

A BAR OF WALTERS' DELICIOUS "CREEMY" TOFFEE FREE INSIDE!

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KIDNAPPED FROM THE AIR!

BY FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Declined Without Thanks!

"COME on, Bunter!"
"Eh!"
"It's a spread!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"Oh!"
"Lots and lots!" said Bob. "Enough even for you, old fat bean! Come on to my study!"

Strange to relate, Billy Bunter did not "come on."
He stood in the Remove passage at Greyfriars, blinking at Bob through his big spectacles.

It was yet early in the afternoon, being a half-holiday at Greyfriars School. Bob Cherry came up the Remove staircase, with quite a large party of friends. After football practice in the keen winter air they were all ready for a spread, without waiting for the usual hour of tea-time.

But Billy Bunter, it seemed, was not!

Which was amazing. Bunter was always ready for a spread! In other matters, such as getting up in the morning, or prep, or class, Bunter was rather like King Ethelred of old, who was always unready. But the mere mention of a spread was usually enough to stir Bunter into activity.

Now he failed to "enthus."

As Bob Cherry and his numerous friends came up the Remove passage from the stairs, Bunter was coming down the passage towards the stairs.

He carried an attache-case in his fat hand, which looked as if he meant to

go out. Fellows did not, as a rule, carry attache-cases about indoors.

"Oh!" repeated Bunter.

"Honest Injun!" said Bob, laughing. "I've had a hamper from home! Some hamper, believe me! Come on, old fat frump!"

"The esteemed hamper is terrific, my worthy Bunter!" said Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Thanks!" said Bunter. "But—"

"Come on!"

"But I don't care for a feed, thanks!" said Bunter. "You fellows go on, and—and enjoy yourselves! I—I'm not hungry!"

"Gammon!"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at the fat Owl of the Remove. Generally it was not difficult to get Bunter to a spread. The difficulty lay in keeping him away from one!

"It's not tea-time yet!" said Bunter. "I don't believe in eating between meals!"

"Wha-a-at?" gasped Harry Wharton.

"It's not much I eat at any time, as you know—"

"Fan me!" murmured Frank Nugent.

"Well," said Bob Cherry, "wonders will never cease! First time I've ever heard of Bunter turning down a spread!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Suit yourself, old fat man," said Bob. "But if you think I'm pulling your leg, fathead, I tell you it's honest Injun. There's a regular stack of stuff, and all these fellows are coming."

"Well, you see, I'm going out," said Bunter. "I—I'm just going down for

my coat and hat. I—I'm thinking of meeting Quelch at the station."

"Quelch?" repeated the juniors, more and more surprised.

"You know Quelch is coming back this afternoon," said Bunter. "Well, it would rather please him to be met at the station—what!"

"Great pip!"

It was true that Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, was booked to return to Greyfriars that afternoon. A cold caught in the Christmas vacation had kept him away at the beginning of the term. But Billy Bunter hitherto had not displayed any enthusiasm about Quelch's return. Rather he had looked forward to it with dismay and misgiving. Quelch was a master who made fellows work. Such a master could hardly expect to be greeted with wild enthusiasm by a fellow like Bunter.

"You're going down to the station in the snow to meet Quelch?" roared Johnny Bull.

"That's it! Let a fellow pass! You're filling the passage!"

"Well, if that's the big idea, you can wash it out!" said Bob Cherry, laughing. "We've heard that the line from Lantham is blocked with snow, and that no train can get through to-day. The railway's held up. Goodness knows how and when Quelch will get here!"

"Oh!" ejaculated Bunter.

"Not even likely to come in a car, with the roads in such a state," said Bob. "Ten to one you won't see Quelch to-day, Bunter. Frightful disappointment, of course!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter's fat face had involuntarily brightened. The prospect of keeping clear of Quelch for yet another day seemed to buck him.

"I say, you fellows, that's jolly good news!" he said. "No need to bother about prep this evening if Quelch isn't coming. Good!"

"So you needn't walk down to the station!" said Johnny Bull sarcastically. "You won't see dear old Quelch if you do. Not that I believe for a minute that you meant to do anything of the kind!"

"You heard me say so, Bull!" said the Owl of the Remove, with a great deal of dignity.

"Yes. That's why I don't believe it!"

"Beast!"

"Well, if you're coming, old fat man, come! If not, roll on!" said Bob Cherry. "You're rather an ass to miss the spread!"

"Oh, rot!" said Bunter. "Your spreads don't amount to much, Cherry!"

"What?"

"A bun all round, or something like that!" said Bunter. "I shouldn't care for it! Hardly worth my while, in fact!"

Bob Cherry gave the fat junior a look and walked on. But Johnny Bull, instead of walking on, grasped Billy Bunter by the collar.

"You fat scoundrel!" said Johnny in measured tones. "Is that how you thank a fellow for asking you to a spread?"

"Yow-ow! Leggo!" roared Bunter. "You fat, frabjous, footling freak! A fellow generally has to boot you out when he's got a spread going! And now—take that!"

Bang!

Billy Bunter's bullet head tapped on the wall of the Remove passage.

"Yaroooh!"

There was a terrific roar from Bunter. "And that!" said the incensed Johnny.

Bang!

"Yoooop!"

Billy Bunter, in desperation, swung round the attache-case he carried in his fat paw. Apparently, that attache-case was well packed, for it was very heavy. It caught Johnny Bull on the waistcoat with unexpected force, and he sat down in the passage quite suddenly.

"Wow!" he gasped.

The next moment Bunter was running. He vanished down the passage, the attache-case swinging in his hand, and darted down the Remove staircase. Bunter's movements were generally slow. Now, a hunted hare had nothing on Bunter! He was anxious to get clear before Johnny Bull got on his feet again.

Johnny staggered up, gasping. "Where's that fat frump? I'll jolly well—"

"Oh, come on!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "He's gone! And we're all ready for the spread if Bunter isn't!"

"Come on, you men!" roared Bob Cherry, from the doorway of Study No. 13.

And the juniors came on, and joined Bob in his study. Mark Linley stirred the study fire into a bright blaze. Two or three fellows pulled chairs up to the table. Bob Cherry went to the study cupboard and opened the door. Within lay the large hamper that had arrived that day from Cherry Place. Bob's father, Major Cherry, was not a rich man, and Bob did not often get a "whacking" hamper from home. It was an occasion to be celebrated, and an army of hungry juniors were ready to help Bob to celebrate it. Bob stooped

to pull the hamper out of the cupboard. Knowing how heavy it was—or had been—he naturally put a good deal of force into the pull.

But that hamper had mysteriously grown lighter since Bob had stacked it in the study cupboard! Instead of coming out slowly in response to the pull, as a heavy hamper would have done, it whisked out in a flash, just like an empty hamper.

That, naturally took Bob by surprise.

He went stumbling backwards and sat down, with a gasp, the hamper falling on his knees.

"Oh!" gasped Bob.

"Clumsy!" grinned Nugent.

"But—but—What the thump!" exclaimed Bob. "I could hardly lift the beastly thing when I shoved it into the cupboard! And now—it seems light as a feather! What—"

He threw back the lid of the hamper.

Then the mystery was explained! The hamper was empty!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Safety First!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH jumped.

The Bouncer of Greyfriars was standing at the telephone, in Mr. Quelch's study, in Masters'

One moment Bob Cherry is playing football with his chums, the next he is whisked away in an aeroplane by unknown kidnapers!

Fun, stirring adventure, and thrilling drama all play their part in this unique story of school life at Greyfriars!

Passage. Smithy, certainly, had no business there; and there were certain penalties attached to using a master's telephone without leave. So he was naturally startled when the study door opened suddenly, and he was fairly caught in the act.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Smithy, spinning round from the telephone.

He had not supposed that there was any danger from Quelch. The Remove master was expected back that day, and a bright fire was burning in his study ready for him; but since it had been learned that a snow-slide had blocked the railway, the Removites had rather given up expecting to see Quelch.

"Sorry, sir! I—" began the Bouncer.

Then he broke off.

It was not the tall and angular figure of Mr. Quelch that appeared in the doorway. It was the short and rotund figure of William George Bunter, with an attache-case in a fat hand.

Smithy stared at him. He would have been surprised by the appearance of Mr. Quelch in the circumstances. But he was still more surprised by the appearance of Billy Bunter! Bunter had no more business in his Form-master's study than Smithy had. And why he should bring an attache-case there was a deep mystery.

"You fat frump!" snapped the Bouncer. "You gave me a start!"

Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles. He was startled, too. He had expected to find the study unoccupied.

"Oh, really, Smithy! What are you up to here?" he demanded.

"Borrowing Quelch's phone!" grunted the Bouncer. "What the thump do you want, you fat duffer?"

"You'd better cut—"

"I haven't taken my call yet!" growled Vernon-Smith. "Shut that door—Prout or Lascelles or Mossoo may come along the passage—"

"You'll get copped, old chap!" said Bunter. "I advise you to cut! Quelch is jolly ratty about fellows using his phone. You got into a row about that last term, Smithy."

"Quelch isn't back yet, fathead!"

The Bouncer turned to the telephone again. Bunter's sudden arrival had startled him; but Bunter's presence did not matter.

Smithy's presence, however, mattered to Bunter! There were times when Bunter—usually a gregarious animal—liked to seek solitude. This was one of the times. Bunter had his reasons—not wholly unconnected with the contents of the attache-case and the disappearance of a spread from Bob Cherry's study cupboard.

"I say, Smithy—"

"Shut up!"

"I say, you'd better cut! Quelch may come up the passage any minute—"

"What?" The Bouncer turned from the telephone again. "Mean to say the old beans blown in?"

"What do you think I'm hiking this bag to his study for?" said Bunter. "Think I'm carrying it for fun?"

"Oh, my hat!"

Billy Bunter did not exactly say that Mr. Quelch had arrived and given him a bag to carry to the study. Bunter was, in his own estimation, a truthful fellow! But that assuredly was the impression the Bouncer drew from his words. He could really hardly have drawn any other!

Vernon-Smith left the telephone hastily.

Smithy had been in a good deal of trouble since the term started, and he had been making up his mind to "toe the line," and make a fresh start, when Mr. Quelch resumed his sway over the Lower Fourth.

Being caught by Quelch, at Quelch's telephone, was hardly the way to make a fresh start!

The Bouncer decided immediately to wash out that telephone call! He slammed the receiver back on the hooks, and ran across the study to the door.

Billy Bunter landed the attache-case on the table! Smithy reached the door at the same moment and glanced out.

The passage was empty! There was plenty of time to clear before Quelch came—if Quelch was coming! Losing no time, Herbert Vernon-Smith scudded out of the study.

"He, he, he!" gurgled Billy Bunter.

He rolled to the door, closed it, and turned the key in the lock. He was safe now, if the Bouncer came back—as he might do if he discovered that Quelch, after all, was nowhere near Greyfriars! He was also safe if Bob Cherry and his friends started searching for the missing contents of the

hamper! "Safety first!" was Bunter's motto!

He knew, if Smithy didn't, that Quelch hadn't come, and wasn't expected now that the railway was snowed up! The fire that had been lighted for Quelch made the study very warm and comfortable for Bunter! Quelch's armchair, drawn up before the fire, looked very cosy! The locked door kept out intruders—and juniors would never venture to kick up a row in Masters' Passage, even if they discovered Bunter there! So it was all right for Bunter; and he prepared to enjoy himself!

He opened the attache-case. It was crammed to the brim! It was not so large as Bob's hamper. So it did not hold all the things that Bunter had annexed from the hamper. Bunter held the rest himself!

The fat Owl's little round eyes glistened behind his big round spectacles, as he gazed at his plunder.

"Fine!" he ejaculated.

And he started!

Seated in Quelch's armchair, with his feet on Quelch's fender, toasting his toes at Quelch's fire, Bunter proceeded to travel through the handsome consignment of tuck that belonged to Bob Cherry.

His fat face was sticky and shiny and happy!

This was life!

Billy Bunter might have wasted a little sympathy on the fellows who had missed that magnificent spread, if he had had time to think of them. But he hadn't! He was too busy with the foodstuffs!

There were all sorts of things, and all of them nice; and all was grist that came to Bunter's mill!

Gobble, gobble, gobble!

Tap!

Bunter started and almost choked. His mouth was full—rather too full—when that tap came at the study door. The door-handle turned!

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter.

From the bottom of his fat heart he was glad that he had locked the door. As it did not open, the tap was repeated. Then a voice came through the door:

"Mon cher Quelch!"

Billy Bunter shook a fat fist at the door. It was the voice of Monsieur Charpentier, the French master, that he heard. Just like that little ass to come along to speak to Quelch, when Quelch wasn't there!

But the trouble was, that as the door was locked, Mossoo could not fail to know that someone was in the study! That was awkward for Bunter!

"Vous êtes de retour, mon cher Quelch?" went on the voice outside. "You are of return, isn't it? I have zink zat perhaps ze snow keep you away, but you are of return, yes?"

Bunter breathed hard.

"Mais ouvrez la porte, donc!" said Monsieur Charpentier, in tones of surprise. "Ze door he appear fast—vill you not open him?"

Supposing, from the fact that somebody was in the study, that Quelch was there, the French master was naturally surprised at being kept out! It was rather unusual for the owner of a study to lock his door—but it was still more unusual for somebody who was not the owner to lock it! Monsieur Charpentier had come along to speak a few friendly words to the Remove master after his prolonged absence, and he was both surprised and hurt by this apparent

incivility on the part of Henry Samuel Quelch.

Bunter gave a fat little cough.

If he did not answer, the French master could not be long in coming to the correct conclusion that some unauthorised person was in the Remove master's study. That, of course, would not have done!

Billy Bunter remembered in time his weird ventriloquial powers! The Greyfriars ventriloquist could imitate any voice that had any marked characteristics—as Mr. Quelch's voice certainly had! Remove fellows compared it sometimes to the growl of a tiger; sometimes to the bark of a mastiff! Anyhow, there was no mistaking it!

"Oh, go away!" barked Bunter, in a voice that Henry Samuel Quelch might have taken for his own.

"Mon Dieu! Vat you say?" ejaculated Monsieur Charpentier, outside the study. "Mon cher Quelch—"

"Get out!"

"Vat!"

"Leave me alone!"

"Ciel! Monsieur Quelch, I zink zat you leave your manners behind you ven you come back zis day! Mon Dieu! Mais certainment, I leave you alone—I speak to you nevair again vunce more! Bah!"

Agitated footsteps were heard receding along the passage. A door was heard to slam at a distance—Mossoo's study door. He was gone—terribly

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offended and deeply angry. That did not matter; Bunter was shut of him!

Bunter grinned.

And he restarted after the brief interval.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Quelch Drops In!

"SEEN Quelch?"

"Seen Bunter?"

The two questions were asked simultaneously—the first by Smithy, the second by Bob Cherry, as they met in the quad.

Bob's face was red with wrath.

His comrades were with him, and they were hunting Bunter.

After the discovery that the hamper in Study No. 13 was empty, it had not taken the chums of the Remove long to guess why Bunter had declined to come to the spread—and what was in the attache-case he had been carrying down the Remove passage!

Bunter seemed to have vanished into thin air.

Up and down and round about, all over Greyfriars, the Famous Five of the Remove hunted for him—but they did not think of looking in a master's study. And so long as they did not think of looking in a master's study they had not much chance of tracking William George Bunter!

They asked fellows right and left if they had seen Bunter. Most fellows replied that they hadn't, and didn't

want to. But they had better luck when they met the Bounder.

"Bunter? Yes," answered Smithy. "I say, he told me that Quelch was back, but I can't find anybody that's seen him. Is he really back?"

"Not that I know of," answered Bob. "I've heard that the line's held up by snow, so he may not come. But we want Bunter. Where did you see him?"

"In Quelch's study—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"What the thump did he pull my leg for?" exclaimed Vernon-Smith. "I took it as true, as he had an attache-case he said he was carrying for Quelch—"

"The fat scoundrel!" roared Bob. "He's got my spread in that attache-case—walked it off right under my nose—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Come on, you men!" exclaimed Bob. "If he's dodged into Quelch's study we've got him! We'll scrag him there! He can't have scooped all the stuff yet—even Bunter! We'll snatch him bald-headed and get back what's left! Come on!"

"By gum! And he cut my telephone call because he wanted a quiet place to guzzle in!" yelled the Bounder. "I'll jolly well burst him all over Quelch's carpet!"

Six juniors ran for the House. Every one of the six was yearning to get hold of Billy Bunter. Undoubtedly the Owl of the Remove had acted wisely in locking Quelch's door.

Harry Wharton & Co. dropped into a walk as they reached Masters' Passage. In that sacred region rows and rags were taboo. Quelch, it was true, was absent, but other beaks were in their studies. Not until they got inside Quelch's room, with the door shut, could they handle the fat Owl as he deserved, and then it would be judicious to stuff a duster into his mouth first.

In quite an orderly manner they walked into Masters' Passage. They had a glimpse of a dapper figure in a frock-coat vanishing into Monsieur Charpentier's study, and heard the slam of his door. They had arrived just after Mossoo's talk to Bunter. They stopped at Mr. Quelch's door, and Bob Cherry turned the handle and shoved.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! It's locked!"

"Oh crikey!" came a startled ejaculation from within.

"You fat scoundrel!" said Vernon-Smith through the keyhole. "Unlock this door, you podgy tick!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Bunter, you fat villain—" hooted Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry! I've told you that I'm not coming to your measly spread!" said Bunter. "Do let a fellow alone!"

That reply, in the circumstances, put the lid on, so to speak. Bob forgot that he was in the sacred precincts of Masters' Passage, and banged furiously at the door of Quelch's study.

Bang, bang, bang!

"Let me in, you fat rotter!" roared Bob. "I'll burst you! I'll scrag you! You've got my feed there, you podgy brigand!"

"Oh, really, Cherry!"

Bang!

"My esteemed Bob," gasped Hurreo Janset Ram Singh, "the bangfulness is too terrific! We shall have the esteemed and ridiculous beaks jumping on our idiotic necks—"

"Chuck it, Bob, for goodness' sake!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"That fat villain—" gurgled Bob.

"Oh, go away!" came Bunter's voice. "I haven't got any feed here! If anybody's taken anything from your

hamper, Cherry, I don't know anything about it. I never knew you had a hamper! I haven't been in your study! As for borrowing Toddy's attache-case to carry the stuff away in, I never even thought of it!"

"What are you locked in Quelch's study for, you snaffling porker?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"I—I'm studying—swotting a bit, you know! Getting up some Latin ready for Quelch. I—I thought I'd come here, as you fellows kick up such a row in the Remove passage."

"Studying! Swotting! You!" gasped Frank Nugent.

"Yes, old chap! I'm not eating anything! The fact is, I don't care for a cold chicken, and I haven't just eaten one—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Besides, the fact is, it was a bit

Prout, still frowning, withdrew his head into his study. Billy Bunter, in Quelch's study, resumed his feed, grinning serenely. Harry Wharton & Co. departed from the spot, with feelings almost too deep for words. So far as feeding went, they were quite able to hold out till tea-time, if that was all, though they were hungry enough to have done full justice to Bob's hamper. But they had been looking forward to that spread—they had been going to enjoy that spread—and the spread had vanished from their gaze like a beautiful dream. They wanted to bump Bunter—and they wanted to bump him hard! And Bunter was out of reach!

"I'll burst that fat frog!" growled Bob Cherry, as they went out into the quadrangle.

"The burstfulness will be terrific," agreed Hurrec Jamsset Ram Singh.

Coker was leaning back to fix his gaze skyward his prominent chin was more prominent than ever, and Bob landed the snowball exactly on the point of the chin.

Coker sat down quite suddenly. "Oooooop!" he gasped. "What—Ooooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good shot!"

Whiz, whiz, whiz! Snowballs rained on Coker, who roared. He scrambled to his feet amid a shower of snowballs.

"Urrgh! You young villains!" roared Coker "I—I'll— Yaroooh! Stoppit! I'll smash you! I'll— Yoooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Buzzzzzzzz!

A deep droning sound filled the air—it came from above. As it struck their ears the juniors glanced up, and then they saw what had interested Coker



Billy Bunter's little round eyes glistened behind his big spectacles, as he gazed at the contents of the attache-case. "Fine!" he ejaculated. Seating himself in Mr. Quelch's armchair, he proceeded to travel through the handsome consignment of tuck that he had plundered from Bob Cherry.

tough, and I don't suppose you fellows would have cared for it! Not that I've had it, you know!"

"Will you open this door?" hissed Bob Cherry.

"Well, as I'm swotting at chicken—I mean Latin—I can't let you noisy fellows in! Come back later, when I've finished the cake—I mean when I've finished this Latin—"

Bang! Thump!

"Hold on, Bob! You can't kick up that row here!" gasped Wharton. "We shall have the beaks out—"

"I'll spifficate him!"

"Yes, but—"

A door opened along the passage. The portly visage of Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, looked out, ornamented with a heavy frown.

"What—" began Prout.

The Removites did not wait to hear the rest of the question. They vanished like spectres at dawn.

"But at the esteemed present moment the—"

"There's Coker of the Fifth!" remarked the Bounder.

"Oh, blow Coker!" grunted Bob.

"There's a lot of snow about—"

Bob's wrathful face cleared, and he grinned.

"Good egg!" he said. "Let's!"

Coker of the Fifth was walking in lofty state, regardless of the existence of mere juniors of the Lower Fourth. He was gazing up at the sky, where through the winter mists there was a gleam of sunshine. What Coker of the Fifth saw to interest him in the sky the juniors did not know. They were interested in Coker, and the excellent target he presented—and, as Smithy had remarked, there was a lot of snow about. They proceeded to gather up some of that snow and knead it into snowballs.

Whiz!

Bob Cherry got in the first shot. As

skyward. An aeroplane, flying low, was circling over the school.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Is that chap looking for trouble among the chimney-pots?"

"Looks like it," said Nugent, staring up. "What the thump is he flying so low for? My hat! He'll be down in the trees if he's not careful!"

The Famous Five forgot Coker. The aeroplane shot on towards the open playing-fields, and Harry Wharton & Co. ran in that direction, leaving Coker of the Fifth sorting snow out of his neck.

"He's coming down!" exclaimed the Bounder.

It looked as if the airman was seeking a spot for a descent. Aeroplanes had landed in the school field before—Larry Lascelles, the games-master, sometimes flew a plane, and had landed there sometimes. But the juniors knew Mr. Lascelles' plane by sight, and this was

not it. If a stranger was attempting to land at Greyfriars, they concluded that it must be due to engine trouble, or something of the kind.

"He's coming down, that's a cert," said Harry Wharton. "Keep clear!"

Dozens of fellows were running towards the spot now. But as it was evident now that the airman intended to land on the field, they kept clear to give him room. The plane swooped down and taxied gracefully along on the field, and came to a halt.

Then a crowd of Greyfriars fellows ran up as the pilot alighted, and helped a tall gentleman, wrapped in thick coats and mufflers, from the rear cockpit. Wrapped up as he was against the cold, with hardly more than the red tip of a nose visible, there was something familiar in the aspect of the tall gentleman.

"Is that——" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"Quelch!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"The esteemed and ridiculous Quelch!" ejaculated Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "The absurd Quelch has returned air-fully!"

"Well, my hat!"

And the astonished juniors "capped" their Form-master, and Mr. Quelch bestowed a nod and a smile on them. The stoppage on the railway had not, after all, prevented Mr. Quelch's return on the appointed day. Mr. Quelch was a stickler for punctuality, which he often told the Removites was the politeness of princes. He had, as Hurree Singh expressed it, returned air-fully! Which Billy Bunter, still going strong in Quelch's study, certainly had not dreamed of foreseeing.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Cornered!

