

RED-HOT STORY OF SCHOOLBOY REBELLION—Inside!

Starring Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars.

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FISHY'S FEARFUL FIX!

BY FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Vials of Wrath!

THAT fat villain—"
 "That podgy pirate—"
 "That bloated brigand—"
 "Hook him out!"
 "Bag him!"

It was a roar of voices on Popper's Island.

That green, wooded island in the River Sark, a mile from Greyfriars School, was generally peaceful and quiet. It had not been very peaceful, or very quiet, since the Greyfriars Remove had marched out of school and camped there. Now, in the early hours of a bright July morning it was less so than ever.

Billy Bunter was still snoring.

From a little bell-tent, in the glade in the centre of the island, the hefty snore of the Owl of the Remove echoed and rumbled.

All the other fellows were up; most of them were looking wrathful. They were gathered round a big tin trunk, under a beech-tree on the edge of the glade. Fingers pointed into it—eyes stared into it! That tin trunk was the camp larder. Provisions were running rather short on the rebel school-boys' island. What remained were parked in that tin trunk—or had been parked in it. Now there were gaps in the stores.

"Bunter, of course!" roared Bob Cherry.

"The esteemed and idiotic Bunter!" agreed Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"That bloated bandersnatch!" hooted Johnny Bull.

"That frabjous frump!" exclaimed Frank Nugent.

"That fat villain!" gasped Harry Wharton. "We whopped him last

night for getting at the grub. He must have got up again."

"Looks like it!" grinned the Bounder.

"I guess that fat guy wants lynching!" growled Fisher T. Fish.

"Hook him out!"

"Collar him!"

There was a scamper towards Bunter's tent. The roar of excited voices had not awakened Billy Bunter. He slept and he snored, unconscious of the discovery that had been made and of the vials of wrath about to be poured on his devoted head.

But his happy slumber was suddenly interrupted. Half a dozen hands jerked at the little tent, and it collapsed on the sleeper.

Then the snore ceased, and was succeeded by a startled squeak.

"Owl! Wharrer marrer! Oooogh! I say, you fellows! Help! My tent's fallen in! Yaroooh!"

"Come out, you fat rotter!"

"Roll out, you bloated brigand!"

Bob Cherry grasped a fat ankle and pulled. Vernon-Smith grasped another and tugged.

There was a wild howl, and Billy Bunter came out of the tangled canvas like a winkle from a shell.

"Ow! I say, you fellows— Wow!" roared Bunter.

"Bump him!"

"Scrag him!"

"Jump on him!"

"All jump together!"

Billy Bunter sat up and blinked at the crowd of excited faces that circled round him in amazement and alarm.

"I say, you fellows, keep off!" he yelled. "I say, what's the matter? Where's my specs? I say—"

The fat Owl of the Remove groped for his big spectacles, jammed them on his fat little nose, and blinked round.

He did not seem to know what the matter was. But a dozen voices told him all at once.

"You've been at the grub, you fat rotter—"

"You've been raiding the tommy, you grubby grub-hunter—"

"You've bagged all the ham—"

"And the sardines—"

"And the butter—"

"And the biscuits—"

"Up-end him and shake 'em out of him!" suggested the Bounder.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, I haven't!" yelled Bunter. "I haven't been near the grub—"

"We caught you at it last night and stopped you!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "You got up again after we were asleep—"

"I didn't!" yelled Bunter.

"Then who's raided the grub?" demanded the captain of the Remove.

"How should I know?" howled Bunter. "I went back to bed after you beasts made out that I was up after the tuck! I went to sleep and never opened my eyes again!"

"You opened your mouth, at any rate," said Smithy, "and you jolly well parked the tuck in it!"

"I never!" roared Bunter indignantly. "If there's any grub gone—"

"There's lots gone—"

"Well, I never had it! I'm fearfully hungry now!" hooted Bunter.

"Famished, in fact! I dare say Smithy had it—"

"What?" yelled the Bounder.

"Or Skinner—"

"Lemme gerrat him!" howled Skinner.

"Or Fishy! Most likely it was Fishy! You all know what a mean beast Fishy is! Was it you, Fishy?"

Fisher T. Fish glared at the Owl of the Remove as if he could have bitten him.

"Why, you—you pesky mugwump!" he spluttered. "You all-fired, dog-goned gink! You pie-faced geck! I guess I'll make potato-scrappings of you! I'll sure soak you some!"

"Here, leggo!" roared Bunter, as the indignant Fishy grasped him with a pair of bony hands. "Leggo, you beast! I say, you fellows, dragimoff! Yaroooh!"

Thump, thump, thump!

"Whoop! Yooop!" roared Bunter, as Fisher T. Fish's bony fists jabbed his fat ribs. "Oh crikey! I didn't mean it was you, Fishy— Yaroooh! Most likely it was Wharton— Wow, wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Thump, thump!

"Take that, you gol-darned geck!" howled Fisher T. Fish. "And that, you dog-goned clam! And— Oh, great Abraham Lincoln!"

Fisher T. Fish broke off suddenly as Billy Bunter, in sheer desperation, hit out with a fat fist.

That unexpected punch caught Fisher Tarleton Fish on the point of his sharp, bony chin. It caught him hard. It had Bunter's weight behind it—and Bunter's weight was no joke! Fisher T. Fish flew over backwards, and sprawled in the grass, yelling. He clasped both hands to his bony chin. It felt as if it had been knocked through his bony head.

"Ow! Wow, wow!" howled Bunter. He unclenched his fat fist, and sucked his fingers. "Ow! I've punctured my hand on his beastly sharp chin—"

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

"Ow! Wow! I say, you fellows—"

"Collar him!" roared Bolsover major. "Frog's march, and duck him in the river!"

"Hea, hear!"

"Leggo!" shrieked Bunter. "I say I never tucked the touch—I mean, I never touched the tuck! I say— Whooop! I never— Yaroooh!"

Bunter roared and wriggled as a dozen hands grasped him. Fisher T. Fish was still busy nursing his chin. But there were plenty of hands to deal with the grub-raider of Greyfriars. The fat Owl of the Remove was swept off his feet, roaring. Not a man in the excited crowd doubted that Billy Bunter was the grub-raider. His manners and customs were well known. At Greyfriars School, no fellow's study cupboard was safe from Bunter. On Popper's Island, Bunter was the same old Bunter. Since the Greyfriars rebels had had to go on rations, he had twice raided the supplies. Nobody doubted that he had been "at it" again!

"Hook him along!"

"Duck him!"

"I say, you fellows!" raved Bunter. "I didn't—I wasn't—I never—I wouldn't—I haven't—"

"You did, you was, you would, and you have!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Down the path through the trees, from the camp in the glade to the landing-place, went the Removites, with Billy Bunter struggling, wriggling, and roaring in their midst.

They reached the water's edge.

"I say, you fellows—" yelled Bunter.

Splash!

"Gurrrrrrgh!"

William George Bunter rolled in shallow water and mud. He rolled, he roared, he howled, and he spluttered. He clambered frantically out—and a

shove sent him toppling in again. Again he scrambled out—again he splashed in. Then he stood, draped with mud as with a garment, with the water washing round his fat knees, and roared.

"Beasts! Lemme out of this! Rotters! I'm wet! Wow!"

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

"Are you going to raid the grub again?" demanded Harry Wharton.

"I didn't!" shrieked Bunter. "It was some other rotter—I mean it was some rotter—I never touched it! Ow!"

"You're not coming out till you own up!"

"Oh lor'! I—I—I own up!" gasped Bunter. "Anything you like! Oh dear! I—I—I own up! Lemme out!"

And the Owl of the Remove was permitted to crawl out of the mud.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Smithy Asks For It!

"I'LL chance it!" said the Bounder. Harry Wharton shook his head.

"N.G.!" he answered.

"Rot!" said Bob Cherry.

"The rotfulness is terrific, my esteemed Smithy!" said Hurree Jamset

A queer guy is Fisher T. Fish. Ever since he joined the Remove Form at Greyfriars his one and only hobby has been making money. And his business transactions have landed him in many a fix. But never have they landed the Shylock of the Remove in so fearful a fix as he finds himself in this week!

Ram Singh, with a shake of his dusky head.

"You'd never get through!" said Tom Redwing.

The Bounder looked obstinate.

A group of the rebel Removites were standing on the island landing-place, looking across the arm of the Sark towards the bank.

The towpath opposite the island was deserted. But from the Popper Court woods along the river sounds could be heard, and every now and then the gaiters of a keeper, or the helmet of a constable, was glimpsed among the trees.

Up and down the river, on both banks of the Sark, and for miles in every direction, the hunt was going on for the hold-up man who had robbed the bank in Courtfield a couple of days ago.

The whole countryside was up, hunting for that desperate man, who, so far, had succeeded in keeping clear of his pursuers.

"Look here—" said Vernon-Smith.

"Nothing doing, Smithy!" said the captain of the Remove. "We've got to keep on the island while this excitement is going on. They'll bag that sportsman soon, and then things will settle down again."

"We can't live on air!" grunted the Bounder.

"We can live on rations—and the grub will hold out if we go easy with it!"

"I'll chance it! Most of the people

who are after that bank-raider won't bother their heads about us, they've got nothing to do with Greyfriars and don't care a rap about our row with the Head."

"That's so!" agreed Wharton. "But any fellow getting off the island will be spotted at once. All Sir Hilton Popper's keepers are out, and they're watching for chances to bag any of us. What's the good of asking for trouble?"

The Bounder grunted again. Smithy, as a matter of fact, was the fellow to ask for trouble! Any reckless adventure had an irresistible appeal for him. The fact that his steps would be dogged by danger if he quitted the safe refuge of Popper's Island rather attracted the Bounder than otherwise. And he liked the idea of making a venture that no other fellow wanted to make. Smithy dearly loved the lime-light.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, there's a jolly old keeper!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, with a nod towards a burly figure that emerged from the wood on the towpath.

It was Joyce, Sir Hilton Popper's head keeper. He glanced towards the island as he moved along the bank. He had a gun under his arm.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" bawled Bob Cherry. "Caught that sportsman yet, old bean?"

Joyce shook his head and passed on, and went into the wood again farther down the bank. There was a sound of shouting at a distance, and the deep bay of a hound. A bloodhound had been put on the trail of the bank-robber; without any success so far. The woods were alive with keepers and police.

"He's gone!" said the Bounder, as Joyce disappeared.

"He's not gone far!" said Frank Nugent.

"Look here, I'm jolly well going to chance it!" exclaimed Herbert Vernon-Smith. "I'm not askin' any of you fellows to come. If they get me I shan't ask you to come along to the school to rescue me!"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" snapped Wharton. "We're all right so long as we stand together! The Head can't sack a whole Form, whatever happens. But if he gets hold of one straggler he will make an example of him. If they get you to Greyfriars you'll be bunked."

"Cut it out, old man!" said Squiff.

"It's not good enough."

"It's good enough for me!" said the Bounder coolly. "I'm goin'!"

"You're an ass!" said Johnny Bull.

"Same to you and many of them!"

"Look here, Smithy—" urged Redwing.

"Oh, rats!"

The Bounder walked towards the boat. There was only one boat on the island, which the rebels had bagged from Coker of the Fifth. It was drawn up out of the water, behind a barricade of wire and stakes and logs, for safety. Harry Wharton knitted his brows. As captain of the Remove, he was in command of the Greyfriars rebellion. But Herbert Vernon-Smith was a far from obedient follower.

"Lend a hand with this boat, you men!" called out the Bounder. "You can run me across to the bank and get it back and leave me to it."

"Leave the boat alone!" snapped the captain of the Remove. "We're not risking losing it because you want to play the fool."

Smithy shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, all right! I'll swim for it!" he retorted.

"You silly ass!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Rats to you!"

"I say you fellows, you shut up!" exclaimed Billy Bunter indignantly. "If Smithy's going for grub it's a jolly good idea! I say, Smithy, you'll bring some jam back with you, won't you, old chap? I haven't tasted jam for days."

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Yah!"

The Bounder sat down to take off his shoes. Evidently his wilful mind was made up; and if he did not cross to the bank in the boat he was going to swim for it. Opposition always had the effect of making Smithy more obstinate and determined.

"Look here, you silly fathead, if you're going we'll ferry you across in the boat!" exclaimed Harry Wharton angrily. "But—"

"Cut out the buts; I'm goin'."

"Lend a hand with the boat, you fellows!" grunted the captain of the Remove. "We shan't see Smithy again; no need for him to get wet."

The Bounder laughed. The Famous Five pulled the boat down to the water and slid it into the Sark. They followed the Bounder into it.

Harry Wharton scanned the bank anxiously. But there was no one to be seen for the moment. The juniors pulled the boat across.

It bumped into the rushes of the towpath, and Herbert Vernon-Smith jumped lightly ashore. He grinned back at the frowning faces in the boat.

"Look here, Smithy, you'd better come back——" said Bob.

"I'll watch it!"

"Oh, go and eat coke, and be blowed to you!" said Bob crossly. And the boat pushed off the bank and pulled back to the island.

There it was beached once more, and the Famous Five, joined by most of the garrison of the island, watched the bank with anxious eyes. Wilful and headstrong as the Bounder was, they did not want him to fall into the hands of the enemy. It was only too certain that the Head of Greyfriars would make a severe example of any member of the rebel Form who fell into his hands.

"Oh, my hat! Look!" breathed Peter Todd.

Vernon-Smith had gone up a shady path into the wood. He had barely disappeared when Joyce was seen again, coming out on the towpath. The juniors on the island watched him with anxious faces. If Sir Hilton Popper's head keeper had seen Smithy land his game was up. And it was quite likely that his eye had been on the boat as it ferried the Bounder across.

Joyce hurried up the bank and turned into the path by which the Bounder had gone. Harry Wharton breathed hard.

"That fears it!" he said. "He's seen Smithy!"

"They'll get him!" said Skinner.

"I guess it's a cinch!" remarked Fisher T. Fish. "They'll sure get him!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There he is!"

Herbert Vernon-Smith suddenly reappeared from the wood. He was running. Behind him appeared the burly figure of Wilson, one of Sir Hilton's keepers. Evidently the Bounder had run into him in the woodland path.

Joyce, the head keeper, was just in front of him as he came racing back to the river-bank. The Bounder saw him, but did not stop. Wilson was close behind, with hand outstretched to grab him. The juniors watched breathlessly from the island. They could not help the reckless fellow, and they could only watch in tense excitement.

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But the Bounder, if he was reckless and self-willed, was not a fellow to be caught easily. He came straight on at Joyce, who grasped at him to stop him. Vernon-Smith lowered his head and butted, suddenly and unexpectedly, and Sir Hilton Popper's head keeper, with a spluttering gasp, rolled over backwards on the bank.

In a second the Bounder leaped past his sprawling form, turned, and ran down the bank of the Sark, with Wilson only a yard behind him, running in pursuit.

Joyce staggered to his feet, gasping for breath, and followed on.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"He's for it!" said Peter Todd.

"They'll have him!"

"He's asked for it!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"The askfulness was terrific!"

Down the grassy bank of the Sark went the Bounder, running like a hare. Close behind him ran Wilson, and behind Wilson, Joyce. The three of them disappeared in the direction of the Greyfriars boathouse, and were lost to the sight of the fellows on the island.

Not a fellow there expected to see the Bounder again. Smithy had asked for it—and he was getting that for which he had asked!

IMPORTANT!

Will readers please note that owing to the August Bank Holiday next week's issue of the MAGNET will be on sale FRIDAY, August 3rd.—Ed.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Captured!

WINGATE of the Sixth stared. The Greyfriars captain was strolling up the bank of the Sark, between the school boathouse and Popper's Island.

Morning classes were on at Greyfriars School; but several of the prefects were not in their usual places in the Sixth Form room.

