remove men hung on his cough.

He was going to speak.

Mr. Quelch was rustling papers at his desk, unconscious of the state of tension in the Form.

All eyes were on Bunter.

Bunter opened his lips.

He half-rose.

Then he closed his lips and sat down again.

In the tuckshop, comforted by tarts and ginger-pop, Bunter's courage had known no bounds. There never was a peril that Billy Bunter could not face, so long as it was a good distance off. It was when it approached closely that Bunter felt his courage ooze.

With the width of the quadrangle between him and Mr. Quelch he was prepared to hurl defiance at Quelch. With Mr. Quelch in the offing he was not quite prepared to do so.

Bunter had meant every word he had said. He had not intended to bag that feed on false pretences. But circumstances alter cases. Before taking, and after taking, were different matters. One look at the severe countenance of Henry Samuel Quelch caused Bunter to feel a deep trepidation in his fat heart.

When Mr. Quelch looked up from the papers on his desk Bunter did not rise and say 'Alone I did it!' He made himself as small as possible.

Remove fellows on all hands made signs to him. Some of them whispered—those within reach kicked him under the desks.

But it booted not, as a poet would say.

Bunter's intentions were good; but intention out-ran performance. The spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak.

According to the proverb, silence is golden; and never had silence seemed to Bunter of such pure gold as on this occasion.

He sat tight.

Third lesson began. No word from Bunter. Third lesson proceeded—and ended. Mr. Quelch dismissed the Form. And still the Owl of the Remove had said nothing.

The expressive looks of the other fellows were not lost on Bunter. He had a dismal anticipation, too, that a kicking awaited him outside the Form-room.

He made an effort, and stopped on his way to the door, and turned towards the Form master's desk.

"Sir!" he gasped.

Faces all round lighted up. Bunter was just going to begin.

Mr. Quelch glanced up.

"Sir!" spluttered Bunter desperately.

"Did you speak, Bunter?"

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped Bunter, in terror.

"What?"

"I—I mean, yes, sir!" gasped the fat junior, gathering his courage again.

"I—I—I—"

"Well?" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"I—I—I—"

"Kindly be brief, Bunter, if you have anything to say to me."

"Oh yes sir! Certainly sir! I—I—I—"

"What do you mean, Bunter?" demanded Mr. Quelch, staring at the Owl of the Remove.

"Oh! Nothing, sir!"

"Boy!"

"I—I—I mean—"

"Well?" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

"I—I—I—I—" groaned the unfortunate Owl. He was really doing his best. But it would not come out.

Mr. Quelch fixed his eyes on Bunter with a terrifying glitter in them.

"I fail to understand you, Bunter," he said. "What do you mean by that absurd and childish repetition of the first personal pronoun? Explain yourself."

"I—I—I—"

"What?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"I—I—I—" gasped Bunter. "I—I—I—" He seemed to be glued to the pronoun.

"I presume," said Mr. Quelch, "that this is some unseemly, impertinent jest. Is that the case, Bunter?"

"Oh! No, sir!" gasped Bunter. "Not at all, sir!"

"Then what do you mean?"

"Nothing, sir!"

"Take a hundred lines, and leave the Form-room at once."

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter; and he fled.

He had not owned up. Really, it was almost a physical impossibility for Bunter to own up, under Henry Samuel Quelch's glittering eye. He felt, as soon as he got out of the Form-room, as Daniel may have felt when he was safe outside the lion's den.

Round him the Removites gathered.

"You fat villain—" roared Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"You fat funk—"

"A fat lot of good bribing and corrupting Bunter!" grinned Frank Nugent. "A sheer waste of tuck."

"I say, you fellows, I—I've only put it off," gasped Bunter. "I—I'll go to Quelch after dinner. I say, let's go down to the tuck-shop and talk it over."

"Kill him, somebody."

William George Bunter hastily departed along the Form-room passage, with three or four kicks to help him along. Evidently, the efforts of the Famous Five, and the spread in the school shop, had been wasted; Bunter was not going to own up. That chicken, as the Boulder expressed it, would not fight.

Of that little scene, Fisher T. Fish had been an astonished spectator.

Fishy had still clung to his belief that the Famous Five and Squiff had bagged those tarts. He had thought of Bunter, of course—when tuck was missing, a fellow couldn't help thinking of Bunter. But to his keen, cute, and spry mind, it seemed that the evidence was against the guys who had shut his pleasing countenance out of the study.

Now, however, it was borne in upon Fishy's mind that the culprit really was Bunter. It was not a welcome discovery; for Bunter had no money to pay the damage. Not unless a formal demand was sent to his father, by some person in authority, would the money be forthcoming from the impecunious Owl of the Remove. Kicking Bunter was no use to Fishy; besides, the other fellows were kicking him already. From any other fellow, Fishy might have hoped to extract the two shillings; from Bunter, not. But if he could not, the Form-master could.

"So it was that pesky, dog-goned, pie-faced mugwump!" said Fisher T. Fish. "It was that slab-sided locoed scallywag, was it? I guess Quelch is going to be put wise to it."

"Don't be a silly ass!" snapped Harry Wharton. "You can't sneak about a man to a master."

"Not even you, Wisly!" said Bob.

Snort from Fisher T. Fish.

"Can't I!" he hooted. "You watch out! Call it what you dog-goned well like—I ain't losing two shillings. I sure ain't being touched like a boob for half a dollar! No, sir! Not this infant, sir! I guess I ain't growing hayseed in my hair, sir! You can't put it

over on me by calling it fancy names! I'm going to the Beak."

And Fisher T. Fish's long, thin legs started towards the Form-room at a great rate.

Bob Cherry put out a foot, and the long, thin legs stumbled over it, and Fisher T. Fish reached the passage floor in a sudden nose-dive.

"Yoooop!" roared Fisher T. Fish.

"Guess again!" chuckled Bob.

"I tell you," shrieked Fisher T. Fish, scrambling up furiously, "I tell you, I'm going to put Quelch wise! I'll tell the world——"

"You can tell the jolly old world, if you like, but not Quelch," chuckled Bob. "Sneaking is barred in the Remove."

"I guess——"

"Shut up, Fishy."

"Oh, guff!" snarled Fish, and he made a run for the Form-room, where Henry Samuel Quelch yet lingered.

Five or six pairs of hands were laid on Fisher Tarleton Fish, with promptness and despatch.

He came down again on the passage floor, with a mighty concussion.

This time, several juniors sat on him to keep him there.

From under the sitters, came gasping howls from Fisher T. Fish. He yelled, he roared, and he raved.

"Sneaking's barred!" explained Bob Cherry, tapping Fishy's head on the floor, to give point to his remarks. "Mustn't give a man away to the beaks. It isn't done, old bean."

"I guess——" shrieked Fisher T. Fish.

"This isn't a guessing competition, old bean. You say one word to Quelch about Bunter, and we'll skin you. You'll get your napper tapped hard, like that——"

"Wow-ow!"

"And like that——"

"Yaroooh!"

"And like that——"

"Whoooooooooooooop!"

"They are samples," explained Bob genially. "But the rest of the goods will be up to sample. Got that?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Wow! Gerroff! I—I guess I'll keep mum!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "Oh, Jerusalem crickets! Oh, great gophers and horned toads! Let up on a guy! You hear me yaup? Let up."

Mr. Quelch came out of the Form-room. He stopped in his majestic progress, to stare at the scene in the passage.

"Boys!" rumbled Mr. Quelch.

The juniors jumped up from Fishy as if he had suddenly given them an electric shock. Fishy crawled to his feet after them.

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Bob.

"Horseplay in the corridors is forbidden, as you know very well," said Mr. Quelch severely. "Let there be no more of it."

"Oh! Yes, sir! Certainly."

Fisher T. Fish opened his mouth—and closed it. If he was going to sneak, this was evidently not a favourable opportunity. Mr. Quelch passed on, without learning what Fishy yearned to tell him.

When the Form-master was gone, Fishy glared at the smiling juniors.

"Look here, you guys," he yapped. "who's going to pay me for those tarts? I want to know."

"Echo answers, who?"

"The who-fulness is terrific."

"Bunter's got no money," howled Fisher T. Fish. "He can write to his nopper for it, but he won't unless Quelch makes him. You can see that Quelch has got to know."

"Otherwise you lose two bob?" chuckled Nugent.

"Yep!"

"And that's impossible?" asked Wharton, laughing.

Fisher T. Fish stared at him. The question seemed to him utterly frivolous. Of course it was impossible!

"Aw, don't be a boob!" he snapped.

"I guess I ain't out to lose money."

"Was it your money?" asked Bob Cherry. "Bunter says that you got it off Fry of the Fourth, interest on a loan or something."

"That reminds me," said Harry Wharton. "We've got to look into that matter of moneylending in the Form, and I don't think we've got to look very far. Now, Fishy——"

Fisher T. Fish departed from the spot. The discussion had ceased to interest him.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Fishy Asks for It!

LATIN prose, at the best of times, seldom thrilled the Greyfriars Remove.

Detention time was the worst of times.

So that hour after class, in the afternoon, was one of the longest, weariest,

Read this clever limerick and then have a shot at winning one of our useful leather wallets yourself!

Said Bunter one day to Bob Cherry:

"I don't feel exceedingly merry."

Said Bob, with a smile,

"I see by your dial,
You've eaten a doughnut too many."

A pocket wallet has been forwarded to: James Hambleton, 7, Onslow Street, Leicester.

and dreariest that the Remove had ever known.