DR. LOCKE, the headmaster of Greyfriars School, stood in the doorway, gazing out with an interested and somewhat surprised expression on his face.

Mr. Quelch came up, followed by Trotter with a suitcase, and by a good many Greyfriars fellows. Quelch was, in fact, the cynosure of all eyes. Air-travel has, of course, become nowadays a common means of locomotion; still, the Greyfriars fellows thought it was rather sporting of an elderly "beak" to fly, and to drop in at the school from the clouds. Certainly it was a rather unusual way for a Form-master to return to his duties. Mr. Quelch smiled faintly as he came up the steps and shook the Head's extended hand.

"My dear Quelch!" said the Head. "You came——"

"By air!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Bless my soul!" said Dr. Locke.

The Head had never been in a plane, though he was far from realising that in that respect he rather resembled the old lady in the story who never travelled by railway-train because she did not believe in those "new-fangled things."

"The saving of time, sir, is very great," said Mr. Quelch. "I have been in the plane only half an hour—on a journey that usually takes several hours, with much greater trouble and inconvenience."

"No doubt," said the Head. "But to charter a plane——"

"I should certainly not have gone to that expense, sir," said Mr. Quelch, with a smile. "But Mr. Kranz was kind enough to offer me a lift."

"Mr. Kranz," repeated the Head. "The name is familiar——"

"Probably you will remember a former Greyfriars boy, sir, named Franz Kranz," said Mr. Quelch—"an Old Boy of this school, sir."

The Head's face altered slightly. "I remember the name!" he said—"I remember the boy! I——" He paused. It seemed that the Head did not remember that Old Boy of Greyfriars with esteem or affection, judging by his momentary look. "It was a long time ago, Quelch—before you joined my staff, I think. Is Mr. Kranz here now?"

"He is with his machine, sir, at the present moment, but will be very glad to pay his respects to his old headmaster, with your permission."

There was a second's pause before the Head replied:

"Oh, certainly! I shall be very glad to see Mr. Kranz, of course—any Old Boy of Greyfriars is always welcome."

Mr. Quelch gave his chief a rather sharp glance.

But there were dozens of ears within listening range, and he made no further remark on the subject of Mr. Kranz.

He was quite keen enough to see that the Head was not exactly pleased by the arrival of that particular Old Boy; but obviously it was too late to mend the matter now.

"Franz Kranz!" repeated the Head. "He was in the Sixth Form when he left—many, many years ago—before the War! I—I remember him perfectly! So he is an airman now? A noble profession, at all events."

"He is not exactly an airman, sir," said Mr. Quelch. "He flies his own plane for pleasure, though he is, of course, a certificated flying-man. I understand that he has prospered very much in the world, and can afford these rather expensive amusements. I thought it very kind of him to offer me a lift to the school, and when I found that the railway was blocked I was glad to accept his offer——"

"Oh, quite!" said the Head. "Certainly very kind of him. I am very glad to see you again, Quelch! Pray come with me."

Mr. Quelch glanced at Trotter.

"Please take that suitcase to my study," he said.

"Yessir!"

Mr. Quelch disappeared with the Head, and the House page carried the suitcase in. A score or more of fellows had heard the interchange of remarks between the Head and the Remove master, and the name of Franz Kranz passed from lip to lip.

It was obviously a German name, not easily forgotten if once heard, but it was unfamiliar to any Greyfriars man of the present generation. Franz Kranz had left the school long before the arrival of the oldest inhabitant, so far as the boys were concerned. He had even ante-dated the Remove master, from what the Head had observed.

"A German, eh!" remarked Skinner, of the Remove.

"Oh, rot!" said Bob Cherry. "It was decent of him to give Quelch a lift to the school."

"We're so jolly glad to have Quelch back, of course!" jeered Skinner.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated the Bunder. "Quelch's back, and Bunter——"

"Bunter——" repeated Bob.

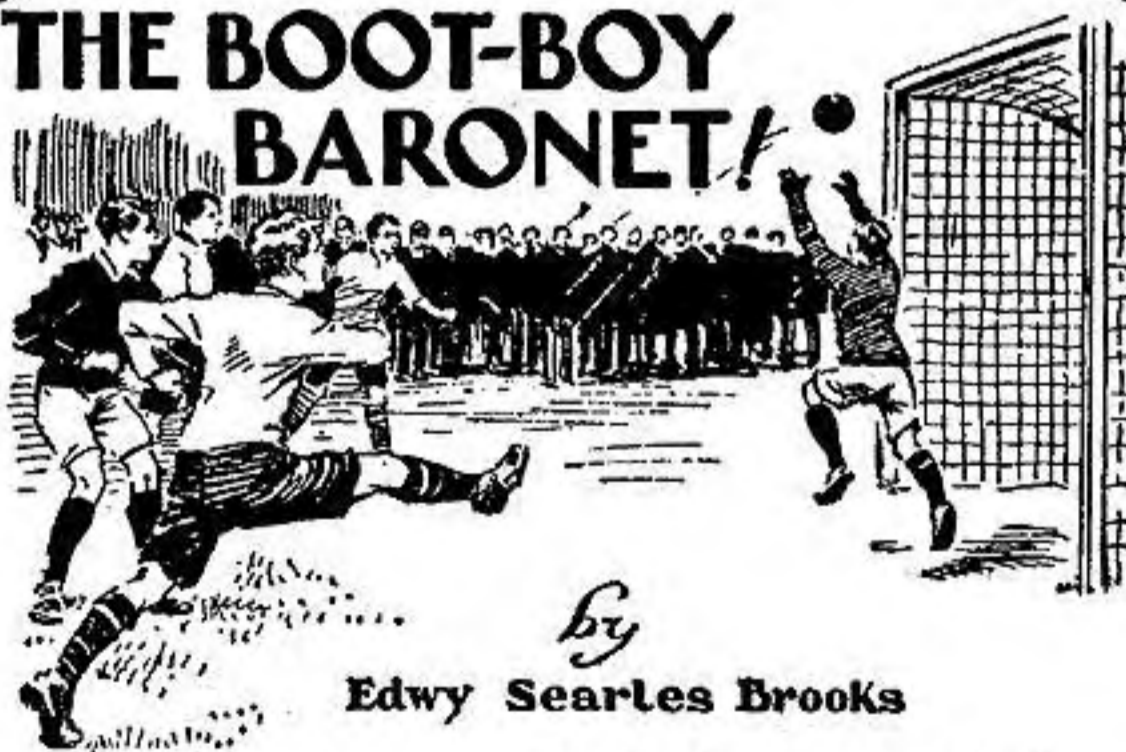
"Locked in his study——"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five roared. Billy Bunter had selected Quelch's study as the safest possible refuge, assured that

THE BOOT-BOY BARONET!



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Quelch was not coming. And Quelch had come.

"The howling ass!" gasped Bob. "Better cut off and give him the tip!"

It was like Bob to forget his own wrath at the prospect of the fat and fatuous Owl landing into a row with a beak.

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders. "Rot!" he answered. "Let him take what's coming to him!"

But Bob was already starting for the House. His chums went with him. Bunter deserved, in their opinion, to be ragged and scragged and bumped and burst; but they were willing to save him, if they could, from the wrath of Henry Samuel Quelch. What Quelch would say and do if he found the fat Owl feasting in his study was hardly to be imagined.

Trotter, with a puzzled expression on his face, was knocking at the study door when the Famous Five arrived in Masters' Passage.

He glanced round at them. "Somebody's locked this here door!" said Trotter. "Mr. Quelch says, take this here bag to his study, he says. But how's a bloke to take it in when the blessed door's locked?"

Bob tapped at the door. "Bunter!" he called out. "Oh, get away, do!" came a voice from within. "Can't you let a fellow eat—I mean work—"

"Come out of that at once, you fat duffer—"

"Yah!" "Quelch's come back!" "He, he, he!"

"You blithering bandersnatch, what are you cackling at?" roared Bob. "I tell you Quelch has come back, and we've come to give you the tip!"

"He, he, he! Think you can pull my leg like that?" jeered Bunter from within. "You told me yourself that the railway line was blocked! Think I'm going to believe that Quelch walked it? Yah!"

"He came by air—" "Wha-a-t?" "He came in a plane—" "He, he, he!"

"Honest Injun, you fat chump!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Trotter's here with his bag—" "He, he, he!"

"Quelch has gone in with the Head, but he may come along here any minute, you frabjous owl!" hooted Johnny Bull. "He, he, he!"

"Are you coming out?" shouted Nugent.

"No fear! He, he, he!" Billy Bunter cachinnated. "He, he, he! Never heard a thinner story. I can see that old donkey travelling by plane! Likely, isn't it? He, he, he! Try again!"

"You fozzling fathead, he's here!" roared Bob.

"You shouldn't tell whoppers, Bob Cherry! I'm rather shocked at you! Why can't you be truthful like me?" "Oh crikey!"

"You want me to open that door!" chortled Bunter. "Well, I'm not going to, see? I haven't finished the grub yet—I mean, I'm swotting at Latin! There's no grub here! Not a morsel! If you fancy I know anything about your hamper, it only shows what a low, suspicious mind you've got! Run away and play, and don't tell whoppers through the keyhole."

"I tell you—" yelled Bob. "Rats!" "Quelch—" "Bosh!"

"I—I say, sir, 'ere comes Mr. Quelch!" murmured Trotter; and the Famous Five backed hastily away from the study

door as a tall and angular figure came into the passage.

"That's torn it!" murmured Bob. It had!

Mr. Quelch gave the juniors a glance and then stopped at the study door.

"Why have you not taken my bag in, Trotter?" he asked. "Take it in at once!"

Mr. Quelch turned the door-handle and pushed at the door to open it, stepping forward to enter at the same moment. Naturally it did not occur to him that the door was locked on the inside. Naturally, too, as the door did not open, Mr. Quelch's forward stride brought him into sudden contact with it. There was a sharp crack as the Remove master's nose collided with the stout oak.

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Quelch, staggering. He released the door-handle and clapped his hand to his nose. That organ, it seemed, felt hurt!



Billy Bunter: "I say, you fellows, lend me a penny to try this 'talkie' weighing machine." Machine (Bunter having stepped on): "One at a time, please!"

Miss Rene Burgess, of Haddenley, Foley Road, Claygate, Surrey, who submitted the above winning joke, now possesses one of our **USEFUL VANITY CASES!**

Note.—All jokes and Greyfriars limericks should be sent to: "Limericks and Jokes" Editor, c/o The MAGNET, 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.).

"What—what—" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"I—I think the—the door's locked, sir!" stammered Trotter.

"Locked? Nonsense! Do you mean that there is someone in the study—locked in? Upon my word!" Mr. Quelch, with a glowing nose, gave an angry rap at the door. "Who is there? Answer me at once!"

"Oh lor!" squeaked Billy Bunter, in dire terror at the sound of the old familiar voice of his Form-master.

"Bunter!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Ow!"

"Bunter! You are there—locked in my study! What does this mean? Open this door at once!" roared Mr. Quelch.

"I—I'm not here, sir—" "What?"

"I—I mean—" "Thump, thump, thump!" went Mr. Quelch's fist on the door. And Billy Bunter, forgetting even his unfinished feed, stood and gazed at the inner side of the door, his little round eyes almost popping through his big, round spectacles in his terror.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Drops Out!

"MON cher Quelch—" "Thump, thump!" "Mais je ne comprends pas—"

"What, what?" barked Mr. Quelch. "Oh, how do you do, monsieur?"

He was annoyed. He was irritated. These feelings, in the circumstances, were natural. But he ceased to thump on the study door, and turned with the politest smile possible as little Monsieur Charpentier came down the passage. After all, it was pleasant to be welcomed back by his colleagues.

Mossoo was in a state of amazement. Having been, as he supposed, ordered off from that study, by Mr. Quelch within, he had been quite astounded to learn that Quelch had only recently arrived by aeroplane. He gazed at Quelch as if at the ghost of the Form-master.

"C'est vous!" he ejaculated. "Yes, it is you!"

"Eh? What? Naturally!" said Mr. Quelch, staring.

"But you are in zat study—" "Eh?"

"I comprehend not!" declared Monsieur Charpentier. "I come to ze study to see if you are of arrival, and you speak zrough ze door and tell me to go away viz myself—"

"What? I certainly did not! I have not been in the study! It is locked—a young rascal is there—Bunter—"

"But I zink zat it is your voice zat speak—"

"Upon my word! Has that young rascal dared—Bunter! Bunter! Open this door at once!" roared Mr. Quelch. "I shall punish you with the greatest severity! Open this door immediately!"

"Mon Dieu! It is zat Buntair zat play ze trick, and I zink it is ze bon Quelch zat speak so impolite!" gasped Monsieur Charpentier.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "That blithering idiot—"

Mr. Quelch stared round at the Famous Five.

"What are you boys doing in this passage? What—"

Before Mr. Quelch could complete his question, the Famous Five faded out of the picture.

As they disappeared, the sound of thumping on the door followed them. Mr. Quelch was very keen to get that door opened. Bunter, on the other hand, seemed to desire it to remain shut.

"That fat blitherer's for it, and no mistake!" said Frank Nugent, as the chums of the Remove went out into the quad, where the winter dusk was beginning to fall. "Quelch will scalp him!"

"The scalpfulness will probably be terrific!" agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The preposterous Quelch is infuriated!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! That must be the Kranz bird!" remarked Bob Cherry, with a nod towards a short, stocky, very powerfully-built man who was walking in the quad.

The Famous Five glanced at Mr. Kranz with interest. He was short in stature, but his shoulders were very broad, and he looked as strong as a horse. His jaw was very square, as determined-looking as a bulldog's; and his clean-shaven face looked younger than they would have expected, considering how many years it was since he had left Greyfriars.

A good many fellows coming towards the House as the dusk fell, glanced at the aviator, some of them doubtless wondering who he was, and what he was doing there. Apparently he was, as an Old Boy, interested in his former school; THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,354.

for he was glancing about him with light-blue eyes that were very keen, and seemed to take in everything at a single glance.

As the Famous Five looked at him, he turned into the path under Master's Windows, and moved along there slowly, glancing at each window, till he came to that of Mr. Quelch's study. There he paused, looking up at the window; which, although on the ground floor of the building, was at a good height from the ground. Standing with his thick legs firmly set, the stocky man stood gazing at that study window, as if interested for some reason in the room within.

"Looks a tough nut to crack!" remarked Frank Nugent. "I wonder what he's interested in Quelch's study for? He can't know that that fat fooler's there."

"I dare say he's had whoppings in that study in his time!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Happy recollections, perhaps!"

The flying-man ceased to regard the study window at last and turned. Harry Wharton & Co., not wishing to be supposed to be staring at a stranger, strolled on. But the airman did not seem to notice them. He leaned back on the old stone wall under the window, the back of his head resting just under the broad stone sill, and lighted a cigarette. From that position he had an extensive view of the quadrangle and many of the school buildings, and he seemed keenly interested in all he saw—perhaps on account of old associations.

Now that his back was to the window,

Watch Out For . . .

he naturally did not see it open above his head.

Neither did he hear it; for it opened silently.

Billy Bunter's terrified fat face looked out.

Outside the study door Quelch was fuming, almost raging! For his fat life the Owl of the Remove dared not open that door and let his Form-master in—in his present mood!

Bunter was thinking only of escape!

The study window was the only way—unless he went up the chimney, which would have been too desperate a resource even for the terrified Owl!

Bunter blinked into the dusky quad.

He was glad that it was dusky and a little misty! He was glad that there was nobody at hand—nobody whom he could see, at all events!

At a short distance, there were the Famous Five strolling along, but they did not matter! No prefect was in sight, and no master. The coast was clear—so far as Bunter could see!

It did not occur to him to peer over the projecting edge of the broad stone sill. Naturally, he did not imagine that a short, stocky man was leaning against the wall there. He was unaware of even the existence of Mr. Franz Kranz, Old Boy of Greyfriars.

Silently—for he was afraid that Quelch would hear him—the fat Owl clambered through the window! He did not want Quelch to whip out of the House and cut off his escape!

Indeed, if he succeeded in getting clear, Bunter entertained a hope of convincing Quelch that he hadn't been in the study at all. He had great faith in his powers as an Ananias!

Anyway, a meeting with Quelch was one of those things that were better put

off, and it could not be postponed too late!

Silently Bunter clambered out on to the sill and dropped!

The next moment there was a fearful yell!

Bunter, dropping over the edge of a window-sill, naturally expected to drop on the earth. Instead of which, his fat, wriggling legs landed on something that moved—something alive!

"Thousand thunders!" came a startled exclamation.

Bunter, instead of dropping on his feet, fell helplessly in a bundle! He clutched out wildly to save himself, and his fat arms were flung convulsively about a thick-set neck!

Down he went, bumping, dragging with him Mr. Franz Kranz!

"Oh crikey!" spluttered Bunter.

"What—" yelled Mr. Kranz.

"Oh lor'!"

Bunter rolled on the ground. He was still frantically clutching something! He was not aware that it was Mr. Kranz's ear!

Mr. Kranz, of course, was aware of it! He was only too painfully aware of it! He felt as if his ear was being wrenched off!

Harry Wharton & Co. turned towards the scene at the sound of Bunter's roar and Mr. Kranz's startled yell.

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"Hallo, hallo, hallo! That fat idiot—" gasped Bob Cherry.

"B-Bunter—" stuttered Johnny Bull.

"He's done it now!"

"Great pip!"

Franz Kranz struggled to release himself. He swept out a fist that sent Bunter rolling, and scrambled to his feet. His hard face was crimson with rage. Bunter, with all his wind knocked out, rolled and spluttered.

"Fool!" panted Mr. Kranz. "Idiot! Is this a schoolboy trick that you play on me—what?"

"Grooogh! Urrggh!" spluttered Bunter. "Oooogh!"

"Fool! Dolt! Thousand thunders!"

"Gurrgh!"

Harry Wharton & Co. looked on, from a distance. It was evident that the Old Boy of Greyfriars was hurt, and that he was angry, and that he had a fierce and savage temper!

He stood glaring at the sprawling Owl for a moment or two, panting; and then, stooping, he grasped him by the collar and dragged him to his feet with one hand, and with the other proceeded to smack his head.

Smack, smack, smack!

Bunter wriggled and gurgled wildly.

Smack, smack, smack!

Harry Wharton & Co. ran towards the spot. Bunter, no doubt, deserved to be whopped; but there was a limit, and the angry man was going far beyond it! The smacks ran like pistol-shots.

"Mr. Kranz! For goodness' sake—" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

Kranz did not seem to hear him! At all events, he did not heed.

Smack, smack, smack!

As the other fellows hesitated Bob Cherry ran in, with quite a grim look on his face, and grasped the airman's arm.

Exerting all his strength, Bob dragged it back.

Kranz turned on him savagely.

"Let go! Thousand thunders, I will—"

"Keep your temper, sir!" said Bob coolly. "You can't smack a fellow's head like that! Keep cool, sir!"

For a second the light blue eyes glared at him, and the juniors had no doubt that the man's rage was turning on Bob. In which case they were prepared to rush in and collar him right and left—Old Boy and guest of their Form-master as he was!

But Franz Kranz controlled his temper in time. He seemed to collect himself, and the blaze of rage died out of his eyes.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!" Bunter was spluttering wildly. "Keep off! Leggo! Ow! Wow! Who's that beast? Ow! Wow!"

Kranz released his collar! Bunter staggered away, gasping and gurgling. Johnny Bull gave him a shove.

"Cut!" he rapped.

Bunter did not need telling twice! He cut promptly, gurgling and spluttering as he went.

Bob let go the Old Boy's arm!

"Sorry, sir!" he said apologetically. "But you were really pitching it a bit too strong."

It's Absolutely Prime!

"Oh, quite!" Mr. Kranz smiled. "I fear that I lost my temper. But I was quite knocked over. I did not expect a schoolboy to jump on my head!" He rubbed his ear and smiled again. "They did not play these tricks at Greyfriars in my time."

"That fat duffer wasn't playing a trick, sir. He's as blind as an owl, and twice as silly, and he didn't know you were under the window—"

"Then why—what—"

"That's Mr. Quelch's study, sir, and Bunter was there, and Quelch is at the door, and he was cutting—"

"Oh!" said Kranz. "Well, well, the boy is stupid, and deserved to have his head smacked!" He looked more attentively at Bob. "Is your name Cherry?" he asked suddenly.

"Yes, sir—Bob Cherry!" answered the junior, surprised that the man knew his name.

"You are like your father!" said the Old Boy, with a smile.

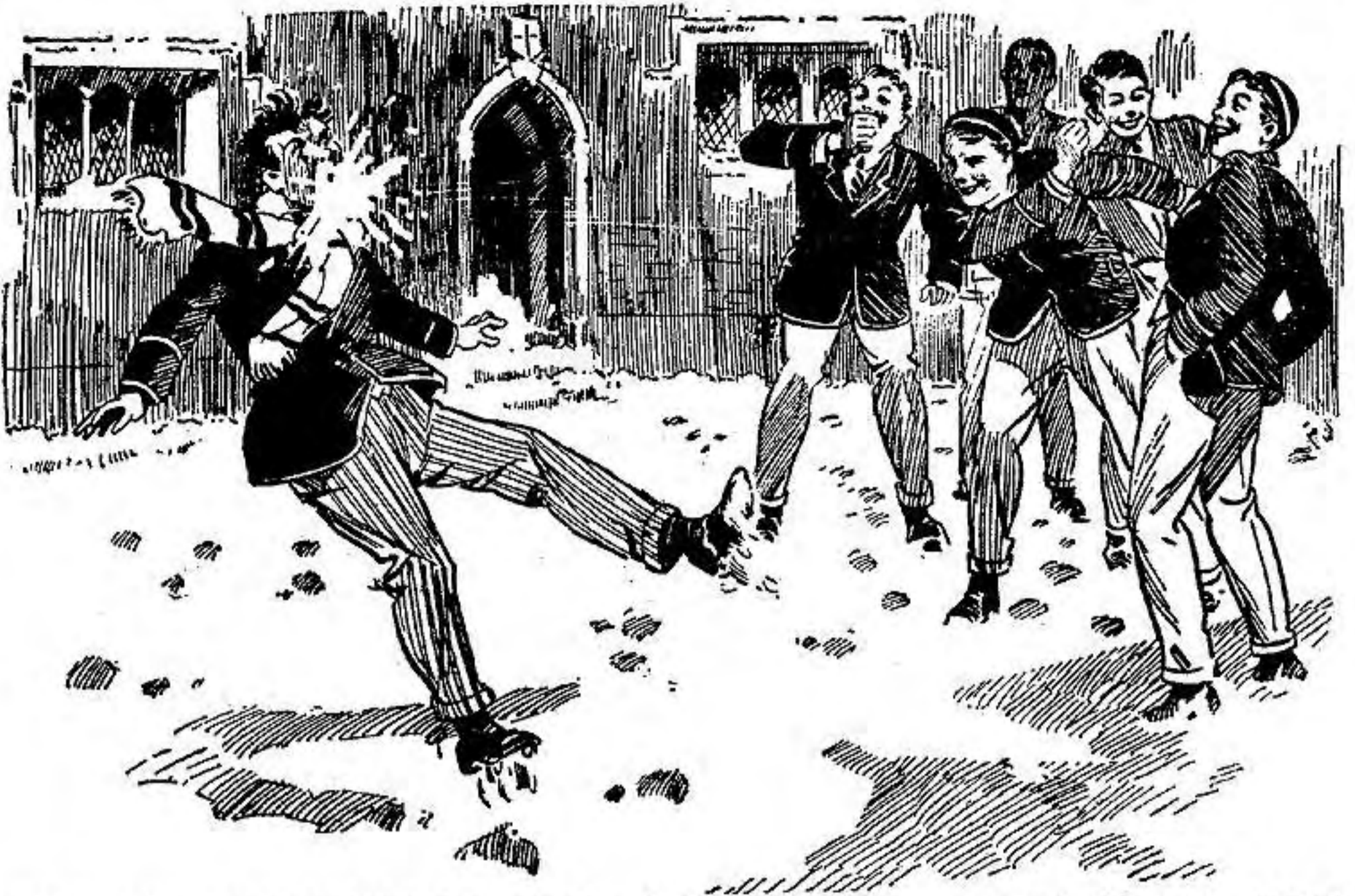
"You know my father, sir?"