By order of the Head, watch was kept on the island in the river. Exactly how to deal with the rebellion of the Remove the Head did not, apparently, know. It was an extraordinary state of affairs, and very difficult to handle.

But he knew, at least, how to deal with any rebel who fell into his hands. More than once fellows leaving the island for supplies had had narrow escapes from watchful prefects. Any fellow known to be a ringleader was fairly certain to be expelled if captured; any other member of the rebel Form was quite certain of a flogging.

Wingate was going along in the direction of the island, certainly not expecting to meet any of the rebel juniors on his way. So he stared at the sight of a Removite coming down the bank at a terrific burst of speed.

"Vernon-Smith!" murmured the Greyfriars captain.

The next moment he saw the cause of Smithy's haste. Behind him, on the bank, appeared two men in gaiters, running fast. Pursuit was close at the heels of the Bounder.

Wingate smiled grimly.

The escaping junior was heading directly towards him. He was not likely to escape now.

The captain of Greyfriars quickened his pace to a run. And the Bounder,

as he saw him, slacked down, panting. Wingate barred his way, and the two keepers were close behind.

Crimson with exertion, but still game, the Bounder turned from the towpath to dodge into the wood.

"Stop!" roared Wingate.

The Bounder did not stop. He tore desperately up a path into the wood. Wingate was after him like a shot.

Joyce and Wilson halted, panting for breath. That rapid run down the river had winded them; and they could safely leave the fugitive to the head prefect of Greyfriars.

"Stop!" shouted Wingate again as he charged up the dusky woodland path after the Bounder.

Vernon-Smith tore on. Close behind him came the tramp of Wingate's feet. At any time a Lower Fourth junior would hardly have beaten the best athlete in the Sixth Form in a foot race. And already the chase had told on the Bounder. He was panting hard as he ran.

An outstretched hand touched his shoulder.

In another moment Wingate would have grasped him. But in that moment the Bounder flung himself to the earth, right under his pursuer's feet. Before he could stop, Wingate went stumbling headlong over him.

"Ow!" he roared as his nose came in contact with a branch of a tree.

Smithy was on his feet in a twinkling.

Without a look at the sprawling prefect, he darted away among the trees.

Wingate staggered to his feet, gasping.

"You young rascal, stop!" he spluttered.

He rushed after the Bounder into the wood.

Crash!

"Oh gum!" gasped the Bounder.

He reeled back from the shock as he crashed into a portly figure among the trees.

There was a howl of angry surprise.

"What the dickens! Who— Oh gad!" Inspector Grimes, of Courtfield, staggered against a tree, gasping.

Before the Bounder could recover, Wingate's grasp was on him. That grasp fastened like a steel vice on Herbert Vernon-Smith's collar.

The Bounder was caught.

Mr. Grimes, gurgling, stared at the two of them. His plump face was red with anger. The Courtfield inspector was searching the wood for traces of an escaped hold-up man, and he certainly had not expected to be suddenly barged over by a schoolboy.

"What does this mean?" he roared. "What? What the dickens do you mean by running into me? What are you doing here at all?"

"It's one of those young rascals off the island, Mr. Grimes!" said Wingate. "Sorry he barged you over——"

"I should say so!" snorted Mr. Grimes. "Tell your headmaster that I should be obliged if he would keep his boys in order! Do you know that there is an armed gunman hiding somewhere in these woods? What! Is this a place for schoolboys to play silly tricks? What!"

"What the thump did you get in the way for?" snarled the Bounder savagely. "You ought to have caught that gunman long ago!"

"What?" roared Mr. Grimes.

"Hold your cheeky tongue, Vernon-Smith!" snapped Wingate. "Sorry, Mr. Grimes! I'm taking this cheeky young rascal back to the school at once."

Mr. Grimes snorted with wrath. Leaving him snorting, Wingate led the Bounder away by the collar. He led him back to the path, and then by the shortest cut to the Courtfield road, and

headed for Greyfriars. Herbert Vernon-Smith went—because he had no choice in the matter. Wingate's grasp on his collar did not relax for a second.

The Bounder tramped along savagely. His hands were clenched and his eyes gleaming. He had asked for it, and he had got it; but he did not intend to be marched into the school if he could help it. He had little chance of handling Wingate; but he was preparing to make a desperate effort to break loose, when Gwynne of the Sixth appeared on the road.

"Hallo, you've got one of them!" called out Gwynne.

"Yes, one of the worst of the young rascals, if not the worst of the lot!" answered Wingate. "I— Oh!"

Wingate gave a yell as the Bounder

"Hallo, they've got one of them!" yelled Coker of the Fifth.

"Time they did!" grinned Potter.

"Oh, rather!" said Greene.

Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, hurried towards the new arrivals.

"So you have caught one of those rebellious young rascals!" he exclaimed.

"Very good! Very good indeed!"

"No bizney of yours, Prout!" said the Bounder coolly.

"What?" ejaculated Mr. Prout.

"What?"

"Gettin' deaf?" asked the Bounder pleasantly. "I said it was no bizney of yours, old bean! But you never could mind your own business, could you, Prout?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled a crowd of fellows in the quad. That mode of

"Come on!" gasped Gwynne. The two prefects hurried their prisoner onward. Mr. Prout was left crimson, and spluttering with wrath, and the Greyfriars fellows howling with laughter. Which was some satisfaction to the captured Bounder as he was marched into the House and taken to his headmaster's study.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Sacked!

"M R. QUELCH——"

"Sir!"

"Something must be done, sir!" snapped the Head.

"Quite!" agreed Mr. Quelch.



Vernon-Smith panted hard as he ran. Another moment, and Wingate would have grasped him. But in that moment the Bounder flung himself to the earth, right under his pursuer's feet. Unable to stop himself in time, Wingate stumbled headlong over the sprawling junior. "Ow!" he roared, as his nose came in contact with a branch of a tree.

suddenly hacked his shin, and at the same moment wrenched his collar loose.

The Greyfriars captain grasped him again as he leaped away. The Bounder struggled desperately in his grasp.

But the next moment Gwynne's grasp was added. With a stalwart Sixth Form man holding him by either arm, even the desperate Bounder had to yield.

"You young rascal!" panted Wingate. He was limping from the hack on his shin. "I'd tan your hide, but you'll get enough from the Head!"

"Blow the Head, and blow you!" retorted the Bounder.

"Get him in!" grunted Gwynne.

And the Bounder was marched in at the school gates. It was morning break now, and the quadrangle swarmed with Greyfriars fellows. There was a shout at once, as Herbert Vernon-Smith was seen, marching in between two tall Sixth Formers.

addressing the Fifth Form master seemed to entertain them.

Mr. Prout's plump face was purple.

"Vernon-Smith! How dare you? How dare——"

"Oh, can it!" said Vernon-Smith. "Keep your cackle for the Fifth, Prout?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Impudent young rascal!" spluttered Mr. Prout. "Upon my word——"

"Bow-wow! Anybody been inking you again, old thing?" asked Smithy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on, you cheeky young rascal!" gasped Wingate.

"Take him to the Head!" gasped Mr. Prout. "I have no doubt that Dr. Locke will expel him from the school. I think it very probable. I think——"

"You don't!" said Vernon-Smith.

"You've got nothin' to do it with!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Have you any suggestion to make, sir?"

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Greyfriars Remove, did not answer that question. Dr. Locke frowned. Frowns had been almost perpetual on the brow of the headmaster of Greyfriars School for some time past.

He was perturbed, he was worried, he was angry. Neither was Mr. Quelch, the master without a Form, enjoying life.

"This state of affairs," said the Head, "is intolerable. I have had several disagreeable communications from Sir Hilton Popper——"

"He is a somewhat disagreeable gentleman!" assented Mr. Quelch.

"He is chairman of the governing board of Greyfriars, Mr. Quelch, and he talks of calling a meeting of the

governors to consider the present extraordinary state of affairs. Imagine my feelings, sir, if that should take place!"

Mr. Quelch could easily imagine them.

"If Bunter could be secured and sent away," said the Head. "The expulsion of Bunter was the excuse, the pretext, for this lawless outbreak in defiance of authority—"

"I should hardly call it a pretext, sir." Mr. Quelch felt bound to put in a word for his erring Form. "All the Remove boys believe that Bunter was not guilty of the act for which he was expelled, sir."

"Nonsense, Mr. Quelch!"

"And, indeed, sir, it seems to me very improbable that a boy like Bunter could have been guilty of so serious, so reckless, an act as squirting ink over a Form-master—"

"I trust, Mr. Quelch, that you do not suppose for one moment that I should expel a Greyfriars boy without conclusive proof."

"Certainly not, sir! Yet—"

"That matter is closed! Unfortunately, Bunter is safe on the island in the river, and the rebellious boys refuse to give him up. The ring-leaders are well known to me," went on the Head angrily. "Wharton, Cherry, Todd, and Vernon-Smith. I believe they are the worst."

Mr. Quelch was silent. Considering that the Greyfriars Remove firmly believed that they were standing up for right and justice, it was a moot point whether the ring-leaders were the worst—or the best!

But it was useless, and would have indeed been wanting in respect to point that out to the Head.

"If any of those four boys should fall into my hands, I shall immediately

expel him, as a warning to the others!" said Dr. Locke, in a deep voice. "That will be a drastic lesson, I think."

Tap!

It was a knock at the Head's study door.

"Come in!" rapped Dr. Locke sharply. Of late, the Head's voice, usually kind and benevolent, had grown very acid.

The door opened, and Wingate and Gwynne of the Sixth appeared, marching between them Vernon-Smith of the Remove.

Mr. Quelch gave a start, and half-rose. Dr. Locke fixed his eyes on the captured rebel with grim satisfaction.

"We caught Vernon-Smith off the island, sir," said the Greyfriars captain. "I have brought him to you."

"You have done well, Wingate," said Dr. Locke. "This is one of the ring-leaders. One of the very worst! I am very glad to see you here, Vernon-Smith!"

"The gladness is all on your side, sir," said the Bounder coolly.

"Wha-at?" ejaculated the Head.

"You don't expect me to share it, sir?" said the Bounder.

"Be silent, Vernon-Smith!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "How dare you speak impertinently to your headmaster?"

"Well, sir, I'm not exactly expectin' to enjoy this interview," said Vernon-Smith. "I shouldn't have come, but Wingate was so pressin' that I couldn't really refuse."

Wingate and Gwynne exchanged a glance over Smithy's head. They suppressed an inclination to grin. The expression on the Head's speaking countenance told that it was no time for grinning.

Dr. Locke rose to his feet.

"Vernon-Smith! You are expelled from this school!" he thundered.

"You don't say so, sir!" asked the Bounder, with refreshing coolness.

"Upon my word!" gasped the Head.

"Will you Sixth Form men please let go?" inquired the Bounder. "You've heard the Beak say I'm sacked. If I'm sacked you can take your paws off me. I've got an engagement elsewhere."

"You will not release that insolent boy, Wingate!"

"Certainly not, sir!"

"But if I'm sacked, ain't I going?" asked Vernon-Smith. "You're not goin' to ask me to stay as a guest, sir, because you can't bear to part with the pleasure of my company, surely?"

"Will you cease to be insolent to your headmaster, Vernon-Smith?" gasped Mr. Quelch.

The Head seemed incapable of speech, for a moment.

"If I'm sacked he's not my headmaster, sir," retorted the Bounder. "He's only Henry Locke, a fussy and ill-tempered old gentleman."

"Boy!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"And I protest against bein' kept here by a fussy and ill-tempered old gentleman!" continued the Bounder. "If I'm sacked, I'm sacked! Tell these two fat-heads to take their paws off me, Locke."

"You—you—you insolent young knave!" stuttered the Head. "You will not be allowed to return to Popper's Island—"

"Why not, if I don't belong to Greyfriars any more?" demanded the Bounder. "You've no right to interfere with my personal liberty, Locke."

"You will be sent home!" thundered the Head. "My duty is not discharged until you are in your father's care."

The Bounder's eyes glimmered. If he was sent home in charge of a prefect he had no doubt of being able to dodge that prefect before they reached London.

But the Head was "wise" to that. Bunter had been sent away in charge of a prefect when he was sacked, and Bunter had got nowhere near home. Dr. Locke was not taking chances like that again.

"Wingate! Gwynne! You will take Vernon-Smith to the punishment-room and see that he is secured there!" he rapped.

"Here, hold on!" exclaimed the Bounder. "What's this game, Locke?"

"Silence!" thundered the Head.

"You can't shut me up in punny!" exclaimed the Bounder. "If I'm sacked I'm ready to clear. I'm not goin' into punny!"

"You will be locked in the punishment-room, Vernon-Smith, until your father can come to Greyfriars to take you away," said Dr. Locke grimly. "I shall communicate with him at once. Remove him, Wingate!"

"This way, kid!" said the Greyfriars captain, and Herbert Vernon-Smith was hooked to the door, and out into the corridor.

His eyes blazed as he went. Probably the reckless Bounder repented, by that time, that he had left the island. His only thought now was to get back there.

The sentence of the "sack" would not have worried him much, in company with the rest of the rebels, all in danger of the same sentence, all determined to stand shoulder to shoulder. But this was a very different matter. Locked in punny, he had no chance to rejoin his Form-fellows, and if he waited at Greyfriars till Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith came, he had to leave the school with his father. And whatever view the millionaire took of the matter, it did not seem probable that Smithy would have any chance of taking further part in



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the Greyfriars rebellion. He went down the corridor between Wingate and Gwynne, panting.

At the corner, he made a sudden wrench, and a bound. He tore himself loose and ran.

"Stop!" roared Wingate.

He was after the Bounder like a shot. Smithy, at a desperate speed, was heading for the open door on the quad. Wingate was close behind, and was about to grasp him when Hobson of the Shell happened!

Perhaps it was by accident that Hobby barged in. Or perhaps he wanted to do the hunted Remove a good turn. Anyhow, James Hobson of the Shell barged right into the captain of Greyfriars, and Wingate, staggering, missed his grasp at the Bounder.

Before he could grasp again Vernon-Smith was out of the doorway, leaping recklessly down the steps. There was a roar in the quadrangle as he was seen.

"Smithy—"

"Oh, my hat! Hook it, Smithy!"

"Put it on, old bean!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The sympathy of the Lower School, at least, seemed to be with Smithy. But there were half a dozen prefects of the Sixth in the offing. They made a rush together for the escaping Bounder. Loder and Carne and Walker all grabbed at him at once.

Smithy was quite desperate now. There was a howl from Gerald Loder as a swift upper-cut sent him spinning backwards, Sixth Former as he was. Loder crashed. The next moment Vernon-Smith was struggling furiously with Carne and Walker. A wildly excited crowd surged round.

"Go it, Smithy!" yelled Tubb of the Third.

"Bravo, Smithy!" howled Dicky Nugent of the Second.

"What—what—what is this?" boomed Mr. Prout. He rolled up. "Upon my word! Outrageous, unprecedented, unparalleled!" Prout's grasp was added to the grasps of Carne and Walker.

"Let go, you old fool!" yelled the Bounder, still struggling.

"Upon my word! I—I—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wingate and Gwynne were on the scene again now. They grasped at the Bounder. Prout reeled breathless from the jab of an elbow that landed on the fattest part of Prout.

"Urrrrgh!" gurgled Prout.

"Collar him!" gasped Gwynne.

Four prefects had hold of the Bounder now. He was swept off his feet. Kicking and struggling and yelling defiance, he was carried bodily back into the House, leaving the quad in a roar. A minute later Herbert Vernon-Smith was tossed into the punishment-room and the key turned on him.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Worries of a Business Man!

FISHER T. FISH yelled. His yell rang across Popper's Island and across both banks of the Sark.

Fishy was hurt.

No fellow could stop Bob Cherry's foot, kicking as if for goal, without feeling hurt.