Mr. Quelch did his duty thoroughly. He had plenty of other avocations, and he had to find an hour's time for this. Possibly that gave a keener edge to his duty. No doubt many of the Lower Fourth benefited and improved their knowledge of the tongue of Cicero, of Horace, and of Virgil. But benefits like these were not much sought after in the Remove. There were plenty of fellows in the Form who could have jogged along quite comfortably without any knowledge of Latin, verse or prose, at all; indeed, in the Remove there was a strong opinion that, Latin being a dead language, it ought to be buried.

Nevertheless, there it was—they had to grind through an hour's detention, and never had Latin prose seemed so prosy.

All things come to an end; even the weariest river winds somewhere safe to sea. Detention was over at last. But in the future loomed detention after detention—an awful prospect, stretching as far as the eye could reach, so to speak.

It couldn't go on! The whole Remove agreed that it couldn't. Something had to be done! Everybody knew now that Bunter was the guilty party, the heinous abstracter of light comestibles, and everybody told Bunter to own up. In all the Remove there was only one dissentient voice on that subject. Unfortunately, that voice was Bunter's.

To all arguments Bunter opposed one

that he considered incontrovertible—"What about me?"

It was useless to explain to him that he, W. G. Bunter, did not matter. W. G. Bunter was convinced that he did.

There were fellows in the Remove, like Skinner and Snoop and Bolsover major, who would have ragged and bullied Bunter into owning up. But the Famous Five were down on that; that was not the game.

With one exception there was nobody in the Remove who would have "sneaked." The exception was Fishy. To do Fishy justice, he did not regard this as sneaking. Fishy would not have given a man away for anything else. But this was a question of money; at least, of money's value. To submit to the loss of money or money's value was, in Fishy's opinion, to act like a boob, a goob, and an all-fired jay. All lesser considerations had to be put aside when money was involved. A sense of honour was a very good thing in its way, as Fishy freely admitted; but what was it in comparison with money? As moonlight unto sunlight, as water unto wine!

Money being the beginning, the middle, and the end of Fishy's existence, he was not likely to be such a boob, such a goob, or such an all-fired jay as to lose a half-dollar when there was the remotest possibility of recovering that sum.

So while the Remove men were discussing the matter and trying to prevail on Bunter to beard the lion in his den, Fisher T. Fish was taking a quiet opportunity of cutting the Gordian knot.

Fisher T. Fish blew into Mr. Quelch's study after tea with the news that the culprit was William George Bunter, and that all the Remove knew it.

Mr. Quelch's first proceeding astonished and pained Fishy. He caned him for tale-bearing.

The Remove master's view was that, so long as the Remove were under detention, public opinion in the Form would be brought to bear on the culprit, leading to confession.

He was not in the least pleased to find that there was a sneak in his Form. He was distinctly displeased. He was annoyed to find that his own action had led a boy to act dishonourably. So he took it out of Fisher T. Fish.

However, now that he was informed, howsoever he might despise the informer, he had no choice but to act on the information.

A quarter of an hour later there was an alarm in the Remove passage.

"Ware beaks!"

Quelch had been sighted on the Remove staircase.

There were hurried preparations in the studies for this unexpected and unwelcome visit. Skinner hastily put his cigarette out of sight, and absorbed cachous. The Bounder shoved his copy of the "Racing Tipster" up the study chimney. Fellows gathered in the passage, trying to look as if butter would not melt in their mouths, and as if they rather liked this wheeze of domiciliary visits from their beloved Form master.

Mr. Quelch advanced along the passage and stopped at Study No. 7.

Then the fellows guessed.

"He's after Bunter!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"That unspeakable worm Fishy has been sneaking!" muttered the captain of the Remove.

The door of Study No. 7 stood open. Peter Todd was in the passage with the other fellows; but Bunter was there. The Owl of the Remove jumped up and blinked at his Form master through his

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big spectacles. He did not wait to be accused. He guessed what was coming, and got in first.

"Please, sir, it wasn't me."

"Bunter!"

"I assure you, sir, it wasn't me," said Bunter. "I—I was never so surprised in my life, sir, as when I heard of it. You could have knocked me down with a hammer, sir—I mean, a feather."

"Did you abstract certain articles of light refreshment from Study No. 14 yesterday, Bunter?" demanded Mr. Quelch in a deep voice.

"Certainly not, sir. I was in Courtfield at the time."

"Did you enter Fish's study at all?"

"Oh, no, sir! Being at Friardale—"

"What?"

"I—I mean Courtfield, sir, I couldn't, could I? The tarts were perfectly safe when I left the study, sir."

"When you left the study?" repeated Mr. Quelch. "Then you were in the study?"

"I—I mean, when I didn't leave the study, sir!" gasped Bunter. "Not being in the study at all, sir, I couldn't have left it, could I? I—I hope you can take my word, sir."

"I fear, Bunter, that I cannot take your word," said Mr. Quelch. "If you have a confession to make, Bunter—"

"Oh, no, sir! Being perfectly innocent, of course I haven't, sir. Besides, my belief is that Fishy ate the tarts himself."

"You pesky jay!" hooted Fisher T. Fish.

"Silence!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "Bunter, I am bound to give you a fair hearing. Do you allege that Fish himself consumed the tarts and only affected to have lost them?"

Bunter blinked round despairingly at the other fellows. Some of them, behind Mr. Quelch's back, shook their heads warningly as a tip to Bunter to think of something easier than that.

"Well, no, sir!" gasped Bunter. "Not exactly that. But—"

"But what?"

"But—but very likely the tarts are there all the time, sir," groaned Bunter. "Fishy says he hid them. Well, he may have hid them so carefully that he couldn't find them again. I—I think that's very likely, sir."

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Quelch.

"It's very likely, isn't it, sir?" said Bunter.

"It does not seem to me in the least probable, Bunter," said the Remove master. "But certainly it has not been established beyond possibility of cavil that the—the comestibles are no longer in the study. Fish!"

"Yep!" gasped Fisher T. Fish.

"You have stated that certain comestibles, to the number of six, were abstracted from your study. Did you make absolutely certain that they were no longer in the room?"

"Sure, sir!"

"Scarcely any doubt can remain on the subject, then," said Mr. Quelch. "Nevertheless, if you persist in denial, Bunter, I shall proceed to ascertain, beyond possibility of doubt, that the—the tarts are no longer in the study. An accused person is entitled to every possible chance. If you have anything to confess, Bunter—"

"Oh, no, sir! Being perfectly innocent—"

"Very well, I shall examine No. 14 Study personally and ascertain whether, by any possibility, the—the comestibles have been overlooked," said Mr. Quelch. "Fish, you will come with me. Please give me the keys to any receptacle that may be locked."

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Fisher T. Fish's face suddenly changed colour.

Mr. Quelch stared at the Remove.

"Are you ill?" he ejaculated.

Fishy looked ill.

His sallow, bony face had become almost green, and his narrow eyes seemed to be starting from his head.

The Removes stared at him in wonder.

What was the matter with Fishy was a mystery. But evidently something was very much the matter with him.

"I—I say, sir!" he gasped.

"Well?"

"It—it ain't necessary to search my study, sir. I—I guess I know the tarts were taken—"

"That is for me to decide, Fish," said Mr. Quelch coldly. "I trust that you are not presuming to instruct your Form master?"

"Nunno, sir! But—"

"Follow me to your study!" snapped the Remove master, and he rustled away along the passage.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Unexpected!

FISHER T. FISH stood staring after Mr. Quelch with haggard eyes.

The other fellows were grinning now.

It really was not likely that the tarts were still in the study, and that Fishy

There's Another Novel

FREE GIFT

In This Week's GEM.

See that you get it, boys!

had overlooked them. That was not at all probable. That was not what Fishy was afraid of. He did not fear jam tarts coming to light. But he feared something else coming to light.

"Oh, great gophers!" groaned Fisher T. Fish.

He dashed along the Remove passage and overtook the Form master at the door of No. 14. The whole Remove swarmed after him. All of them were interested now.

"What on earth is Fishy scared about?" murmured Nugent.

"Goodness knows; but he's got it bad," chuckled Bob Cherry. "There's something in his study that he doesn't want Quelch to see."

"He's asked for it," chortled Squiff.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Outside No. 14 Study the passage swarmed. The Remove thrilled with interest now.

"Mr. Quelch, sir!" Fisher T. Fish gasped as he followed the Form master in. "I—I say, sir! I—I'd rather let the whole matter drop, sir, if you don't mind."

"What?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"After all, sir, it was only a few tarts," gasped Fishy. "I—I don't mind Bunter having had them. I don't really, sir!"

"It is not yet proved that Bunter abstracted these comestibles, Fish," snapped Mr. Quelch. "I begin to doubt whether they were ever missed from this study at all. Certainly, your conduct is very suspicious."

"I—I mean, sir—"

"I shall certainly make a search of the room," said Mr. Quelch. "Your very peculiar conduct, Fish, makes that

proceeding more than ever necessary."

"The—the tarts ain't here, sir!" gasped Fisher T. Fish.

"I shall ascertain that fact for myself, Fish."

"I—I assure you, sir—"

"Silence!"

"The—the fact is, sir," gasped Fisher T. Fish, desperately, "I—I ate them myself, sir!"

There was a gasp in the crowded passage. Billy Bunter's eyes opened wide behind his spectacles. Bunter had the best of reasons for knowing that that statement was not in accordance with the facts.