"I have met Major Cherry!" said Kranz. "He is interested in aviation, as doubtless you know, and we have had some interesting talks."

Bob grinned.

"Yes, rather, sir! The pater's going to revolutionise flying some day—if it comes off! I lend him a hand in the hols sometimes with his gadgets. Not that I understand half of it—too deep for me! But the pater's frightfully keen on his jolly old inventions."

"And you are his son!" said Kranz, looking very attentively at Bob's face. "Yes, I think I should have known you anywhere by the likeness. It is a very great pleasure to make your acquaintance, Master Cherry—a very great pleasure indeed! You should be proud



Whiz! As Coker was leaning back to fix his gaze skywards, his prominent chin was more prominent than ever; and Bob Cherry landed the snowball exactly on the point of the chin. Plop! "Oooooooop!" gasped the Fifth Former. "What—oooooop!" "Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the Famous Five. "Good shot!"

of your father—the finest man I have ever met!"

With a nod to the juniors, Mr. Kranz walked away.

"Not a bad sportsman," said Bob, naturally rather pleased by Mr. Kranz's allusion to his father. "He's got a bit of a temper—"

"He's got a rotten temper!" grunted Johnny Bull. "No decent man would smack a kid's head as he did Bunter's!"

"Well, it was a bit upsetting for a fat fozler to drop suddenly on his napper."

"I know that; but decent men don't lose their tempers to that extent."

"Um!" said Bob. He rather agreed with Johnny; but the way Mr. Kranz had spoken of his father disarmed him. "Well, what about getting in here, as that fat frump has opened the window, and letting Quelch into his study? He will have a fit if this goes on much longer!"

"Good egg!" agreed Harry Wharton.

With a "bunk" from the captain of the Remove, Bob clambered in at the study window. Mr. Quelch had resumed thumping on the door, and his voice came through the keyhole in accents that were positively blood-curdling.

"Bunter! If you do not instantly open this door—"

Bob Cherry jumped across the study, turned back the key, and pulled the door wide open. Mr. Quelch, crimson in the face, strode in. He glared at Bob.

"Cherry! It is you! I supposed it was Bunter. I heard Bunter's voice! Where is he? You were here also! Where is my cane?"

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped Bob, in alarm.

"I—I got in at the window to open the door for you, sir!"

"Oh!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch. He glanced at the open window. "I—I see! I am obliged to you, Cherry! Where is Bunter?"

"I—I think he's gone, sir!"

"What—what—what is all this?" Mr. Quelch gazed at the remains of an extensive spread on his study table.

"What—what— Is it possible that—that Bunter— Upon my word! Cherry, go and look for Bunter immediately, and send him to my study if you find him."

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Bob.

And he went! But he did not find Bunter. Certainly he looked for him, as commanded. But as he did not look in any places where he was likely to be found, he did not succeed in finding him and sending him to Quelch! It was Bob's sage opinion that Quelch had better be given time to cool down before he interviewed Bunter—an opinion in which Billy Bunter fully concurred—for he remained lost to sight, though, perhaps, to memory dear!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Dodging Quelch!

"LOOK out, Bunter!"

"Wha-a-at—"

"Quelch—"

"Oh lor'!"

"And the Kranz man!" grinned Skinner.

"Oh crikey!"

There was a chortle in the Rag.

Between tea and prep plenty of fellows congregated in that apartment. Outside, there was snow, darkness, and a bitter wind. Within, a great fire roared up the wide, old-fashioned chimney, and the light gleamed on a crowd of cheery faces. The Famous Five were there, talking football with the Bounder, Redwing, Peter Todd, Squiff, and other footballing fellows—the topic being the match with the Shell, shortly due.

Lord Mauleverer, stretched in an easy-chair, with one elegant leg crossed over

the other, was considering whether it was worth the trouble to change legs, as it were, and cross the other over the one. On the whole, his lazy lordship decided that it wasn't, and remained as he was.

Fisher T. Fish, with an energetic keenness that contrasted with Mauly's laziness, was sitting at the table making calculations, with a stump of pencil. His face was set and earnest. He was a penny short in his accounts that term.

What had become of that penny was a mystery. He could not, of course, have given it away; that was a sheer impossibility. But where was it? With deep, tense earnestness, Fisher T. Fish went through and through his accounts, in search of that elusive penny—as keen on it as Bob Cherry on a game of football, or Billy Bunter on a spread!

Kipps of the Remove was standing near the door, with a circle of fellows round him—Newland and Hazeldene, Dutton and Bolsover major and Dupont, and two or three others, watching him. Kipps had a "bolo" in his hand, and was keeping six or seven balls circling in it. It was not easy to keep the little white balls circling in the grooved inner circle of the metal ring. But Kipps of the Remove was a wonderful conjurer, who could perform all sorts of sleight-of-hand tricks—and the "bolo" was quite easy to him. He could wave the ring round his head, with the balls still circling, much to the admiration of the other fellows.

Billy Bunter was blinking on. Billy Bunter had remained out of the public view for a considerable time. He did not want to see Quelch, and he was rather uneasy about meeting the Famous Five, after the affair of the hamper. But he turned up in the Rag at last.

To his great relief, Bob Cherry did not raise the subject of the raided THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,354.

hamper. Bob's opinion was that Bunter was going to get quite enough from Quelch—which was no doubt the fact. So Bunter was relieved to find that Bob passed him by like the idle wind which he regarded not.

Bunter was watching Oliver Kipps with the bolo—but with one eye on the door. He had not been to Quelch—and he was worried by a foreboding that if he didn't, Quelch would come to him!

Certainly, Bunter could not hope to dodge his Form-master for ever! But equally certainly he was going to dodge him as long as he could!

Obviously, he was going to get it hot and strong when he met Quelch. So the later that painful meeting was postponed, the better William George Bunter liked it.

Skinner, glancing out at the half-open door, gave the alarm—with a cheery grin on his face. Billy Bunter's state of funky apprehension seemed to amuse Skinner. Skinner was one of those agreeable fellows who can always derive entertainment from the trouble of others.

"I—I—I say, you fellows, shut the door!" exclaimed Bunter, in alarm. "I say, stand against it! Shove your feet to it! See? Make Quelch think that it's jammed or something—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I say, you fellows, keep him out!" gasped Bunter. "Is—is—is he coming this way, Skinner?"

Skinner looked out again, while Bunter backed across the room.

"Coming!" announced Skinner. "He's showing the Kranz man round—and they're coming right here."

"Oh crumbs!"
"Half a minute more, old fat bean!" chortled Skinner. "Then—"

Bunter blinked wildly round the Rag! On all sides he saw grinning faces. But he saw no avenue of escape.

"You silly ass!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "You've got to see Quelch sooner or later—"

"Beast!"
"You've got to have it, fathead!" said Johnny Bull. "Take it and get it over, you flabby funk."

"Rotter!"
"Buck up and face it, old fat man!" said Bob. "I should be whopping you this minute if Quelch wasn't going to!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Is—is—is he coming, Skinner?"
"Another sec—"

"Oh crikey!"
Billy Bunter plunged under the table. There was a roar of laughter in the Rag.

From underneath the table, a terrified fat face peered out, with a gleam of spectacles in the light.

"I—I say, you fellows—"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, stand between the table and the door—I say, don't let Quelch spot me! I—I say, stand by a chap, you know—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Yelling with laughter, but willing to do what they could for Bunter, the Famous Five, and three or four other fellows, lined up along the big table, forming a screen for Bunter underneath.

More fellows joined them there. Fisher T. Fish did not even look up from his calculations. But Lord Mauleverer, who had been too lazy to shift his crossed leg on his own account, jumped up quite actively, and added himself to Bunter's screen.

Quite a little crowd interposed between Bunter and the door, and behind that camouflage the fat Owl of the Remove quaked under the table, as the

door was pushed open, and Mr. Quelch entered with Franz Kranz.

Apparently Mr. Kranz was staying the night at the school. At all events, he was still there, and had dressed for dinner. No doubt the Head had politely asked the Old Boy to dine with him.

Quelch had quite a good-tempered expression on his face, as he showed the former Greyfriars man about his old haunts.

"Probably you remember this room, Mr. Kranz!" he remarked. "It is now called—'hem, the Rag—by the boys of—"

"It was called the Rag in my time!" said Mr. Kranz, with a smile, and he walked down the long room with the Remove master.

There was a whispering squeak from

"My boy, you won't get the toothache if you eat WALTERS' CHOCOLATE NOUGAT," said the schoolmaster, who had not forgotten that he had been a boy once. "Why don't you get next week's MAGNET? Inside every copy you will find a bar of this nutritious sweetmeat."



That's the sort of schoolmaster to have, boys! And the MAGNET'S the right sort of paper to stick to. It's quite true—in next week's record-breaking FREE GIFT issue every reader will find a bar of

WALTERS' DELICIOUS CHOCOLATE NOUGAT!

Make sure of this wonderful FREE GIFT.

a fat junior watching from behind a forest of legs.

"I say, you fellows—"
"Quiet, you blithering ass!" breathed Bob Cherry.

He moved along the table, and the other fellows moved after him. If Bunter was to keep screened from the enemy, his screen had to move as Mr. Quelch moved.

Mr. Quelch and his guest moved to the window, and the screen moved along the long table, and grouped at the end.

Had they not done so, the fat junior crouching underneath would certainly have been spotted when they turned to walk back down the room.

As it was, Harry Wharton & Co. were in the way, and the two gentlemen came walking down the Rag again without seeing anything of Bunter.

But they walked down the room on the other side of the long table.

There was a hurried movement on the part of the human screen to get round to that side in time.

Fisher T. Fish was sitting at the corner of the table, deep in his abstruse calculations—regardless of Bunter, of the other fellows, and of Quelch and Kranz! On the trail of that elusive penny, Fisher T. Fish was lost to the world. Three or four fellows bumped into his chair, in their hurry to get round, and there was an indignant howl from Fishy.

"Aw! You pesky guys! Wake snakes! What the great horned toad are—"

"Gerrou of the way!" hissed Bob Cherry.

"I guess—"

Mr. Quelch glanced at the juniors. Perhaps he had already noticed that odd circling movement of the fellows standing round the table as he walked round the Rag with Mr. Kranz. Certainly he noticed them bumping into Fishy as they turned the corner of the long table.

"What—" began Mr. Quelch sharply.

He broke off. But for Fishy being in the way, Bunter's screen would have acted effectively. But delays were dangerous. Mr. Quelch's attention being directed to the spot, and the screen not yet being in position, the Remove master had a view of a fat figure crouching under the table, watching him with terrified eyes through a big pair of spectacles.

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Is—is—is that Bunter?"

"Oh lor'!"

"Bunter! What are you doing under the table? Come out immediately! I command you to emerge!"

"Oh crikey!"

"It is the fat fellow who jumped on my head from your study window!" exclaimed Mr. Kranz, also staring at Bunter.

"Bunter!"

"Oh scissors!"
"Emerge!" hooted Quelch.

Bunter emerged; but he emerged on the other side of the table, and scudded for the door.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Bunter, you ass!" gasped Harry Wharton. "Stop!"

"BUNTER!" roared Mr. Quelch. That did it! Bunter would hardly have stopped if his Form-master had spoken like a cooing dove; but that formidable roar accelerated his flight.

Bunter tore out of the doorway of the Rag and vanished.

"BUNTER!"
There was no reply. Bunter was gone!

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, colouring with vexation. "That absurd boy! Really—really—" He stared round at the Removites. "What are you laughing at, Cherry?"

"Was—was—was I laughing, sir?" stammered Bob.

"You were! Take fifty lines!"
"Oh! Yes, sir!"

There was no more laughter till Mr. Quelch and his visitor were gone. Then there was a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Where is Bunter?

WINGATE of the Sixth frowned. Everybody else in the Remove dormitory grinned. It was bed-time for the Remove, but one member of the Lower Fourth had not turned up for dorm. That

member was William George Bunter. Ever since he had bolted from under the table in the Rag, Bunter had been missing. He was missing still!

Twice during the time devoted to prep, Bunter's study, No. 7 in the Remove, had been visited; first by a prefect, then by Mr. Quelch in person. Neither visit had unearthed Bunter. Bunter was not there. He had done no prep.

Cutting prep was a serious matter, but it was only a drop in the ocean added to Bunter's other sins.

Bunter, perhaps, hoped that the longer he kept out of sight, the more chance Quelch's wrath had of cooling. Up to a certain point no doubt that was a good theory. Beyond a certain point, however, it was certain that Bunter's amazing proceedings would add to the wrath of his exasperated Form-master.

Nobody doubted that the hidden Owl would turn up for dorm. Wingate of the Sixth, who was seeing lights out for the Remove, had instructions to conduct him to Quelch's study.

But Bunter had not turned up!

Wingate frowned, but frowning could not produce Bunter. Bunter was not there! Even had he, like the Lord High Executioner, frowned a "frightful, fearful, frantic frown," it could not have produced Bunter.

"Wharton!" rapped out the Greyfriars captain.

"Yes, Wingate!" Wharton suppressed a smile.

"Where's Bunter?"

"I don't know, Wingate."

"Has anybody here seen Bunter?" snorted the prefect.

There was no reply. Skinner, in a low tone, began to sing the ancient song. "Has anybody seen our cat?" There was a chortle.

"Stop that row!" snapped Wingate. "Look here, that young ass has got to be found. Quelch wants him."

"That's why he can't be found, Wingate, I think," said Harry.

"The silly young ass! He will get scalped for this! Well, turn in!" grunted Wingate.

The Remove turned in, and Wingate put out the light and retired, to report to Mr. Quelch that Bunter was not to be found.

There was a chuckle from bed to bed in the Remove dormitory.

"The howling ass!" said Peter Todd. "He will get a flogging at this rate. Quelch will be as mad as a hatter!"

"The madfulness will be terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"I shouldn't care to be in Bunter's shoes when Quelch gets hold of him!" said Squiff.

"I shouldn't care to be in his bags, anyhow!" remarked the Bounder.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is the blithering idiot going to stay up all night, or what?" asked Bob Cherry. "He will have to face it to-morrow. The awful ass!"

"Bet you he'll sneak here to bed after Wingate's got clear," said Skinner. "That's his game."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob sat up in bed. "Is that—"

"Bunter!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

The dormitory door was heard to open in the dark. It closed again, and a sound of panting breath was heard; then a well-known voice:

"I say, you fellows!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" groaned Bunter. "I say, do you fellows know whether Quelch is still waxy?"

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

"You blithering bandersnatch!" roared Peter Todd. "Do you think

you've put him in a good temper by cutting prep and cutting dorm?"

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"He's as wild as a Red Indian!" chuckled Skinner. "Get ready for the whopping of your life, Bunter!"

"Beast!"

"For goodness' sake, Bunter, go down to Quelch at once!" said Harry Wharton. "The sooner you get it over, the better."

"I'll watch it!" gasped Bunter.

"You'll have to see him to-morrow, you fathead!"

"Well, he may be in a better temper to-morrow," said Bunter. "I hope so, at any rate!" Evidently Bunter had a hopeful nature.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Likely!" chuckled Skinner.

"I—I say, you fellows, d-d-do you think anybody's likely to come up if I turn in?" asked Bunter anxiously. "Think they'll guess that I've come up to bed?"

"The guessfulness will be terrific!"

"Oh lor'!"

"Quelch is sure to come up and see if you've turned in," said Bob Cherry. "Make up your mind to it, and go down to him."

"Yah!"

Evidently Billy Bunter could not make up his mind to take the whopping he so richly deserved. At the same time he hesitated to turn in, with the possibility—or, rather, the certainty—that Quelch would come up and look for him in the Remove dormitory. It was quite a painful and perplexing position for the hapless Owl.

"I say, you fellows, what's a fellow to do?" groaned Bunter. "It's all your fault, Bob Cherry, you beast!"

"My fault!" gasped Bob.

"Yes, yours! I should never have taken that tuck to Quelch's study if you hadn't been after me. I only went there because I knew you'd be hunting for me as soon as you missed the stuff out of your hamper. I knew you'd fancy that I'd had it. A low, suspicious mind, I call it—"

"Oh crikey!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Making out that a fellow bags your tuck, and getting him into an awful fix like this!" groaned Bunter.

"You did bag it!" shrieked Bob. "Quelch found it on his study table—all that you hadn't scooped!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I say, you fellows, if I tell Quelch that I wasn't in his study at all, do you think he'd take my word?"

"Oh crumbs!"

"You see, he never saw me there," argued Bunter. "It's only what they call circumstantial evidence. As for the tuck on the table, you make out that that was yours, Bob. Well, if it was yours, you're responsible!"

"Oh scissors!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If it hadn't been for that beast standing under the window, it would have been all right! But he will make out that it was I who fell on his head, as—as he saw me!" groaned Bunter. "No good my saying it wasn't; he looks like like the sort of cad to doubt a fellow's word!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"I say, you fellows, I heard him and Quelch jawing, and it seems that his name is Crank, or Spank, or something, and he's

an Old Boy or something, and he's staying the night," said Bunter. "As Quelch has got a visitor staying here, don't you fellows think he may forget all about me?"

"He may!" chuckled Bob.

"The mayfulness is terrific!"

"I—I'd like to turn in, if I was sure that Quelch wouldn't come up! Oh lor'! I can hear somebody coming!"

There were footsteps in the passage outside. Billy Bunter stood quaking in the dark. The footsteps stopped at the door of the Remove dormitory.

That door opened.

As it opened Billy Bunter backed to the wall behind it.

Mr. Quelch stepped in, switching on the light as he did so. And Billy Bunter, blotted out of sight behind the open door, quaked with terror.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

On the Run I

MR. QUELCH stood just within the doorway, glancing along the row of beds.

Evidently, in spite of the fact that he had a visitor, he had not forgotten Bunter. And the expression on his face indicated that his temper had not improved. Rather, it seemed to have grown worse.

His eyes fixed on the empty bed.

Wingate of the Sixth glanced in after him.

"Is he there, sir?" asked the prefect.

"He does not seem to be here yet," said Mr. Quelch. "I had no doubt that the foolish boy would come up to bed when you had gone down. But he does not seem to be here. Upon my word, this passes all patience! I shall administer the most severe punishment when the absurd boy is found! I shall cane him very severely indeed!"

If Bunter had had any idea of emerging from behind the door and giving himself up, he abandoned it when he heard that!

He crouched close to the wall, hidden by the door, and hardly dared to breathe.


Most of the Remove fellows were sitting up in bed. Nobody, of course, was going to give Bunter away. But they wondered, with considerable entertainment, whether he would be discovered. As Mr. Quelch had guessed that Bunter would come up to the dormitory when the prefect had gone down, he might guess, further, that the fat Owl was there and had dodged out of sight.

He seemed, at all events, in no hurry to go. Bunter's bed was empty; but Quelch was casting suspicious glances up and down the dormitory, and at the faces of the wide-awake Removites. Perhaps he gathered, from some of those faces, that the juniors knew something of Bunter's movements.

"Certainly I shall punish him with the greatest severity!" said Mr. Quelch. "His conduct has been absolutely outrageous, selecting my study—his Form-master's study—for what I can only describe as an orgy, and jumping from

(Continued on page 14.)

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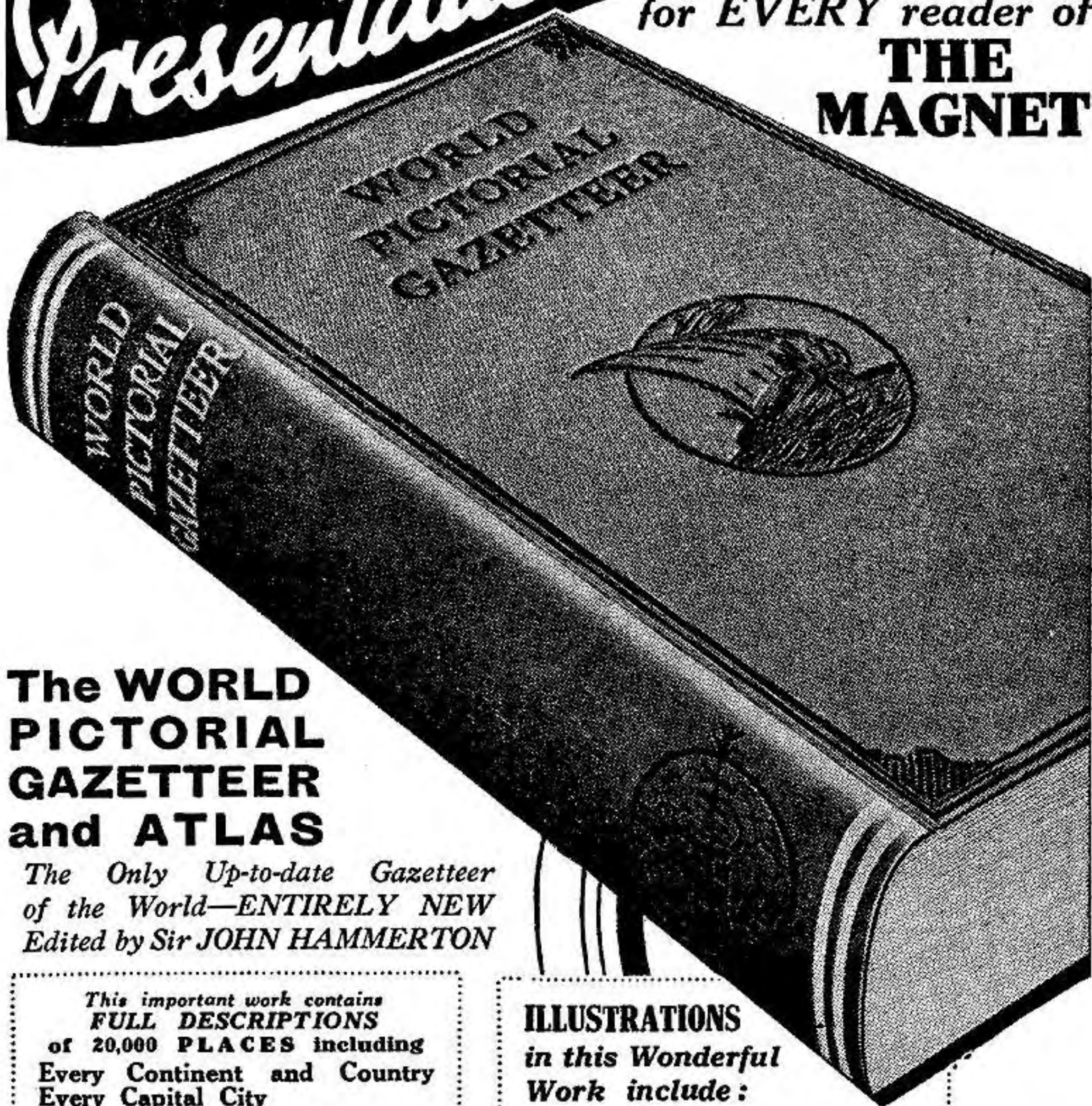
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the window on the head of a gentleman visiting the school! But even that is not so serious as neglecting his preparation and hiding out of sight in this extraordinary manner! I almost fear that the boy is not in his senses! Such extraordinary stupidity—"

Mr. Quelch paused.
"It is possible, Wingate, that he is here, and that he has concealed himself on our approach," he said. "Please stand at the door, and see that he does not leave the dormitory, while I look under the beds."