Fishy had stopped it with his bony person.

Hence his fearful yell

"Yaroo! Wake snakes!" yelled Fishy. "Whooooop! Why, you all-fired pesky jay, wharrer you kicking a guy for?"

For the moment Fishy did not realise why Bob Cherry, passing him in the

glade on Popper's Island, had bestowed that hefty kick.

Fisher T. Fish was leaning over the big tin trunk that was used as the camp larder. The lid was closed, and Fishy was using the lid as a table.

An account-book was open before him, and Fishy with a fountain-pen was making entries in that account-book. Dealing with the subject of money, Fishy was naturally oblivious of all other things. When money occupied his thoughts Fisher Tarleton Fish forgot time and space.

GREYFRIARS CARTOONS

By HAROLD SKINNER.

No. 9.—HERBERT VERNON-SMITH

(The Bounder of the Remove.)

This week our lightning artist comes up to scratch again with a cartoon of "Smithy," who has a lot of good points . . . and plenty of bad ones, too!



Here is Vernon-Smith, the Bounder, Loudly dressed, but very cute; Good at sports, a fine all-rounder, He can bat and box and shoot.

But his tastes lie more in gambling, Billiards is the game he plays; He's not fond of country rambling, But delights in "shady ways."

Besides, Fishy was busy. The school-boy moneylender of Greyfriars had succeeded in collecting an account.

In the present state of affairs, besieged on Popper's Island, Fishy was not able to gather in the small amounts due to him from fags of the Third and the Second. That was a perpetual worry to Fisher T. Fish. He could not help guessing, reckoning, and calculating that after a long lapse of time some of those accounts might be rather difficult to gather in. But there were fellows in the Remove who had borrowed from the schoolboy Shylock. Those fellows had the pleasure—or

otherwise—of Fishy's company, and he was able to dun them. And now he had succeeded in extracting a half-crown from Wibley of the Remove, on account of interest on a little loan.

Entering that small sum in his business-book was a sheer joy to Fishy. But his joy was suddenly dashed as Bob Cherry spotted his occupation. What Bob thought of it was demonstrated by the sudden hefty kick that landed on Fishy's trousers and sent him sprawling across the trunk.

Fishy sprawled and yelled. He squirmed round, sat on the trunk, and glared at the cheery Bob with a ferocious glare.

"You pic-faced gink!" he howled. "Wharrer you calculate you're at—eh? Want me to make potato-scrappings of you, you dog-goned jay?"

"Go it!" said Bob cheerfully.

"What on earth's the row?" exclaimed Harry Wharton. Half a dozen fellows were drawn to the spot by Fishy's fearful yell.

"The rowfulness of the esteemed Fishy is terrific!" grinned Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh. "But whyfully the kickfulness, my esteemed Bob?"

"Kicking Shylock does him good!" explained Bob Cherry. He pointed to the account-book, which Fishy had dropped as he sprawled over the trunk. "That's Fishy's jolly old ledger that Prout got hold of once; you fellows remember Squiff chucked it out of the study window and it dropped on Prout's napper. Prout ought to have taken it to the Head and got Fishy the order of the boot."

"Yaas, begad!" remarked Lord Maulverer. "And if the Head sacked Fishy we wouldn't make the fuss we're makin' about jolly old Bunter."

"Hardly!" chuckled Squiff. "No fear!"

"The no-fearfulness is terrific."

Fisher T. Fish rolled off the trunk and grabbed up his "ledger." He seemed to forget his intention of making "potato-scrappings" of Bob Cherry. He was anxious about that precious book.

That account-book was well known in the Remove. Certainly Fishy did not display it if he could help it, but it had been seen often enough. It had had, in fact, several narrow escapes from fellows who did not approve of an enterprising business man starting a moneylending business at school. Now it was going to have another.

"You rotten rascal!" said the captain of the Remove, with a frown at the wriggling Fish. "You've been flogged for that sneaking game, and you ought to be jolly well bunked!"

"Aw, can it!" growled Fisher T. Fish. "I guess you jays in this pesky old mouldy country don't know the first thing about business. I'll say I never struck such an all-fired bunch of boobs."

"I never knew you'd got that book back from Prout," said Squiff. "How did you get it off Prout, you worm?"

Fisher T. Fish caught his breath.

That topic was a rather dangerous one to the junior from New York. He had used rather desperate measures in getting that precious book back before Mr. Prout could discover the owner.

"Oh, I—I guess he dropped it, and I sure picked it up!" stammered Fishy. He did not add that Prout had dropped it because he had been startled by a stream of ink being suddenly squirted over him.

Billy Bunter was supposed at Greyfriars to be the reckless ragger who had inked Prout. The Remove did not believe it, but they never dreamed who

that inker really was. Fisher T. Fish was not likely to tell them!

"Pity Prout did not take it to the Head!" growled Johnny Bull. "It's high time Fishy was sacked for his rotten games!"

"Hear, hear!"
"Hand over that book, Fish!" said the captain of the Remove.

"What?" howled Fishy.
"It's going into the river! That's the best place for it. You're not doing any moneylending stunts here!" said Wharton tersely. "You've been flogged for it by the Head, caned for it by Quelch, and kicked for it in the Remove. Now you're going to be kicked again, and that rotten ledger is going to the bottom of the river. Hand it over!"

Fisher T. Fish clutched the precious book in a bony hand and glared at the captain of the Remove.

Fishy had long ago despaired of making these jays, ginks, and geeks understand business as understood in "Noo Yark." But this was altogether too thick, in Fishy's opinion. It was really the limit—it was the elephant's side whiskers, in fact!

"You—you—you pesky bonehead!" gasped Fishy. "Why, I got all my accounts in that book! S'pose I lose that book—how'm I going to collect what's due to me when we go back to Greyfriars? I'll say there's a bunch of fags that will never pony up what's due—"

"All the better! Are you handing that rotten book over?"

"Nope!" roared Fisher T. Fish. "I'll say nope! Nix! Nunk! Not in your life-time, you all-fired boneheaded geek!"

"Then I'll take it!" said the captain of the Remove cheerfully, and he stepped towards the American junior.

The next moment he met with a surprise.

Fishy was well known to be no fighting man. And tackling the athletic captain of the Form was a proposition that might have made even a good fighting-man pause and consider. But Fishy, robbed of his precious moneylending accounts, felt rather like a lioness robbed of her cubs. Instead of handing over the offending book, Fisher T. Fish lashed out with a bony fist and caught Harry Wharton fairly on the nose.

"Ow!" roared Wharton.
He staggered under that unexpected rap. He sat down with a sudden bump in the grass of Popper's Island.

Fisher T. Fish glared at him.
He had knocked down the captain of the Form! That was satisfactory, so far as it went! But what was going to happen when the captain of the Form got up again, was too awful to contemplate!

As Wharton, red with wrath, scrambled to his feet, Fisher T. Fish

bolted away across the glade, and rushed into the trees.

"After him!" roared Bob Cherry.

"I—I—I'll spifficate him!" gasped Wharton. He dabbed a red stream from his nose. "Why, I'll mop him up into small pieces! I'll—" The captain of the Remove dashed in pursuit.

After him went a crowd of fellows, laughing. Fisher T. Fish, with his precious ledger clutched in a desperate hand, was fleeing for his life. And all the Removites were interested to behold what was going to happen to him when he was run down.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Startling Discovery!

"AFTER him!"
"Bag him!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Aw, wake snakes and walk chalks!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. He fairly raced.

Up and down, and round about Popper's Island, went the hapless business man of the Remove. Close behind came Wharton, with a crimson-oozing nose, and red wrath in his face. Behind Wharton came a yelling mob.

Popper's Island was not extensive. But it was thickly wooded, the only open spot being the glade round the massive ancient oak in the centre of the island. Trees and thickets and brambles, tangled alders and drooping willows, made almost a jungle round the glade. It was not easy going—but if flight was difficult, so was pursuit. For quite a long time Fisher T. Fish dodged and twisted and wound and doubled, and escaped the wrath that was on his trail.

It was not so much a thumping that Fishy dreaded. It was not so much a kicking. It was the loss of his business book. Even Fishy's cute, spry, business-like head could hardly carry all the details of his moneylending business, which was quite extensive among the fags of the Third and Second. That ledger was essential to his transactions. As he fled and dodged and twisted, Fishy was thinking of some safe hiding-place for that precious volume, where he could leave it before he was run down! But the chase was too hot for that. He had no time to find a spot to conceal the business book. Five or six times he was almost caught, before, at last, he bolted out into the glade again, and the book was still in his bony paw.

Gasping and panting, the hapless Fishy tore across the glade with the captain of the Remove at his heels, and a yelling crowd behind.

He headed for the big oak-tree. That was his only possible refuge! He had no time to climb the gnarled, old trunk. As he came under the big oak he made a desperate bound, and caught the lowest branch.

He swung himself wildly up, Wharton's grasp below missing him by a few inches.

"Tree'd!" roared Bob Cherry.
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come down!" roared the captain of the Remove.

"Aw, go and chop chips!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. He clambered on the branch, and crawled along to the main trunk.

Harry Wharton, dabbing his nose, glared up at him. Fisher T. Fish, ten feet from the ground, held on to a bough, and stood ready to kick if a climber followed him up. In defence of that precious business book, Fishy was quite desperate and determined.

"Are you coming down?"
"I'll say nope!" gasped Fisher T. Fish.

"Well, you can roost there, as long as you like!" said the captain of the Remove. "Look out for squalls when you come down!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton went to bathe his nose. It needed it. Fisher T. Fish sat in the oak-tree, gasping for breath. He was safe for the present. He had to face the music when he came down: but that precious account book would be safe. He was going to hide that in some deep recess high up the ancient tree. There it could remain concealed till he had a chance of retrieving it later.

So long as a laughing crowd of juniors remained under the tree, Fishy did not stir. But a few minutes later, the Removites were drawn away to the landing-place, by an alarm of a crowd on the towpath opposite. Keepers, policemen, and Inspector Grimes, were passing along in sight of the island, and one of the keepers held a bloodhound in leash. Watching them from Popper's Island, the juniors forgot all about Fisher T. Fish.

Fishy was only too glad to be forgotten.

Having recovered his breath, he clambered higher into the oak-tree. Twenty feet from the ground, was a spot where several lateral branches jutted off, making a sort of rough platform in the centre. Fishy stopped there to rest and look about him for a recess that might serve as a receptacle for the business book. There was a rustle in the thick foliage above him, but he did not heed it. Certainly it did not occur to him, for a moment, that there was already somebody in the tree.

But as he groped about the flat space where the branches joined, he gave a surprised ejaculation.

"Wake snakes!" he murmured.
Someone had been there! And that someone had, apparently, had a meal! A biscuit lay there, a crust of bread, and the peel of a banana. And Fishy's surprised stare detected crumbs scattered right and left.

"That gink Bunter!" muttered Fishy.

Bunter was supposed to have raided the camp larder the previous night. Someone had raided it, that was a certainty. And Bunter had owned up to it—to get out of the mud!

Had the fat junior clambered up the oak in the dark, to devour his purloined tuck in safety?

It looked like it!
But Fishy was puzzled.

There really seemed to be no other explanation of the unexpected "sign." he had found twenty feet up in the tall oak. On the other hand, Bunter was no climber—and tree climbing in the dark was a rather perilous business for a more active fellow than Billy Bunter! And he had no need to seek such a remote spot, while all the fellows were asleep.

But if it was not Bunter, who had been scoffing the purloined provisions high up in the oak?

"I'll say this has got me beat!" murmured the astonished Fishy.

He stared round him blankly.
Above him the foliage was thick and dusky. Below him the lower branches, loaded with leaves, entirely shut off the sight of the earth. From the bank of the Sark came the deep, thrilling sound of a bloodhound's bay. Fishy did not heed it. He was not interested in the hunt that was going on for the gunman. He was puzzled and perplexed

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by his strange discovery in the heart of the old oak.

There was a rustle overhead.

Standing there in the dusky twilight amid the thick branches, Fisher T. Fish stared up.

He had heard a rustle above him several times as he climbed, but he had not heeded it, supposing it to be caused by the wind from the sea.

Now he realised that it was not the wind. One of the high branches was sagging under a weight, making twigs and leaves rustle. There was someone ahead of him in the tree!

Whoever it was that had been making a meal there had climbed higher when the American junior came up from below.

But who?

It could only be a Remove fellow: there was nobody else on Popper's Island. Why he had dodged out of Fishy's sight, and was trying to keep quiet and hidden, was an absolute

mystery. Was it possible that there was some stranger on the island?

And then, suddenly, horribly, it flashed into Fishy's startled mind! And he knew!

For whole days, the hunt for the gunman had gone on. Yesterday, Inspector Grimes had searched Popper's Island for him, under the eyes of the rebel Removites. But he had not, of course, rooted through the branches of all the trees. Every vestige of colour faded from Fishy's bony face, as it dawned on him that there was someone hidden in the topmost boughs of the tall oak—and that that someone was, must be, the lost gunman who had robbed the Court-field and County bank, and shot and wounded a man there—and still carried the automatic with which he had fired on the pursuing crowd and kept them at bay.

Fisher T. Fish trembled in every bony limb.

He forgot even his precious account

book. He forgot everything but his fearful terror of what might be hidden in the deep, thick foliage within a few feet of him.

He made a scrambling movement towards the lower branches. As he did so, a lithe figure dropped from above on to the rough platform in the centre of the jutting branches, and a hand of iron grasped him.

One squeal of terror escaped Fisher T. Fish, as he was crushed down on the rough, uneven wood.

"Silence!"

That single word was hissed in his ear. A hard metal rim was pressed to his head. Lying helpless in that savage grip, Fisher T. Fish stared up wildly at a hard, evil face, stubbly with several days' growth of beard, with narrow, shifty eyes that gleamed like a wild animal's.

"Silence!"

Fisher T. Fish was dumb.

(Continued on next page.)



"UMPIRE" is at the service of all MAGNET readers. See if you can get him groggy with a knotty cricket problem. I doubt if you can. Address your queries: "UMPIRE," o/o The MAGNET, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

RUN-OUT QUERIES I

IN recent weeks so much of my time and thought has been spent on Test matches that I am afraid general cricket topics have been rather neglected. But I know you will forgive me, because I expect your time and thoughts have been running in the same direction.

Anyway, we can get away from Test cricket this week to deal with many questions which await my attention. For some reason which I cannot fathom—it is probably no more than a coincidence—my post-bag contains a lot of queries regarding run-out.

First and foremost there is the question of running out a batsman who is backing-up a bit too energetically. You know how this can be done, of course. The bowler, running to the wicket to deliver the ball, notices that the batsman at his end, very eager for a run, has left his crease before the ball is delivered. Can the bowler run out that batsman by breaking the wicket before he has delivered the ball? That is the question sent to me by Fred Storm.

The answer is that the bowler can thus run-out a batsman, and there is nothing in the rules to prevent him from doing so. The ball is in play, for all practical purposes, when the bowler starts his run. But on this head I have to say that the method of running out a batsman which I have described is one of the things "not done" in cricket.

What does happen is this.

The bowler, noticing the habit of the batsman at his end in backing up before the ball is delivered, warns him that if he does it again he will run him out. If, in spite of this warning, the batsman persists, then the bowler can run the batsman out without any qualms of conscience. But the warning should be given first; not because of any law to that effect, but in the true spirit of the sport.

Following this run-out query comes one from F. C. Reed, of Charlton. He was batting and drove the ball back hard and straight towards the other wicket. His batting partner, having started for a run, was out of his ground when the ball touched his leg, and went into his wicket. I am told there was an argument as to whether the batsman was out. There should not have been. A batsman cannot be run out when his colleague at the other end sends the ball into his wicket, unless the ball has touched a member of the fielding side in transit.