Mr. Quelch gave Fisher T. Fish a petrifying glare.

"You—you ate the tarts yourself, Fish?" he stuttered, as if he could barely articulate.

"Yep," groaned the wretched Fishy. "So—so it had better drop, sir. It was only a joke, sir—jest that. I—I own up."

Mr. Quelch's eyes seemed to bore into him.

"It appears to me, Fish, that you have some reason—some secret, surreptitious, and probably disgraceful reason—for desiring that no search should be made here."

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped Fisher T. Fish.

"I shall accept your statement," said Mr. Quelch, "to this extent. I shall take it as exonerating Bunter and all the other boys in the Remove from the suspicion of having purloined comestibles in this study. Whether you are now speaking truthfully or falsely, I cannot say, but in either case, I cannot take your word, and I therefore refuse to give ear to any accusation you may make against any person or persons. The matter of the missing comestibles—if they really were missing—ends here. I shall cane you for having caused so much disturbance without cause. That will end the matter."

There was a cheer in the Remove passage.

Billy Bunter grinned.

"Very well, sir," mumbled Fisher T. Fish. "Shall I—I come to your study now, sir?"

Evidently Fishy was prepared to welcome a caning in Mr. Quelch's study if he could get Mr. Quelch away from No. 14.

The Remove master smiled grimly.

"No, Fish," he answered. "Before I leave this study, it is my intention to ascertain on what grounds you fear a search of your belongings. The matter of the missing comestibles is ended, and the detention of the Remove is therefore rescinded. But it appears to me that I have, by chance, lighted upon some matter of a more serious import. Give me your keys—"

"I—I've lost them, sir."

"I advise you," said Mr. Quelch grimly, "to find them without delay. Otherwise, I shall take you immediately to your headmaster."

Fisher T. Fish found his keys. He had not far to look. They were in his pocket. With a face that was almost haggard, he handed them over to Mr. Quelch.

Excitement in the Remove passage was at fever heat now. It was plain that Mr. Quelch was on the verge of making some startling discovery, and that Fisher T. Fish was scared to the very marrow of his bones. The smile on Billy Bunter's fat and fatuous visage expanded till it extended almost from ear to ear.

Squiff and Johnny Bull, Fishy's study-mates, were called in, to point out articles that belonged to Fishy. Mr. Quelch perhaps thought that Fishy



"You have made profits out of your schoolfellows, Fish!" said Mr. Quelch. "You have accumulated, and probably spent, money that was not your own. Wretched boy! What have you to say?" Fisher T. Fish could only gasp. "I shall take these books and papers to your headmaster," said Mr. Quelch. "You will accompany me, Fish!" (See Chapter 15.)

might have overlooked some of them—which was very probable.

On the study table was a small locked desk. Fishy kept his private papers in that little desk, and it was never unlocked. As the Form-master fitted a key to it perspiration was seen to start out on Fishy's bony brow.

"I—I say, sir," he stammered, "the—the tarts couldn't be in that desk, sir! It—it ain't big enough to hold them, sir."

"I am not now looking for comestibles, Fish," said Mr. Quelch, in a grinding voice. "I am looking for your reason for desiring to escape a search of your belongings."

"Ow!" moaned Fishy.

The key clicked, and Mr. Quelch opened the desk. There was a buzz of excitement in the swarming passage.

From the interior of the desk Mr. Quelch drew many papers in neat, little packets and bundles. Fishy was a business man, and his business affairs were all in order. Then an account book, apparently a sort of ledger, came to light.

Mr. Quelch opened it.

There were many entries in that book, and it evidently covered a considerable period. It puzzled the Remove master at first. There were dates, with various sums of money, and names, entered against the dates. Puzzled at first, the Remove master began to comprehend, and thunder grew in his brow. He examined the little bundles of papers. Most of them were IOU's, signed by various fellows in the Remove, the Third, and the Fourth. Blacker and blacker grew the brow of the Remove master.

Fisher T. Fish leaned limply against the wall.

The game was up now, and he knew

it. All the precious records of the moneylender of the Remove were in the hands of the Remove master. The Shylock of Greyfriars was completely exposed.

A flogging, or the sack? That was the awful question that buzzed in Fishy's harassed brain. Perhaps both. He groaned.

Mr. Quelch looked up at last. Silence fell on the juniors crowded round the door. Often enough had they seen their Form-master look angry; but never had they seen in his august countenance such overwhelming wrath as they beheld there now.

"Boy," said Mr. Quelch—"boy, I must call you, though it is a disgrace to the word to apply it to you. For some time there has been a suspicion abroad that usury has been practised in the Remove. That some boy, lost to all sense of honour and decency, has played the miserable part of a moneylender, exacting interest on loans to his schoolfellows. You are that boy!"

Fisher T. Fish could only gasp.

Willingly he would have denied it. But with the evidence in Mr. Quelch's hands, denial was futile.

And it was useless to explain to Mr. Quelch that it was business, and that business was business, and that money was the beginning and end of all things. Mr. Quelch would not even have understood. He had not had the advantage of being raised in New York.

"You," said Mr. Quelch, "are the boy! You have been guilty of this miserable, contemptible, usurious form of petty extortion. You have made profits out of your schoolfellows. You have accumulated, and probably spent, money that was not your own. Wretched boy! What have you to say?"

Fisher T. Fish had nothing to say. He could only gasp.

"I shall take these books and papers to your headmaster," said Mr. Quelch. "I shall place the matter in the hands of Dr. Locke. You will accompany me. Come!"

Mr. Quelch stalked majestically away down the Remove passage. Fisher T. Fish trailed after him limply.

Not till the Remove master was out of hearing did the Removeites venture to laugh. Then they roared. Fishy, in his persistent pursuit of his two shillings, had led his Form-master to the discovery of his own shady secret. The snowball had started an avalanche with a vengeance. It struck the Remove fellows as comic; and they roared.

Fisher T. Fish, much to his relief, was not sacked. But the flogging he received was a real record, and for days and days afterwards Fisher T. Fish wriggled and twitched. His precious books and papers were burned. A stern order from the Head forbade any of Fishy's debtors to hand him either principal or interest. That hurt Fishy more than the flogging—much more. It hit him where he lived, as he would have expressed it. The life of a keen American business man, in a played-out old island, seemed to be an absolute wash-out. For days and days and days Fisher T. Fish mourned, and would not be comforted.

And the rest of the Remove chuckled.

THE END.

(There will be another rattling fine story of Harry Wharton & Co. in next week's MAGNET, entitled: "THE PERFECT PLOT!" Make sure of reading it, chums, by ordering your copy WELL IN ADVANCE!)



The Silver Pennant!

THE headlights of the oncoming car bore round upon the figures of Ron and Jimmy, and showed them up clearly in the strong glare. There was a slight screeching of tyres as the brakes were applied, and Jimmy started to move forward with his chum as the car began to slow up.

Then a startling thing happened. Without warning, the car accelerated.

Jimmy was taken completely by surprise; but, nevertheless, he flung himself to the right with instantaneous presence of mind as the bonnet and the headlamps seemed to leap at him; and in his headlong dash he shoved Ron before him.

The car flashed past, missing Jimmy by an inch; but, blinded though he was by the glare of the lights, the youngster had a momentary impression of a man crouching behind the steering-wheel.

A lamp inside the car was shining on him. He was dressed in a black leather suit, and he was wearing an aviation mask, fitted with tinted goggles, such as "the boys" used on the dirt-track. It was possible to imagine that he had also been wearing a crash-helmet, but this he had removed.

The man was "Tornado" Rossiter!

Ron lay recuperating at an inexpensive hotel at Westleigh, and on the Saturday of the seaside Speedway meeting he was somewhat gloomy of mien. For a doctor had given him strict instructions that he was not to stir from his bed-room.

Only one thing tended to make Ron's lot a little more bearable. That one thing was a letter which he had received from John Robertson, Gordon Beresford's manager.

Robertson was now in command at the works, and he had written to Ron saying that, as he was aware that Mr. Beresford had intended to consider the youngster's invention before his unfor-

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tunate illness, he was taking it upon himself to do so in his stead.

Ron's spirits revived appreciably on receiving this letter, for there was much in it that was of a hopeful nature.

"I can see myself on the road to being famous yet, Jimmy," he said,

Jimmy Beresford has set his heart on winning the Silver Pennant, and by sheer grit he wins it. But the climax to that thrilling race is even more thrilling than the race itself!

when the latter came in just before leaving for the Speedway. "I've just had this from Robertson, and he writes that the Beresford Company's advisers feel that my old engine has strong possibilities. My invention's going to be lodged in the framework of a Beresford 'Twin,' and a full test is to be made. Gee, Jimmy, I'll be on edge that day, in case the thing let's me down!"

"Don't you worry," Jimmy told him reassuringly. "Your invention is the goods, Ron, and it's going to give the Beresford bikes the extra bit of acceleration that they need for beating the Volsons. But I dropped in to say 'Cheerio!' old son. It's tough luck you can't get along to see me win the Pennant," he added, with a grin. "Better still, to see Bernard Volson presenting it to me."

Jimmy left his chum, and ten minutes later he was in the pits at the Westleigh Speedway.

Westleigh was not a large town, but the holiday season had already begun, and it was thronged with visitors, so that the speedway had a crowd of close on thirty thousand pass through the turnstiles. It was a high-spirited and expectant crowd—high-spirited because brilliant sunshine, the tang of the sea, and the holiday feeling, were predominant—expectant because big men like Rossiter were featured in the programme.