"Certainly, sir!"
Wingate stood in the doorway. Mr. Quelch advanced into the dormitory and proceeded to glance under bed after bed.

Bunter suppressed a groan.
Quelch was not going to unearth him under a bed. But when he turned at the end of the dormitory to come back, he was certain to see the fat figure blotted behind the door.

Bunter, from behind the door, had a view of Quelch's back as he went up the room. He waited in terror for Quelch to turn. There was, perhaps, a faint chance that those keen gimlet eyes might not spot him. But the chance was very faint.

Almost in agony, he watched Quelch's back.

At the last bed Quelch turned to come back. Then he gave a jump as, having a view behind the open door from the end of the room, he saw Bunter.

"Bunter!" gasped the Remove master.
He made a rapid stride, with an expression on his face that might have alarmed a much stouter heart than Billy Bunter's.

Bunter did not wait. He shoved at the door and spun round it. The door, as it swung, caught Wingate standing a foot or two within the doorway, taking him quite by surprise. So far as Wingate could see, the big oak door moved of its own volition—which certainly he had been far from expecting!

"Wha-at—" gasped Wingate, as the door smote him.

He staggered. As he staggered, Billy Bunter whipped round the door.

Wingate clutched at him, a second too late. Bunter tore past him into the passage.

"Bunter!" yelled Wingate.
"Stop him!" shouted Mr. Quelch.

Wingate rushed into the passage in pursuit. After Wingate rushed Mr. Quelch, his gown fluttering behind him as he rushed. In his haste he did not stop to turn off the light or to shut the door.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bob Cherry.
"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites were left yelling. There was no doubt that the antics of William George Bunter were adding very considerably to the gaiety of existence in the Lower Fourth Form of Greyfriars.

Bunter, however, was feeling far from gay himself. In dire terror, the fat junior bolted down the passage, thinking only of escape.

After him came Wingate, running hard; after Wingate came Quelch, whisking and rustling.

"Stop!" yelled Wingate.
Putting on speed, the captain of Greyfriars overtook the Owl of the Remove on the landing, and grabbed at his shoulder.

"Yaroooh!" squeaked Bunter.
In sheer terror, he collapsed, and Wingate, running too fast to stop, caught his knees in a podgy figure, and went headlong over Bunter.

Bump!
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"Oh!" roared Wingate, as he landed.
"Urrrgh!" gasped Bunter.

Crash! Bump! Quelch had arrived—also at great speed, and unable to stop in time to avoid a catastrophe! He shot over Bunter and landed on Wingate.

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

"Gurrrrgh!" gurgled Bunter.
He sat up, blinking dizzily through his spectacles. Wingate was sprawling on the landing. Quelch was sprawling on Wingate. Bunter had a second or two before they sorted themselves out. He made the most of it.

The fat Owl bounded to his feet. The master and the prefect were down, and what would happen to him when the master and the prefect got up did not bear thinking of.

Bunter bolted at frantic speed.
He vanished round the nearest corner, and was out of sight when Mr. Quelch scrambled up and Wingate scrambled up after him.

There was an absolutely ferocious and deadly glint in Quelch's eyes as he glared round for Bunter.

"That boy—" he gasped. "Bunter—where is Bunter? Are you hurt, Wingate?"

"Ow! Yes! Wow!"
"I also am very much shaken! I—I—I will give that wretched boy such a

caning that— Kindly search for him, Wingate, as soon as you have recovered your breath! Bless my soul!"

Leaving Wingate to resume the search for the vanished Owl, Mr. Quelch walked back to the Remove dormitory to turn off the light, gasping as he went. Then he went to help Wingate in the search.

In the Remove dormitory it was some time before the sleepest fellow closed his eyes.

The Remove fellows fully expected the door to open, to admit Bunter in a woeful state after a terrific whopping. But it did not happen.

Ten o'clock was heard to strike—and Bunter had not come! Evidently the egregious Owl was still dodging successfully.

"He's keeping it up!" yawned Bob Cherry.
"The keepfulness up is terrific," murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur.

The fellows were falling asleep now. At half-past ten they were all asleep. And still Bunter had not come! It looked as if the fat and fatuous Owl of the Remove was having a night out!

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THE NINTH CHAPTER.

A Mystery of the Night I

BILLY BUNTER groaned.

It was a cold winter's night, and Bunter was chilly!

He had succeeded in dodging the inevitable encounter with Quelch, so far as that was any advantage. But even the fat Owl doubted whether it was really an advantage.

Certainly he had to face the music sooner or later! Even Bunter realized that it was extremely doubtful whether Quelch's temper would improve with the lapse of time—in the peculiar circumstances! Still, he hoped so! Anyhow, he simply had not the nerve to show up and take what was coming to him—and that was that!

He was in the Remove box-room now. He had bagged a coat and a rug, and wrapped himself up and tried to sleep. He succeeded in dozing. But as eleven tolled out from the clock-tower he was wide awake. The night seemed to grow colder and colder. Snowflakes fluttered against the window panes. A bitter wind wafted among the old chimneys of Greyfriars.

Bunter groaned—and he shivered!

He thought of his warm bed in the Remove dormitory! But he did not think of seeking it. He had heard that Quelch and Mr. Kranz were dining with the Head that evening. What time Quelch would come back from the Head's house he did not know. As a rule, Quelch was a fairly early bird. But when he dined with the Head he sometimes stayed for a late chat—time passed very quickly to the two elderly gentlemen when they got upon some favourite topic—such as a disputed passage in Aeschylus or Sophocles.

Bunter knew how likely it was that when Quelch came back he would look in at the Remove dormitory to see whether Bunter was there!

The Owl of the Remove did not want to be there when Quelch looked in!

Once sure that Quelch had gone to bed, Bunter would have gone to bed also, and chanced it in the morning! But he had to be sure!

But it was too cold in the box-room to stay there longer, and Bunter was fearfully sleepy!

At eleven o'clock all the prefects and most of the masters would be gone to bed; so the coast was fairly clear.

Bunter pondered over it! Was Quelch likely to go to his study when he came back from the Head's house?

He was not! It was fairly certain that he would give the Remove dorm the "once-over," to see whether Bunter was there, and then go to bed.

Having thought that out, Bunter left the box-room at last and tiptoed down the stairs to Masters' Passage.

The light was turned out there, which looked as if all the beaks had gone to bed—unless Quelch was still with Dr. Locke.

The fat Owl crept along to Quelch's study.

That study, in the circumstances, was a cover that was not likely to be drawn in search of Bunter. But his chief reason for going there was the fact that there was a large and comfortable armchair and a fire! If the fire was out he could re-light it—if it was low, he could mend it—and he would be warm—and safe, if Quelch didn't hop in! The mere thought of getting into Quelch's deep armchair in front of a fire drew the cold, shivering, and sleepy Owl like a magnet!

There was a faint red glow from the grate when he entered the study and closed the door softly after him.

The fire had burned very low. But the room was warm; and that warmth was grateful and comforting.

Billy Bunter groped for the tongs, and carefully placed lumps of coal from the coalbox on the fire. Having built it high, and thus assured himself of warmth for some time to come, he pulled the big armchair in front of it.

With a grunt of relief, he sprawled in that chair, his toes on the fender. This



As Bunter dropped from the window-sill, his fat wriggling legs landed on something that moved—something alive! He clutched out wildly to save himself, and his fat arms were flung convulsively about a thick-set neck. "Oh crikey!" he spluttered. "Fool! Dolt! Thousand thunders!" yelled Mr. Kranz.

was real relief and comfort after his hardships.

The fire burned and glowed. Bunter blinked at it appreciatively through his big spectacles. His eyelids drooped behind those spectacles.

He dozed! But he did not sleep with his usual soundness. The thought of Quelch worried him too much for that. If, against all probability, Quelch did come to the study when he returned his game was up! He had arranged the armchair so that the high back hid him from anyone looking into the room. But if Quelch came in and turned on the light, discovery was inevitable.

Bunter could only hope that he wouldn't. It was, in fact, improbable. But the thought of Quelch lingered in his fat mind as he dozed.

A sound awakened him.

He sat up, starting and listening.

But it was only the deep boom of twelve from the clock-tower!

Midnight!

The fire was burning with a red, warm glow, the firelight playing on the old oak-panelled walls of the study! Mr. Quelch's study was one of the oldest rooms in the building, and the black oak of the walls was said to be priceless, and was certainly many centuries old. It had been a master's study ever since Greyfriars had been a school; but before that it had been used for similar purposes by the ancient Abbots of Greyfriars. The ancient oak reflected the firelight with many a dancing light and shadow. Billy Bunter blinked round him rather uneasily.

Midnight was not a time when a fellow liked to be the only fellow downstairs in a huge, rambling building far from anybody else. Bunter remembered that it was said that there was a sliding panel in those ancient oak walls giving access to a stone stair leading down into the vaults. That was an uncomfortable thought at midnight.

The last stroke of twelve died away.

Bunter was wide awake now.

By this time Quelch must be back and gone to bed. If he was going to look into the Remove dorm for Bunter, he must have looked, and gone!

Surely it would be safe to go to bed now!

Dark passages and staircases in a sleeping house did not appeal to Bunter much! In fact, he disliked them extremely! And it was very warm and cosy where he was!

He debated the point in his fat mind—unwilling to stir, and at the same time unwilling to remain where he was.

He was still thinking it out, and dropping into a sleepy state again when there was a sudden sound. It was a faint and slight sound; but the silence of midnight made it seem louder! Worst of all, it was made by the study door opening.

Bunter's fat heart jumped.

Against all probability Quelch had barged in! In dire terror, no longer sleepy—Bunter sat, waiting for discovery when the light was turned on.

But the light was not turned on!

To his amazement, as well as relief the study remained dark, except for the ruddy glow of the firelight.

The faint sound of the door closing reached his ears; and the faint click of the key as it was cautiously and softly turned in the lock.

Still there was no light.

Whoever had entered the study, at nearly half-past twelve at night, had closed and locked the door; but remained without a light!

This was utterly amazing.

It could not be Quelch! Bunter realised that! Quelch's first action would have been to switch on the light.

But if it was not Quelch, who was it? Some fellow "larking"? But the most inveterate practical joker would hardly turn out after midnight for a lark in a master's study.

Bunter remembered that he had interrupted the Bunder's telephone call in that study! Was it possible—But

it wasn't! Smithy certainly could not have come down at that hour to use the telephone.

There was a faint sound of movement. Bunter trembled.

But the stealthy footsteps did not approach the fire or the armchair. They moved along the wall of the study where the bookcase was.

The thought of burglars flashed into Bunter's mind. But it came only to be dismissed. Burglars would come from without, not from within. Someone in the House had come down to the study—but who?

Bunter sat very still! Whoever it was Bunter did not want to be discovered. Was it, after all, Quelch—coming down for a book, perhaps? But Quelch would have switched on the light.

Who on earth was it, and what did he want?

Bunter was alarmed! But after a time he was more curious than alarmed. The whole thing was utterly mysterious and perplexing.

Obviously the newcomer had not the faintest idea that there was anyone in the study. Billy Bunter ventured to move his head at last, and peered round the high back of the chair.

A short, stocky man was standing beside Mr. Quelch's bookcase, his back to Bunter, apparently scanning the oak panels of the wall in the dim glow of firelight.

Though he had only a back view of that figure, there was something familiar and recognisable in it.

Bunter realised suddenly who it was. It was Franz Kranz, the Old Boy of Greyfriars—the man who had piloted the aeroplane that day in which Mr. Quelch had returned to the school.

Bunter blinked through his spectacles in dumbfounded amazement at the broad, stocky back of Mr. Kranz.

There was a sudden flash of light.

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(Continued from page 15.)

Mr. Kranz had turned on an electric torch. The beam of light played over the oak panels of the wall.

What on earth was the man up to? He was making a close and careful examination of the panelled wall—why?

Looking for the supposed secret panel? Possibly in his old days at Greyfriars, Kranz might have found it, or heard of it. But what could be his interest in it now, after so many years; and when he was staying at the school only for one night? Dumbfounded, Bunter watched him.

A live coal fell from the fire with a splutter of sparks. There was a sudden leap of blaze. As if alarmed by that slight sound, Kranz shut off the torch and turned. Bunter heard his heavy breathing. He caught the gleam of light blue eyes in the blaze of the fire. With a spasm of terror he realised that those light blue eyes were fixed on him—that the man had seen him in the fire-light. And the fierce and bitter rage that burned in those light blue eyes brought a gasp of fear from Billy Bunter.

It was for hardly more than a second that the man stared at him. Then he leaped.

Bunter started up with a yell of terror as a sinewy hand grasped him, and a voice hissed:

"Who are you? What are you doing here?"

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Caught!

"YAROOOH!"

Bunter roared. "Yow-ow! Leggo! Yoop! Whoop! Help! Yaroooh!"

The fat junior roared at the top of his voice.

Fear of discovery, fear of Quelch, were forgotten now. Quelch at that moment would have been welcome to the terrified fat junior, in his deadly fear of the man who had grasped him.

"Silence!" "Help! Help! Yaroop! Help!" roared Bunter.

His frantic yell rang through the silent House, echoing far and wide.

The stocky man, as if remembering himself, released the fat junior. What he had been thinking of, in his sudden rage and alarm at finding the fat junior watching him, Bunter did not know; but he feared with a deadly fear. But whatever had been in the man's mind, he was very quick to recover his self-command.

He released Bunter, who immediately bounded out of the armchair, and rushed for the door. He bumped into a chair, stumbled, and rolled over. In deadly fear of being grasped again, he yelled for help at the top of his voice.

"Thousand thunders!" breathed Kranz.

He whipped across to the door, swiftly unlocked it, and switched on the

light. He had been seen in the study; his surreptitious visit there could not be kept a secret now. He had to explain. Franz Kranz's wits worked swiftly. Whatever had been his object, it was not one that he desired to explain to Mr. Quelch or the headmaster of Greyfriars. He had to think, and think quickly.

He threw the door wide open. Already there was a sound of an opening door above. Mr. Quelch's rooms were over his study. Probably late back from the Head's house, he was not yet asleep. At all events, he had certainly heard Bunter's wild yells below.

Light from the study streamed out into the passage. Along with it streamed the yelling of Billy Bunter.

Kranz turned towards him. The rage in his face was quite gone now. He was perfectly calm. There was even a smile on his hard features.

"Quiet, my boy!" he said. "You will wake the whole House at this rate. There is nothing to be alarmed about."

"Ow! Keep off!" yelled Bunter.

"I shall have to mention this to your Form-master," said Kranz calmly. "I can hardly keep such a matter a secret. I cannot imagine why you are wandering about the school in the middle of the night."

"I—I wasn't—I—I—"

Bunter picked himself up, and blinked uneasily and doubtfully at the stocky man's face.

He was reassured by its expression. Whether, as he had feared, Kranz was capable of harming him or not, it was clear that the man would not venture to do so. Already there were steps on the stairs, and a light gleamed. Mr. Quelch's voice was heard:

"It is Bunter. You may go back to bed, Wingate. I will deal with the foolish boy—"

"Oh, very well, sir!"

Evidently the Greyfriars captain had been awakened, also, and had come out of his room.

There was a swish and a rustle in the passage. Mr. Quelch, in his dressing-gown, appeared at his study doorway.

The expression on his face was like unto that of the fabled Gorgon of old. He stared into the lighted study.

Then he jumped. Having heard Bunter's yelling, he expected to see Bunter. But he had certainly not expected to see Franz Kranz.

"Mr. Kranz!" he ejaculated, in amazement. "What—"

Kranz smiled.

"I have to apologise, Mr. Quelch," he said. "It turns out only to be a foolish schoolboy, and not a burglar, as I supposed."

"A—a—a burglar! I do not understand—"

"I was awakened by a noise," explained Kranz. "I was certain that someone was moving about the House, and came down to ascertain what it was. Naturally it never occurred to me that it was a schoolboy at this hour."

"I understand. That foolish, exasperating boy did not go to bed with the rest; he has been in hiding from a just punishment—"

"Ah, that accounts for my finding him here! Following the sound to this room, I fancied that I had cornered a burglar, and, to my amazement, found here the fat boy who fell on my head this afternoon!" Mr. Kranz laughed.

Billy Bunter blinked at Franz Kranz like a fellow in a dream.

When it came to fibbing, Bunter was a good hand himself. It was said in the Remove that he could beat Ananias and George Washington at their own game. But the sheer, cool, impudent lying of

the Old Boy of Greyfriars quite took Bunter's breath away.

To Bunter, though not to Mr. Quelch, it was obvious that Kranz was lying, though why was a mystery to the fat Owl.

Kranz said that he had heard someone moving—that he had followed the sound to that study. Certainly that was not only untrue, but impossible. Bunter had been a good hour in the study, not making a sound. Kranz had been at least five minutes in the study before discovering him there.

Bunter fairly gasped. Mr. Kranz laughed quite heartily. Bunter could hardly believe that it was the same man who had seized him in a steel-like grip, with rage and ferocity gleaming and glinting in his eyes.

"I quite understand," said Mr. Quelch. He turned to Bunter, with a brow of thunder. "Bunter, you ridiculous boy, you have added to your offences by awakening Mr. Kranz in the middle of the night."

"I—I didn't—"

"And disturbing me!" hooted Mr. Quelch. "You might have awakened the whole House. You—you—"

"I—I—" stammered Bunter. "I—I—I—"

"I am sorry, Mr. Kranz—more sorry than I can say—that your night's rest should have been disturbed by this foolish boy—"

"Not at all, sir," said Mr. Kranz, smiling. "As it turns out to be only a false alarm, I will return to my room. Good-night, sir!"

"Good-night, Mr. Kranz!"

Franz Kranz left the study, the smile still on his face. But there was no smile on Quelch's as he fixed his gimlet eyes on the dismayed Owl.

"Bunter, I shall not punish you at this late hour—"

"Oh, good!" gasped Bunter. "I—I mean—"

"I shall punish you to-morrow with the greatest severity—"

"Oh lor'!"

"Now I shall take you to your dormitory. Come!"

Mr. Quelch grasped the fat Owl by the shoulder. Bunter was not going to have a chance of dodging again. He switched off the light in the study, and led the fat Owl of the Remove away.

When they reached the Remove dormitory silence and slumber reigned there. Bunter, quaking under Quelch's gimlet eye, bolted into bed.

He was glad, at least, to get to bed. That was so much to the good. Mr. Quelch watched him grimly.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came a sleepy murmur from Bob Cherry's bed. "Who—what—"

Bob sat up, rubbing his eyes.

Two or three other fellows awakened and stared in the light.

"Do not disturb yourselves, boys!" said Mr. Quelch. "It is only Bunter—"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob.

Mr. Quelch turned off the light, closed the door, and departed. There was a sleepy chuckle or two in the darkness.

"So you've turned up, you fat ass!" murmured Bob.

"I say, you fellows—"

"You blithering owl, don't jaw this time of night!" mumbled Peter Todd.

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter, for once, was not greatly disposed to "jaw." He was sleepy. His eyes closed as his fat head sank into the pillows, and the Remove dormitory echoed to the old familiar sound of Bunter's hefty snore.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter is Not Believed!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! There he goes!"

"The esteemed Kranz is—"

The morning sunshine glimmered on a snowy landscape. Harry Wharton & Co., taking a trot in the quad before brekker, looked round at the hum of an engine, and saw the plane rising from the school field. Mr. Franz Kranz, it seemed, was going—and he was going early. The Famous Five stood and watched the graceful plane rising, till it vanished into space.

"I say, you fellows—"

Billy Bunter was blinking after the disappearing plane, through his big spectacles. Bunter's fat face wore a worried look.

"That beast's gone!" he said.

"The gonefulness is terrific!" agreed the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"The rotter!" said Bunter.

"My esteemed and idiotic Bunter—"

"The sneaking toad!"

Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at the fat Owl. Bunter appeared to have a deep "down" on the Old Boy who had just departed in the air. He glared after the vanished plane.

"You silly ass!" said Bob. "Ho smacked your head rather hard yesterday; but you dropped on his napper—"

"The lying worm!" said Bunter.

"The rotten spoofer! I say, you fellows, that man's a beast! He caught me last night—"

"Is he a beast because he caught you, fathead?"

"Well, he told Quelch a lot of lies—"

"Eh?"

"You see, I was in Quelch's study—I thought it would be safe there—and that brute came sneaking into the room at half-past twelve—"

"Wha-a-at?"

"And found me there!" said Bunter. "He told Quelch he'd heard somebody moving, and came down to see if it was burglars. It was a whopper, see?"

"What rot!" said Harry Wharton. "Why should he tell Quelch whoppers, fathead? And why else should he have come down at all?"

"He was up to something!" said Bunter. "You see, he never heard me moving about, as he told Quelch. I'd been sitting in the armchair more than an hour when he came down. And

(Continued on next page.)



If you're in doubt over any Soccer problem write and get "Linesman's" expert opinion. He's always ready to assist MAGNET readers. Address your queries to him, c/o The MAGNET, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

THE MOST FAMOUS TEAMS!

NOT for a moment do I believe that any reader of the MAGNET would make a deliberate attempt to get me into hot water. From time to time, however, I do get seemingly innocent questions which, if I made the attempt to answer definitely, would be sure to get me into trouble. A typical query under this head comes from a Leicester reader. He asks me to give, in order of merit, the three most famous teams in football of all time. That's a big order, isn't it?

I am asked to look back right to the beginning of football and name three big teams which have left their biggest mark on the story of football. Frankly, I am not going to be definite, because there are so many points of view from which such a question can be tackled. We might say, for instance, that Preston North End occupy a big page in the story of football.

When League play was first started in the season of 1888, Preston North End went through that season without losing a League game, and they went through the Cup competition in the same season without conceding one goal to their opponents in the knock-out competition.

No club has ever equalled that record, and no club will ever equal it. There were only 22 matches in a League season in those long-ago days. There are 42 now!

I shan't make many enemies by placing Aston Villa high up in the list of the most famous teams. In the record line they also have a corner to themselves. On six occasions they have won the F.A. Cup, a total only shared by Blackburn Rovers. On six occasions also they have won the First Division championship, and no team has equalled that total. They have also won the Cup and the League in the same season.

Then it must be remembered that the Villa and Blackburn Rovers are the only clubs which have remained in continuous membership of the League since it was

first formed; that is to say they have never been relegated. So altogether I think I should place the Villa first. Newcastle United hold a prominent place, too, for they have won the championship of the First Division on four occasions, and have been Cup-winners three times.