THE TRUE SPIRIT!

STILL another run-out question to be answered. Here are the facts. "I thought," writes D. Moore, "that a run was worth risking after I had hit the ball. The other batsman did not think so, and the result was that we were both in his crease when the wicket was broken at the other end. Which of us was out?"

In replying to this question, I think it may be of general interest to quote the official law on this subject. Here it is:

"If the batsmen have crossed each other, he that runs to the wicket which is put down is out. If they have not crossed, he that has left the wicket which is put down is out."

Interpreting this law in the common-sense way, it cannot be said that the batsman who stood still at one end crossed the other batsman in running. Hence it was the striker—my reader friend in this particular case—who was out.

Always, of course, the tragic side of it comes home to us when we see a batsman hopelessly run out; when both the fellows are at the same end. It should not happen if there is the understanding which is so necessary to successful running between the wickets. Even in first-class cricket,

however, these misunderstandings regarding what is, or what is not, a run, crop up. And sometimes you will see the true spirit of the sport illustrated by a player who sacrifices his wicket so that his comrade can go on batting.

Not long ago, Jack O'Connor and Stan Nichols were batting together for Essex. O'Connor was well set for another of the many hundreds he has made this season, but Nichols had only just arrived at the wicket. O'Connor called for a run, but Nichols did not think one could safely be made. He tried to send O'Connor back, but instinctively realising that it was too late, Nichols went for the impossible one and, of course, was run out. If Nichols had stayed at his end, O'Connor would have been the batsman to be run out. There are occasions when cricketers, remembering that the success of the team rather than the individual, is the thing, must sacrifice themselves. I like to see it done, don't you?

OBSTRUCTING THE FIELD!

RONALD McEWEN, of Aberdeen, is not quite sure what the phrase in the rules "obstructing the field" means, and he asks me to say something on this question for the enlightenment of himself and others who are equally uncertain. Actually, there is not a lot of explanation necessary. In the first place, it should be said that a batsman cannot be given out for obstructing the field unless he does it deliberately. That is for the umpire to decide.

Suppose, however, a batsman hits a ball high into the air, and in such a way that a catch can be made by, say, the bowler. The batsman, to save his wicket, runs into the bowler deliberately and prevents him from making the catch. That would be obstructing the field.

There is one point about obstructing the field which should be borne in mind.

If the field is obstructed it is the batsman who has made the stroke who is out, not necessarily the batsman who obstructs the field. To put the matter plainly, if the batsman at one end sent the ball up so that a catch could be made, and the batsman at the other end deliberately obstructed the field, it would be the first batsman who would be out.

A regular reader who lives at Nuneaton is concerned over the proper decision if a batsman snicks a "yorker" and is caught behind the wicket. If the ball strikes the ground, and the bat at the same time, the batsman is not out. "UMPIRE."

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THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

In the Gunman's Grip!

GUNNER BRIGGS, bank robber, gunman, and desperado, compressed his grasp on the shrinking junior, with the automatic jammed to his head.

Bending over him, holding him fast, the gunman listened intently, like the hunted wild beast he was.

Fisher T. Fish could only gaze at him in dumb terror.

Only too well he knew in what desperate hands he was. A man lay in Courtfield Hospital, whom the desperate rascal had shot down in robbing the bank. Half a dozen times he had fired on his pursuers before he had succeeded in eluding them. And this was the man that Fisher T. Fish had discovered in his unsuspected hiding-place! His life hung on a thread.

He knew now that the wretch must have swum to the island in the hours of darkness. He had somehow contrived to land without alarming the garrison. He had hidden himself high up in the oak. He had crouched there, unseen, even while the police were searching Popper's Island.

And—Fishy knew it now—in the darkness of the previous night, he had crept down to seek food—of which he must have been in pressing need. It was not Bunter who had raided the camp larder. Fishy's brain whirled as he realised it all! And he was in the man's hands—at his mercy! It was hardly necessary for Gunner Briggs to bid him be silent. Terror made him dumb.

The man was listening. Apparently he feared that, as one of the schoolboys had climbed the tree, others might be coming up.

But there was no sound or sight to alarm him. The glade below was silent and deserted. All the garrison of Popper's Island were at the landing-place, watching the bank. From a distance the bay of the hound was heard again.

The gunman spoke at last in a whisper. His fierce, stubbly face was bent close to Fishy's terrified, colourless visage.

"Who are you? Speak in a whisper! If there is an alarm, you know what to expect!"

"I—I guess I'm Fish—a Greyfriars fellow— Oh, great snakes! Keep that gun away! I ain't yauping any!" moaned Fisher T. Fish.

"You belong to that crowd of school-boys?"

"Yep!"

"Why did you climb this tree?"

"I guess the guys was after me—larking—"

"Are they coming up?"

"Nope! I guess they know I'll come down for dinner. Say, you shift that gun! It—it might go off."

Gunner Briggs laughed savagely.

"It will go off if you make a sound; if I'm found here! You know who I am?"

"Nope! I guess I don't know a thing!"

"Liar! You know that I am the man who held up the bank at Courtfield a couple of days ago!"

"I—I kinder guessed you might be!" mumbled Fisher T. Fish. "Say, you shift that gun! Oh snakes!"

"You did not know I was here when you climbed?"

The question was hardly necessary. Fisher T. Fish's face showed how unlikely it was that he would have climbed the oak had he even dreamed that the bank-raider was hidden in its branches.

"Nope!" he moaned.

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"Does anyone else suspect?"

"Nope!"

The man nodded slowly. He was satisfied that Fish was speaking the truth; the wretched junior was too terrified to do anything else.

"They believe that it was one of themselves—the fat boy—who took the food last night?" he muttered.

"Yep!" Evidently the gunman had heard, if not seen, what had happened on Popper's Island that morning.

The gunman was silent. He did not question Fish about the presence of the schoolboys on the island, which must have mystified him when he first discovered them there. No doubt the talk he had heard among the rebels, while hidden in the oak, had enlightened him to some extent.

He was thinking now, with savage intensity.

The presence of a garrison on the island, keeping off all comers, had been an additional security for the hidden fugitive—so long as that garrison did not discover his presence.

The police had searched the island, as in duty bound; but probably in a rather perfunctory manner; for it had seemed extremely improbable that the hunted man could have hidden himself on a small island crowded by thirty school-boys.

That search was not likely to be repeated; and, apart from the official police, the rebel schoolboys allowed no one to land.

Even the risk of purloining food in the hours of darkness had been but slight as the schoolboys, never dreaming of a stranger on the island, had attributed the pilfering to one of their own number.

Had Gunner Briggs only remained undiscovered, his prospects were good. He had only to stick it out till the hunt along the river slackened, and then, stealing the rebels' boat some dark night, make an attempt to get clear.

That scheme might, in all probability, have turned out a "winner," but for Fisher T. Fish climbing the oak. But now—

Fishy watched the changing expressions on the ruffian's face with silent, quaking dread.

The man dared not fire—he knew that as soon as his terrified mind was able to realise anything. A shot would have betrayed his presence. Every ear on Popper's Island would have caught it, and many ears on the bank of the Sark. The hunt now going on up and down the river would have concentrated at once on Popper's Island.

Not unless he was driven to bay would the wretch pull trigger. But one savage blow from that heavy weapon would have cracked Fish's head—and at that, he was only too well aware the desperado would not have hesitated for a moment, if his safety required it. Fishy broke the silence in a trembling whisper.

"Say, bo! I guess I'll keep it dark. I got no call to give you away. I ain't saying a word about you. Say, if I don't go down from this here tree for dinner, they'll want to know, sure!"

Gunner Briggs gritted his teeth.

That was the thought in his own tormented mind.

For the moment the other schoolboys were regardless of the junior who had climbed the oak. But if he did not descend again, obviously they would wonder what had become of him. Sooner or later, if he did not go down, or answer to a call, someone would climb to look for him. It was useless to crack his head with the butt of the automatic. That would keep Fisher T. Fish quiet,

but it would not prevent the rest from discovering what had happened.

"I guess they'll be looking for me!" mumbled Fisher T. Fish. "I'll say your best guess is to let me vamoose the ranch. I ain't giving you away."

Gunner Briggs made him a gesture to be silent.

His grip was still on the American junior, but the automatic was no longer pressed to Fishy's head. Briggs had taken it by the barrel. Fisher T. Fish, in an agony of apprehension, knew that the wretch was debating in his own mind whether it would be safest to knock him on the head. Fishy's business transactions had landed him into many a scrape. But never had they landed him in so fearful a scrape as this!

Every minute that passed seemed like an age to Fisher T. Fish. From the glade below came the sound of voices.

"They'll get him with that jolly old bloodhound!" It was Bob Cherry's voice, clearly audible in the foliage of the oak.

"Unless he takes to the water," said Harry Wharton.

"If he does, there's half a dozen boats on the Sark now, looking for him. He hasn't an earthly."

"I hope they'll get the brute!"

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific!"

The juniors were discussing the man-hunt, little dreaming that the hunted man heard every word they uttered. Fisher T. Fish trembled at the blaze of rage that came into the gunman's eyes.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hungry, Bunter?" asked Bob, with a chuckle.

"Famished!" said Billy Bunter. "I say, you fellows, we can't go short of grub like this! I'm perishing!"

"You had enough last night to last you a week, you fat cormorant!"

"I never had any last night, you beast!" roared Bunter. "I keep on telling you that I never touched the tuck—"

"You fat villain, you owned up that you did!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Well, you silly ass, of course I owned up, when I was up to my neck in water!" hooted Bunter. "Who wouldn't have? I never touched it all the same."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Hasn't Fishy come off his perch yet? He will miss his dinner at this rate," said Bob Cherry. And he glanced up at the roof of foliage above his head, and shouted: "Fishy, Fishy, Fishy! Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

Fisher T. Fish heard. But he dared not answer. He quaked like a jelly in the grip of the gunman.

"Fishy!" roared Wharton. "Come down and have your nose punched!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was no answer from the oak.

"Dinner-time, Fishy!" roared Bob, little dreaming of the reason of the American junior's silence. "If you're not on time, Bunter will scoff your whack. I can see it is in his eye."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Why doesn't the silly ass answer?" said Johnny Bull. "He hasn't gone deaf or dumb, I suppose?"

"Oh, let him rip!" said Harry. "He will have to come down for dinner. Let's get on with tiffin."

It was dinner-time, and the schoolboy rebels gave their attention to that function—especially Bunter. If Fishy chose to remain in the oak-tree, and refuse to answer a call, that was his

own business. Certainly nobody particularly wanted his company. Nobody, so far, had the slightest suspicion that anything was wrong. Only Fisher T. Fish knew that, and he knew it with painful, awful clearness.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Angry Father!

MR. SAMUEL VERNON-SMITH, financier and millionaire, frowned portentously as his magnificent Rolls turned in at the gates of Greyfriars.

There had been a frown on Mr. Vernon-Smith's brow all the way down to Greyfriars, and it intensified as he drove in. The millionaire was angry—very angry indeed. It did not look as if there was a happy interview coming for the junior locked up in the punishment-room.

Fellows in the Greyfriars quad, who beheld the millionaire's arrival, exchanged glances, and there was a buzz of comment.

"That's the Old Obadiah," remarked Temple of the Fourth. "Bet you he's come for the Young Obadiah."

"Oh, rather!" agreed Dabney.

"Bit thick to sack Smithy, though," remarked Fry. "Smithy's no worse than the rest of the mob."

Cecil Reginald Temple grinned.

"He's the only one the beak's got his claws on. He's going to be made a horrible example of."

Mr. Quelch, from his study window, observed the millionaire. His frown was as deep as Mr. Vernon-Smith's.

The Head's drastic measures with Smithy were far from winning the approval of Smithy's Form-master.

No master liked a fellow in his Form to be sacked. Bunter was under sentence already. Now Smith had "got" it. Making all allowance for the Head's natural anger at the Remove rebellion, it was, in Edward Fry's language, a "bit thick." That was not what Mr. Quelch would have called it, of course. But that was undoubtedly what he thought.

However, he could not intervene. It could not be denied that Herbert Vernon-Smith had rebelled against authority—an offence deserving of expulsion. The fact that all the rest of the Remove had rebelled in a similar manner was an extenuating circumstance which, however, the exasperated headmaster did not choose to take into account.

Mr. Vernon-Smith was shown into the Head's study. He entered that apartment rather like a whirlwind. Dr. Locke rose courteously to greet him; but the millionaire had no time or inclination for courteous greetings. He interrupted the Head ruthlessly.

"Dr. Locke, I was surprised—astonished, by your message. You tell me that my son is expelled—why?"

"Pray be seated, sir!"

Mr. Vernon-Smith plumped into a chair.

"Not long ago," he went on, "my son was in trouble here. I admit that his conduct was bad. You gave him another chance. I went to the length of menacing him with disinheritance if he did not mend his ways. I understood that he had taken warning, and mended them. I have received a favourable account of him from you, sir. I have had a very agreeable report from his Form-master. Now, sir, all of a sudden, like a bolt from the blue—"

"I regret very much—"

"Why is my son expelled?" demanded the millionaire. "If he has taken to bad and disreputable courses again—"

"No—no; nothing of the kind!"

"I am glad of it, sir—I am very glad of it! I believed that I could trust him, and I have trusted him. But if he has not erred in the same way as formerly—what has he done?"

"He has rebelled against authority, sir," said the Head. "He has absented himself from school without leave; he has refused to return to obedience, and he has resisted by force the prefects sent to fetch him back."

"Good gad!" gasped Mr. Vernon-Smith. "Is it possible?"

"It is not only possible, but true, sir. This morning he was caught by the prefects, and brought into the school. He is now locked up in the punishment-room. That, sir, is the only way of keeping him here for you to take away. Had I sent him home with a prefect in charge of him, he would certainly have escaped on the way, or attempted to do so."

"Good gad!" repeated Mr. Vernon-Smith blankly.

He fairly gasped. Whatever he had expected to hear from Dr. Locke, certainly he had not expected to hear this.

"The young rascal!" he exclaimed. "The reckless young reprobate! I quite fail to understand this, Dr. Locke. What is the boy's reason for such a very extraordinary line of conduct? He must have had some reason."

The Head coughed. He was unwilling to enter upon the topic of the Remove rebellion. It was not a pleasant topic. It was a humiliating topic. But there was no help for it.

(Continued on next page.)

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Mr. Vernon-Smith's eyes were very keenly on his face. The sharp and acute City gentleman did not need telling that there was something behind this.

"Come, sir!" barked Mr. Vernon-Smith. "Herbert must have had some reason, some provocation—at least, he must have fancied so. What you describe is so very extraordinary—"

"A boy in the Remove, sir, named Bunter, is under sentence of expulsion for having thrown ink over a member of my staff. His Form fellows have taken the impertinent, the insolent view, that an error was made—by me, sir—and they have taken Bunter out of the school, and are keeping him with them, in order to prevent my sentence from being carried out. Your son is one of the ringleaders."

"Good gad!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith.

He gazed at the Head.

"Let us have this clear, sir!" he jerked out. "You say his Form fellows—does that mean all the Remove?"

"It does, sir."

"Then the whole Form is absent from the school, and they are keeping this boy Bunter with them in defiance of you?"

"That is the state of the case."

"And my son has taken part in this?"

"A leading part," said the Head. "There are many boys in the Remove who would certainly not have ventured to join in such a movement. But the ringleaders are known, and Vernon-Smith is one of them."

"And the others, sir?"

"That is immaterial."

"It is not immaterial, sir!" snorted Mr. Vernon-Smith. "You tell me that my son has been guilty of outrageously rebellious conduct, for which I, sir, should condemn him as severely as you possibly could. Then you tell me that all the boys of his Form are concerned in the same transaction. I have a right to know, sir, why my son is selected for punishment?" He snorted still more emphatically. "Is it your intention, sir, to expel the whole of that Form from Greyfriars School?"