Rossiter was riding in the handicap, and he had just run off his heat when Jimmy arrived at the speedway. The next event was a novice's race, and the one following—Jimmy's heat in the Silver Pennant.

As he wheeled his bike across the ramp he saw the figure of Bernard Volson standing amidst a crowd of officials. Rossiter had joined the group, too, and was laughingly endeavouring to secure possession of the finishing-gun. For it was the ambition of most of the riders to stand by the judges and fire it off at the end of each race for which they themselves were not entered.

Only the lower part of Rossiter's features were visible. His aviation mask hid the rest, and his goggles concealed the expression that was in his eyes, otherwise Jimmy might possibly have suspected why the mystery champion of the Speedways was so intent on obtaining the finishing-gun.

In the "toss-up" Jimmy came off with the outside position, and he formed a line with four other riders. Coming

SPEEDWAY PALS!

by
A. CARNEY ALLAN

into the front straight after a preliminary circuit, they passed the starter in immaculate formation, and the race was on.

It was a thrilling struggle, and it stirred the "fans" even more than Rossiter's exhibition had done, for Tornado Rossiter had won his event too easily to provide any thrills—and, into the bargain, Tornado Rossiter was not popular.

Jimmy felt a glow of pleasure sweep over him when he heard his name yelled by the enthusiasts, for he realised that his ever-growing fame had not merely been confined to Elsenham Park. But he had increased his reputation still more by the time that Heat 1 of the Silver Pennant was over, for he gained first place in dare-devil style.

The other heats were run off, and then came the final of the handicap, for which Rossiter was entered. The latter was first across the line, an Australian runner-up coming to grief on the very last bend, when he looked like taking the lead.

Then came the final of the Silver Pennant, and four riders wheeled their bikes to the line. They were Jimmy Beresford (red), Karl Hendry (white), of the U.S., Ben Davidson (blue), of Australia, and Joe Rogers (yellow).

In the toss-up for places Jimmy was third from the inner edge. On his right he had Rogers, the other British rider; on his left, Davidson and Hendry, respectively.

Jimmy glanced in the direction of the starting-post, and with the movement he again saw Rossiter with the finishing-gun. He was in the company of Bernard Volson, and Jimmy realised that the two were discussing him, for they were staring in his direction as they talked.

Jimmy returned their scrutiny with a grim directness, and presently they looked away. Then the youngster forgot the pair of them as he and his rivals were pushed off by the attendants.

Jimmy "turned up the wick," and the Beresford Twin answered well. She had not been tuned by Ron this time, of course, but had had a thorough overhauling by another mechanic at the workshop of Glendale Richards, and seemed in good trim.

Making the preliminary circuit, the four finalists came out of the second bend into the front straight, and immediately opened up for the flying start. With their engine-notes rising steadily and in unison they moved towards the starting-point, endeavouring to keep in line with one another as they did so.

The line was ragged, and the starter signalled a fault. One of the attendants posted round the track then flagged the riders, and they slackened up to make yet another circuit.

This time they passed the starter in an immaculate line.

Hendry was riding an American machine, the Mohawk, and, with an acceleration that rivalled the Volson's, he dashed away to take the lead. Davidson, the Australian, was close behind him, and Jimmy and Rogers brought up the rear dead level.

Hendry was a regular, rip-roaring American who had been captivating London enthusiasts with his wild daring, and he hurtled into the bend at reckless speed, skidding and broadsiding furiously. He was the kind of rider who needed half the width of the track; and Davidson, who was far more skilled and might possibly have gained the lead, was forced to delay acceleration when he came to the back-stretch close to the Mohawk's tail.

Jimmy and Rogers were only half-

way round the curve then, and they swung on to the back-straight several lengths behind the other two, who were now fighting for the advantage in a tear-away race.

Jimmy was slightly in advance of Rogers, but, nevertheless, he knew that he had only beaten his fellow-countryman by superior skill on the bend. All through his career on the tracks he had to do that—lose ground on the straight and win it back on the curve—and it was Ron who had made him realise it, by pointing out the extreme failing of the Beresford bike. That failing lay in acceleration, for other makes had an extra three or four miles an hour on the Beresford.

Jimmy did his best on the back-stretch, and managed to retain his slight advantage over Rogers. But he was six clear lengths behind Hendry and Davidson when he hit the second bend.

The youngster "thumbed" the cut-out button, and his back wheel ripped sideways in a searing skid that carried him round the curve. He was only three lengths behind Davidson when he reached the front-straight, and twisted the throttle-grip on his handlebar.

Hendry was one length ahead of the Australian, and kept the lead to the first bend on the second lap. As before, he took this bend in a way that brought the "fans" to their feet, yelling delightedly.

But if they imagined Hendry was daring, they were soon to know what real recklessness was. For Jimmy Beresford had warmed up to the race.

He hurled his machine into the curve at the top of its speed, and once again he juggled with the cut-out button. There was a blurring and a snorting of the Beresford's exhaust-spouts, a stabbing of saffron flame, and then the youngster was slashing round the bend in a terrific broadside.

His toe-plates ploughed through the cinders and his back wheel smothered the spectators with a swinging cascade of the grit. The fans did not cheer as they had cheered Hendry. They gasped, literally gasped, for it seemed miraculous to them that young Jimmy Beresford could take the corner without a crash.

But he did, and he came on to the back-straight abreast of Davidson, and

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#### INTRODUCTION

*Jimmy Beresford, a cheery, athletic youngster, is the son of Gordon Beresford, the head of Beresford Motors, who are working on the plans of a new motor-cycle engine invented by Ron Connolly, Jimmy's pal. Mainly owing to an encounter with his cousin Otto, Jimmy is told by his irate father that he will either have to take a position in the works or fend for himself. Jimmy decides to do the latter, and, helped by Ron's expert mechanical knowledge, rapidly makes a name for himself at the Elsenham Park Speedway. The youngster soon realises that by fair means or foul, his scoundrelly cousin Otto is determined to inherit Beresford Motors. An attempt on Jimmy's life is unsuccessful, but shortly afterwards his father, who is recovering from a serious illness, is kidnapped by agents of Volson Motors, Beresford's unscrupulous rivals, with whom Otto is in league. This is done under cover of a recuperating holiday. But Jimmy's hands are tied, for to bring the police into the affair and expose Otto's treachery might cause his father to have a fatal relapse. Jimmy and Ron discover, however, that Mr. Beresford has been taken to the lonely house of Bernard Volson near the south coast town of Westleigh. They force an entry into the house, but by a cunning trick Bernard Volson outwits them and they are plunged through a hidden trap-door into a subterranean inlet of the sea beneath. After a perilous swim under water the two chums reach the open sea and gain the summit of the cliffs. The lights of a car appear round a bend of the coast road and, supporting Ron with one arm, Jimmy waves the other to attract attention.*

(Now read on.)

almost abreast of Hendry, though on the outer edge of the track.

Jimmy kept to the outer edge, for he saw that the wild, ill-controlled tactics of the American were dangerous to all who were near him, and he had already noticed how Davidson had been forced to shut off on account of them.

On the straight Jimmy lost ground again, but, dashing into the second bend, he recovered it with a vengeance, and he crossed the line for the third lap dead level with Hendry and Davidson.

From then on thirty thousand spectators roared themselves hoarse, for right till the end of the race the three riders were bunched close together—Britisher, Australian, and American. Once the Mohawk pulled ahead, but the advantage was lost on the next bend. Then Davidson took the lead with a magnificent burst, only to lose it before the completion of that lap.

The yellow flag dropped to signal the last lap of the race, and the three riders were neck-and-neck. As they flashed past the man with the flag Jimmy saw a sea of faces on the right hand, and on the left a figure in a black, leather suit, the figure of the speedman who was holding the finishing-gun—"Tornado" Rossiter.

On the back-stretch the three were still close together, and it seemed like anybody's race. But on the last bend the crowd stood up to Jimmy Beresford.

He rushed it at full speed, and slung round the tail of his machine in a tearing skid. He was almost down, and his very knee was scoring through the dirt before he had wrenched the speed-iron under control, raking on to the home-stretch with a two-length lead.

He opened up with the throttle, and the Beresford "Twin" blazed stridently, though not so stridently as the two machines that stormed after her in a last-minute effort to snatch the victory.

But there were only a few yards to go, and the Beresford won the day. Out of the corner of his eye Jimmy glimpsed the checked flag falling for him.

Out of the corner of his eye he also saw Tornado Rossiter levelling the finishing-gun, levelling it very deliberately with a strange leer lurking around the corners of his mouth.

There was a flash of flame and a report.

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#### Otto Again!

**T**HE report of the finishing-pistol was followed by a sound that was for all the world like an echo. Actually, it was the bursting of Jimmy Beresford's front tyre, and at the speed the effect was disastrous.

Jimmy lost control and came out of the saddle, his hands thrust forward instinctively to take the impact of his fall. But the bike came somersaulting after him, and crashed down a-top of him. Jimmy Beresford received a stunning blow on the back of the head as the tail-end struck him. Then he lay quite still.

The crowd stood shocked and silent. The thing had happened so suddenly, so unexpectedly that it left them dumbfounded. They could only stare at the unparalleled spectacle of a winner stretched out unconscious on the track, while his defeated rivals scraped past his body, and the wreck of his machine.

Three or four attendants in white flannels sprinted across to the spot

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where the youngster was lying, and, lifting him, they carried him on to the turf. The official medical officer was soon on the scene, and proceeded to make an examination.