I think the Newcastle United team of a few years before the War was probably the best ever. They went to the Cup Final five times in seven seasons.

A CUP RULE!

SINCE the War, Huddersfield Town have a very consistent record in both Cup and League football, and coming right down to our own times, Arsenal are surely earning the right to be included among the most famous of the football clubs. Having thus mentioned several, I will leave this subject, and leave you to write to me about famous teams I have left out of my list.

A reader who has noticed that it is the custom for the manager of a football club to watch and weigh up forthcoming Cup opponents has a big idea. He suggests that if he were the manager of a football club he would not let his Cup opponents know anything about the composition of the team until they were actually being prepared for the fray. Thus, so my friend says, he would try to upset the tactical ideas formed in advance by the opposition.

This is all very well as an idea, but it can only be carried out to a limited extent.

Perhaps it is not generally known that each football club must send to the opposing club in a Cup-tie, five days before the match is due to be played, a list of players from whom the Cup side will be chosen. There is even an order, in connection with this rule, that such a list of players shall be sent by registered post so as to make sure the other club gets the list.

This Cup rule was not on the books with a view to preventing any protests

after the games have been played, about the eligibility of this or that player. No protest on this head is entertained unless notice is officially given at least twenty-four hours before the match is due to start.

In the old days protests about players not being eligible were frequently made. I recall a series of Cup-ties played some forty years ago, in which Sheffield Wednesday and Derby County were engaged. Sheffield Wednesday won the first match, but Derby protested that one of the Sheffield players was not eligible. The protest was upheld, and the game was replayed. This time Derby County won, but then the Wednesday officials protested that a player, whose name was Bloomer, should not have appeared in the match. That protest was held to be good also, and a third match was played.

I don't suppose you know, do you, that a big Cup-tie had been replayed because the wonderful Steve Bloomer turned out when he was not eligible to do so? Yet it is a fact.

FULL-BACK PLAY!

TO satisfy another of my readers I am putting in this week one or two hints about full-back play. The first essential in a full-back is the ability to kick strongly, and to tackle efficiently. In regard to the kicking, no full-back, whether he plays on the left or the right, can consider himself a complete player unless he can kick almost equally well with either foot. One-footed full-backs are handicapped in respect of many clearances.

Although I have mentioned the ability to kick strongly as a qualification, I must also emphasise that many full-backs make the mistake of kicking the ball as hard as they can every time it comes to them. This is not necessary, or helpful. Ernest Belkingsop and Eddie Hapgood, two of the finest full-backs in the game to-day, have each developed the habit of starting an attack, even when making a clearance, by placing the ball gently to the foot of a colleague.

This can often be done, and is much better than merely banging the ball somewhere up the field.

The strength of leg which is necessary to make a strong kicker is also useful in the tackle. There is one golden rule in trying to get the ball from an opponent. Keep your eye on the ball, not on the opponent. Having made up your mind to tackle, don't do it half-heartedly. Go into it with this motto in your mind: "That ball is mine, and I am going to have it."

"LINESMAN."

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when he came into Quelch's study he never turned on the light—he just rooted about with an electric torch, and he had been there five or six minutes before he spotted me. He never knew I was there, you know; but he told Quelch he heard me and came down—

"Well, my hat!" said Wharton blankly. "Perhaps you were dreaming, old fat bean! What could the man want in Quelch's study, if it wasn't as he said?"

"Well, he wanted something that he didn't care to tel' Quelch!" snorted Bunter. "He was examining the wall by the bookcase—goodness knows why, unless he was looking for the secret panel!"

"Why should he?"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Bunter irritably. "I don't know why he should; but I know he did, because I saw him at it! And when he suddenly spotted me, he sprang at me like a tiger—"

"Rot!"

"Like a savage tiger—" roared Bunter.

"Pile it in!"

"And seized me by the throat—at least, by the shoulder—"

"Not much difference!"

"And—and I thought he was going to murder me, for a minute—"

"If he murdered you, it would be for more than a minute," said Bob Cherry, shaking his head. "That sort of thing is permanent."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly ass!" howled Bunter. "I mean, I thought for a minute that he was going to murder me—"

"You thought for a minute?" demanded Bob.

"Yes!" hooted Bunter.

"What did you do it with?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can cackle!" roared Bunter indignantly. "But I can tell you I was fairly scared stiff—"

"We can believe that much!" chuckled Frank Nugent.

"Yes, rather!"

"That sounds prooable!" admitted Johnny Bull.

"But he didn't quite finish you!" chuckled Bob. "You didn't seem very much murdered when Quelch brought you back to the dorm. At least, I didn't notice it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you fellows don't believe me—"

"Believe you! Oh crikey!"

"Well, I'm telling you exactly what happened. He was after something in Quelch's study; and he found me there, and it put the lid on! I dare say he went down again after Quelch had gone back to bed. There was nothing to stop him," said Bunter. "He could have, if he liked."

"Not likely to like though!" grinned Bob. "Why should he?"

"I don't know you ass; but I know he sneaked into the room on tiptoe, and locked the door, and—"

"But why—"

"I don't know why!" yelled Bunter. "But he did! Then he tells Quelch that he came down because he heard me moving about—"

"Well, if he said as he did!" said Harry Wharton. "Or perhaps he heard you snoring, and thought it was a grampus escaped from the Zoo—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wasn't asleep—besides, I don't snore! You fellows make out that I snore; but I jolly well stayed awake

one night to listen, and I didn't snore at all—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I say, you fellows, he told Quelch a lot of lies, and he was up to something. Think Quelch would let me off if I explained to him—"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob. "I wouldn't recommend it! You see, you must have dreamed the whole thing. Quelch isn't likely to believe that his giddy visitor came down in the middle of the night to root over his study. Of course, you fancied it all—"

"I didn't!" yelled Bunter. "I was wide awake—I saw the whole thing! You fellows know whether I ever exaggerate or make up anything—"

"Oh crikey! Don't you?" gasped Bob.

"Never!" said Bunter. "The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—that's me, as you know!"

"Fan me!" murmured Nugent.

"Quelch believed him," said Bunter. "The question is, if I told him the actual facts, would he believe me—and—and let me off?"

"He knows your facts!" grinned Bob. "Your facts are so jolly like other people's fiction, old fat bean!"

"Beast!"

"Anyhow, whatever the Kranz-man

This
**GREYFRIARS
LIMERICK**
"bags" one of our useful
POCKET WALLETS!

There is one chap who's clever
Indeed;
He can scent—from a mile off—
a feed.
No matter who owns it,
This young porker bones it!
Now which Greyfriars man shows
such greed?

Sent in by: Billy Lawson,
of Lake Road, Ambleside,
Westmorland.

was up to, it doesn't alter the fact that you've asked for the licking of your life, you fat duffer!" said the captain of the Remove. "You shouldn't have been in the study at all!"

"I mean, if I told Quelch it would put him on his guard—you see, the man was up to something syrupsticious—"

"Something which?" gasped Bob.

"Syrupsticious—"

"Do you mean surreptitious, you blithering owl?"

"And if he tries it on again, you know—" urged Bunter.

"How could he, when he's gone, and will probably never come within miles of the school again?" said Harry Wharton. "He's not expected back here, that I know of."

"Oh!" said Bunter. "Well, anyway, he was up to something syrupsticious, and, being on the spot, I interrupted him—baffed him, in fact! Quelch ought to let me off, in the circumstances. The man's a scoundrel! In fact, an awful villain! Look how he smacked my head yesterday, just because I happened to drop on his silly napper—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I shall jolly well tell Quelch, and chance it!" said Bunter. "I think you fellows might believe me, at least. You know me!"

"That's why we don't!" explained Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter rolled in dismally when the bell went for breakfast. He had the most dolorous anticipations of what was to follow. Quelch's face, at the head of the table, was not reassuring.

Bunter ate hardly enough for three fellows that morning. The worry on his fat mind affected his appetite.

He even thought of resuming his dodging tactics and disappearing from view again to give Quelch a chance to get over his bad temper.

But he had, of course, to have his breakfast; that was important and urgent—a thing that could not possibly be put off!

If he was going to disappear, it was obviously impossible to do so until he had parked his brekker.

Afterwards it was too late!

Mr. Quelch bade him follow him to his study. Under the Remove-master's gimlet-eye Bunter did not venture to attempt to disappear.

In Quelch's study there was quite a painful scene.

Bunter had no chance of telling Quelch the true story of the night's strange happenings—not that Quelch would have been likely to believe so strange a story from so well-known a fibber as Bunter.

Quelch did all the talking!

For a good five minutes he gave the hapless Owl a "royal and imperial" jaw! Bunter would not have minded that so much if there had been nothing worse to follow.

But there was! As Hamlet remarked of old, "Thus bad begins, but worse remains behind."

Having "jawed" Bunter to a sufficient extent, Mr. Quelch picked up his cane and uttered the dread words:

"Bend over!"

The whacking of the cane could be heard far beyond the confines of the Remove-master's study. Farther still could be heard the yelling of William George Bunter.

Mr. Quelch felt that it was his duty to be severe. No doubt it was; but Billy Bunter could have done with a much less dutiful Form-master.

When Quelch had finished doing his painful duty the fat Owl of the Remove crawled from the study, looking as if he found life hardly worth the trouble of living.

In the Form-room that morning his fat face was the picture of woe.

He rolled out in break with a dolorous and dismal fat countenance, still in the depths of woe.

Bob Cherry smacked him on the shoulder.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Enjoying life?" roared Bob.

"Beast!"

"I've had a remittance—"

"Oh!" Bunter brightened a little.

"This way to the tuckshop!" grinned Bob.

A smile emerged through Billy Bunter's dismal expression, like the sun coming through the clouds.

"Oh, good!" he gasped. "Come on, old chap!"

Bob Cherry chuckled and led the woe-ful Owl to the school shop and ordered tarts. Billy Bunter, shiny and sticky and happy, grinned a cheery grin. Once more life was worth living!

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for Smithy!

"**T**HAT old ass!" muttered Herbert Vernon-Smith.

It was not a respectful way to allude to Major Cherry, the father of Bob Cherry of the Remove.



As Billy Bunter blinked through his spectacles in dumbfounded amazement at the broad, stocky back of Mr. Kranz, the Old Boy of Greyfriars turned on an electric torch and made a close and careful examination of the panelled wall!
"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter mystified.

But the Bounder of Greyfriars was annoyed.

Smithy at that moment was seated in a first-class carriage in a train in Lantham Station, waiting rather impatiently for it to start.

Except on holidays, Lantham was out of school bounds—far out—and the Bounder, of course, had no business to be there. Moreover, it was after lock-up at the school—a second and still more cogent reason why the Bounder should not have been at Lantham.

In those circumstances, Smithy was far from pleased to see Major Cherry on the platform. It was unusual—very unusual—for a fellow's pater to visit him at the school so late in the day, but Smithy took it for granted that the major was going to Greyfriars. As his home was in Dorsetshire, it was difficult to imagine what other reason he could have for being in Kent, only eight or nine miles from his son's school.

Keeping carefully out of sight from the platform, Smithy peered from the carriage window, his eyes on the old major.

He did not want Major Cherry to see him—naturally. If the major was going to the school he had to get on that train, and Smithy hoped that he would not select the same carriage.

That term Smithy was turning over a new leaf—or, at least, attempting to do so. Since Quelch had come back he had had no trouble with his Form-master—and as three or four days had now elapsed since Mr. Quelch's return, that was rather a record for the scapegrace of Greyfriars.

Certainly, however, he would have had trouble with Quelch had that gentleman known of his present whereabouts. Getting out of school between tea and prep, after the gates were locked, was an extremely serious matter. And whatever business had taken the Bounder to Lantham, it was not business that he

could have explained to the satisfaction of a beak.

"Blithering old ass!" muttered Smithy, as the major paced up and down, stretching his legs a little after his journey in the London train. It was fairly clear that he was going to catch that train for Courtfield; and if he was travelling first-class, it was equally certain that he would step into Smithy's carriage—as it happened to be the only first-class carriage of the train.

It was intensely annoying to the Bounder.

The major, seeing him there, would know that he was out of school bounds, and as an old soldier—a stickler for discipline—he was likely to take a severe view of it. Whether he would carry his disapproval to the length of reporting Smithy to his Form-master the Bounder did not know. But he certainly did not want to take the risk.

"Bother the old owl!" growled Smithy.

After dark a fellow ought to have been safe from visiting paters. What the thump was the old ass going to the school after lock-up for, the Bounder savagely asked himself. Why couldn't the old frump come in the day-time, like other paters and relations?

Smithy had to keep out of sight. He was prepared to dodge under the seat if the major headed for that carriage. Apart from the question of punishment, he had his new stunt of good behaviour to think of, and he did not want to risk a report to Quelch. He could not get out of the carriage without revealing himself to the major's eyes, so he had to remain where he was, waiting uneasily, and scowling at the old military gentleman's unconscious head.

The local train for Courtfield was not booked to start for two or three minutes yet. Smithy was glad that he had, at least, got safe into the carriage before

the major stepped from the London train on the other side of the platform.

"My hat!" murmured the Bounder.

Watching the major as he paced, Smithy became aware of the peculiar fact that he was not the only person watching him.

At a little distance a man stood with his eyes on Major Cherry. When other people on the platform intervened the man moved so as to keep the major in sight all the time.

He was a rather short man, and looked stoutly built, in a thick and heavy overcoat. He had a slouched hat pulled down over his face, the lower part of which was hidden by a short, thick, dark beard. Between the beard and the hat little more than his nose was to be seen, and it was a rather unusual nose—large and stubby and very prominent, almost jutting from the face. Smithy could only see, in addition, that he wore glasses—he had a glimpse every now and then of the gold frames.

Major Cherry glanced at his watch, and, finding that he had time, took a brisk walk along the platform, snuffing at the frosty air. The man in the slouch hat followed him as he went.

For about a minute the Bounder lost sight of both of them; then the major came marching back, and at a little distance behind him the slouch-hatted man strolled.

Then, after looking at his watch again, the major stood still, glancing along the train; and the other man halted not far away, watching him quietly from under the brim of his hat.

Smithy grinned. He wondered whether the slouch-hatted man was a pickpocket, looking for a chance to relieve the old military gentleman of his pocket-book. The Bounder would not have been sorry had something occurred to keep the major from catching that train.

However, nothing did occur, and Major Cherry stepped towards the train at last—and, as Smithy had feared, headed for Smithy's carriage. And the Bounder, with a scowl, vanished under the seat in time.

It looked like an empty carriage when Major Cherry stepped into it. He sat down in the corner seat, his boots only a few inches from the fellow underneath.

The whistle went, and the train was on the move when the carriage door opened again and the slouch-hatted man stepped in.

He slammed the door and sat down in the corner opposite the major.

Smithy, from where he lay, could not see him, excepting his boots and his trouser-ends. But he had noticed that the slouch-hatted man wore grey trousers and dark tan boots. Now he had a view of grey trouser-ends and dark tan boots, so he had no doubt who the passenger was. The man who had been watching Major Cherry on the platform had followed him into the train. It looked as if Smithy's theory was a correct one, and the man was a pickpocket, sticking to his intended victim. That did not matter much to the Bounder; he was thinking of himself, and was not much concerned about Major Cherry's pocket-book. He lay quiet and still; only longing for that uncomfortable trip to Courtfield to be over.

"Major Cherry!"

The train was barely out of Lantham Station when the man in the corner spoke. His voice was deep, harsh, and husky.

"What—what?" Smithy heard a surprised exclamation from the major. "You seem to know my name!"

"Quite, sir!"

"I have never seen you before, that I know of!"

"Possibly not. We have ten minutes, Major Cherry, before there is a stop. So there is no time to lose."

"What the dooce—"

"You will hand over to me the packet of plans you are taking to Wapshot Camp!"

"What?"

"Or else, sir, I shall blow your brains out where you sit!"

Vernon Smith, stretched under the seat, wondered whether he was dreaming.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Bounder Takes a Hand!

MAJOR CHERRY stared at the man opposite him in the carriage.

The slouch-hatted man had slipped his hand under his thick overcoat. It came out again with a wicked-looking automatic in it. The muzzle was bearing full on the major.

There was only amazement in the face of the major. There was not a sign of fear. Yet, if the slouch-hatted man was in earnest his life hung on a thread.

"Sit still!" the harsh voice rapped. "I am aware that you carry a revolver, Major Cherry! You will not live to use it if you attempt to touch it. You are dealing with a desperate man."

"Good gad!" gasped the major.

He stared blankly at the bearded face, the jutting nose with the gold-rimmed glasses over it, under the slouch of the hat.

"What—how do you know—" he stammered.

"Never mind that! You are going to Wapshot, the air-camp near Greyfriars School."

School! I am aware of why you are going. I want the packet you carry in your breast pocket. Hand it over!"

"You must be mad!" gasped Major Cherry. "I have never seen you before! Who are you?"

"You may call me Nemo, if you desire to remember me by a name!" said the slouch-hatted man, with a sour smile.

"Nemo!" repeated the major. "That means nobody!"

"Exactly! That is all you will ever know of me—nobody! But we are wasting time—the plans!"

"You seem to know as much about my business as I know myself," said Major Cherry quietly. "But you can know little of me personally if you fancy that a threat will have any effect on me. It is true that I have certain plans in my pocket, which I am taking to Wapshot—"

"And which contain the details of a certain invention that you have been working on for years, and that you have now perfected!" added the man who called himself "Nemo." "An invention which, if it proves successful in experiments, may revolutionise flying."

"Evidently you have been spying!" said the major contemptuously. "If it is as you say, the secret is not my own to give away; it belongs to my country. Put away that pistol, sir, and get it into your head that you cannot frighten me! I shall give you in charge at the next station for uttering threats."

The slouch-hatted man laughed, an unpleasant laugh.

"You will not be living when this train reaches the next station if the packet is not in my hands!" he said. "I had planned other measures—never mind what they were—but this is, I think, surer. Will you hand over the packet?"

"No, sir!" roared the major, red with wrath. "I will do nothing of the kind."

"I will give you three minutes to change your mind," said Nemo coolly. "If you have not changed it by then you are a dead man, Major Cherry! And if you make a single movement, sir, I will shoot you dead where you sit!"

Major Cherry had made a movement to rise, but he sat down again. There was no mistaking the cold, hard, savage earnestness in the voice of the man with the automatic. He meant every word he uttered. And the black muzzle of the automatic was only three feet from the major as he sat.

Under the seat, on the major's side of the carriage, the Bounder lay in almost stupefied amazement.

But he was collecting his wits now.

He realised that Major Cherry was not, as he had supposed, going to Greyfriars School. He was bound for Wapshot Camp, a few miles from the school. And the slouch-hatted man was not a pickpocket after a pocket-book. He was an armed and desperate criminal. And Smithy realised as clearly as the major did that a life was at stake; and that, when the interval had elapsed, the automatic would bark out death if Nemo's order was not obeyed. In less than a minute the Bounder of Greyfriars was his cool and self-possessed self again, and considering what he should do.

He knew Major Cherry, and knew what the major would do. He would not yield to the threat; he would make some desperate attempt to defend himself, and he would be shot down in the act. Neither of the actors in that strange drama had the remotest suspicion that a third party was in the

railway carriage. The Bounder ventured to put his head out an inch or two. His head was towards the farther side of the carriage; his feet within a few inches of the major's. He had no doubt that the slouch-hatted man's eyes would be fixed on the man opposite, watching for a desperate attempt at resistance; and he was right. Peering out from under the end of the seat, the Bounder saw his fixed, set profile; and the man's eyes did not turn towards him.

"One minute!" came the harsh voice.

"You scoundrel!" said Major Cherry, between his teeth.

"You have two more minutes, major!"

The automatic was lifted, levelled at the major; the hard eyes behind the gold-rimmed glasses, looking over it, fixed and deadly. The Bounder, moving silently, cautiously as a cat, took the cap from his head, jerked up his arm, and flung it.

The cap struck the desperate criminal full in the face. The next moment Major Cherry knocked the automatic from the man's hand, and it crashed on the floor of the carriage. That sudden and unexpected intervention had taken the slouch-hatted man entirely by surprise.

The Bounder gave a breathless yell.

"Collar him, sir!"

The slouch-hatted man gasped, and plunged after the fallen weapon. But the major hurled himself forward at the man, grasped him, and bore him down.

Vernon-Smith struggled out from under the seat. He could not have been in time to prevent the rascal recovering his weapon. But the major was in time. Nemo went heavily to the floor, with Major Cherry over him, and they were struggling. The Bounder scrambled along the seat, reached down, and snatched up the automatic.

"Bag him, sir!" panted the Bounder. "I've got his gun!"

There was a hoarse yell of rage from the slouch-hatted man. Major Cherry was strong; but the short, stocky man seemed stronger. He hurled the major off and struggled to his feet. The slouched hat fell from his head, and in the major's hand was a thick, short, dark beard. It had come off Nemo in the struggle. A clean-shaven, square chin was revealed now that the false beard was off.

Hurled off by the rascal, Major Cherry sprawled on a seat. Nemo glared round for the automatic.

But it was in the Bounder's hand. He made a movement towards the Greyfriars junior, and as he did so the major scrambled up again and plunged at him.

Nemo leaped back across the carriage to the farther side.

For a second he stood there—a split second. Then he tore open the carriage door, and with reckless desperation leaped out.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Vernon-Smith.

A cry of horror came from the major. He leaped after the man, and stared from the open door.

He had a glimpse of the man rolling down a bank of snow. The snow had saved him from injury, for as the train rushed on, the major saw him scramble to his feet. The next moment he was lost to sight.

"Good gad!" gasped the major.

He closed the carriage door and then turned to the Bounder. The scapegrace of Greyfriars, cool as a cucumber, held out the automatic to him by the barrel.

"You'd better take charge of this, sir!"

(Continued on page 24.)



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"Good gad!" The major took it, staring at him blankly. "You're a Greyfriars boy, I think. I've seen you before."

"Vernon-Smith, of the Remove, sir." "How the dooce did you get here? The carriage was empty when I got in. How the dooce—" gasped Major Cherry.

"I got under the seat, sir; I'm out of bounds," explained the Bounder cheerfully. "I fancied you were going to the school, as you were coming on this train, and that you might mention to Quelch that you had seen me—"

"Good gad! Well, I've seen you now." Major Cherry smiled faintly. "Lucky for me you were here! Was it your cap you threw? By gad, you had presence of mind, young man! I believe you've saved my life! That scoundrel—" He broke off. "Out of bounds, eh? You young rascal!"

"One good turn deserves another, sir!" said the Bounder coolly. "You won't mention to Quelch that you've seen me."

The major gave a grunt. "As it happens, I'm not going to Greyfriars, as you supposed—not today, at all events! I've got business in this direction, but not at the school. But I dare say you heard what that scoundrel said. By gad, if I knew who he was—" He stared at the slouched hat and the false beard. "I dare say the police will find him, the rascal! I get out at Wapshot. Why, here we are!"

The train stopped. Major Cherry stepped out at Wapshot Station. He glanced back at the Bounder.

"Thank you, my boy!" "Not at all, sir!" said the Bounder, with a grin.

And the train went on with Herbert Vernon-Smith alone in the carriage, which had so nearly been the scene of a tragedy.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Saving Smithy's Bacon!

"I SAY, you fellows—" "Hallo, hallo, hallo, it's prep!" said Bob Cherry, getting off the corner of the table in Study No. 1 in the Remove.