"That is scarcely practicable—"

"On what grounds, then, is my son selected for such a very drastic and severe punishment?" demanded Mr. Vernon-Smith. "Is it because he chances to be the only Remove boy in your power, sir?"

Dr. Locke coloured. That was an extremely unpleasant way of putting it. "Pray be calm, Mr. Vernon-Smith. I have said that your son was a ringleader."

"The only one, sir?"

"No—no. There are several others."

"Their names, sir? They must be known to you, since you are so well acquainted with the ringleaders, so far as my son is concerned. I know some of the boys in the Remove—friends of my son."

"Wharton, Cherry, Field, Todd, since you desire to know, sir!" snapped the Head.

"Wharton, Cherry, Field, Todd!" repeated Mr. Vernon-Smith. "And it is your intention to expel Wharton, Cherry, Field, and Todd, sir, as you are expelling my son?"

The Head paused. Certainly he was exasperated enough to expel fellows right and left. Still, there was a limit. Half a dozen expulsions in one Form was a big order.

"Or am I to understand, sir," hooted Mr. Vernon-Smith, "that my son has been picked out as a scapegoat, and that other boys, equally guilty of rebellion

and defiance of authority, are not to be punished in the same manner?"

"Not at all, sir! If the boys persist in their rebellion, the ringleaders will certainly be expelled as soon as they fall into my hands. The others will be severely flogged," said the Head. "If they submit of their own accord to authority, I shall be as lenient as possible."

"My son's chief delinquency, it seems, consists in falling into your hands, sir, not in rebelling against your authority!" barked Mr. Vernon-Smith.

The Head reddened with vexation.

"Really, Mr. Vernon-Smith—"

"That is how it appears to me, sir. My son has done what the whole Form has done—neither more nor less. And it seems, sir, that this Form had rebelled on account of a boy they believe to be unjustly punished. They believe that you have made an error. I have little doubt that they are right, sir."

"Sir!" gasped the Head.

"Tell me this, sir!" hooted Mr. Vernon-Smith. "Are the boys you have named the worst boys in the Form, sir, or the best boys in the Form?"

Dr. Locke did not answer that.

"I know these boys," continued Mr. Vernon-Smith. "Wharton is a splendid lad; Cherry another. Field is an Australian boy, and as fine a lad, sir, as I have ever seen! And if you expel them from the school, the loss will be the school's! Colonel Wharton and Major Cherry are governors of the school, sir, and I do not imagine they will allow their boys to be expelled without rigid inquiry into the circumstances. They will find, sir, that you are administering this drastic punishment because the boys have stood manfully by a lad whom they believe to have been wronged."

"Mr. Vernon-Smith!"

"Had my son, sir, refused to stand by his friends in such an emergency, I should have been ashamed of him!" roared Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"Sir!"

"You have no right, sir, to expel my son unless you expel, at the same time, the whole of the Form to which he belongs!"

Dr. Locke rose to his feet. His face was crimson. His usually kind temper had been terribly exacerbated by the late happenings at Greyfriars. He was in no mood to be dictated to by the irate millionaire.

"This discussion, sir, is serving no purpose!" he rapped. "I request you, sir, to remove your son from the school!"

Mr. Vernon-Smith bounced up.

"That I shall certainly do immediately, sir! But if you fancy, sir, that your sentence will be submitted to, you are making a very serious mistake!" he bawled. "You will hear more of this, sir! You will hear a great deal more of it! Now let me see my son!"

The Head rang for Trotter and handed him the key of the punishment-room. Mr. Vernon-Smith, snorting, followed the page. Dr. Locke gasped for breath when the door closed on the millionaire. Just then the Head of Greyfriars felt that he had nothing to ask, except that Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith would take his departure, and take it promptly.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Fishy's Ordeal!

"FISHY!"
"Fish!"
"What's happened to the duffer?"
"Fishy, you ass!"
"Can't you answer, you fathead?"

Half a dozen fellows, under the wide-spreading branches of the big oak-tree, were calling up to Fisher T. Fish.

It was several hours now since the American junior had clambered for refuge into the big oak on Popper's Island. He had cut tiffin, and now it was getting near tea-time, and he had not reappeared. Nobody wanted him, so far as that went. But Harry Wharton & Co. were rather puzzled, and beginning to wonder whether any mischance had occurred to him.

Certainly he had not fallen from the tree, or he would have been visible to all eyes. And if he had got jammed in some fork of the branches, from which he could not extricate himself, he could have called out. It could not be for the sake of his precious business-book that he was sticking there; he could have concealed that easily enough before coming down. And it could hardly be because he was going to have his bony nose punched in return for punching Wharton's. He had to face that possibility sooner or later.

For a fellow to stick up in a tree and miss meals was extraordinary. There was absolutely no accounting for Fishy's amazing line of conduct, especially for his refusal to answer when called.

"Fishy!" bawled Bob Cherry. "Bunter's scoffed your dinner! He will scoff your tea if you don't come down!"

"I say, you fellows, leave Fishy alone! We don't want him!" squeaked Billy Bunter. The fat Owl of the Remove was rather keen on scoffing Fishy's tea.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why the thump doesn't he answer?" asked Harry Wharton, staring up into the mass of foliage. "Nothing can have happened to him up there, surely?"

"What could?" said Nugent.

"Nothing, I suppose. He's clumsy ass enough to fall, but he hasn't fallen. If the howling ass is sulking, he can get on with it!"

"If he doesn't come down for tea, I'll go up and root him out!" said Bob Cherry.

"I say, you leave him alone!" protested Bunter. "We're fearfully short of grub, and if Fishy doesn't want any, I can jolly well tell you I do! Let him stick up there all day, if he likes, and all night, too! I say, you fellows, I wish Smithy would get back!"

"Not much chance of that!" said Bob. "Smithy's been lagged, for a cert. They were on his track before he had been gone two minutes. He never got anywhere near Courtfield, old fat bean. Smithy won't be turning up with a bag of grub."

"Not likely!" said Harry, shaking his head. "I'm afraid they've got him!"

"Flogging or the sack!" said Skinner. "Poor old Smithy! What a man he is to ask for it!"

All through the day the rebels had been keeping watchful eyes open for a sign of Smithy.

But they had seen nothing of him, and there was little doubt that he had fallen into the hands of authority.

It could not be helped, and it was indubitable that the Bounder, in his reckless obstinacy, had asked for it.

Headstrong and obstinate as he was, most of the fellows were concerned about him, and wondering uneasily what his fate would be. Most deeply concerned of all was Billy Bunter—though it was not about the Bounder himself that Bunter worried, but about the supplies he was going to bring back to the island if he got through.

"I say, you fellows, it's rotten if



"If you don't hand that rotten book over, Fish," said Harry Wharton, stepping towards the American junior, "I'll take it!" The next moment the captain of the Remove met with a surprise. Instead of handing over the offending book, Fisher T. Fish landed out with a bony fist, and caught him fairly on the nose. "Ow!" roared Wharton, staggering under the unexpected rap.

they've got Smithy!" said the fat Owl of the Remove dolorously.

"Beastly!" said Redwing, who, as Smithy's chum, was most perturbed.

"It means that we shan't have jam for tea!" said Bunter sadly.

"What?"

"Smithy was going to bring back some jam——"

"You fat idiot!"

"Oh, really, Redwing——"

"You blithering owl!" growled Redwing.

"Beast!"

"Are you coming down, Fishy?" bawled Bob Cherry into the oak.

"For goodness' sake, shut up, Cherry!" exclaimed Billy Bunter peevishly. "What's the good of calling him down to tea? Let him rip!"

There was no answer from the branches of the oak. The juniors gave their attention to getting tea.

Meanwhile, Fisher T. Fish was in a most unenviable frame of mind. Every time he was hailed from below he would gladly have answered; but he dared utter no word, with the gunman crouched beside him, high up in the ancient oak.

For several hours Fishy had not been enjoying life. He would have given his precious ledger and all the profits of his moneylending business to be safe out of this fearful scrape. What the gunman was going to do with him he did not know—and, apparently, Gunner Briggs knew no more than Fishy did.

So far he had kept the American junior there and prevented him from giving an alarm. But that evidently could not last much longer.

Nobody on the island could possibly suspect how matters stood, but the

schoolboys were plainly growing curious and unquiet on the subject of Fishy. The gunman had heard Bob Cherry declare that, if Fishy were not down by tea-time, he would root after him in the oak. The desperate man had to come to some decision.

To knock the wretched junior on the head was easy, but it would serve no purpose. To collar Bob when he came, as Fishy had been collared, was equally useless; for it was certain that if another junior disappeared into the tree, and did not return, a swarm of surprised and curious schoolboys would clamber up to see what had become of him.

Blacker and more savage grew the gunman's stubbly, fierce face, and Fishy watched it, with palpitating heart.

The gunman had to decide, at last, on one of two alternatives. He could handle his automatic, and scare the crowd of schoolboys with it. Or he could let Fishy go, and terrify him by threats into keeping secret what he had discovered. That was an uncertain resource; but it was plain, at least, that Fishy was amenable to threats. His terror was only too palpable. The gunman had little time left to come to a determination; and he made up his mind at last.

His cold, hard, shifty eyes turned on Fisher T. Fish, with a look in them that chilled the very marrow in Fishy's bones.

"You will go down!" He spoke in a fierce, hissing whisper. "But not a word—you understand! I shall hear you—I shall see you! Give the slightest hint to the others that I am here——"

"Nope!" groaned Fishy. "Not a word!"

"If there is an alarm, I shall come down—and take my chance of getting away. You will know what to expect. I will blow your brains out as soon as look at you!" snarled the gunman.

Fisher T. Fish had little doubt of it. The man was as savage and ruthless as a hunted wild beast.

Gunner Briggs released his hold on the wretched Fishy. He had to take the chance; but his eyes burned with ferocity.

"Go!" he breathed.

Fisher T. Fish was only too glad to go. Trembling in every limb, he clambered down the oak. His last glimpse of the gunman, as he descended, showed him the ruffian watching, automatic in hand, his eyes burning. Almost sick with terror, Fisher T. Fish clambered clumsily down the oak, slid down the trunk, and stumbled into the grass below.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Fishy in a Funk!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"Here he is!"

"Here's Fishy!"

A dozen fellows came towards the American junior as he stumbled from the tree. If Harry Wharton had still intended to give Fishy the punch on his transatlantic nose that he had asked for, he forgot all about that intention now, as he saw the junior's face.

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FISHY'S FEARFUL FIX!

(Continued from page 13.)

He stared at him blankly.

"What on earth's the matter with you?" he asked.

"Eh? Nothing!" gasped Fishy.

"You're as white as a sheet!"

"You look as sick as a cat," said Peter Todd.

"The sickfulness is terrific!"

"I—I—I guess I—I got giddy, some!" stammered Fisher T. Fish. "I—I guess I thought I was going to fall! Oh dear!"

"Funk!" snorted Bolsover major.

Bob Cherry laughed.

"Have you been sticking up there, too frightened to move?" he ejaculated. "Oh, my hat! You'd better leave climbing stunts alone, Fishy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly ass!" said Harry Wharton, with a mingling of compassion and contempt. "Any fellow here could climb that tree without losing his nerve! Even Bunter could! Why didn't you call out? We'd have come up and helped you down, you shivering funk!"

Fisher T. Fish did not answer that. He wiped the clotted perspiration from his brow. He was quite willing for the juniors to believe that he had lost his nerve, high up in the tree, and had been afraid to stir. Anything was better than that they should guess what he had found there. For he knew that eager, savage ears were drinking in every word above him, and that the deadly automatic was grasped in a desperate hand.

There was a terrifying vision in his mind of the desperate wretch leaping down, automatic in hand, shooting right and left. He was only too thankful that the Removites guessed nothing of the truth.

He tottered away and sank down on a log. Billy Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles.

"I say, Fishy! Feeling ill?" he asked.

"Yep, jest a few!" mumbled Fisher T. Fish.

"Then you won't want any tea!" said Bunter brightly.

"Aw, can it, you geck!"

Fisher T. Fish joined the others at tea. Having had no dinner, there was an aching void in his bony interior.

But, empty as he was, he ate with a very poor appetite. And the colour did not return to his face. He left the glade after tea, and went down to the landing place. He gazed at the boat with longing eyes. Fisher T. Fish would have given anything to be safely off the island.

The utmost wrath of the Head was a mere nothing to him, in comparison with his haunting terror of the gunman. He would have rejoiced to be safely at Greyfriars, even if he had been bending under the Head's birch.

Across the arm of the Sark a Courtfield constable appeared, for a moment, from the wood, and disappeared again. Popper Court Woods were still being

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closely searched for the hold-up man. Again and again the bay of the hound had come down the wind from a distance.

Fisher T. Fish groaned.

He could have called across to that constable and told him where to lay hands on the man he wanted. But he did not think of doing so.

"Aw, the bonheaded ginks!" groaned Fisher T. Fish. "The all-fired jays, rooting after him all over the shop, and leaving him here on this pesky island!"

The Famous Five came down to the landing place, to look out once more in the faint hope of seeing something of Smithy.

Fisher T. Fish drew near them. All his desires were now concentrated on one object—to get off Popper's Island. But he had to be careful not to let the man in the oak suspect his object. Once safe out of range of the automatic, Fisher T. Fish would have told, fast enough, where the hunted man was to be found. It was difficult to speak without danger of being overheard by the man in the tree. The giant branches of the great oak spread over half the island; and well Fisher T. Fish knew how intently the hunted wretch would be listening.

"Say, you guys, Smithy hasn't come back yet?" he mumbled.

"No," answered Harry. "They've got him, I'm afraid."

Fishy sank his voice to a whisper, in his dread of being overheard.

"What about going to look for him?" he asked.

Harry Wharton & Co. stared at him. Why Fishy was whispering was a deep mystery to them, unless he had taken leave of his senses.

"No good looking for him," answered Harry. "If they've got him he's at Greyfriars long ago, and most likely locked in."

"And any fellow going after him would be nabbed in the same way!" said Bob Cherry. "You can bet the prefects are on the watch, now they've got Smithy, for any other fellow who's ass enough to give them a chance."

"I guess I'll risk it!" breathed Fishy.

"You?" ejaculated Johnny Bull.

"Yep!"

"You silly ass!" breathed Nugent. "You'd be caught at once, and flogged as soon as the Head got you."

"I guess I ain't afraid of a flogging."

The chums of the Remove fairly blinked at Fisher T. Fish. Of all the fellows on Popper's Island, Fishy was about the last they would have expected to volunteer for a reckless enterprise. That was surprising enough. Still more surprising was his making his communication in a whisper!

"Do you think the Head's ears are long enough to hear you from Greyfriars, Fishy?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Nope! But—"

"Then why can't you speak out?"

"I—I guess—"

"Mad?" asked Johnny Bull.

"The madfulness seems to be truly terrific!" remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur, with a very curious glance at Fishy's face.

"Aw, don't shout!" gasped Fisher T. Fish.

"Why not?" demanded Wharton.

"Oh! Nix!"

Fisher T. Fish moved hastily away. The gunman in the oak could not have heard his whispering, but it was very likely that he heard the answers of the other fellows, and might guess from their words that Fishy was thinking of

getting off the island. Fishy moved away in an agony of apprehension. Harry Wharton & Co. stared after him blankly.

"Is that chap going potty or what?" asked Bob.

"Blessed if it doesn't look like it!" said Wharton, in wonder. "Anyhow, he's jolly well not going after Smithy!"

Johnny Bull snorted.

"That's gammon!" he grunted. "Fat lot he cares about Smithy! Looks to me as if he's in a funk, and wants to desert."