Meanwhile, Tornado Rossiter had strolled off towards the pits; but Jimmy being the cynosure of all eyes, no one paid any heed to the champion's movements.

The group around the injured youngster was increasing every moment, and heads bobbed, craned, and twisted to and fro in eager attempts to see what was going on.

Then the tall figure of the medical officer arose.

"No broken bones," he said, to those in his immediate presence, "but slight concussion. It would be advisable to get him to bed right away, perhaps."

Someone came elbowing through the crowd, and addressed the doctor.

"I've got a car here," this individual said. "And I know where to take him. You see, doctor, he and I are cousins."

A stretcher was called for, but before it had arrived Jimmy opened his eyes, and as he saw two blue-uniformed ambulance men approaching, he made a feeble gesture of protest. For, like all "the boys," Jimmy hated the idea of the stretcher.

He insisted on trying to struggle to his feet, but his knees gave way, and he could scarcely stand; then, a wave of dizziness coming over him, he closed his eyes. Two attendants then took him each by an arm and led him towards the pits, and Jimmy had a vague idea of staggering from the Speedway with them, and half-falling into a waiting car.

Someone climbed in beside him. Jimmy did not know who it was, and did not very much care. The youngster laid his throbbing head against the comfortable upholstery, and, with his eyes shut, listened to the hum of the automobile's engine. Then he felt the vehicle move forward, and from that moment the easy rise and fall of the well-sprung body lulled him into a semi-conscious state again.

Nevertheless, Jimmy felt very sick and very sore, and there was an ugly pain at the back of his skull that brought an occasional groan from him. The pain increased, and he began to wish that he was out of the car—that he was lying between the cool sheets of bed.

Jimmy envied Ron, who was already in that happy condition. But Ron, he remembered, had not thought it a happy one, and had fretted at being confined to his room. Well, the two of them would be laid up now.

All these thoughts came to Jimmy fragmentarily, between bouts of pain and dizziness, and then it occurred to him to wonder where he was being taken. Was he simply being driven to his hotel, or had he been so badly hurt that the destination was a hospital?

Hospital! Always that name had filled Jimmy with a kind of dread, and he endeavoured to rouse himself. Rousing himself consisted of edging himself a little higher in his seat and opening his eyes.

Jimmy looked at the fellow who was sitting next to him, behind the steering-wheel, but at first he could see only a blurred impression of him. The youngster drew a hand across his brow. He was beginning to feel faint again. He tried desperately to focus his gaze.

Just for an instant the impression of his companion became clear-cut and definitely distinguishable, and Jimmy felt himself stiffen as he recognised his Cousin Otto. With an exclamation he tried to climb to his feet, but the moment his legs felt the strain of his weight they sagged underneath him, and simultaneously that wave of faintness reached its height. He collapsed on the seat, and lay still.

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### The End of "The Towers."

JIMMY came round to find himself still in the car, but it was no longer on the move. It was standing in a garage, and its engine had been switched off.

The young speed merchant felt somewhat better, though his head was still paining him, and when he rose to his feet he found that his legs would now support him. Climbing down from the car he looked around.

He realised that the garage was one attached to the Towers—the house in which his father, although unaware of the fact, was virtually a prisoner—for, on looking through a small window, Jimmy saw Black Ness Point, with the sea-waves breaking up into white foam on the rocks.

Then he recollected Otto.

Jimmy went to the door of the garage and tried it. As he expected, it was locked, and the windows of the place were not large enough to afford him any means of escape.

He was deliberating on his situation when he heard footfalls on the gravel path outside, then a voice—the voice of his cousin.

"He wasn't killed," Otto was saying, "and, as luck would have it, he wasn't even badly hurt. But before he could collect his wits I stepped in and told the doctor I'd run him home. And here he is."

With the last words the garage doors were unlocked and dragged open, and Jimmy found himself face to face with Otto, Bernard Volson and Brown.

Otto was taken unawares by seeing the youngster on his feet, and it was with some haste that he closed the doors. He need not have been concerned, however, for Jimmy noticed a compact fistful of blue steel in the hand of "Mr. Brown."

Otto was the first to speak.

"So you've come round, eh?" he muttered.

"Looks like it," remarked Jimmy. His mind was quite clear now, and he could remember every detail of what had occurred just before his crash. "Yes; I've come round, but I fancy Rossiter and you three would have been better pleased if I'd never come round. That was a good idea on your part, for Rossiter to get hold of the finishing-gun, change the usual blank cartridge for a live one—and then aim at my front tyre. I've certainly got to hand it to you for making things look like accidents."

It was Bernard Volson who answered Jimmy's speech.

"Now that you are here, my young friend," he observed, "we shall speedily think of something else that will have the appearance of an accident. Keep back!" he rapped out, as Jimmy started forward. "You'll see that Brown, here, is carrying an automatic."

Jimmy laughed shortly.

"Would it look like an accident if he used that?" he asked.

Volson's lip twisted into the semblance of a smile, and his small eyes seemed to gleam.

"You can call a bluff, young Beresford, I see," he said. "Well, supposing the gun was not used? We are three to one, and a shout would bring another three menservants. But enough of this. Till we have decided what to do with you, you stay here. You will be as safe in the garage as anywhere else."

He backed towards the doors, and, in company with Otto and Brown, he left the shed. A moment later Jimmy heard the snap of a padlock, and it was followed by the sound of retreating footfalls as his three captors made their way round the drive to the front door of the old house.

Jimmy Beresford settled himself on the step of the car, and racked his brains for some plan of action. He knew too well that, as soon as a means of disposing of him occurred to his enemies, he would be summarily dealt with. He knew that their one ruling intent was to kill him, and that his situation was desperately perilous.

It was a queer situation, too, for weeks ago he might have denounced the Volson people and turned the machinery of justice into motion—if his father had not been in too precarious a state of health to hear of the precious Otto's villainy. And here was his father at the house on Black Ness—Bernard Volson's house, though Mr. Beresford did not know it—the house of his rival in the motoring world, and a rival whose methods he had always despised.

Such reflections, however, were not bringing Jimmy any nearer to escape. He stared about him and peered into corners that were beginning to grow dark, for the light was failing outside. He had an idea that he might find some instrument with which he could force the door, but his search was in vain. The only objects that he could see, excepting a few useless tools, were two or three cans of petrol, equally useless.

Useless? No, they were not useless, for suddenly an inspiration flashed on Jimmy, and the more he considered it the more it appealed to him. It was an inspiration that would not only help him to escape from the clutches of Otto and the Volson people, but one that would also help him to remove his unsuspecting father from their power.

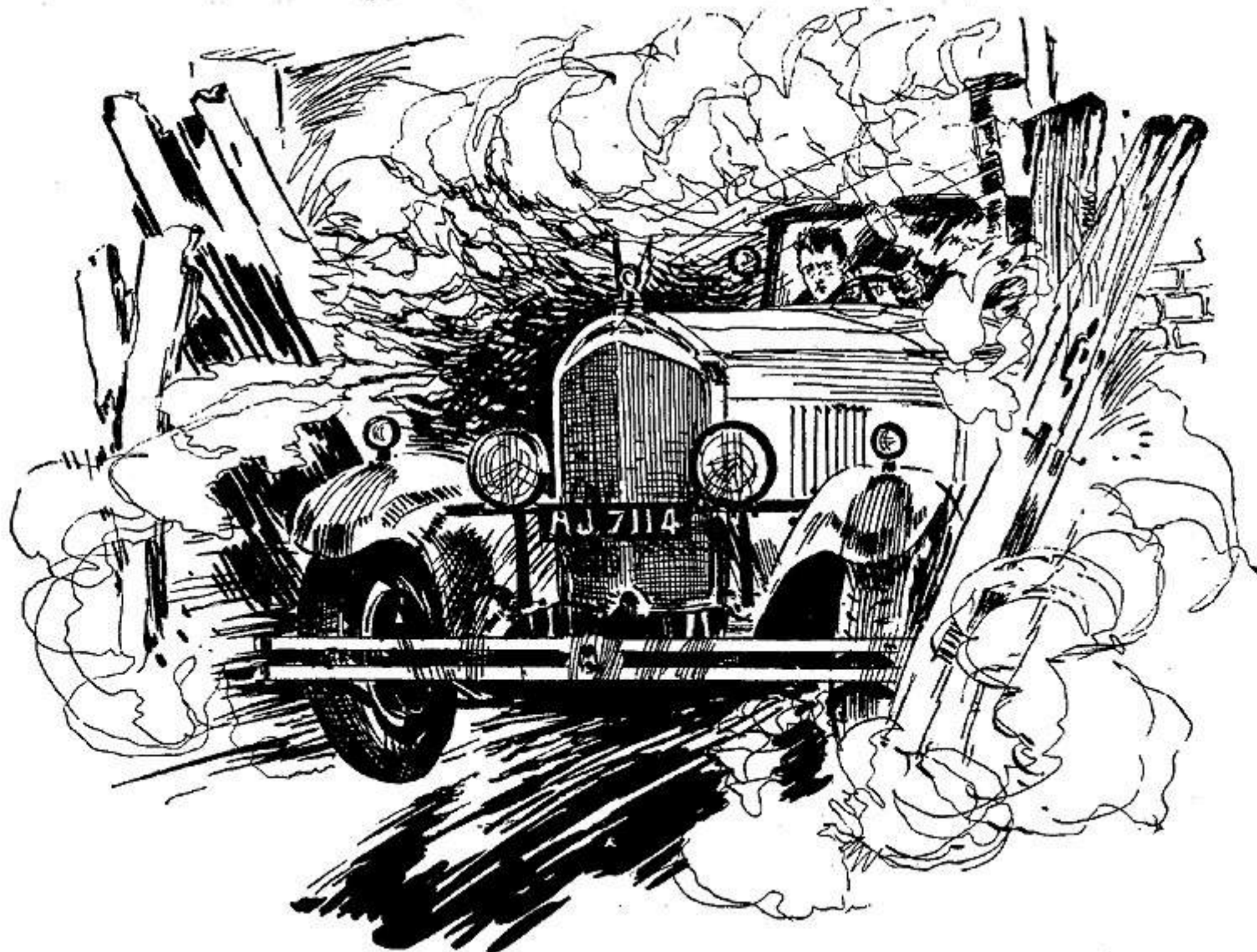
Otto had taken Gordon Beresford to the Towers to recuperate, the latter never imagining the true state of affairs; and Gordon Beresford was quite content to stay at the Towers. So long as he was content to stay there Jimmy could not urge him to leave without revealing the whole ugly story. But if the Towers no longer remained—

Jimmy picked up the cans of petrol one by one and poured their contents down the doors and the walls of the garage. It was a large garage, big enough for several cars, but the fumes seemed to fill the place, and Jimmy knew that he was taking a chance.