As a matter of fact, it was a little late for prep. But the Famous Five in Harry Wharton's study had been talking Soccer, and time had flown, and the bell had rung unheeded. But Bob remembered prep as Bunter put a fat face and a large pair of spectacles into the study doorway.

"I say—" recommenced Bunter. His fat face was wreathed in grins. "I say, Smithy's for it!"

"What's up with Smithy?" asked Wharton.

"He's out of the House." "Silly ass!" grunted Johnny Bull. "I thought he was behaving himself this term! Time he began."

"He, he, he! And Loder's on duty to-night," grinned Bunter. "Smithy will be spotted this time. He, he, he!"

"Is that anything to cackle at, you blithering bandersnatch?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"He, he, he!" Apparently Bunter considered that it was, for he cackled.

"Serve him right if he's nailed!" growled Johnny Bull. "Why can't he keep in bounds, like any other fellow?"

And Johnny went up the Remove passage to Study No. 14, to prep.

"Come onfully, my esteemed Bob!" said Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh, moving to the door.

"I say, you fellows—" "Oh, shut up, Bunter!"

"He, he, he! Smithy will be nabbed," grinned Bunter. "Loder's coming up, you know. I heard Quelch speaking to him. I say—"

"Oh, seat!" growled Bob Cherry, and he made a motion with his foot, and Bunter promptly "scatted."

Wharton and Nugent sat down to the table in Study No. 1 with their books. Bob Cherry went out with Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. But while the nabob went along to Study No. 13 Bob paused at the door of Study No. 4 and looked in. Tom Redwing was there alone, with a rather worried look on his face. He was standing by the study window, which was open, looking out into the misty darkness of the quad.

"Smithy out?" asked Bob.

Redwing glanced round. "Yes—the ass! He's coming back this way—up the ivy. I hope he won't be missed. I dare say Loder won't look in here. He's jolly slack as a prefect when he's taking hall."

"Bunter says Quelch has been speaking to him, and he's coming up."

"If he does the game's up for Smithy. The silly ass has gone over to Lantham on some of his rot," growled Redwing. He looked from the window again and gave a start as the flash of an electric torch gleamed for a second or two in the darkness. "He's coming!"

"None too soon," said Bob, glancing down the Remove passage from the doorway. "Loder's coming."

"That's his signal; but he can't be in for some minutes yet, at least," muttered Redwing anxiously. "Shut the door. Loder may not look in—"

Bob Cherry drew the door shut. He looked down the passage towards the stairs. Loder of the Sixth was there, with a scowl on his face. Loder was one of those prefects who like the privileges of a position without yearning to perform any of the duties. When he was "taking hall," as often as not he retired to his own study for a quiet smoke. No doubt Quelch had spoken a little sharply, and Loder was going to do his duty—in a bad temper, doing his duty having that effect on the bully of the Sixth. His duty was to see that the Remove were all in their studies at prep, and that they did not "lark" up and down the passages, instead of attending to that important business. And the look on his face showed that any junior caught out would be given cause to remember the same!

Coming up the passage, Loder stared into the studies with a scowling brow. His eyes then fixed on Bob Cherry.

Bob had had time to scud along to Study No. 13 and disappear. But he remained where he was. He was thinking of Smithy.

Of all the fellows in the Remove, probably Bob had least sympathy with the Bounder's reckless course of conduct. At the same time, he hated to see a fellow caught out, and he was all good-nature. Smithy was coming back; but he had no time to get into Study No. 4 by the window before Loder looked in.

Breaking bounds was a serious matter, especially for the scapegrace of Greyfriars, who was under suspicion already. It meant at least a caning, and, in all probability, a flogging. Bob's idea was to give the Bounder time to get in. He wanted only a few minutes.

"Cherry!" Loder fairly hooted. "What are you doing out of your study in prep?" He slipped his ashplant down from under his arm, glad of a pretext for using it. "Come here!"

"Eh?" "Come here!" hooted Loder.

"Did you call me, Loder?" "I told you to come here!" roared Loder. "And you'd better be quick, unless you want a dozen, instead of six."

"Oh, all right!"

Bob had been told to be quick. Probably, however, Loder did not expect him to be quite so quick. He approached the prefect at a rush—rather as if he was after a ball on the football field. Before Loder knew what was happening Bob had charged him, and he sat down in the passage with a heavy bump.

"Oh!" gasped Bob. "Sorry, Loder!" "Urrrrrggh!" gasped Loder. "Wurrgh!"

He sat and spluttered. Bob stood and looked down at him. Every minute gained gave the Bounder a chance. Already he was on the ivy, clambering up to the study window, with Redwing standing ready to help him in.

"You—you—you—" gasped Loder breathlessly. "You young hooligan, what the thump do you mean by rushing at me like that? Urrgh!"

"You told me to be quick," said Bob innocently.

Loder staggered to his feet. He gripped his ashplant with an almost convulsive grip. His face was crimson with rage.

"Bend over!" he spluttered.

"I—I say, Loder—"

"Bend over!" roared Loder, brandishing the ashplant. "Touch your toes! I'll teach you to charge me over, you young ruffian!"

"I don't need teaching to do that, Loder."

"What?"

"I mean to say, I can do that all right, Loder! If that's the only reason why you're going to whop me, don't take the trouble."

Loder glared at him. He was in no mood for jesting.

"Bend over, or I'll take you down to Quelch this instant!" he snorted.

"Oh, all right!"

Bob Cherry bent over and touched his toes. The ashplant swished and swished! Bob had had six before, many a time and oft, but seldom had he had such a hefty "six" as this. Loder laid it on as if he were beating a carpet.

"There!" he gasped, when he had finished. "Now go to your study and stay there!"

And Bob, wriggling as he went, departed to Study No. 13. He was feeling hurt—there was no doubt about that! But he had saved Smithy! When Loder looked into Study No. 4 there were two juniors there—Redwing and the Bounder—and the window was shut. Loder scowled at them and went on his way. Smithy winked at his chum, when the prefect was gone.

"Close shave, Reddy!" he remarked.

"But a miss is as good as a mile."

"For you," said Tom, "not for Cherry!"

"What about Cherry?" "Only he kept Loder away, and landed six for doing it," said Redwing dryly. "And Loder was laying it on hard, to judge by the sound."

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"You have two more minutes!" said the desperate criminal, levelling his automatic at Major Cherry. Moving out from under the seat, as cautiously as a cat, Vernon-Smith took the cap from his head, jerked up his arm, and let fly! The cap struck the villain full in the face, taking him completely by surprise!

The Bounder whistled.

"That was jolly decent of him," he said. "I've done him a good turn this evening, though he doesn't know it! What would you say, Reddy, if I told you I stopped a man who was going for Cherry's pater in a railway train with an automatic?"

Redwing stared.

"I should say that you were pulling my leg," he answered.

The Bounder grinned.

"Then I won't tell you," he said. "Chuck over that Latin dic—and get on with prep! I'm going to win golden opinions from Quelch this term! I was an ass to break out and go to Lantham—though I fancy Bob Cherry will be glad I did when he hears from his pater!"

"What the thump—"

"Prep!" said the Bounder severely. "Don't jaw in prep, Reddy—you risk the loss of useless knowledge if you waste time!"

And the Bounder, refusing to say more, devoted himself to work. Bob Cherry, in Study No. 13, was finding it rather more difficult to do so. He was still wriggling a little from Loder's six when he went down after prep.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Kidnapped from the Air I

"BEAST!" remarked Billy Bunter. Bunter was addressing some person or persons unknown, blinking skyward through his big spectacles as he did so.

A good many Greyfriars fellows were staring up at the circling plane.

It was the following afternoon, clear, with a nip of frost in the air, and on Little Side the junior footballers were gathering. It was a Form match that afternoon, between the Remove and the Shell. The Shell, as an older Form,

were rather a tough proposition for the Lower Fourth; but the Removites were great men at Soccer, and they were looking forward to beating Hobson & Co. The footballers did not give much attention to the drone of the plane over their heads. But other fellows did—and Bunter was not the only one who noticed that the aeroplane was flying very low.

"The beast will be down on our nappers at this rate," grunted Bunter. "Why doesn't he clear off, or keep high, the silly ass?"

"Looks as if he's going to land," remarked Wibley, staring up. "Tain't the same plane that landed here last week, though."

"If it's that beast Kranz coming again—"

"It's not the same plane, anyhow," said Bolsover major. "Hallo! They're starting."

The whistle went and the game started. General attention was diverted from the droning plane to the football. Every now and then, however, a glance was cast upward. The plane was so low down that it could be seen that there were two men in it, and its drone intensified to a roar. It looked as if the pilot was watching for a place to land, as Franz Kranz had landed a week ago on the school field. But it was certainly a different plane, and nobody supposed that it was that Old Boy of Greyfriars paying the school another visit in the same way.

"Goal!"

"Well kicked, Smithy!"

The crowd round the junior ground forgot the droning plane as Herbert Vernon-Smith put the ball into the Shell goal, in the first five minutes of the game. Hobson of the Shell gave his custodian a frown.

"Keep your eyes open!" he suggested. Hobson was there to beat the Remove

and demonstrate unto that cheeky Form that in playing the Shell at Soccer they hadn't an earthly. A goal for the Remove at the start was not the way to accomplish that purpose!

"Good man, Smithy!" said Bob Cherry, clapping the Bounder on the shoulder, as they went back to the centre of the field.

The Bounder glanced up.

"What's that ass stunting over our heads for?" he said. "Does he take Greyfriars for an aerodrome, or what?"

Bob followed his glance.

"I wonder," he said. "My pater's at Wapshot Camp now, and he told me he would run across to Greyfriars this afternoon to see me! Might run over by plane—"

"That's not one of the R.A.F. machines from Wapshot," said Harry Wharton.

"No, I suppose it can't be the pater coming skyfully, as Inky puts it. But I fancy that sportsman is going to land, all the same."

"Line up!"

The whistle went, and Hobson of the Shell kicked off. Once more the plane was forgotten by the footballers, and most of the spectators. But Billy Bunter, who had intended to bestow a few minutes of his valuable time in encouraging his Form with his valuable presence, changed his fat mind and rolled away to the House. And two or three other fellows glanced up at the plane rather uneasily. It seemed to a good many of them that it was flying dangerously low.

"He's coming down!" shouted Hazeldeno suddenly.

"Look out!"

"Great pip!"

The plane swept down. There was plenty of room for a good pilot to make a safe landing without danger to the

crowd round the football field, but many startled eyes turned on the plane as it landed. But it landed easily and gracefully, and taxied to a stop.

A man in leather flying-kit jumped from the rear cockpit, the pilot keeping his place. A dozen fellows ran towards him. Little could be seen of the man's face save a jutting nose and a reddish beard.

He called out to the fellows who ran up:

"Is one of you named Cherry?"

"Cherry!" repeated Tom Redwing. "No, Bob Cherry's playing football. He's with the fellows yonder."

"Call him here—he is wanted."

"Can't call a man away from a football match," said Bolsover major.

"It's urgent—his father's had a serious accident, flying, at Wapshot! I've come over for him!" snapped the airman.

"Oh, my hat!"

Redwing turned at once and ran towards the football field. The plane had landed hardly thirty yards from the players. A hot attack on the Shell goal was going on, and the footballers had not even noticed that the plane had come down.

"Cherry!" shouted Redwing. "Bob Cherry! Stop the game, Potter!"

Potter of the Fifth was referee.

"What the dickens——" snapped Potter.

"Bob Cherry's wanted—his father's had an accident——"

"Oh!"

Potter blew the whistle. The tussle in front of the Shell goal broke off. Redwing ran on the field and caught Bob by the arm.

"What the jolly old thump?" exclaimed the Remove centre-half. He stared blankly at Redwing.

Redwing pointed to the plane and the man in leathers standing beside it with a gathering crowd of Greyfriars men.

"That chap says he's from Wapshot, and your father's had an accident there——"

"Oh!" gasped Bob.

"Was your father at Wapshot, Bob?" asked Peter Todd.

Bob's ruddy face was suddenly pale.

"Yes," he breathed. "I had a phone call from him this morning—he's at the aerodrome there, and he said he might come across this afternoon. I've no doubt he's been up—and——"

"Better speak to the man," said Harry Wharton. "Keep your pecker up, old chap—it may not be so bad! I'll get your coat!"

Bob Cherry started at a run for the plane. Keen footballer as he was, he forgot football now.

The interrupted game was at a standstill. The footballers gathered in a buzzing group, watching Bob as he ran, his feet seeming scarcely to touch the ground.

Bob came racing up to the man in leathers. In his excitement he grasped him by the arm.

"My father!" he panted.

"You're Robert Cherry?"

"Yes, yes—my father!"

"Badly hurt, I'm sorry to say—forced landing! I'll get you across in five minutes! Got a coat?"

"Never mind that——"

Bob Cherry's face was white. Harry Wharton came racing up with Bob's coat and muffler.

"Here you are, old chap——"

"Oh, don't waste a second!" panted Bob.

His friends forced the coat and muffler

on him. There was no time for changing. He scrambled into the rear cockpit, and the man in leathers followed him in. The engine roared.

"He's not—not——" Bob Cherry choked, clutching at the arm of the man beside him.

"No; there's a chance——"

"Oh, quick—quick!" groaned Bob. It seemed to him that the plane would never take off. He hardly knew that he was rising. But he was already on the rise, and he realised suddenly that Greyfriars and the school fields were floating away below.

He looked down. He had a bird's eye view of the school, of the wide playing-fields, of countless faces staring up. Even in the growing distance he recognised his friends. He saw Harry Wharton wave a hand, and he saw——

Was he dreaming?

What was that sturdy, soldierly figure that was striding towards the football ground, pausing, and looking up? Whose ruddy face was that, gazing up at the departing plane? It seemed to Bob that he must be dreaming, for the face he was looking down upon was his father's face! A few seconds more and it was a blur—it was gone. Bob panted.

"That's my father!"

"What?"

"You've made a mistake—there's been some mistake!" Bob struggled to rise. "I've seen my father. He said he might come over to the school this afternoon, and he's come. He's not hurt—he can't be. Get down! Do you hear?"

A grasp like iron fastened on his arm. "Just in time, then!" said the man in leathers.

"What do you mean? Are you mad?"

"Your father's not hurt! That was a trick to get you on the plane." The man in leathers shouted to make his voice heard above the roar. "Just in time! I never knew he was coming to the school; but—— I've cut it fine, but——"

"Are you mad?" yelled Bob. "Take this plane down, and——"

"Not likely!"

"I tell you I—I'll——"

The iron grip on his arm forced him down.

"You young fool! We're already two thousand feet up! Do you want to jump out?"

Bob Cherry sank back, gasping, helpless, dazed with astonishment. He was kidnapped—kidnapped by aeroplane! What did it—what could it—mean? The playing fields, the school—all vanished as the plane climbed and climbed.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Vanished Into Space!

MAJOR CHERRY!" The Bounder spotted him and gave a yell. The rather stout, but still soldierly figure of the old major came striding towards the football ground, where the juniors were thinking of re-starting the game after Bob's hurried departure. But they were, for the moment, thinking also of poor Bob, and the terrible blow he had received in the sudden and startling news from Wapshot. The appearance of Major Cherry came as the surprise of their lives. The Remove footballers stared at him with almost unbelieving eyes.

"Major Cherry!" Harry Wharton almost babbled. "Bob's father! But what—what—what——" He broke off in blank amazement.

"It is the esteemed and ridiculous major!" exclaimed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "He has not been injured accidentally."

"Some mistake——" gasped Johnny Bull.

"Mistake!" said the Bounder. "There's more than that to it. They don't make mistakes like that in air camps."

"But what——"

Harry Wharton stared up. The aeroplane that had borne Bob Cherry so suddenly away from his school, from his friends, from his father, was a spot in the clouds fast vanishing. And it was not going in the direction of Wapshot Camp! It was heading almost due north, away from Wapshot. It was too high and distant now for the purr of the engine to be heard. Only a keen eye could pick it up at all. But Wharton picked it up, and he saw that it was heading away from the aerodrome from which, according to the man in leathers, it had come to fetch Bob to his father.

"What does it mean?" gasped the captain of the Remove. "What can it mean? The man said——"

"The man lied!" said the Bounder quietly. Back into his mind came some words uttered by the slouch-hatted man in the train the previous evening—the rascal whose attack on Major Cherry he had defeated. The man who called himself "Nemo" had said that he had planned other measures. His attack on the major had failed. He had not obtained what he sought. Had he tried now the "other measures"?

"But why—why——" gasped Wharton.

"The whyfulness is terrific!"

Harry Wharton ran towards the major as he reached the football field. Bob's father gave him a pleasant nod and a smile.

"Half-time, what?" he asked.

"No!" gasped Harry. "But——"

"Then what——"

"Bob——"

"Isn't Bob playing?" asked Major Cherry. "He told me he would be playing this afternoon, and I told him I'd run across, if possible, and see him. Isn't he here?"

"He—he's gone——"

"Gone!" repeated Bob's father.

Harry Wharton, in helpless bewilderment, pointed to the sky. The major, staring up, had a glimpse, a last glimpse, of the mysterious plane as it vanished into the clouds.

"What do you mean, Wharton?" he asked, staring at the captain of the Remove. "My son has not gone on a flying trip, I suppose, when he knew that I was coming over to see him?"

"Has there been an accident at Wapshot?" panted Wharton.

"None that I have heard of."

"You've had no accident!"

"I! No! Can't you see that?" said the major testily. "Should I be here if I'd had an accident? What do you mean?"

"Bob's been taken away in that plane!" gasped Harry. "The man said you'd had a flying accident, and he was sent over from Wapshot to fetch him——"

"What!" roared the major.

"That's what he said——"

"Good gad!"

Major Cherry, thunderstruck, stood staring at the junior. He glanced up at the steely sky again; but the plane had vanished now. Bob Cherry and his mysterious kidnappers had disappeared into space.

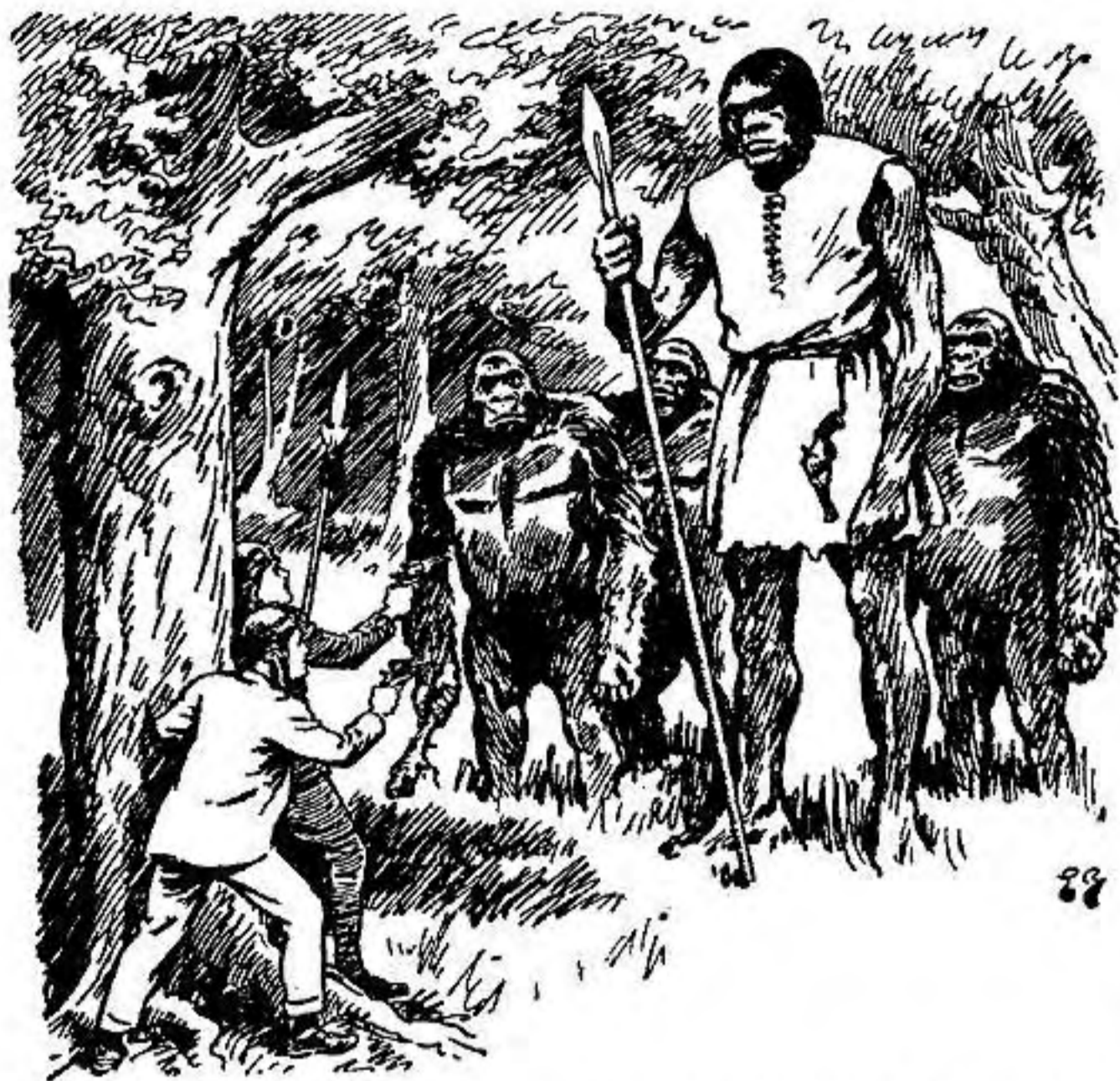
"My—my boy is gone in that plane, and—and the man said——" Major Cherry stuttered. "There has been no accident—he was never sent—it is false—not a word of truth in it—what can it mean?"

"I can't understand—we all believed that——"

(Continued on page 32.)

WHEN the GREAT APES CAME!

By STUART MARTIN.



HOW THE STORY STARTED.

GERRY LAMBERT and **BILLY MURCHIE**, two young airmen, are brought down in the African jungle by an army of apes—led by **Big Ling**, a giant ape-man—reared to crush civilisation by a renegade called **Stein**. Gerry escapes, but Billy is forced to lead an expedition to England which spreads devastation in all directions. After raiding the Tower of London and stripping the armoury of every available weapon, **Big Ling** and his "troops" make for the **New Forest**, where they ambush hundreds of British soldiers. Billy, who, in company with Gerry and **Commander Walsh**, of the **R.A.F.**, is hard on the trail of the enemy, is hurrying off to warn reinforcements of **Big Ling's** next move, when he is captured. Leaving death and destruction in his wake, **Big Ling** marches on **Salisbury**, where he threatens to blow the city sky high unless the attacking planes draw off.

(Now read on.)

The Watcher!

GERRY and **Commander Walsh** soon became aware that **Billy** had not been able to reach his objective. There was no change in the advance of the troops, and from their hiding-place in the tree they saw the slaughter that followed.

They were aware, too, that **Ling** had seen them, for he had detached an ape-man to capture them; but they had eluded him by hiding in the undergrowth until the battle was over.

After a time they saw the wagons of **Ling** move off in the distance, and the silence of the forest invited them to make a move.

They crept out appalled at the carnage on every hand.

Out to the main road where they had left the **Moth** they scrambled, watching at every step for gorillas, but seeing none.

The **Moth** lay where they had left it, but it had suffered at the enemy's hands; wings were crumpled, struts broken, and the petrol tank had been

ripped out and flung aside. The instruments in the cockpit were damaged beyond repair.