That Fishy was in a funk was, at least, obvious to the most casual eye. Never had the hapless Fishy been in such a mortal funk.

He dared not tell the other fellows what he had discovered. They would have been powerless against the gunman. There were thirty of them, most of them sturdy and plucky. But they had no more chance than a flock of sheep against a desperate man with a firearm in his hand. And the wretch would shoot if he was endangered. That was a certainty. He had shot down a man at the Courtfield Bank merely for the sake of plunder. He had fired on his pursuers half a dozen times in making his escape. Fishy shuddered at the thought of what might happen on the island if the wretch were discovered and driven to desperation.

If he could only get off the island! In that extremity of fear, the wretched Fishy even thought of slipping into the water and swimming for it. He was not much of a swimmer, but he was good for crossing the narrow arm of the Sark. That he would be collared on the bank and marched off to punishment at Greyfriars mattered nothing.

Then another terrifying thought came into his tormented mind. From the tall oak, overtopping by yards all the other trees on the island, the hidden gunman was able to watch the river. He would not see Fisher T. Fish leave the island, but he would see him swimming the channel; he would see him land on the towpath.

"Oh, great Christopher Columbus!" muttered Fisher T. Fish, as that thought flashed into his mind.

He shuddered.

Was the gunman in the oak watching? It was certain! Every time one of the hunters appeared on the bank it could hardly be doubted that the eyes of the hidden man in the high tree watched him. Every moment the wretch must have feared that the search would be turned on the island again. There could be no doubt that, from his eyrie, he was watching like a hunted wolf. Nobody could leave the island unseen by him. Once beyond the overhanging trees, a boat or a swimmer would have been in full view of the man at the summit of the tall oak.

Fisher T. Fish realised that had the Famous Five consented to ferry him across in the boat they would have rowed him not to the safety of the bank, but under the fire of the man in the oak!

He trembled, and wiped his clammy brow.

He could not leave the island. Through the long summer day he had to remain there. Not till darkness fell could he dare to make the venture. It was long hours to darkness.

He groaned.

Suppose some unthinking fellow, in want of occupation, climbed the oak? It was not likely, but it might happen. Or suppose the hidden man was seen or heard? Or suppose he suspected that Fishy had betrayed him. Fishy, in

anguish of spirit, supposed, and supposed, and supposed, and every supposition added to his terror. Fisher T. Fish had often been in a funk. But the funk he was now in was such a funk as he had never experienced before. It was, in fact, the bee's knee! It was the rhinoceros' side-whiskers! It was the elephant's pyjamas!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Unexpected!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH breathed hard. Footsteps were approaching the punishment-room at Greyfriars, in which the Bounder was a prisoner.

He thought he knew those heavy footsteps. He had no doubt that it was his father who was coming.

The day had seemed long enough to the Bounder. A hundred times he had felt like kicking himself for his wilful folly. He had had his way, in spite of opposition, and it had led to this!

Long as the day seemed, the minutes crawling by on leaden feet, Smithy was not anxious for the arrival of Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith. He dreaded the interview with his father.

It was not long since he had been in disgrace at school, and at home, that he had been threatened with disinheritance if he did not mend his ways. He had mended them—more or less. At all events, he had run no risk of being sacked for bad conduct. Now, however, he was sacked. And the sack was the sack, for whatsoever reason! Smithy realised that only too clearly.

Had the Remove all stood together, as planned, the danger would have been remote. No headmaster could expel a whole Form. There was to be no surrender till there was an assurance that nobody was to be sacked. But the Head, though he could not possibly expel the whole Remove, could, and would, expel any ringleader who fell into his hands while the rebellion was going on. And he had done so. The Bounder had asked for it—and got it!

His father was coming at last. In what temper Smithy rather dreaded to learn.

Not till late in the afternoon did he come. Even that message from Dr. Locke, which must have disturbed him deeply, would not draw him away from the City before the Stock Exchange was closed!

But he had come at last!

Vernon-Smith breathed hard and deep as the footsteps came down the long corridor. The key was inserted in the lock, and Trotter threw the door open. The portly City gentleman strode in.

His face was crimson with wrath, his eyes glinted under his plump brows. His look was not reassuring.

"So here you are, Herbert!" he grunted.

"Yes, father!" said the Bounder meekly.

"Expelled, hey?"

"Not my fault!" said Smithy. "If you'll let me explain, father—"

Snort!

"Your old donkey of a headmaster has explained," growled Mr. Vernon-Smith. Smithy stared. His eyes danced.

That disrespectful description of his headmaster showed that the millionaire's wrath was not directed towards his son. It was the Head of Greyfriars who stirred Mr. Vernon-Smith's resentment.

"Come with me!" grunted Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"You're goin'—"

"I am going to take you away from Greyfriars."

The Bounder's face fell.

"Father! I had to stand in with the other fellows. If I'd stood out and let them down I should have been called a sneak and a funk—"

"I know that. I hear that the whole Form is in rebellion, and that my son has been selected as a scapegoat!" snorted the millionaire. "You are to blame, Herbert, but no more than the rest. You will not suffer more than the rest, by Jove! Dr. Locke has not heard the last of this."

"Then, father—"

"You were a cheeky young rascal to dispute your headmaster's authority. They're all cheeky young rascals!"

school now, Herbert, but you can depend on it that this is not the end."

"But—"

"Do you want to stay here, locked in?"

"No fear! But—"

"Then come!"

The Bounder followed his father from the punishment-room. It was something to get out of imprisonment, and it was still more to find that his father, instead of condemning him, was standing by him. But Smithy did not want to go home. He wanted to rejoin the Remove. However, he followed the portly millionaire in silence.

Mr. Quelch met them at the doorway of the House. His face was clouded and troubled.

"I am sorry you are going, Vernon-Smith!" said the Remove master.

"I hope I may be comin' back, sir, when the other fellows do!" said the Bounder respectfully.

"I—I hope so! I trust so—"

"You may depend on it, sir," boomed Mr. Vernon-Smith.

And he marched out to his car with the Bounder at his heels.

"Good-bye, Smithy!" called out a dozen fellows.

The Bounder grinned round at them.

"Say au revoir, but not good-bye!" he called back. "You'll see me here again, old beans!"

And he followed his father into the car, and the Rolls rolled away to the gates. Mr. Vernon-Smith sat bolt upright, his brows knitted under his shining silk hat. The car rolled along the road to Courtfield Common. Mr. Vernon-Smith sat grim and silent, apparently in deep thought, till Greyfriars School was out of sight behind.

The Bounder smiled. His father was in a good humour with him. All his wrath was reserved for the Head, who had, in Mr. Vernon-Smith's opinion, selected his son as a scapegoat. Smithy was not wholly surprised when his father signed to the chauffeur to stop.

"Herbert!" he barked. "If you want to go back to your friends—"

"What-ho!" grinned the Bounder.

"As the matter stands, you are expelled from the school. But if you are with the others when this rebellion comes to an end you will be dealt with as the others are dealt with. All of them cannot be expelled. And you will not be expelled. You see?"

Evidently the City gentleman had thought the matter out, to some purpose. The Bounder nodded.

"Dr. Locke is angry now, and irritated. But he is a just man," said the millionaire. "When the time comes he will make no distinction between one offender and another. He will not be allowed to, by Jove! Stick with your friends, and don't worry!"

The Bounder stepped from the car. He smiled as he watched it roll rapidly away in the summer sunset. The Head had sacked him and handed him over to his father to be taken home, and undoubtedly regarded that ringleader of the rebels as done with. Instead of which, the Head's severe measures had resulted only in the Bounder's release and an opportunity to rejoin the other rebels! The Bounder chuckled.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

No Escape!

FISHER T. FISH'S eyes gleamed. He was leaning on an elm by the landing-place of Popper's Island in a state of mind that was quite unenviable. Every fellow on THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,361.

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"The Head's in the wrong, father. He sacked Bunter for nothing."

"What is Bunter to you?" snapped Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"Nothin' at all. But he's a Remove man, and the whole Form stood by him, to see that he had justice. Could I stand out?"

Another snort!

"If you had, I think I should have disowned you, Herbert! Right or wrong, I should expect my son to take the same risk as his friends."

"Dad, you're a sportsman!" cried the Bounder gratefully.

"Eh, what?" The millionaire stared at him, and his frowning face broke into a smile. "Well, it's a bad state of affairs, but you are no worse than the rest, and you're not going to be a scapegoat. I must take you away from the

the island had noticed that there was something wrong with Fishy, but never dreamed of guessing what it was. He had not received the promised punch on the nose from the captain of the Remove. He had not even been asked to hand over that precious account-book. Nobody, certainly, was much concerned about him, but as he looked sick and seedy, nobody wanted to bother him. But Fishy was not worrying about the other fellows, or what they might be thinking. His worry was concentrated on his bony, transatlantic self.

He wanted to get off the island, which since his discovery of the man with the automatic had become to him, in the poet's words, "a home by horror haunted." Any minute, it seemed to Fisher T. Fish, in his present state of funk, something might happen to reveal the presence of the hidden gunman. The automatic might begin to bark! The bare, remote possibility of stopping a bullet with his bony person gave Fishy cold shivers. He had got to get off that pesky, all-fired, dog-goned island somehow.

So a gleam of hope came into his eyes at the sight of a barge coming down from Courtfield, lumbering along in the wake of a horse that plodded along the towpath.

"Wake snakes!" murmured Fisher T. Fish.

Taking a boat, or swimming, meant risking a bullet from the man in the oak-tree. But there was a chance of getting away if he could jump on the barge.

That might be done unseen by the man in the oak.

He would not need to approach the opposite bank, which was in view of the watching gunman above. He could remain on the barge and hide himself there before, passing below the island, it came into the gunman's purview again. While it was in the channel, midway between the island and the bank, it could not be seen by the man in the tall oak, the lower trees round the landing-place screening the view. Fishy's heart beat high with hope.

The barge, steering, was not alone on the big, heavy craft. A constable stood there, and a Popper Court keeper, evidently accompanying the barge to keep an eye open for the hunted bank-raider. Possibly Inspector Grimes suspected that the desperado might attempt to get away on a barge by menacing the bargeman with his pistol.

But the sight of those two figures was rather reassuring than otherwise to Fisher T. Fish. The policeman, probably, would not bother his head about a truant schoolboy, but Sir Hilton's keeper was certain to collar him, as Joyce and Wilson had collared the Boulder that morning. Little did Fishy care for that. At the present moment nothing could have pleased him better than to get back to Greyfriars.

He waited, with beating heart, for the slow barge to draw nearer. It was rather too far out for a jump, and he dared not call to the barge to close in, for the man in the oak would have heard. But it was easy to swing out on an overhanging bough and jump thence as the barge passed. And the moment his feet landed on board he would make one dive into the little cabin and vanish. Nothing else mattered, excepting getting out of the range of the dreaded automatic.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came a shout from Bob Cherry. "Keep an eye on that barge, you men. There's one of Popper's sportsmen on it!"

"Not after us, I fancy," said Harry Wharton, with a smile. "They're looking for that merchant with the gun."

But a crowd of fellows gathered to watch the barge pass. Sir Hilton Popper's keepers had made more than one attempt on the schoolboys' island, and they were on their guard.

As the heavy craft lumbered into the channel the bargeman grinned, the policeman stared, and the keeper frowned at the crowd of schoolboys on the island. Fishy hooked himself into an elm that grew close to the water. He sprawled out on an extending branch.

A dozen pairs of eyes were on him at once.

"What's that game, Fishy?" called out Bob Cherry.

"What the thump——"

"Fishy, you ass——"

Unheeding and unanswering, Fisher T. Fish crawled along the bough. The rebels stared after him blankly.

That it was his intention to drop on board the passing barge was clear enough. Why, was not so clear.

"You silly ass!" bawled Squiff. "Can't you see Popper's man on the barge? You'll be collared, fathead!"

"Come back, Fishy, you ass!" shouted Harry Wharton. "Do you think that keeper will let you go and look for Smithy?"

"I told you the funky worm wanted to desert," grunted Johnny Bull. "He never wanted to go to look for Smithy. He's got cold feet, and he wanted to get away."

"Silly ass, then!" said Skinner. "If the Head gets him he will get the same as Smithy's getting."

Harry Wharton set his lips. It could hardly be doubted now that Fishy's object was to get away at any risk; and that meant that he was going to desert the garrison of Popper's Island.

The keeper, on the barge, was staring at him, and was evidently prepared to collar him, as he saw his intention of boarding.

"The funky worm!" said the captain of the Remove in disgust. "By gum, he ought to be jolly well kicked!"

"The kickfulness is the proper caper," declared Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"He's not going!" roared Bolsover major, in great wrath. "Nobody's going to be allowed to desert."

"No fear!"

"Come back, Fishy, you worm!"

"Come back, Fishy, you funk!"

"You sneaking toad, come back!"

Half the Remove roared at Fisher T. Fish. Taking no heed, he crawled out on the bough. The barge was coming on slowly, and, to Fishy's agonised eyes, it seemed to crawl like a snail.

The man in the oak could not see him through masses of foliage. But he could hear the shouting of the crowd of juniors. He could hardly fail to guess that the junior who knew his secret was trying to get away. Fisher T. Fish could imagine his rage and fury when he realised that. Would the crawling barge never come?

"Will you come back, you rotter?" bawled Bob Cherry.

"I'll jolly well see that he does!" roared Bolsover major, and he clambered into the elm. Five or six fellows clambered after him.

"Collar him!" shouted Wharton.

"Bag him!"

"Don't let him get away!"

"Yaas, begad!" remarked Lord Mauleverer. "One funk makes many. If fellows begin desertin', goodness knows where it will end."

"Nobody's goin' to desert!" said the captain of the Remove grimly. "We're

all standing together till the finish. That's our only chance!"

The barge rolled heavily under that extending bough of the elm. But already Bolsover major and Bob Cherry were within reach of Fisher T. Fish. Bolsover grabbed him by one leg; Bob got him by an arm. The barge rolled below, the three men on board staring up at the schoolboys. But Fisher T. Fish was safely held.

He yelled with rage and apprehension.

"Leggo! Aw, leggo, you jays! Leggo, I'm telling you! I got to get away! Oh, wake snakes and walk chalks! Will you leggo?"

"No jolly fear!" grinned Bolsover major. "Let go the tree, if you like, you funky freak. I'm not letting go your leg!"

"Stick it out, Fishy!" said Bob Cherry encouragingly. "You can't help being a sneaking funk, but you've stuck it out, so far. Anyhow, you're not going!"

Fisher T. Fish wriggled and howled.

That the gunman in the oak by that time knew that he was attempting to leave the island, was a certainty. Every moment the terrified Fishy dreaded that he would come slithering down from his hiding-place, or that the deadly automatic would ring out. In a frenzy of fear he struggled to release himself from the grasp of the two juniors. But he struggled in vain. They had him by an arm and a leg, and he was safe.

"You boneheads!" panted Fishy. "Lemme go! I got to go! Leggo! Look here! That gunman's on the island! Let me go!"

The barge was passing from beneath the extending bough of the elm. There was still time for Fisher T. Fish to swing himself to the stern as it went, if he had been released. But he was not released. In his desperation, he had let out the terrifying secret. But though he astonished the two fellows who were grasping him, he did not make them let go.

"The gunman?" repeated Bob blankly.

"On the island?" ejaculated Bolsover major.

"Yep! Leggo! Oh, leggo!" shrieked Fisher T. Fish, in an agony, as the barge rolled on, and passed down the river.

It was too late now!

"Mad!" said Bob, in utter wonder. "Have you got that gun-merchant on the brain, Fishy? He's not on the island!"

"And if he was, was that rotten worm going to slide off on his own, and never even give us the tip?" howled Bolsover major. "You funky worm, is that what you were going to do?"