Nevertheless he was game, and, climbing into the automobile that had brought him from the Speedway, he struck a match and flung it towards the doors.

There was a blinding flash that lit up every corner, and then the doors and walls of the garage became masses of flame—flame that coiled and writhed with fearsome red and yellow tongues. Crouching in the car, Jimmy felt the powerful heat of them, and he heard a crackling sound as they took grip on the woodwork of the big shed.





Jimmy let in the clutch and the car hurled itself forward. The next second the massive bonnet hit the flaming doors and burst them asunder with a smashing, splintering crash! (See this page.)

The floor, fortunately, was of concrete, so that the youngster himself was threatened for the present only by stray flames that lolled towards the automobile. His immediate concern was not for his own person, however, but for the petrol-tank of the vehicle.

With the garage-doors blazing furiously, Jimmy pressed the self-starter of the car and then stepped on the clutch-pedal. Next he slipped the gear-lever into "first" and accelerated till the engine was screaming at top pitch.

The youngster set his teeth, and marked the burning doors—wondering if the flames had sufficiently weakened them for his project. There was nothing else to do but risk it, for smoke was beginning to fill the shed and already he had started to cough.

Jimmy gripped the steering-wheel hard, so that his knuckles stood out white against the skin. There was very little "run" between him and the doors, but he was banking on horsepower to see him through.

He let in the clutch abruptly, and the car seemed to hurl itself forward from a standstill. A brief, fierce tear-away rush, and then the massive bonnet hit the flaming doors.

They burst asunder with a smashing, splintering crash, and the shock of the impact threw Jimmy forward over the steering-wheel. Next moment the car was on the gravel-drive.

Jimmy dragged on the hand-brake, and at a glance saw that things were working out according to his hopes. The garage, of course, was one mass of flame, and, as it adjoined the house, the fire had spread to the larger building. Already it had gained a hold on the ancient structure, for there was a

great deal of woodwork in the design, and the old beams and rafters fairly blazed.

The conflagration had passed unnoticed till this very moment, as far as those in the house were concerned, but the crash of the car's impact with the doors had brought Otto, Volson, Brown and the three menservants on to the drive.

At sight of the flames they set up a clamour, over which the voice of Bernard Volson prevailed.

He was shouting for the garden-hose, but the garden-hose was in the garage. Then the cry of "buckets" arose.

Jimmy waited to hear no more. He had seen an open window on the ground floor of the house, and, scrambling out of the car, he dived through into a darkening room. He was seen, and the clamour of his enemies grew louder. But once again the voice of Bernard Volson prevailed.

"Leave him!" he ground out. "He's gone in for his father. Try to get the fire under first. We can easily lay hands on young Beresford later!"

Jimmy had indeed entered the house to rescue his father, but he knew that the latter was in no immediate danger. At the very commencement he had figured out that the garage was in the east wing of the house, while the room his father occupied was towards the west wing.

Jimmy, however, did not make straight for the old man's apartment, but first of all stopped by a telephone in the hall, and called up the West-leigh exchange.

"Speaking from the Towers, Black Ness," he said. "Get through to the

fire station, will you? There's a bad outbreak here!"

Jamming the receiver on its hook, Jimmy wheeled and ran upstairs. He was not quite sure where to locate his father, but he tried every door until he came to the right room and saw the old man lying in bed with his head propped up on a couple of pillows.

The old man smiled twistedly at sight of him, and then he spoke—in a tone that was scarcely more audible than a whisper.

"Hallo, boy!" he greeted, cheerfully enough. "You'll notice I'm getting my voice back. But what's this—a flying visit?"

Jimmy came across to him. He knew that it was possible for his father to be moved, otherwise he would never have acted as he had done. At the same time, he was anxious not to alarm him.

"I'm glad you're coming on fine, dad," he said. "But do you feel equal to getting up?"

Gordon Beresford smiled again. "I'm up for half an hour every day," he informed the youngster. "Only in my room, though. I have the window open and look out at the sea. A great place this, Jimmy, and that fellow Brown—Otto's friend—is as decent as they make 'em."

He did not see the gleam in Jimmy's eyes.

"Well, dad," the youngster said, "I'm sorry you like the Towers so much, because I'm going to ask you to clear out of the house. In fact, it's rather necessary that everybody should be out of here—just as a precaution. Don't want to put the wind up you."

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dad, but as a matter of fact there's a danger of fire."

He had chosen his words so well that not a trace of anxiety appeared on his father's grey face.

"Fire, boy?" echoed Gordon Beresford, and then he slowly climbed out of bed. "Jove, it's going to be a pity if a fine old place like this is gutted!" he added.

Jimmy helped his father on with his things, and, taking his arm, went downstairs with him. As they emerged from the front door they saw that the dusk was blotched with the reflection of the fire in the east wing, and a glance to the left showed them that it had gained a firm grip there.

In that same glance Jimmy observed several figures vainly throwing water on the flames. Simultaneously, the youngster and his father were seen by those figures, one of whom abruptly vanished—Jimmy noticing that it was the figure of Bernard Volson.

Another of the figures came forward to meet Jimmy and old Gordon Beresford. It was Otto—a smoke-blackened and grimy Otto—and he joined them close to the car in which Jimmy had burst out of the garage.

"As the house is in danger," said Jimmy, "I'm going to run dad to the Marine Hotel at Westleigh. Don't mind me using this car, do you, Otto?"

Otto was ready with an answer, and his quick-wittedness compelled a certain admiration in Jimmy. For, hesitating only for an instant, Otto indicated the smashed headlamps and the bent front wings.

"Well, as a matter of fact, I think I'd better drive it," he observed. "You can see it's been in a smash-up, and it needs pretty delicate handling on the steering. You stay and help them with the fire, Jimmy."

Jimmy looked at Otto very directly. He knew what would happen if he stayed to help with the fire. At the hands of Volson and his hirelings he would become a victim of the fire.

"There's no need for me to stay and help," he told Otto. "Listen!"

He held up his hand to compel silence, and they all heard the roaring of a powerful engine on the coast-road that led from Westleigh. The roar of that engine was accompanied by the discordant clanging of a bell.

"I phoned for the fire brigade," said Jimmy. "Well, dad oughtn't to be out in the night air like this, and I guess I'd better drive him. It would look rotten for you to leave your friend Brown in the lurch just now, Otto."

With these words the youngster helped his father into the car, and climbed in after him, and before Otto could find anything to say he was left standing alone with the smoke from the exhaust weaving blue spirals around him.

Some time later, hunched up on the front seat beside his son, old Gordon Beresford broached a subject that had been a bone of contention between them.

"Still racing on the dirt-tracks?" he demanded.

Jimmy turned his head towards his father. The gruffness of the old man's tone, the suspicion of a glitter that was in his eyes, the hint of colour that crept into his cheeks—these things made Jimmy want to grin, for he knew that his father was on the road to recovery.

"Still on the dirt-tracks," Jimmy

assured him, "and not doing so badly, either. I've nearly earned that five hundred already. How about coming to Elsenham Park next Saturday afternoon to see me in a match-race with Jem Carpenter, dad—"

"Don't be a fool!" said Gordon Beresford sharply.

### The Match Race!

THE Elsenham Park Speedway was crowded with the usual army of "fans," and on the track four riders in colourful slips were providing their share of the afternoon's thrills.

Meanwhile, in the pits, two youngsters were talking excitedly. One was Ron Connolly, mechanic, now quite recovered from his adventure at Black Ness; the other was Jimmy Beresford.

They were both mutually excited, for two reasons—one, because Jimmy was about to ride the race of his career; secondly, because Ron had received a letter from John Robertson, acting on behalf of Gordon Beresford during the latter's illness, a letter stating that the young mechanic's invention was to be tried out that evening on the private test-track of Beresford Motors.

John Robertson added that the engine had already proved efficient as far as durability was concerned, but he had managed at last to persuade Gordon Beresford that speed must be aimed at as well. If Ron's engine could excel the present Beresford model—better still, the present Volson model—it was a winner.