Along the road the chums saw the bodies of the apes that **Billy** had slain, and the carcass of the pony lay in the ditch, torn and mangled as if tigers had made it their prey.

But where were the troops? Not a sign of them, except the bodies of a company that lay at the crossroads, and the overturned field-guns that were strewn in every direction. There was no need to ask how these soldiers had met their death. Dead gorillas showed that the men had put up a stiff fight before being overcome by numbers.

They wondered whether **Billy** had been captured, and taken away by **Ling**?

"Let's have a look at the trail where the pony was killed," suggested **Gerry**.

The muddy footprints showed that besides gorillas, at least one ape-man had stepped from the forest at this point.

Gerry and **Walsh** followed the trail. Some distance from the road they found **Billy's** cap, and a stain of blood made them fear the worst; but it also made them determined to find their chum, if it took them all day.

They were not allowed to roam in pursuit without interruption, however. A sound behind them made them realise their danger. There, coming stealthily behind them, were three large gorillas, led by an ape-man.

Four to two! The odds did not strike fear into the hearts of the two boys, but even such odds would have scared most adventurers. The gorillas were the largest **Gerry** had ever seen.

They stood eight feet high, and walked on their hind legs like men. Their faces were black, hanging with coarse hair, and their teeth were tusks

that shone from capacious mouths. The ape-man was twice the size of the gorillas, and in his hand he carried a spear, while at his girdle swung a revolver which was of the Army pattern. It was part of the loot he had taken from the dead troops.

"Back to the tree, **Walsh**!" exclaimed **Gerry**, after the first alarm had shown them what to expect.

They braced themselves against a tall ash-tree. The ape-man halted, and his gorillas stood beside him.

"I have been sent for you," he said loudly, in a thick tone that was difficult to understand. "The king sent me."

It was evident he was choosing his words as one who is not used to the speech.

"What king sent you?" demanded **Walsh**, lifting his revolver, and holding the spear **Billy** had left ready in case of a rush.

But no rush came. The ape-man seemed surprised at the question.

"King **Ling**," he said. "King of the world."

He took a step forward, and saw both boys lift their guns and level them straight at his breast.

A faint smile passed over the ape-man's swarthy face. He spoke under his breath, and the gorillas dropped to their paws, and bounded into the shadow of the woods.

They did not go far, however, but swung round in a rough circle, leaped into the branches, and began to swing overhead towards the tree under which the boys stood.

"Go back and tell **Ling** that he is not king of anything but beasts!" cried **Gerry**.

"I dare not," said the ape-man. "He would kill me. I am weary of killing."

"Then clear out before you are killed!" were **Gerry's** next words.

The ape-man did not move; but his eyes travelled above to where the gorillas were swinging towards the boys.

Up went **Gerry's** gun, and a gorilla yelped with pain. **Walsh** fired the next moment, and a second gorilla stopped and howled in distress. The third gorilla, however, took a long swing, and dived straight at the two boys.

Gerry had no time to fire again. Dropping his gun he lifted the spear. But before he could raise it, the gorilla landed. He sent **Gerry** flying with a blow from his paw. But that was the last blow the gorilla ever delivered, for his leap had brought him right on the point of the spear.

The sharp point pierced the gorilla's body, and the beast rolled over to breathe its last.

Gerry regained his feet and his revolver in time to see the gorilla **Walsh** had wounded dropping straight to the ground. It rushed forward, and seized **Walsh** in an embrace that would have crushed the life out of him had it been prolonged. But it was not prolonged.

As the two rolled on the ground there was an explosion. **Walsh** had shot the gorilla as he pressed the gun into his side.

"Well done!" said the ape-man solemnly. "A good fight. Will you come now?"

The boys glanced up at the third gorilla. It had swung away from

them, badly wounded, crouching in pain as it made its leaps from tree to tree.

The ape-man had not moved during the struggle. He stood leaning on his spear, the point of which was in the ground, his arms folded over the haft. He was watching the two boys without fear and without triumph.

"Listen!" he said, in his peculiar tone. "I am called Watcher because I see. You cannot escape from here without my help. You were three when you came here. Now you are two. If you became three again, would I live and go back to the jungle unharmed?"

"What are you talking about?" asked Walsh, his gun raised.

"I am making a bargain."

The eyes of the ape-man became narrow and deep for a moment. He seemed to be thinking deeply, and the effort brought his heavy brows down to a straight line, under which his eyes were lost.

"Ling," he said slowly and cautiously, "promised us to be princes. The master promised this, too. But we are not princes, although Ling calls himself king. I am Watcher. I have seen your cities, your war machines. It is but a matter of time before we are killed. This I know. In the jungle we killed for food. Here we kill, but are slain by machines in scores. I wish for the jungle again."

He drew a long breath and opened his eyes. It seemed to the boys that he was superior to his companions—that he was beyond them in penetration and observation.

"What is your bargain?" demanded Gerry quickly.

"It is this. If your companion was given back to you, would I be spared? Would I travel to the jungle again where I am at home?"

"Bring our companion, and we will take you to our people with the story," said Gerry. "They would not kill you."

"And I would return to the jungle?"

"Yes; I think I can promise that," answered Gerry.

"And Ling would not know?"

"Ling will be killed. There is no doubt of that. He opened war, and he will be captured."

The ape-man pondered for a moment, then suddenly he raised his head.

"I cannot bring your companion to you. He is in the tree-house. But I will bargain his life for mine."

"What do you mean?"

"I will go back and tell the others that I cannot find you. I will ask them to come into this wood to search. While we are searching you can find your companion. At dusk I will meet you here—at this spot. We will go to your people, and I will return with their help to the jungle."

"But why wait till dusk?"

"Can we travel in the daylight? Ling is returning. The master is returning. And when I leave them to be killed, one by one in this land, I will be king of the jungle in my own."

"Who'd have thought it?" whispered Walsh to Gerry, in a low tone. "That chap's got a bit more brain than his looks would lead us to believe. He's pretty far-seeing. No wonder he is called Watcher."

"But can we trust him?" asked Gerry.

"Let's test him."

He turned to the ape-man who had not moved.

"Very well, that's a bargain! But where is this tree-house you mention?"

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"Follow me at a distance so that no one sees you, and you will know," said the ape-man.

"We will," said Gerry. "But you must first of all throw down your weapons."

A smile passed over the ape-man's face as he tossed his spear towards Walsh and Gerry and jerked his revolver at their feet. Gerry pounced on the latter. The gun was empty, every cartridge was used.

Already the ape-man was on the trail. He broke his way through the woods at a trot that made the boys hasten to keep up with him. At times he stopped and looked round to make sure they were following, then he went on again. The route he took seemed to be a huge curve, and after several miles he stopped again, raised his arm in a signal, and disappeared suddenly.

Gerry and Walsh advanced cautiously. It was now getting misty in the forest and the afternoon was well advanced; but through the greyness they saw the big wigwam that had been thrown together. They crept forward and saw Watcher with several others of his own size at the entrance. He was talking, and throwing his arms wide as if explaining the situation.

The others did not seem to agree, for their deep voices rumbled in discussion. At length, however, they entered the wigwam, coming out in a moment with weapons. They strode into the woods, leaving only a few gorillas squatting near the door.

Gerry and Walsh waited for some time to let the ape-men get well away, then they moved cautiously towards the hut. The gorillas snarled at them, but did not attack. At the entrance they peered in. Billy Murchie was lying on the floor.

In a bound they were in the tree-house and had cut their chum's bonds.

Billy could hardly stand. His limbs were bruised and stiff with the thongs that had cut into his flesh. His chums were rubbing him to get the circulation back, when Walsh stood up suddenly, head erect.

"Listen!"

A strange cry rang through the forest, followed by another, and yet another. Then these single cries were followed by a riot of howling.

"We'd better get out of here!" cried Gerry anxiously, and he ran towards the door.

As he did so, Walsh gave a warning cry:

"Look out!"

A dark body broke through the branches above them and dropped at their feet. Others followed, and more came through the doorway.

Gerry heard Walsh gasp as if struck. Billy gave a kind of moan and dropped, and then something struck Gerry, and he smelled gorilla and ape-men as well as saw them.

He was tackled from behind with a stranglehold upon his throat. He swung himself forward and hove the attacker off his feet, but did not make him loose his hold. It was a gorilla, not a tall one, but one that grunted as he held.

Something on the floor made Gerry stumble. He heard Walsh shout, then Billy. Then came the sound of blows from all sides. It was too dark under that thick canopy of branches to see clearly.

Exerting all his strength, Gerry forced the gorilla off his back, but another got him by the throat. He hit out at a pair of eyes that glared at him. A

paw gripped his wrist and gave his arm a twist that nearly broke it. He wrenched himself free and struck out in all directions.

Other forms loomed up in the entrance—large forms, forms of ape-men. Among them, too, was another form that Gerry saw, the form of a man.

A voice spoke quickly, and Gerry recognised the speaker.

"Stein!" he yelled, struggling valiantly.

The only sound that followed was the quick breathing of the combatants. Billy was lying on the ground. Someone, or something, was holding him down; a pair of hands had him by the shoulders, and a body lay across him, worrying at his throat. He kicked and turned in an effort to escape that attack, and managed to get free. But not for long, for once more he was held down and was unable to free himself.

As for Walsh, he had drawn his gun and emptied it among the attackers. He backed into the branches that trailed downward, lunging and hitting like mad.

Gerry saw something of the other struggles, but he was too busy with his own affairs to lend aid. He felt every time that he landed a blow he was punching india-rubber.

The breath of the gorillas came through their teeth in a hissing sound.

Gerry managed at last to manoeuvre towards the door. He had an idea that he wanted to bring Stein within his reach; for it was Stein who was watching there in the gloom, and beside Stein were ape-men.

But it was difficult to make any progress, so many arms were about him, pulling at him, while he heaved and struck at them and at the faces that rose up like gnomes in front of him.

He got hold of an arm and wrenched it against a branch, and the owner of that arm yelped with pain. Still Gerry held on, and with a sudden pressure felt the bone under his hands snap. The arm fell away. A face rose in its place, and a punch sent it staggering back into the darkness.

Somebody thrust him sideways. He stumbled against a crouching figure and was floored, then a heavy form sat on his chest.

He wriggled over on his face, lay still until he felt the pressure ease, then heaved up and was on his feet again.

He had a clear run for Stein. Launching himself forward, he swung upward with his fist and caught the man full on the jaw.

Stein went crashing to the ground, but three or four more forms were on Gerry's back, bearing him down also. He threw them off, lowered his head, and then butted at a figure that blocked his way.

A grunt came from the figure and it fell. The strenuous effort left Gerry gasping and tottering on his feet.

The next moment he was seized by the collar and dragged hither and thither, brought down as a stag is brought down—and he could no longer hit back.

The voice of Stein broke the stillness again.

"Heave him up! Let me look at him!"

Gerry was hoisted to his feet. He faced the cold iciness of Stein, who was without his eyeglass.

"Bring the others!"

A searching began, but there were no

others. The gorillas pushed each other aside as they probed in every corner. A torch was brought by an ape-man, who thrust it here and there. But there was no sign of Billy or Walsh. A hole in the foliage was examined, for fear they may have broken through and escaped that way. But it revealed nothing.

Gerry felt a glow of gladness that his pals had escaped, and this was followed by a rage against the ape-man who had called himself the Watcher. He was not present, but Gerry felt that he and Walsh had been led into a trap. Anyway, the trap had not held all its intended victims.

"Where is the Watcher?" demanded Stein.

Nobody knew, but after many shouts the ape-man appeared at the entrance.

"You called, master?"

Stein walked up to him and gazed upward into the massive face.

"Watcher, if I knew that you were a traitor—"

"Master, how can I be a traitor?"

"It was you who told your mates to leave the hut, I hear. Well, we'll see later."

The perplexity left Stein's face as he swung round on Gerry.

"As for you, there is no escape this time. It is lucky I returned in time. Tie him up!"

A New Friend!

TWO ape-men seized Gerry and held him while another brought a stake and stuck it into the ground, hammering it deeply with a log of wood.

They tied Gerry to the stake, hands and feet, and put the cord round his waist.

"Send for Ling!" ordered Stein. "I heard him arrive just now."

As a matter of fact, during the fight more howling outside had taken place. In a few minutes Big Ling entered the tree-hut. He saluted Stein and turned his eyes on the prisoner.

"You got away?" asked Stein. "Is everything as you wished?"

"Master, I held the town for twelve hours. I made the enemy cease sending their planes, then, in cover of the darkness, I came. I have run all the way, with a few followers."

"And the others, the main army?"

"We vacated the town. The army is camped on the hills. The enemy has brought up guns. I came here because I wanted your advice."

"I, too, have left my army on the hills, Ling," said Stein. "The lieutenants have their orders. We will join both armies and march north to-night."

Ling's dark eyes scanned the face of Gerry sullenly.

"This is not the prisoner I left here."

"No; it is his companion. The other escaped a few moments ago. I sent for you to deal with him."

"Torture him and throw his corpse to the dogs," said Ling shortly. "Bring wood for the fire."

Ape-men already had brought broken branches which they piled around Gerry's feet. The one called the Watcher bent down and touched the pile as if to examine it.

"This wood is green," he said. "We cannot burn the prisoner or torture him with green wood. He would die too quickly from the smoke. Bring fresh wood."

He scattered the pile with his foot and saluted Ling.

"King, may I say a word?"

"What is it?"

"Why waste time with this mite? It will take hours to torture him as he deserves. I have a better plan."

"Name it."

"Tie a slow bomb to his feet and leave him. Is our valuable time to be wasted with such as he?"

"You are in a hurry to leave, Watcher!" sneered Stein.

"The sooner to crush the enemy, master. I have other news."

"What is it?"

"When I was in the forest just now I heard something overhead. A plane passed over, high up. And the enemy have brought others to the forest. I saw them on the trail, coming stealthily."

The information made Ling grind his teeth.

"If you start a fire it will tell the enemy where we are," continued the Watcher. "That is why I suggested a bomb."

"Let it be, so long as he is blown to bits!" cried Ling. "But I will set the bomb."

He made a sign, and one of his ape-men hurried out and came back shortly with a small bomb.

Ling took it and laid it beside Gerry's feet, then covered it with a handful of twigs. There was a long fuse attached to the bomb, and Ling lighted the end of it which stretched some distance away.

The fuse fizzed and spluttered at first, then glowed like a cigarette.

Stein laughed as he walked up to Gerry and hit him full in the face.

"That is one of your own bombs," he said. "It will explode in ten minutes—maybe less. We have quite a collection of these fuses, and I will leave a companion to see that you do not weary."

He caught hold of a wounded gorilla and dragged the brute forward, fastening one of its paws with a cord to the stake that held Gerry. Then he placed the hissing fuse between the two.

With a last look round, and a word of command, he and Ling left the tree-hut.

Gerry heard them tramping through the woods. Their sounds grew fainter and fainter.

"Billy!" he cried loudly. "Walsh!"

But there was no sound of an answering voice.

The gorilla was licking its wounds unconcernedly, while the fuse burned steadily.

Tied to the stake, Gerry awaited his fate. But for the knowledge that he was in the New Forest, in England, he could have believed that he was in some African surroundings.

The gorilla at his side went on licking its wounds, taking no notice of him whatsoever. The forest was silent, but now, as he listened, Gerry heard the whir of an aeroplane in the air. It appeared in sight later, and swooped and rose time after time. It was hopeless, though, to expect help from that quarter.

Then came another interruption. A bright finger of light struck the trees, stopping now and then to light up dark corners, then moving again through the shrubbery. Gerry knew that somewhere beyond the fringe of the woods someone was using a searchlight.

He shouted again and again, but there was no reply. He had been only wasting his breath in trying to make himself heard. Now he turned to the matter of his own danger.

"It must be very near time that fuse exploded the bomb," he muttered.

He began to count aloud. When he reached one hundred he expected the

explosion that would end his life. It did not come. He looked down and saw the gorilla still licking its wounds unconcernedly.

"It may be a delayed fuse," he thought; and began to count again.

He stopped before reaching another hundred, however.

"The fuse is not going to explode," he said to himself. "It has been too long burning now."

The gorilla tied to the stake looked up at him, and as it did so, Gerry saw the reason why there had been no explosion. The animal had actually been chewing the fuse!

It seemed incredible, but it was only too true. There was the fuse with the burning end black and dead. The bomb had been robbed of its power.

Why had the gorilla chewed that cord? Gerry thanked his lucky stars as he watched the gorilla chewing hard as if he liked the taste of the cord. A peculiar odour came up to Gerry's nostrils—an odour from the breath of the gorilla. The cord had been soaked in treacle!

Gerry began to heave at the stake that held him. He swung to and fro, and the gorilla, in a playful way, imitated his actions.

"That's it, gorilla," said Gerry. "Pull with me—we'll manage yet!"

The gorilla, taught by Ling and his ape-men to obey, entered into the spirit of the game. It rose to its stumpy legs, completely forgetting its wounds, and added its force to that of Gerry.

To and fro they swung until the stake came away and they fell over each other in the darkness.

In a moment Gerry loosened the knots of the cords and threw the fastenings aside, doing the same for the gorilla. The animal, indeed, was no enemy. It could not distinguish between friend and foe. Had Gerry struck out, the gorilla would have attacked at once. Since he spoke to it, and helped it, he was accepted as an ally.

"And now," he said, "you and I, gorilla, will get out of here."

He poked his head out of the entrance of the tree-hut and saw the searchlight playing on the trees some distance away. He thought he saw figures moving in the forest, but he was not sure, and he dared not investigate. If they were Ling's forces they would come back and find out why the bomb had not burst.

Gerry decided to fool them.

He planted the bomb in the heap of fuel, noting that it was not green, as the Watcher had stated. There were but a few sticks and leaves at the top, but mostly it was fairly dry fuel.

Taking the torch that had been thrown down when Stein and Ling departed, he blew it into a red-hot glare, and then applied it to the twigs. Then he ran for the forest, and the wounded gorilla scrambled beside him.

They had not gone more than a hundred yards, however, when the bomb exploded. It lifted the tree-hut high in the air and launched a volcano of sparks and flame upward. It did even more. When the echo of the explosion died down Gerry saw that the forest had caught fire. Flames were spreading in every direction. He headed for the searchlight, which was suddenly turned towards the spot where the fire was blazing.

It was rough going, and Gerry was almost exhausted when he reached a track, one of the many through the forest. He saw figures moving in the distance. They were not gorillas, they were men—soldiers! He shouted and

waved his arms. The searchlight moved and settled on his running form.

"Halt!"

A voice suddenly rang out—a British voice—and Gerry saw two soldiers, with gas masks hanging from their chests, advancing towards him.

The gorilla snarled and spat angrily, but Gerry patted its great head, speaking words of control. The animal crouched beside him, ready to spring.

"Who goes there?"

"A friend!" called Gerry. "Don't fire, boys!"

"Advance, friend, and be recognised!"

Gerry ran forward, the gorilla beside him.

"Take me to your officers," he urged when he had given a few words of explanation. "And there are two of my pals somewhere—they may be in the forest. They escaped—"

"Come on!" said one of the men—a corporal. "You'll hear about them from the colonel! We are the Guards!"

"Are my pals safe?"

"Safe?" said the corporal. "Crikey, I've been in some wars but this one beats everything! Your pals came to camp with a chap—lor', he was as big as a tree!"

Out on a treeless space the searchlight was stationed and around it stood several officers. They listened to Gerry's story, and then ordered the searchlight to be dimmed.

"We were looking for your place of imprisonment," said the colonel grimly. "Your pals are gone!"

"Where?"

"The details can wait, but, briefly, the situation is that it was that big ape-man who saved your pals. Watcher, he is called. He thrust them out of the tree-hut and hid them under a load of branches some distance away. Then he went back to meet this Ling fellow. After that he sneaked off and came running here with the two of them under his arms. He says he smelled our camp."

"Where is he now?"

"He had not a moment to waste, he said; for he would be suspected if he waited. He told us that he had planted a gorilla to chew the fuse beside you—"

"But Billy and Walsh—where are they?"

"Up in the air somewhere. They were both crazy to rescue you, and we sent them off in a plane, one of our best. Now, then, we'll tell them what's what."

He strode over to a tent where there was a clicking and flickering of lights. A man sat inside the tent with a pair of earphones strapped to his head. His hands were moving quickly over knobs and discs.

The colonel gave him directions, and a few seconds later the man was giving information that Gerry was safe and sound. He handed Gerry a pair of earphones, and bade him listen.

"Hallo, Gerry!" came Billy's voice. "Glad to hear you are safe! We are up in the blue—"

Billy's voice was silenced suddenly. Another and more powerful call came through:

"Hallo! Whitehall speaking! R.A.F. stand by! Orders are that every plane is to concentrate on district between Reading and Amesbury. This applies to—"

The numbers of bombers and war-planes were reeled off. The voice went on:

"Enemy have been located on the

plains. Orders will be given by squadron leaders. That's all, southern section. Northern section, stand by!"

More orders poured forth, and Gerry removed the earphones from his head. He saw the officers had all been listening-in also. Quickly they consulted a map that hung under a single bulb, the colonel tracing points with his finger.

He glanced at the burning forest beyond the tent.

"Get everybody in," he said quietly. "Advance begins right away. Tell engineers to go ahead and inspect roads. Bring up the tear-shells, and all ammunition is to be loaded in special trucks."

He turned to Gerry

"Youngster, you will come with us. Your friends are unable to land just now. They will see the battle from the air and you from the ground. We've got the army of Ling nearly surrounded. It's the other army that we are worrying about."

"You mean Stein's?"

"That's the man's name. Nobody knows him, but he seems to be everywhere. He smashed Reading and withdrew his troops just after dusk. We've got this in hand better than they have over in Europe, anyway."

He thrust a newspaper into Gerry's hands, and the boy was amazed at the headings he saw there. Paris had been raided by beasts and was practically in their power. From the Black Forest there had issued a cataract of animals that had caused consternation throughout Germany. Spain was in terror of gorillas and other animals that had come from the mountains. In Rome there were thousands of wild monsters destroying the city.

Down the home page Gerry's eyes travelled. He saw that Liverpool had been battling with animals mysteriously let loose from ships. The Edinburgh zoological specimens that had escaped were still causing havoc. On the Clyde a steamer had been sunk by explosives blocking the river, and several ape-men were running wild over the city, followed by several hundred monkeys of all sizes.

A proclamation had been dropped from an enemy plane on London, calling on the authorities to surrender and admit that Ling was king of the world. That was how he signed himself, apparently—"King of the World."

It may have appeared grotesque, wildly absurd; but all revolts were absurd and grotesque. And all revolts have been engineered by minorities. A handful of desperate characters can change the face of a country!

Gerry took his seat in the officers' car, and his brain could hardly grasp the entire situation as he tried to think it out. He gave up trying.

Through the night the car went, but not by the main roads which Ling had torn up. It went by side tracks, by country lanes where traffic still dribbled and soldiers were stationed scrutinising every vehicle.

When they reached the wide spaces of the country beyond the ruin that had been Salisbury the car stopped. A number of searchlights were playing from various points on the hills, concentrating on the valley, and Gerry saw, in that white concentration, the moving figures of monkeys in the distance. It was Ling's force, camped around a farm, every window of which was lit up.

The troops had not surrounded them, but they were facing the gorillas from

the four sides of the compass, and it seemed that not a move could be made that was not shown by the searchlights. The officers who were with Gerry were in command of one of the four barriers to Ling's freedom. A string of sentries kept each force in touch with its neighbour.