Fisher T. Fish groaned. The barge was rolling past Popper's Island, far out of his reach. There was no escape for him—and the man in the oak knew. Limp as a rag, Fishy allowed himself to be jerked back from the bough, and dumped down on the landing-place.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Man With the Gun!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. gathered round the trembling, shivering Fishy.

Most of the Removites were looking grim. The one chance of success in the Remove rebellion was for the whole Form to stand loyally shoulder to shoulder. Desertion was a dire offence. The general opinion was that an example had better be made of Fisher T. Fish. It would be a warning



Gunner Briggs' cold, hard, shifty eyes turned on Fisher T. Fish, with a look in them that chilled the very marrow in the transatlantic junior's bones. "You will go down!" he said in a fierce, hissing whisper. "But not a word—you understand? If there is an alarm, I will blow your brains out as soon as look at you!"

to him, and to other weak-kneed fellows who might be tempted to follow his example.

"Rag him!" roared a dozen voices.

"Scrag him!"

"Bump him!"

"I say, you fellows, give him a jolly good ragging!" exclaimed Billy Bunter. "Give him beans! Wallop him!"

Billy Bunter was most indignant of all. Bunter, probably, was no less funky than Fishy. But, in the peculiar circumstances of the case, desertion was not a resource that was open to Bunter. It was Bunter who was under sentence of the sack; Bunter that the Head specially wanted to lay hands on.

Billy Bunter, though no hero, was for holding out to the bitter end. Surrender meant the finish for Bunter! So the fat Owl's motto was "No surrender." And his little round eyes fairly glittered with scorn and indignation, through his big round spectacles at the wretched Fishy.

Little, however, did Fishy care for Bunter, or for anyone else there. He had failed to get off the island, and he knew that the gunman must be aware that he had attempted to do so. That terrifying knowledge made Fishy blind and deaf to everything else. He was, at the present moment, nothing but a bundle of terror and jumping nerves.

"I say, you fellows, wallop him!" yelled Bunter. "I say, lemme get at him! Hold him! I'm going to kick him! Better hold him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hold on!" said Bob. "The howling ass is frightened out of his silly wits. Ho fancies that that bank-raiding johnny has got on the island."

"What?" ejaculated Wharton.

"He said so!" snorted Bolsover.

"Only his rotten funk, of course; but he thinks the man's here, and he was going to sneak off on his own—"

"Is that it?" exclaimed Nugent, in amazement. "Why, you frightened ass, what's put that into your head?"

"The gunman here!" gasped Peter Todd.

"Rubbish!"

"Rot!"

"Only funk!"

"The man can't be on the island!" exclaimed Wharton. "We should have seen something of him. Mean to say you've seen him, Fishy?"

Fisher T. Fish only groaned. He knew that every startled exclamation reached the ears of the man with the automatic.

"Can't you answer, you shivering funk?" exclaimed the captain of the Remove angrily.

The wretched Fishy only groaned. The schoolboys were not likely to be left long in doubt. The hidden man would not remain hidden now.

The crowd of fellows stared at Fishy, and stared up the path through the trees. It seemed impossible to them that the desperate, hunted man could really be on Popper's Island without their knowledge. But, in spite of themselves, the palsied terror of Fisher T. Fish began to carry conviction.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Look!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Who—"

"Great pip!"

Fisher T. Fish sunk limply in Wharton's arms. The rest of the fellows stared at a figure that had suddenly appeared on the path from the glade.

It was the figure of a slim, dark man,

with stubbly chin, and shifty, sharp, desperate eyes.

Harry Wharton and some of the others had seen him before. Then he had been wearing a black beard and moustache, which were gone now. But they knew the hard, evil face now it was undisguised; and even if they had not known it, they would not have needed telling who the man was.

It was the man who had held up the bank at Courtfield; who had shot a man down in the bank, and fled with his plunder; who was hunted up and down the countryside by scores of police and keepers. And as he came on them, the bluish barrel of the automatic glimmered in his hand, and it was directed at the crowd of startled, horrified schoolboys.

The face that looked over it was the face of a wild animal rather than that of a man. Its ferocity was terrifying.

"The—the—the gunman!" stuttered Bob.

"Oh crumbs!"

"Look out!"

"I say, you fellows, keep him off!" squeaked Billy Bunter. "I say—oh crikey! I say—oh lor'!" The fat Owl's podgy knees knocked together, and his eyes almost popped through his spectacles.

Harry Wharton caught his breath. A thrill ran through him; but he kept cool. There was death in that bluish barrel—death in the savage face and glaring eyes behind it. But he set his lips and faced the man.

"Silence!" That was Gunner Briggs' first word. "Silence! Your lives are at my mercy! Call out to the bank and I will shoot!"

His voice came in hissing tones. In

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his savage rage and fear he seemed more than half-disposed to use the deadly weapon in his hand.

That he would use it if a finger was lifted against him there was not the slightest doubt.

Bob Cherry clenched his hands almost convulsively. But clenched hands were futile against a stream of bullets from an automatic pistol. Bob stood where he was, silent.

With a swift, half-crouching step, the gunman drew nearer. But he did not emerge from the wooded path on to the open landing-place. He was in fear of being seen from the bank of the river.

"Get back under the oak!" he snarled.

"What?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Out of sight from the bank—get back, I tell you! If you drive me to use this weapon—"

Wharton set his teeth hard. To obey the ruffian was bitter enough; but it was sudden death to resist. Between rage and fear the gunman was as dangerous as a tiger.

For a single moment Wharton hesitated. Then he spoke quietly:

"Come on, you fellows! Don't play the goat, any of you! We've got to toe the line, for the present."

The juniors had already realised that. A stream of bullets tearing through flesh and bone was hardly to be faced by unarmed schoolboys, if it could be helped. The man with the gun had the upper hand—for the present, at least! How long he would keep it depended on whether the Greyfriars fellows got a chance at him. There was no chance now.

They crowded up the path from the landing-place to the glade round the big oak. The man stepped from the path to let them pass him, his weapon still raised and threatening. Fisher T. Fish was the last, and as he almost crawled past the gunman, Gunner Briggs' eyes blazed at him.

It was Fisher T. Fish who had forced him to reveal his presence, thus adding a thousandfold to his peril of capture. His look was so terrifying that Fisher T. Fish broke into a run, and bolted after the other fellows like a scared

rabbit. Then the gunman stepped from the trees into the path again, and followed the Greyfriars crowd into the glade.

They gathered under the branches of the great oak, which had so long hidden the desperado from their sight.

The hard, sharp eyes of the gunman ran over the dismayed group, then they fixed on the captain of the Remove.

"Your name is Wharton," he rapped.

"You are leader of these boys?"

"Yes," answered Harry curtly.

"They are all here?"

Wharton glanced round him. The whole crowd of Removites were gathered in the glade under the big oak.

"Yes," he answered, "excepting one fellow who left early this morning and isn't expected back."

Again the sharp eyes ran over the little crowd. Evidently the gunman had watched and listened and taken note during his long hours of hiding in the oak-tree. He nodded as if satisfied. He had lowered the automatic now, but held it at his side, ready to lift instantly if it was wanted. He scanned face after face—some of them set and savage, some angry and dogged, some full of dismay, and two or three badly scared. He spoke again.

"Listen to me! You know who I am—the man who shot the cashier at the Courtfield bank. I will shoot any of you, as soon as I would shoot a rabbit, if you stand in my light! Got that?"

There was no answer.

"You would never have known that I was here, but for that meddling fool." The hard, evil eyes glittered at Fisher T. Fish, who tried to hide himself behind Bolsover major's burly form. "You know now. You've got to be careful to let nobody off the island know." He gritted his teeth. "If I loose off this pistol the shot will be heard. You know that. I shall not fire if I can help it. But take care of this—if I have to fire one shot, and bring the police after me, I will empty the pistol among you!"

He spoke with a bitter, savage, snarling emphasis, that left no doubt that he was in deadly earnest.

"Keep where you are," went on the gunman. "Take a step out of this glade, any of you, and I will shoot! Keep where you are and keep quiet, and you are safe. Take a single step to cause me danger, and you know what to expect!"

He slipped the automatic into his pocket and sat on a log with his back to the trunk of the oak. From that position he could keep the whole crowd of schoolboys under his eyes.

The juniors moved about the glade, but they were careful not to go too near the trees that encircled it while the keen, evil eyes were watching. The automatic was ready to leap into view again at any moment, and they knew that the desperate man would fire if any fellow attempted to get out of his sight. And they wondered how long this was going to last, and how it would end.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Homeward Bound!

"SCANDALOUS!" said Mr. Prout. "C'est affreux!" agreed Monsieur Charpentier.

Herbert Vernon-Smith, stepping cautiously along a footpath in Popper Court Woods, stopped and backed promptly into a thicket as he heard those voices.

The Bounder was wary.

Quite unexpectedly, by his father's intervention, he had regained his liberty. But he knew that he was not likely to keep it long if he was spotted by the Greyfriars beaks, or prefects, before he succeeded in getting back to Popper's Island.

The Head regarded him as "sacked," and might, therefore, have been expected to leave him to his own devices. Nevertheless, it was quite certain that he would not be allowed to rejoin the rebels if it could be prevented. Sacked or not, he knew that he would be collared again and kept away from the rebel headquarters. And he hastened to take cover at the sound of the voices of two Greyfriars beaks in the wood.

Smithy had not been idle since his father had dropped him from the car on Courtfield Common. There was a rucksack on his shoulder crammed almost to bursting. The Bounder had quitted the island that morning to bring in supplies. After what had happened, it was like him to stick to his intention. He grinned at the thought of the surprise of the garrison when he came back, after a day's absence, loaded with provisions. No doubt they did not expect to see him again, and they would not only see him, but would find that he had succeeded in his expedition. That would be "one up" for the Bounder.

It had not been difficult to get the supplies. He had plenty of money, and he had met Wickers, of Courtfield County school, on the common. William Wickers had willingly agreed to go into Courtfield for him and make purchases. He had come back with the packed rucksack. Now the Bounder was on his way to the island, wary as a fox as he threaded his way through the woods. Twice he had come on policemen there, but they did not heed a schoolboy. Once he had sighted a keeper and dodged him among the trees. Once he had spotted a Greyfriars prefect and dodged again. Now he had almost walked into Mr. Prout and Monsieur Charpentier. Luckily, they were talking as they came along the footpath, and the Bounder had time to take cover.

He watched them through the hawthorns. Prout rolled on, portly and

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pompous, the little French gentleman at his side.

"Scandalous!" repeated Prout. Evidently he was referring to the Remove rebellion. "An unparalleled state of affairs, Monsieur Charpentier."

"Old ass!" murmured the Bounder.

"If the Head would place the matter in my hands," pursued Prout, "I think that I should very soon bring the young rascals to book."

"J'en suis sur!" murmured little Monsieur Charpentier politely.

"But Dr. Locke, sir, has not even asked my advice," said Mr. Prout, with gloomy indignation.

"Vraiment?"

"Indeed, he has answered me with what I can only call extreme curtness when I have offered it," said Prout.

Monsieur Charpentier smiled. He thought it very probable that the Head, in his present irritated state, had no use for the sage counsels of the master who was called in his own Form "Old Pompous." Prout's pomposity could not have had a soothing effect on a worried headmaster.

"I repeat that it is scandalous!" resumed Prout. "The boy, Bunter, who threw—I may say hurled—ink over me remains in defiance of the sentence of expulsion. A whole Form of rebels give him their support. Several weeks have elapsed, yet only one of the young rascals has been brought to account. Is it not scandalous?"

"Mais oui!" assented Monsieur Charpentier.

He suppressed a yawn. It was rather an honour for the French master to take a walk after classes with so important a gentleman as Prout. But there was no doubt that Prout was rather a bore.

"If the Head would place the matter in my hands—" went on Prout, who had a way of making his remarks over and over again—though in the opinion of most of his colleagues they were not worth making even once.

The Fifth Form master's voice died away up the path; the two masters had passed the hidden Bounder unsuspecting.

Vernon-Smith emerged from cover.

The two masters were ahead of him on the footpath, going towards the river. The Bounder followed more slowly in order not to overtake them.

There was a sudden exclamation behind him.

"Here, you!"

He spun round. It was Joyce, Sir Hilton Popper's head keeper.

Joyce stared at him. He recognised him at once as the Greyfriars junior he had chased down the river that morning, and whom he had since supposed to be safe at the school.

"You—you young rascal!" exclaimed Joyce. "So you've got away!" And he made a rush at the Bounder.

Vernon-Smith's eyes gleamed. What the Head would do if he was marched back to Greyfriars again after being "sacked" he did not know. But whatever it was, he was not disposed to risk it.

He waited for the keeper to reach him, side-stepped swiftly, and hit out. Joyce, catching a fist that seemed like a lump of iron with his left ear, tumbled over headlong into the bushes, roaring.

Almost before he touched the ground the Bounder was running. He had to take the chance of Prout and Mossoo now.

He heard the angry keeper scrambling up as he ran. Like a deer he raced down the footpath. He was in sight of Prout and Monsieur Charpentier in a couple of swift minutes.

Both of them turned at the sound of

running feet behind them. They stared blankly at the Bounder.

"Smeat!" ejaculated Monsieur Charpentier.

"Vernon-Smith!" gasped Mr. Prout. "Upon my word! This boy is expelled, yet he is evidently going to— Stop! Vernon-Smith, stop!" Prout waved a commanding hand. "Stop at once! I shall take you back to the school! I order you to stop! I order you to— Whoooooop!"

Prout gave a roar as the Bounder crashed into him.

It was a terrific charge.

The Fifth Form master went over backwards and sat down in the footpath.

"Oooooogh!" spluttered Prout.

"Smeat!" shrieked Monsieur Charpentier. He clutched at the Bounder and caught him by the collar.

But Smithy was desperate now. Prout was floored for the moment, but Joyce was thundering on behind.

The Bounder closed with the French master and hooked his leg. Monsieur Charpentier went over on his back, the Bounder falling on him.

"Urrgh!" gurgled Mossoo. "Mon Dieu! Wurrgh!"

The Bounder tore himself loose. Prout made a grasp at his leg as he leaped free, and narrowly missed. He tore away just as the enraged keeper came rushing on the scene.

He heard a crash behind him, and guessed that Joyce, going at top speed, had stumbled over the Greyfriars beaks sprawling in the footpath. There was quite a chorus of Joyce's deep and angry gruff voice, Prout's boom, and Monsieur Charpentier's excited squeak. The Bounder did not stop to listen! Leaving them to sort themselves out, he tore on towards the river.

The footpath led on to the towpath by the Sark. The gleam of the river was in sight, when a burly form in gaiters appeared, standing on the towpath and staring up into the wood. It was another keeper—directly ahead of the Bounder! Instantly he turned off into the wood, and scrambled desperately away among trees and thickets.

Deep in the wood, hidden in the heart of a mass of ferns and brambles into which he had crawled, the Bounder lay silent, suppressing his breathing. He could hear calling voices and tramping footsteps. They died away at last; but Vernon-Smith did not emerge from his cover.

The sun was setting over Popper Court Woods; and the Bounder, realising that he had little chance of getting back to the island while daylight lasted, remained in deep cover and waited for darkness.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

In the Shadow of Death!

"THE villain!" breathed Bob Cherry.

"The terrific scoundrel!" muttered Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I say, you fellows, don't let him hear you—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"I guess this is the bee's knee!" groaned Fisher T. Fish. "I'll say this is the grasshopper's pyjamas!"

"Shut up, you worm!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Look here, we're not going to stand this!" hissed Bolsover major.

"What can we do?" asked Tom Redwing.