In another paragraph he mentioned that it might be possible for young Jimmy to perform the trial run, and Jimmy had assured Ron that he certainly would.

At the moment, however, Ron was less concerned with his invention than with the match-race between his chum and Jem Carpenter.

"You're up against it with a vengeance this time, Jimmy," he declared. "You know the fault with Beresfords—they're not fast enough as they stand. Well, if Carpenter didn't ride a Beresford, as you do, I reckon he'd give Rossiter a run for his money."

Rossiter! Jimmy conjured with that name, the name of the man he was going to beat one day—"Tornado" Rossiter, the mystery champion of the dirt-tracks. Who was Rossiter? No one knew. But he held undisputed sway over the knights of the "speed-iron," for as yet there had never been any rider in the world to touch him.

From his stand on the oval stretch of turf the announcer suddenly addressed the crowd, giving the result and time of the previous race, and then calling out the features of the succeeding one.

"The next event—Round one of a match-race between Jimmy Beresford and Jem Carpenter. A second round to follow, and a third if necessary."

Jimmy and Carpenter wheeled their bikes to the starting-line, Jimmy in a red slip, Carpenter in white.

Both riders were pushed forward, and as they gave their bikes the throttle, the "spouts" dinned their tune with thunderous voice. Without pressing, however, the two competitors made the preliminary circuit, one or the other of them occasionally "turning

up the wick" to test the acceleration of his speed-iron.

They came out of the second bend and sighted the starting-line, the pair of them instantly switching over the throttle-grip. With a double roar that scaled upward to high pitch, the bikes surged forward in unison.

Carpenter stormed for the bend, and, with the advantage of the inside position, he snatched a length lead on it, swinging on to the back-straight with Jimmy taking his smoke.

The pair of them flashed along the stretch to the second curve, and Carpenter managed to hold his lead, rushing the corner at high speed.

Jimmy did the same, and then lashed the back wheel away in a rip-roaring skid. But he was still a length behind Carpenter when they gained the front straight, and he knew right then that Ron's words had not been idle. He was "up against it with a vengeance."

They crossed the line for the second lap, and dashed into the first bend again, both slashing round it with their front wheels twisted and their back wheels raking.

On the back-straight they raced at full-throttle, their engines roaring deafeningly; then once more they were into the second curve, and fighting round in reckless style.

As they entered on their third lap Carpenter was still a length in front, but at the first bend Jimmy made a desperate bid to cut down the advantage. With toe-plate scrabbling through the dirt, he struggled abreast of his rival for an instant, but the inside-position gave Carpenter a chance to take the lead ere they hit the straight.

But that lead was no more than half a length now.

It was still half a length when the green flag fell to signal the last lap of the race, and both riders, flattened along the tanks, hands clenched on the rubber grips, took every conceivable chance.

Storming into the first bend, they went round it with their machines listing far over and their boots digging at the carpet of cinders. Out on the back-straight they came, with no more than inches between them, and the second and last curve still saw Carpenter a shade in advance.

Carpenter took the corner at wild speed, but not so daringly as Jimmy; for Jimmy, thumb twitching on the cut-out button, slung round the tail of his machine in a nerve-wracking broadside. But daring as the youngster was his hands were sure and his toe-plate came into action magnificently, and it was in skill that he finally defeated his rival.

Half way round the bend Carpenter's bike jumped out of his control and took a crazy switch to the right.

Jimmy glimpsed the speed-iron swinging towards him, and heard the involuntary gasp of the crowd as they foresaw a double crash. But swift as thought he wrenched his machine towards the outer edge and missed disaster by a hair's-breadth.

(It looks as if our plucky young speed merchant is going to add another victory to his already long list of successes, doesn't it, chums? Don't miss next week's thrilling instalment, whatever you do!)

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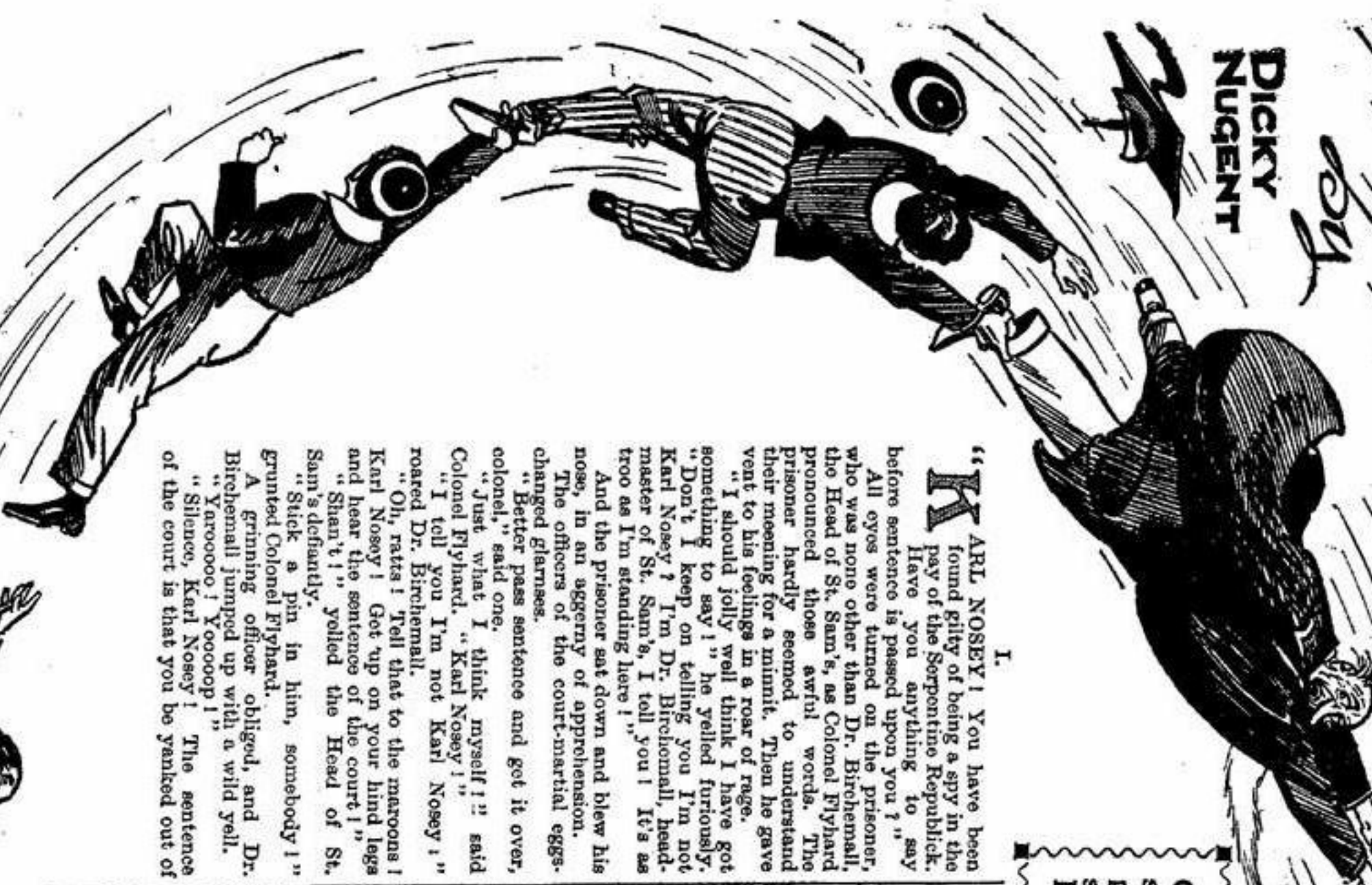
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# The Scoolboy

## And-He-Does!

DICKY  
NUGENT



Convicted as a spy and due to be shot at dawn is not a very cheery prospect, is it, chums? But such seems to be the fate of Dr. Birchmell until . . .

**K**ARL NOSEY! You have been found guilty of being a spy in the pay of the Serpentine Republic. Have you anything to say before sentence is passed upon you?"

All eyes were turned on the prisoner, who was none other than Dr. Birchmell, the Head of St. Sam's, as Colonel Flyhard pronounced those awful words. The prisoner hardly seemed to understand their meaning for a minute. Then he gave vent to his feelings in a roar of rage. "I should jolly well think I have got something to say!" he yelled furiously. "Don't I keep on telling you I'm not Karl Nosey? I'm Dr. Birchmell, headmaster of St. Sam's, I tell you! It's as true as I'm standing here!"

And the prisoner sat down and blew his nose, in an agony of apprehension. The officers of the court-martial exchanged glances.

"Better pass sentence and get it over, colonel," said one. "Just what I think myself!" said Colonel Flyhard. "Karl Nosey!"

"I tell you I'm not Karl Nosey!" roared Dr. Birchmell. "Oh, rats! Tell that to the maroons! Karl Nosey! Get up on your hind legs and hear the sentence of the court!"

"Shant!" yelled the Head of St. Sam's defiantly. "Stick a pin in him, somebody!"

A grinning officer obliged, and Dr. Birchmell jumped up with a wild yell. "Yoooooo! Yoooooo!"

"Silence, Karl Nosey!" The sentence of the court is that you be yanked out of

the guard-room first thing in the morning, and shot at dawn!"

"Oh, grate pip!" gasped the unhappy Head. "Don't say that!"

"But I do say it!" wrapped out the colonel sternly.

"But surely you won't have the heart to shoot me before I have my breakfast?" groaned Dr. Birchmell, ringing his hands in despair.