As Gerry sat watching the strange sight something soft rubbed against his hand which held the side of the touring-car. He looked down. The gorilla, dust-covered and panting, was beside him, touching him, with a mute appeal.

The other occupants of the car drew away from the animal, but Gerry patted its massive head. He saw the creature was labouring and suffering from its wounds, and there was blood oozing from its side.

"When is the attack on Ling to be made?" he asked quickly.

"Zero hour is just before dawn," replied the colonel. "If you're tired, you can have a sleep while we are—"

"That's all right but I was thinking of this poor brute. Is it possible to get a doctor to attend to it?"

The colonel gave a short laugh.

"I was thinking of putting a bullet into it to end its pain," he said. "But as it has palled up to you we can find a medical officer to attend to the first enemy casualty."

So Gerry and the gorilla were taken off to a tent that had been erected with others behind the lines, and there the gorilla was patched under the hands of interested surgeons, and bandaged by orderlies who were scared of their patient.

Gerry was not thinking of sleep, however. He came back to the car, and found the officers standing alert and watchful.

The farm was still lit up, the searchlights still played, but something had changed. Out of the farmhouse several figures came, each holding a white sheet. They were ape-men. They walked straight into the concentrated glare of the searchlights, waving the white sheets, and there they separated. Towards each of the four forces an ape-man strode, each bearing his sheet aloft, waving it slowly to attract attention.

Was it a signal of surrender? The searchlights ceased to concentrate on the wider objective, and followed the figures, moving fingers keeping the waving sheets in clear view. Up the slope came the holders of the sheets.

"They're scared," said an officer beside Gerry. "We don't need to fire a shot."

No one else spoke. The ape-man who was coming towards them did not hesitate. He approached the batteries and stood there, waving his sheet, then waited. A messenger came hurrying along to Gerry's group.

"Enemy have sent a white flag, sir." "Bring him here."

The ape-man came, surrounded by a guard of soldiers. His message was brief. King Ling wished to know what terms of surrender were offered. Not understanding where the high commander of the British troops was stationed, King Ling had sent four messengers, one to each group. There was a sneer on the ape-man's face as he spoke his words haltingly.

"Wait where you are," said the colonel, and turned towards a tent some distance off; but Gerry rushed after him.

"It's a trap, sir!" he gasped. "It's an excuse—"

"What do you mean?"

"Look down there, sir!"

Gerry pointed towards the valley. The searchlights were still concentrated on the ape-men, but in the greyness of the diffused light Gerry had seen something that made him speak.

Up the incline of the slopes gorillas

had moved in scattered little groups. A chattering and snarling had broken out. And as Gerry and the officer stood watching a loud whistle struck sharply on the still air.

The army of Ling was on the move.

Before the artillery could get the new range the gorillas were well under the

line of fire. They attacked, not the troops who were ready to receive them in formation, but the patches where the sentries paraded.

The searchlights swung up and down and round about, picking out the racing

(Continued on next page.)

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., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped, addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

WELL, chums, the first of our series of magnificent FREE GIFTS is now in your hands. It may even be in your mouth as you are reading these words! What do you think of it? Scrumptious, eh? Walters' "Palm Creamy" Toffee, a bar of which is presented with every copy of this week's MAGNET, is absolutely "the stuff to give the troops," as we used to say during the War. And this week's bar of free toffee is only just a taster. There are three more bars of toffee in store for you in our following issues, and each bar is of a different flavour. Hold tight while I tell you what they are.

Next week you will receive

ANOTHER BAR OF DELICIOUS SWEETMEAT!

This will be a bar of Walters' Chocolate Nougat, and very good it is, too. I know, for I've tasted some. The week following, in our February 10th issue, you will receive our third free bar of toffee—a bar of Walters' Strawberry-Flavoured Toffee. The fourth bar of toffee will be found in our issue dated February 17th, and this will have a real tip-top banana flavour. Don't miss any of these free gifts, chums! You can only make sure of getting them by placing a regular order for the MAGNET with your newsagent. That done, you can share this splendid treat with your chums by telling them all about it. Gee, I can see them hustling off to the nearest newsagent right away!

By the way, I hope all my chums will get the

GRAND £1 - 1 - 0 PRESENTATION VOLUME

of the "WORLD PICTORIAL GAZETTEER," full particulars of which appear on pages 12 and 13 of this issue. This "greatest of all reference books" is offered to you on terms practically amounting to a gift, and is a golden opportunity

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As this volume is only available to regular readers, you should place a regular order for The MAGNET, at once.

READERS who are film fans will be interested in this reply to Bert Green, of Hammersmith, who asks me:

HOW OLD ARE THE "MOVIES"?

So far as this country is concerned, the first public performance of the cinema as we know it to-day was in London on February 10th, 1896. Therefore the cinema is thirty-eight years old this year. Previous to that people had to content themselves with the "magic lantern" and a few trick slides, which showed such subjects as a man swallowing rats, and so on. They were received with yells of laughter and roars of applause. I wonder what a modern audience would say if that was all they saw at the cinemas nowadays? There would certainly be yells—for money back!

This reader also asks me to tell him something about

FAKING THE FILMS.

Nowadays cameramen are such expert "wangers" that they can make anything appear possible on the screen. Most of this faking is done by means of "double exposure." For instance, suppose you wanted to make a man appear to be as tall as the Nelson Monument, and you wanted to show him walking about Trafalgar Square. This could be done as follows:

First an ordinary film of Trafalgar Square is taken. This is then projected from behind on to a screen placed behind the actor. Lights are arranged so that they show on the actor, but do not interfere with the screen. Now, when the actor walks in front of the screen "scenery" of Trafalgar Square, it is easy to make him appear to be whatever height you wish. Another camera now takes a composite film of both the actor and the scene which is going on behind him, and when the composite film is developed it looks as though the giant is walking around Trafalgar Square in a perfectly normal manner. This was the method employed in making "King Kong" appear to be such a gigantic creature. Small models are sometimes used, but the above method looks much more realistic.

When you see things moving at a tremendous rate on the films, this is the easiest faked picture of all. The camera simply takes the films fairly slowly and then, when the projector shows them at the ordinary rate, everything is speeded up considerably. So motors can be shown travelling at a hundred miles per hour when, actually, they were probably going at less than fifty m.p.h. when the film was taken. This is the opposite to "slow motion," in which the films are taken at a tremendous rate and then shown at normal speed, the result being that the action is delayed so that we can see every movement very slowly.

But it would take a whole issue of the MAGNET to describe how every film effect is obtained, so we had better pass on to the next reader's query.

WHAT IS A GUN-ROOM?

asked "Puzzled," of Brighton. This is the name given to the mess-room used by junior officers of the Navy—midshipmen and sub-lieutenants. The mess-room of the senior officers—from lieutenants upwards—is called the "Ward Room." The name "Gun Room" dates from the days of the old wooden walls, when the junior and warrant officers messed on the actual gun-deck, between the "after guard," who were the senior officers, and the sailors. The gun-room officers formed a sort of protection for the other officers, for in those days mutinies often broke out amongst the "pressed" men in the fore-castle, and they had to fight their way along the gun-deck before they could gain the poop and take command of the ship. Nowadays, of course, you will not find any guns in the "gun-rooms."

G. Carter, of Lowestoft, sends along this query:

WHAT IS A LIVERY COMPANY?

This is a survival of the olden days when craftsmen of a city formed themselves into a trade guild to protect their interests. Their members were called "livermen" because they were entitled to wear the special uniform, or livery, of their guild. At the present time there are seventy-six livery companies in London, including such ones as the Skinners, Salters, Vintners, Mercers, Fishmongers, and Merchant Taylors. But nowadays it does not mean that a man is a fishmonger because he belongs to the Fishmongers' Company, or a skinner because he belongs to the Skinners' Company. At one time these companies governed London, but nowadays they are mostly charitable societies, and some of them are identified with large Public schools, such as the Merchant Taylors.

I SHALL have to leave over a number of queries in order that I can tell you something about what is in store for you next week.

"THE MYSTERY OF THE VAULTS!"

By Frank Richards,

is the title of the long complete yarn of the chums of Greyfriars. Frank Richards told me the other day that he had only made one New Year's resolution this year, and that was to make these weekly stories of ours better and better each week. It certainly looks as though he is keeping that resolution, as you will agree when you read this splendid complete yarn next week.

Our magnificent story, "When the Great Apes Came!" is still going great guns, and next week's chapters are more thrilling than ever.

There will be a "Greyfriars Herald" next week as usual, and, of course, our regular shorter features, not forgetting another chat. A final reminder: Don't forget that next Saturday's MAGNET will contain a delicious bar of Walters' Chocolate Nougat. Order your copy now and be on the safe side!

YOUR EDITOR.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,354.

gorillas. They picked out, too, the bigger figures of the ape-men leading them; and they picked out the towering figure of Ling.

He bounded across the grassy slopes, uttering his war-yell, brandishing his club; and after him came ape-men, throwing bombs and flinging their spears with deadly accuracy.

Simultaneously, the ape-men who had come with their white flags of truce discarded all pretence. They answered the whistles with yells and leaped at the officers facing them.

Revolvers sang out their messages of death, rifles clattered, bayonets flashed; but the apes had the first stroke delivered by the time the duplicity of their ruse was understood.

Down the slopes the four ape-men raced to join their comrades, and after them went a withering volley that laid three of them low. The batteries belched their shells into the air, and the farmhouse was blown to bits. But that was only the beginning. Ling had struck first; he had anticipated zero hour, and for the time being had taken the troops off their guard.

In hand-to-hand fighting his gorillas might suffer, but they could stand more punishment than men, and it was Ling's intention to force the ring that threatened him by four thrusts between the regiments. For this reason he had so organised his gorillas that there were four spearheads led by ape-men directed towards the areas between the batteries. By forcing close fighting he had practically masked the batteries.

But there was one thing he could not do—and that was oppose the bombers. Squads of men advanced towards the struggling mass of apes; masked men, looking like strange creatures of the night, and as they advanced they hurled bombs that broke and spread that terrible mustard gas for which there is no known antidote.

The gas clung in clouds to the ground, moving slowly over the apes, laying them low, gasping and squirming in pain. They howled as they rolled on the ground, but it seemed to the bombing squads that there was no limit to the numbers of the gorillas. They attacked the bombers, throwing their own bombs, too, staggering about like drunken things as they fought with the gas that blistered and blinded them.

(Look out for further thrilling chapters of this popular adventure story in next week's FREE GIFT NUMBER of the MAGNET.)

KIDNAPPED FROM THE AIR!

(Continued from page 26.)

"It cannot be a jest—a childish practical joke—if they made my boy believe that I was injured! What villany is this?" exclaimed the major. "He should not have gone—did his Form-master give him permission—"

"He did not wait—he was off like a shot—he believed what the man said, that you had had a flying accident, and that there was no time—"

"But—but what—why—"

Major Cherry stood staring at the sky. But there was no further sign to be seen of the mysterious plane. It had vanished to the northward, and was gone. Setting his lips, the major strode away towards the House.

Harry Wharton & Co. changed, feeling like fellows in a dream. They could hardly begin to understand what had happened. A man unknown had come with a lie on his lips, and had tricked Bob into entering the plane—and carried him off into space! Why? An enemy—but what enemy could a schoolboy have, to take such measures? Pursuit—it was futile to think of pursuit! The kidnappers and the kidnapped schoolboy had vanished into the air.

Major Cherry, in Mr. Quelch's study, was already at the telephone. When Harry Wharton & Co. came out, after changing, excited and bewildered and utterly dismayed, the Bounder came up to them. He pointed to the sky.

"They're after him already!" he said. "What—"

"I fancy the major got through to Wapshot at once! Look!"

"Oh!" gasped Wharton.

From the direction of Wapshot camp plane after plane was roaring aloft. Standing in the quad, staring up at the steely winter sky, the chums of the Remove counted five planes, one after another, lifting swiftly over the intervening woods and roaring away to the north. They watched them in breathless silence till they were out of sight.

"They're after him!" repeated the Bounder.

"But—"

"He's got a good start! But he'll be looked for all over the kingdom—he dare not come down in any aerodrome—every aerodrome, every airport will be warned—it's not so easy to get away, even in the sky!" said Vernon-Smith. "They'll get him, unless—"

"Unless what?"

"Unless he goes over the water! He's got no chance, so far as I can see, un-

less he hits for the ocean and a foreign country."

"He headed north," said Harry. "The sea is east from here—"

"That may be a dodge—he may have headed east when he was out of sight of Greyfriars! But—he's got a good start, but they're not long after him—and they're good men!" said the Bounder. He whistled. "By gum, we're living in the air age now, you men! People talk about how the motor-car is used in crime—but the turn of the plane is coming—this may be the first time, but it won't be the last! Gangsters in planes—that's going to be the next big job for Scotland Yard to tackle! It's the air age now, old bean—and it was bound to come! We've seen the first of it at Greyfriars, that's all!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, dry up, Bunter!"

"Tea, old chap! Don't yell at a fellow! I say, I hear that Bob's been hooked off in a plane—kidnapped or something—pity I wasn't on the spot. Poor old Bob! I wonder if they took him for me?" said Bunter thoughtfully.

"Wha-a-t!"

"I mean, if they've kidnapped a chap for ransom, or that sort of thing, they'd naturally be looking for a rich fellow—"

"You howling ass!"

"Oh, really, Nugent! Cherry's people are poor, you know—if they've bagged him for ransom, they'll get a rather unpleasant surprise—he, he, he! But I say, I'll— Yaroooooh! Whooop! Yooooop! Wharrer you kicking me for? Yow-ow-ow-woooooop!" Billy Bunter fled for his fat life, without asking any more questions about tea!

There was tense excitement in Greyfriars School that night. From the Sixth to the Second there was only one topic—the kidnapping of Bob Cherry from the air! Every moment the chums of the Remove longed and hoped for news! But there was no news. Bob Cherry had vanished from the eyes of all that knew him—vanished into illimitable space, leaving no trace behind. Where was he—and what was to become of him? But to those questions, his anxious friends could find no answer. THE END.

(Now look out for next Saturday's MAGNET and the next yarn in this grand new series which is entitled: "THE MYSTERY OF THE VAULTS!" It's a real corking yarn, boys! And don't forget that this issue will contain a FREE BAR of WALTERS' CHOCOLATE NOUGAT! Order your copy to-day!)

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THE NEW Greyfriars Herald

NOTICE TO PUBLISHERS
If you're looking for an expert inventor of fairy tales, why not call on Temple, and ask him to tell you how the Fourth played the Remove at footer last week?

OH, SCISSORS!
The new barber at Courtfield, unlike many of his fellow tonsorial artists, is not at all talkative.
You rarely have to "cut him short"!

January 27th, 1934.

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

UGLIEST TIMEPIECES COMPETITION
Entries invited for the "Greyfriars Herald" Uglyest Timepieces' Competition. A prize of One Year's Subscription to the "Greyfriars Herald" will be awarded to the Uglyest Clock exhibited.

N.B.—To give the general public a chance, Bolsover and Coker will not compete!

ANOTHER MYSTERY SOLVED!
Mrs. Mimble is said to be trying to cure her rheumatism by "quack" methods. Perhaps this explains why fellows occasionally refer to her as an old duck!

MY WORST AND BEST EXPERIENCE

By Paul Pontifex Prout, M.A.

When the average man is asked about his worst experience, his mind, I suppose, turns to experiences involving physical discomfort. But I, as readers of the "Greyfriars Herald" will probably know already, am not as other men. Physical discomfort to me, my dear sirs, is the very salt of life. Consequently, for my worst experience, I turn to discomfort of a mental kind.

The worst mental discomfort within my recollection came to me one wintry night when I went to one of the private meetings in the Town Hall at Courtfield to address the local Fossils Society on Big Game Hunting in the Rockies. Never, my dear sirs, shall I forget that night!

I received my first shock when, on walking on to the platform, the audience roared with laughter. But worse was to follow. Despite the fact that my lecture was of a particularly sober and serious character, the laughter grew louder and louder, till eventually I was hardly able to make myself heard at all!

I was almost overwhelmed by astonishment. But my astonishment was as nothing compared with my indignation. I had arranged to address this gathering purely out of the kindness of my heart, wanting no reward, but the gratitude of my listeners—and instead of the gratitude I had expected, I was receiving naught but ribald hilarity! Can you wonder, my dear sirs, that I became well-nigh inarticulate with rage?

At last, unable to bear it longer, I shouted, "I utterly refuse to continue this lecture in the face of your unseemly mirth!" and stalked off the platform. And the laughter was louder than ever—than the laughter.

Afterwards, I made an astounding discovery. I had apparently wandered into the wrong room and unwittingly delivered my lecture to an audience which had gathered to hear a variety performance! What I still fail to understand is in what manner the audience found my serious lecture mirth-provoking. Whatever the answer to that question may be, the incident was more disconcerting to me than anything else I can remember!

My best experience came to me one day

LIGHTNING STRIKE IN THIRD FORM—Ends Before Striking

"Action!" yelled Tubb at the Third, at a crowded meeting in the Third Form-room one day last week. "That's what we want—action!" "Hurrah!" yelled back a score of frenzied fags. For terms, it's been nothing but talk, talk, talk! And what do we get for it? Nothing but contempt! "Hurrah!" yelled the young enthusiasts.

"We'll start the revolt right now!" Tubb yelled, with a glance at the clock. "It's pretty well bed-time, and Wingate will be along in a minute to order us up to the dorm. Well, we'll give Wingate a shock—we'll defy him!"

"Hurrah!" yelled the rebels.

"When he orders us to bed, we'll yell 'Revs!' When he grabs his sash to lash out at us, we'll tell him to go and chop chips! And when he tries to give his ashpant we'll swarm over him, wrench it from his hand, and give him a jolly good whacking with it! That will be the signal for revolt!" yelled Tubb. Then as he found, to his surprise, that the desks had suddenly emptied, he yelled: "Where are you all? Go, you silly creatures!"

"Where you young fags are going in a minute—bed!" said a grim voice behind Tubb. "But you're going to have 'six' before you go! Bend over! It was Wingate!

Properly speaking, the moment for revolt had arrived. But, remarkable to relate, nobody yelled "Revs!" or "Go and chop chips!" or swarmed over Wingate, or gave him a jolly good whacking with his own sashpant. All still more remarkable, Tubb was Third Form since the begin-



ing of the new term. So far, that resentment had found expression only in mutterings and grumbings. But now, the leader of the fags seemed to be heading it to open revolt.

"We'll start the revolt right now!" Tubb yelled, with a glance at the clock. "It's pretty well bed-time, and Wingate will be along in a minute to order us up to the dorm. Well, we'll give Wingate a shock—we'll defy him!"

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SHOULD REFEREES WEAR ARMOUR?

Stewart's Sensational Suggestion

The Greyfriars Second Form team played a fag Eleven from Highcliffe last Wednesday. Stewart of the Shell was ref. Now, Stewart of the Shell always had a notion there wasn't much about footer he didn't know. But he frankly admits that this little game taught him heaps he didn't know before.

He realises now, in his newly-advanced state of knowledge, that there are varieties of footer in which the ball is ignored for lengthy periods while the opposing teams barge each other all round the field. He appreciates now that nose-punching can become an integral part of other sports besides boxing. He understands now, after watching fag footer players stopping the game to indulge in fierce argument, that the art of debating, surprisingly enough, can be as important on the field as the art of dribbling the ball!

But above all, he has learned that, by mutual consent between the two captains, the aim of the game can be entirely altered, from kicking the ball through the goalposts to kicking the ball at the referee!

In the last five minutes of the first half the ball collided with Stewart's face about a dozen times. And during the second half it struck him in various parts of the body thirty or forty times!



It is, in fact, his considered opinion that all refs engaged for fag games should wear a steel waist-coat, trousers of chain-mail, cast-iron shinguards, and a crash helmet!

PREFECTS URGENTLY WANTED.

To supervise mass meetings called to demand peace between Fourth and Remove. Bludgeons and armour-plated clothing provided.—G. WINGATE, Captain of School.

MONSTER OF THE SARK

Remove Drag Infested Waters

The River Sark is known to all Friars as the pleasant stream in whose rippling waters they swim and scull in summer and on whose frozen expanse they are sometimes able to skate in winter. Up to a short while ago the mere suggestion that it might be inhabited by an unspeakably foul prehistoric monster would have brought a smile of derision to any face.

But the situation has changed with startling suddenness.

Rumours that a gigantic primeval beast dwells in its depths are flying round the school and trickling through the villages in the neighbourhood—disturbing rumours that cannot be lightly dismissed!

Bunter was the first to see the monster. He came rushing back to the school one "halfer" recently, quivering like a jelly-fish, and explained to a sceptical crowd that he had seen a sea-serpent in the Sark. Later on, after his imaginative faculties had had time to get to work again, he added that he had had a fearful fight with the monster, which had put its head out of the water with the intention of eating him!

Bunter's yarn was not taken seriously, though nobody doubted that something had happened to scare him in some way or other. But when others turned up with stories of having seen a strange and indescribable shape bobbing about in the water, the school became a little less sceptical. The new witnesses were all fairly reliable men—Hilary of the Remove, Temple and Dabney of the Fourth, Blundell, Bland, and Tomkinson major of the Fifth, and North of the Sixth, not to mention several fags who had never been known to suffer from hallucinations. All of them saw the shape bobbing out of the water, then diving again, and the phenomenon was always observed in the early winter dusk—not once during broad daylight.

What are we to make of it?

Well, so far as we're concerned, there's no particular reason for being completely sceptical. After all, the Sark is not far from the sea, and it's just possible that some unclassified deep sea demizans decided to make his winter headquarters up-river.

But the results achieved by the newly-formed Sark Monster Committee of the Remove last Wednesday afternoon were distinctly disappointing. Assisted by many willing helpers, the Committee threw a wide, weighted net across the river, and dragged it along for a distance of two miles.

The only "monster" they caught was a weird-looking contraction which turned out to be a water-ovote abandoned by Coker of the Fifth after an ill-fated run from the boathouse last summer!

Still, there's no telling what may happen yet. The Committee is actively pursuing its investigations—and by this time next week we may have astounding news to report!

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?

When Billy Bunter's naturally soft and collectible for a number of charities. He refused point blank, however, to collect for Bunter—who considered himself a "deserving object"!

Alonzo Todd is a very sympathetic voice in the Remove. Hailing his charms in the hall once, he started Bunter to collect for himself swallowed a bun whole—nearly choked!

Bob Cherry has the most powerful voice in the Remove. Hailing his charms in the hall once, he started Bunter to collect for himself swallowed a bun whole—nearly choked!

In his native Bhamur, "Inky" Loder is the most unpopu- ar feature—and when the Head reprimanded him in public the next day, for twisting Skinner's nose later—and Skinner looked far from handsome!

GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT!

Wharto, as very handsome features—and when the Head reprimanded him in public the next day, for twisting Skinner's nose later—and Skinner looked far from handsome!

Wingo, as very handsome features—and when the Head reprimanded him in public the next day, for twisting Skinner's nose later—and Skinner looked far from handsome!

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DICKY NUGENT'S WEEKLY WISDOM

Bolsover minor says that his major's lapses into boozing occur only when he gets heated. He has to be "cool" to be kind!

Hobson's pater wants him to win promotion into the Fifth; but Hobson modestly prefers to remain in the lower Form. It's difficult to get him to come out of his "Shell"!

Hobson's Choice