"We jolly well will!" answered Colonel Flyhard, with a harsh laugh.

"Oh, crakey! What a gararly fate!" cried Dr. Birchmell. "Look here, sir, I appeal to you—"

"To postpone the affair till another time."

"Boosh!"

"I've just remembered I've got an important engagement for to-morrow morning."

"Ha, ha! I'm afraid you'll have to put off your engagement for an indefinite period, then!" said Colonel Flyhard, with a grim chuckle.

Dr. Birchmell groaned—a deep, deep groan. Even now, he could hardly believe that all this was true. Only a few hours before, he had been a happy, care-free schoolmaster, enjoying an outing in an airplane. And now—now, he was a convicted spy, doomed to be shot in several places, at dawn. It seemed impossible—ridiculous. And yet it was only too true!

Of course, the silly old buffer had brought paid more attention to Jack Jolly's words in the first place, he would never have landed himself in such a mess. Jack Jolly, with his usual keen insight into things, had all along suspected the mysterious foreign gentleman who had left his airplane in charge of the Head. Right from the first moment, Jack had expressed the opinion that the stranger was a spy; the Head had merely laughed scornfully at the suggestion. Now that it was too late, he wished he had taken the captain of the Fourth more seriously. But it wasn't much use

crying over spilt milk. The question of the moment was how to get out of the awful predicament he now found himself in?

"Look here, gentlemen," said Dr. Birchmell, feeling anxious to gain time at any cost.

"Can't I?" retorted the colonel. "The sight's too painful!"

"Why, you cheeky ass—"

"Ask any favor you like, but don't ask that! There is a limit, you know!"

"Your fizzog—"

"Well, what about my fizzog?" roared Dr. Birchmell, almost forgetting his other troubles in his wrath at being insulted in this disrespectful manner.

"The least said about it, the better!" grinned the Air Force man. "Take him to the guard-room, men, and don't leave any mirrors there, or he'll crack them all!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Dr. Birchmell struggled furiously as his guards laid their hands on his shoulders. Whatever happened, he didn't want to go back to the guard-room. Once inside that dreaded apartment, all means of escape was cut off from him, whereas, there was a little consolation in being in the open air.

"Lemme alone, you rotters!" he gasped. "Listen, Colonel Flyhard—"

"Well, what is it?" asked the colonel, rather wearily.

"Have you heard that awfully amusing riddle about the chicken?" asked the Head, with a feeble effort at a smile. "It will make you simply howl with laughter, I can assure you!"

"Can't say I remember it," remarked Colonel Flyhard. "Release the prisoner, you men, while he relates his riddle."

"I, I, sir!" muttered the men, taking three paces to the rear.

Dr. Birchmell waggled a solemn four-finger at the interested assembly.

Now you must think very carefully over this problem, gentlemen," he said. "It is an awfully clever riddle which I invented myself only last night."

"Get on with the riddle washing, then!" ordered Colonel Flyhard.

"Certainly, colonel! The riddle is: Why does a chicken cross the road?"

The officers rubbed their chins thoughtfully and looked at each other rather sheepishly.

"That's a teaser, and no mistake!" said Colonel Flyhard at last. "I must confess I am beaten. What is the answer?"

"Why, to get to the other side!"

"There was a moment of silence, as the officers pondered over the answer. Then a roar of laughter went up."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ho, ho, ho!"

"Ho, ho, ho!"

"Oh, my giddy aunt!"

"To get to the other side, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Dr. Birchmell had not told them that awfully amusing riddle just for the fun of the thing. He had anticipated that it would bring the house down, so to speak, and his hope was that everybody would

be so dubbed up with laughter that he would be able to slip away, unobserved.

That hope was more than fulfilled. Within a couple of seconds of hearing the answer, everybody in Potshot Camp was laughing fit to bust. The officers thumped each other on the back, and simply yelled, while the rank-and-file rolled and staggered all over the place, helpless with historical laughter.

It was the opportunity Dr. Birchmell had been waiting for.

He gave one look round him—a swift, keen look, like that of a startled fawn. Then he bolted, and made a bee-line for the woods near the camp.

It was five minutes or so, before Colonel Flyhard had recovered sufficiently to look up again. When he did so, he jumped to his feet with an exclamation of utter dismay.

"Oh, crumbs!" he ejaculated hoarsely. "Dished, diddled, and done!"

II.

**T**INKLE, tinkle! Midnite crashed out from the old clock tower of St. Sam's.

The moon shone fitfully from a cloudless sky. But it didn't shine on Jack Jolly & Co., the heroes of the Fourth, for the simple reason that they were lying concealed in the shadow of some bushes, near the solitary airplane that stood still and silent in the quad.

That airplane was the one which the mysterious forner had handed over to Dr. Birchmell. Earlier in the afternoon, Jack Jolly & Co. had spotted the man of mystery skulking in the woods near the school. With their usual remarkable intelligence, they had suspected that he would return that night to retrieve his possession, and with Mr. Lickham's consent, they had arranged to watch over the plane all night.

"Yav-aw-aw! I'm beginning to feel tired!" remarked Jack Jolly, as the last stroke of midnight dyed away. "Wish something would happen to relieve the monotony!"

"Same here!" cursed Merry. "The chums of the Fourth hated being inactive. They were never more happy than when they were rescuing people from fire or water, or fighting desperately against fearful odds. But lying about doing nothing, they couldn't stand at any price. Fortunately, they didn't have to remain inactive much longer. Scarcely had Jack Jolly finished speaking over a faint sound fell on their sharp, well-trained ears—the sound of heavy, hob-nailed boots climbing over the school wall and landing, with a thud, inside the school grounds."

"The forner!" hissed Jack Jolly.

"What shall we do?" asked Merry.

"Rush the rotter!" he answered, without hesitation. "Are you chaps ready?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Then charge!"

Instantly, the three chums rose to their feet and made a rush at the midnight visitor, hoping to bowl him over before he had them coming.

Said to relate, however, the forin gentleman caught the sound of their footprints. With a forin oath on his lips and a feendish expression on his face, he turned. "Surrender, you forin rotter!" shouted Jack Jolly.

The forner's answer was to whip out a revolver. "Hands up, you dogs, ain't it?" he cried, threateningly. Jack Jolly & Co. laughed scornfully. Such threats were not likely to terrify them. A moment later, the introcuder fired. Bang! Bang! Bang! Three bullets found bullets in Jolly, Merry and Bright respectively. The juniors merely pawed to eggstret them from their bodies, then rushed to the attack

again. But that paws, bree as it had been, was long enuff to give the enemy a chance of getting away. With a triumphant grin on his evil face, he gave the propeller a twist, then climbed up into the pilot's seat. Just as he did so, an eggstret finger raced across the quad, his beard streaming behind him. "Stop him!" roared an excited voice. "It was Dr. Birchmell!"

"My hat!" gasped Bright. "It's the Head!"

"Don't let the rotter get away, boys!" yelled Dr. Birchmell. "You shall have dozens of jam-tarts at my eggspense, if only you stop him!"

Jack Jolly & Co. chuckled, and raced after the airplane, which had already begun to move off.

As for the Head, he simply flew after the retreating machine. All his hopes of escaping being shot at dawn were concentrated in capturing the forin airman, and by hook or by crook he meant to do it.

The Head was the first to reach the machine. Just as he did so, it began to rise. Many a man would have given up the chase then. But the Head rose to the occasion, in more senses than one. Without a moment's hesitation, he seized the tale of the airplane in his bony hands, and rose with it!

For a mere fraction of a second, Jack Jolly & Co. were overcome with astonishment. Then Jack Jolly made a quick decision.

"Follow him!" he shouted.

The captain of the Fourth leaped after the plane, grabbed hold of the Head's heels, and was whirled aloft. Merry followed, suit by hanging on to his leader's ankles, and Bright brought up in the rear. Flying in the wake of the airplane like the tale of a kite, Dr. Birchmell and Jack Jolly & Co. clung on like grim death.

Soon they were in mid-air. Most fellows, of course, would have felt nervous at such an ordeal. But our heroes, like two British boys, felt quite at home in their novel surroundings.

Space alone prevents how the other eggspaining eggstret how they reached the pilot. Suffice it to say that they eventually did so: and grate was the forner's surprise when he saw their grinning faces.

A short, sharp battle followed, resulting in the forner being overpowered; and then Dr. Birchmell took the pilot's place and triumphantly dived down in the direction of the quad again.

By the time they droo up in front of the Scool House steps, the entire school was out-of-doors, awakened by the noise of the engine, and also by the arrival of troops from Potshot Camp. There was a rush to surround the airplane as it came to a stop, and a hundred questions were hurled at the passenger.

Dr. Birchmell held up his hand for silence.

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows!" he yelled. "With my usual dauntless courage, I have been successful in capturing a forin spy who has very nearly been the means of my being shot at dawn. I now have pleasure in handing over this precious scoundrell to our Air Force friends to be carted off to clink. Meanwhile, I call for three cheers for the bravest airman in Grate Britain—Alfred Birchmell!"

"What about Jack Jolly & Co.?" asked Mr. Lickham, indignantly. "From what I saw of it, they were the heroes of the peace!"

"Heer, heer!" yelled the crowd. And they then proceeded to give three hearty cheers—not for Dr. Birchmell, but for Jack Jolly & Co., the schoolboy air-heroes!

THE END.

(Look out next week for the first yarn in a screamingly funny new "Movie" series entitled: "FILM STRUCK!" You'll laugh till your sides ache.)

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