Harry Wharton set his lips. Submission to a lawless gunman was as bitter to him as to any fellow there. More than one desperate idea had passed through his mind for getting the

upper hand of the ruffian. But every half-formed plan was too desperate. Lives were at stake, and lives were not to be thrown away. And though Bolsover major declared that he was not going to stand it, he was careful not to let Gunner Briggs hear him say so, or to make any move to draw the gunman's attention specially on himself.

The fact was, there was nothing doing!

A desperate man, with a deadly weapon in his hand, ready to shoot at a suspicious movement, held the trump card.

Ten years penal servitude, at least, waited for Gunner Briggs if he was caught! Indeed, he dreaded a more terrible fate. The man in Courtfield Hospital was recovering, but the Gunner was not aware of that—at least, not sure of it. His liberty for ten long years, perhaps for life, was at stake! He was not likely to stick at trifles in such circumstances.

He did not want to use the automatic if he could help it, chiefly because a shot would draw attention to the island. Men were going up and down the towpath and rooting through Popper Court Woods, within easy hearing of the report of a pistol. The schoolboys knew that, and knew that they were safe enough so long as they made no hostile movement.

But the evil, watchful eyes never left them. As the dusk deepened over the island the Gunner grew more watchful than ever.

He would not fire if he could help it! But if he had to pull trigger he would be as merciless as a tiger.

Billy Bunter, squatted in the grass, had forgotten even supper! His fat form wriggled with terror like a jelly. Fisher T. Fish was thankful that the gunman had not singled him out; he had feared the savage vengeance of the wretch whose presence on the island he had revealed. But he was trembling with apprehension till his teeth chattered in his bony jaws. He reckoned, guessed, and calculated that if there was shooting he would not be spared! Fisher T. Fish was clammy with dread.

Skinner and Snoop were white as chalk. But most of the fellows were cool. And more than one was thinking that, when darkness came, they might have a chance. That was in Harry Wharton's mind.

But darkness was long in coming on a long summer's day. The minutes seemed endless.

"We're up against it, you men!" murmured Lord Mauleverer, placidly reposing in the grass. "No good walkin' up to an automatic and askin' for it!"

"I'm not afraid of his automatic, if you are!" growled Bolsover major.

"Well, look here, you walk up to it, and I'll walk after you!" suggested Lord Mauleverer.

Some of the juniors grinned. Bolsover major did not stir. Big words cost nothing; but Bolsover major had no idea of walking up to that automatic!

"No good gassing!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Nobody here's afraid of the man, I hope; but we've got no chance."

"The chancefulness is not terrific!"

"I say, you fellows, I wish we were back at Greyfriars! I wish I'd let old Locke sack me! I wish— Oh lor'!"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"We can't do anything," said the captain of the Remove quietly. "There are enough of us to handle him; but he would shoot down five or six of us, and that's hardly good enough."

"Hardly!" grinned Bob.

"But when it's dark," went on Wharton, in the same low tone, "we may

get a chance! Shooting in the dark isn't so jolly dangerous."

"Don't be a fool!" muttered Skinner. "For goodness' sake, don't be mad enough to start that villain shooting!"

"I guess you're loco!" groaned Fisher T. Fish. "You let that hoodlum rip! You leave him alone!"

"This can't last!" said Lord Mauleverer placidly. "When it's dark some of us can sneak away, without bein' seen by that merchant, and swim off the island. He knows that!"

Harry Wharton nodded.

"That's so!" he agreed. "Once we get word to the police that he's here his game is up. He must be intending to clear as soon as it's dark."

"Oh crumbs, I hope so!" mumbled Skinner.

The sunset was red on the river; under the trees on Popper's Island it was growing dusky. In the shadow of the big oak, where he sat, the gunman was only dimly visible.

But when the schoolboys looked towards him, they caught the glitter of his watchful eyes.

There could be little doubt that Mauleverer was right. So long as the schoolboys were at the mercy of the automatic they were helpless. But in another hour it would be dark; and then it must have been clear to Gunner Briggs there would be a change in the situation. He must have realised that when he could no longer watch them the juniors would creep away from the glade under the trees, and fellows who could swim would get off the island.

They wondered what desperate thoughts were passing behind that scowling, savage face and those watchful, glinting eyes.

Undoubtedly the gunner was thinking hard.

He could not leave the island in the daylight. That meant capture. It was risky enough to leave it at night. But he had no choice left him. Even one schoolboy escaping and giving the alarm on shore meant that foes would be swarming round him. And when it was dark they could elude him.

Anxious as the strange situation was for the Greyfriars fellows, it was yet more terribly anxious for the wretch who had so much at stake.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" muttered Bob. "He's coming!"

The gunman was stirring at last. He stepped out from the shadow of the oak, and came towards the Greyfriars fellows. His automatic was in his hand again now.

They watched him in silence, wondering what was in his mind. Billy Bunter gave a yelp of terror. Fisher T. Fish's teeth rattled. The colour wavered in many faces. There was death in that terrible weapon in the ruffian's hand, and there was no telling what, in his savage desperation, he might do. What did he intend now? Harry Wharton felt his heart beat faster as he faced the glinting eyes of the gunman.

"You'll be shut of me soon!" Gunner Briggs rasped out the words. "I'm going—after dark! I shall take your boat and try my luck."

The juniors did not answer. They could not prevent the gunman from taking the boat, if he chose to take it. Indeed, most of them were only too thankful at the prospect of getting rid of him at any cost.

"You'll keep here, and keep quiet, when I go!" went on the gunner. "I fancy I know what's in your minds; but if some of you sneak away after dark, I'll get a few of you—mark that!" He spat out the words.

Silence.

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The savage eyes roved from face to face.

"You understand me?" he snarled. "I mean you no harm if you keep clear of me! In an hour from now I'm going! That's what you want."

"Yaas," drawled Lord Mauleverer placidly. "We shan't be frightfully sorry to see the last of you, dear man."

Briggs stared at his lordship for a moment. Then he went on:

"Stand where you are, and keep quiet. That's all."

He moved away a few paces.

The juniors remained where they were, some standing, some lying or sitting in the grass. When a fellow made a movement the gunman's eyes glittered at him at once. He moved incessantly, and there was something strangely and terribly like a wild animal in his looks as he moved. He seemed unable to keep still. Several times he circled round the group of silent schoolboys as if fearful that, in the deepening dusk, one or another of them might make an attempt to steal off into the surrounding trees.

But they did not stir. They realised that the man's nerves were on the jump, and that at the least provocation a shot would ring out. The shadow of death was over that dusky green glade on the island in the Sark. They saw him start and listen, as there was a distant shout from somewhere on the bank of the river. Again he started, and the sweat glistened on his brow when the splash of oars from a passing boat was heard. This ordeal, which was trying enough to the schoolboys under the threat of death, was still more terribly trying to the desperate man for whom a hundred enemies were hunting. And his uneasiness intensified as the dusk deepened into dark.

He moved farther away from the silent, almost breathless group, at length. But they could hear his restless footsteps in the dark. Every heart was beating almost to suffocation under the strain.

There was silence. Harry Wharton strained his ears to listen. Had the man gone? He could no longer hear the footfalls in the gloom.

"He's gone," breathed Bob Cherry.

"Quiet!" whispered Bolsover major. Bolsover's usually ruddy face was chalky white. "Keep where you are. If he's watching—"

"Better stick it, you men," murmured Lord Mauleverer.

The juniors listened.

Had the man crept away down the path to the landing-place, leaving them in doubt whether he was still watching them from the shadows?

It was likely enough, for he knew that he could not rely on their silence once they were certain that the deadly automatic no longer threatened their lives. Yet in the gloom he might be waiting, watching, his finger on the trigger.

A faint sound came from the direction of the landing-place. But if it was made by the gunman he was moving softly, stealthily, and they could not be sure.

"He's going," muttered Wharton. "Is he gone? Hark! What—"

From the landing-place came a sudden, ringing yell.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Smithy Takes a Hand!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH stepped silently from the wood on to the towpath by the Sark, and looked cautiously round

him.

All was dark along the river.

There was a faint glimmer of starlight on the rippling waters of the Sark—that was all. The towpath was dark, under the shadow of branches. The island in the river lay a black mass, unbroken by a single gleam.

The Bounder stood staring towards it. In the summer days it was light till a late hour, and the garrison of Popper's Island generally turned in at dark. Still, the Bounder was rather surprised not to detect the gleam of a single light through the trees on the island.

He looked up and down the towpath. No one was to be seen; but in the gloom a dozen figures might have been quite near him unseen. It was some time since he had heard sounds or movements in the woods. The hunt for the bank raider seemed to have shifted in another direction.

The Bounder was wary. It was known now at Greyfriars that he had not gone home, but was making an attempt to rejoin his comrades on the island. Prout could not have failed to report that at the school. Smithy could imagine the deep, intense annoyance with which the Head would hear such news. It was very probable that measures might be taken to prevent him from carrying out his purpose. It was more than probable.

A few minutes later he was glad of his caution. From the shadows, so near him that the sound made him start and thrill, came a low voice.

"I'm getting fed-up with this, Gwynne."

It was the voice of Wingate of the Sixth.

The Bounder's heart beat; but he grinned in the darkness. The Greyfriars captain little dreamed of the ears that heard his remark.

"Faith, I'm as fed as you can be, old man," came the voice of Gwynne of the Sixth. "But it's the Big Beak's orders entirely."

Wingate grunted.

"We'll stick it out another hour. I shouldn't wonder if the cheeky young scoundrel has got back to the Island before this."

"Well, he hasn't had much chance. Anyhow, he can't be much longer if he's coming. We've got to nail him."

"Bother old Prout!"

"Bother him entirely! Bother them all!" murmured Gwynne. "I wonder what the Beak will do with the young rascal when we roll him home? It doesn't seem much good sacking him."

Wingate laughed.

"If we get him again he will be locked up in punny till this foolery is over, I think. My hat! I wish he'd turn up. I'm fed-up to the chin!"

There was silence again.

The murmur of the prefects' voices told the Bounder where they stood leaning on a big ash-tree back of the towpath. He was glad now that he had not walked openly along the path, or called to the fellows on the island to send over the boat. He would not have had much chance of getting to the boat if it had come.

Silently he unfastened the packed rucksack from his back, and slid it into a bed of ferns out of sight. He had to swim, and his burden could be retrieved later.

Then, dropping on his hands and knees the Bounder crawled across the dark towpath to the water's edge, silently and cautiously. Had he gone on his feet there was enough starlight to reveal him to the eyes of the unseen



As the boat rocked out from the bank, Vernon-Smith grasped at the gunwale, and threw his whole weight on it. The boat capsized immediately, and the gunman, standing in it, pitched over headlong and splashed into the water!

Sixth Formers under the ash. But they did not observe the creeping form that wriggled like an eel through the grass.

The Bounder was breathing hard as he reached the bank, where it rose steeply from the water. He slid over the grassy edge, and stood in the shallows, with the water up to his knees.

Silently he let himself down into the water, and started to swim. With hardly a sound he cleft the water, shooting out towards the dark mass of Popper's Island. The Bounder was a splendid swimmer, and the short distance across was nothing to him, even with his clothes and boots on. He was grinning as he swam. As soon as he landed he intended to call across to the prefects, and let them know how they had missed him.

But he was not landed yet.

He glided into the black shadow of the overhanging branches on the island. As he did so a faint sound from the landing-place reached his ears.

There was a faint splash as a boat slid from the island shore into the river.

It rocked in the water, almost touching the Bounder.

In sheer amazement he blinked at the dark shape of the boat looming over him.

A figure stepped into it.

Dark as it was the Bounder saw that it was the figure of a man, not of a boy.

He checked the exclamation on his lips.

It was improbable enough that one of the Removites would be putting out in the boat at that hour of the night. And Vernon-Smith could see that it was not. He could see that it was a man standing in the boat, with an oar in his hands, about to push off.

The Bounder caught his breath.

The first thought that flashed into his

mind was that it was some river thief, stealing the boat while the schoolboys were asleep. But instantly it flashed on him who the man was—who he must be. Somewhere along the Sark was a man hunted by the police, hunted by bloodhounds, hunted for his liberty, if not for his life. With a thrill at his heart Herbert Vernon-Smith knew that the man standing in the boat, that rocked within his touch, was the gunman of Courtfield.

It was the desperado who had shot down a man at the Courtfield and County Bank, whom Vernon-Smith had joined the crowd in chasing. He knew it, as well as if he could have seen the man clearly. It was the man with the automatic. Of what had happened on Popper's Island that day the Bounder, of course, knew nothing. But he knew that the gunman was seizing the Remove boat to make his escape.

Standing in the boat he had so silently and stealthily launched, the gunman was pushing off with an oar.

The boat rocked.

There was no time for the Bounder to think. Neither did he need to think. Any amount of thinking would not have caused him to act otherwise than as he did. The hunted desperado was not going to get away in the Greyfriars boat! That was the instant fixed idea in the Bounder's mind. On that he acted.

Under the shove of the oar on the island, the boat was rocking almost over the junior in the water. He grasped the gunwale, and threw his whole weight on it as it rocked down. The boat capsized immediately. That sudden drag, as the gunwale dipped to the water, was more than enough to dip the gunwale under.

The Sark was flooding into the dipping boat at once, and the man splashing in it pitched over headlong, thumping into the water hardly a foot from the Bounder.

The sharp, startled cry that escaped Gunner Briggs was cut off as his head and shoulders plunged in, and he choked and gurgled under water. One of his hands, as he wildly threw out his arms, actually touched Vernon-Smith for a second. The next moment he was under; the boat, full of water, settled down in the shallows by the island, and the Bounder, scrambling ashore, was yelling at the top of his voice.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Getting the Gunman!

HARRY WHARTON & CO., listening intently in the dark glade, started, as that sudden, ringing yell came through the silence of the summer night.

It was not the voice of the gunman. It was a voice they knew, but which they had never expected to hear on Popper's Island.

"Wake up! Turn out, you men!" came the yell from the landing-place, and the juniors, in amazement, knew that it was the Bounder. "This way!"

"Smithy!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"The esteemed and absurd Smithy!" ejaculated Hurreo Janset Ram Singh. Harry Wharton dashed across the glade to the path, and raced down to the landing-place. After him went his comrades, and after them streamed most of the Remove. Fisher T. Fish and Billy Bunter, Skinner and Snoop, were all that remained behind.

It was Vernon-Smith who was yelling. The Bounder had come back—obviously as the gunman was leaving the island. Evidently, he had run into the desperado. Automatic or no automatic, Harry Wharton & Co. were not likely to leave him unaided.

The Famous Five tore down the path through the island trees, fully expecting to hear, as they ran, the bark of the deadly firearm. But they heard

only the Bounder's voice, and a sound of splashing in the river.

"This way!" Vernon-Smith was yelling. "Back up, you men!"

"Smithy!" panted Wharton.

He stumbled against the Bounder in the dark.

"That you, Wharton?"

"Smithy! What—where—where's that villain?" gasped Wharton.

"In the water—look!"

"Great pip!"

Harry Wharton stared blankly. In the dim starlight that filtered through the branches, and glimmered on the river, he made out a swimmer. The dark, savage, enraged stubbly face of the gunman glimmered from the water. Gunner Briggs was swimming.

"He was getting the boat out!" breathed the Bounder. "I tipped it over—and tipped him in!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I fancied you fellows were all asleep—"

"He's been holding us up—with his gun—"

The Bounder gave a breathless chuckle.

"He won't use his gun now. Stand ready to knock him on the head if he tries to get back here."

"Where's the boat?"

"Under water."

"Oh, Smithy!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Oh, my hat! Stand ready, you men! The brute can't use his gun now—ready to bag him! By gum! Won't I be jolly glad to get hold of him!"

"The gladfulness will be terrific!"

The juniors crowded on the edge of the landing place. A score of pairs of eyes were fixed on the gunman. They did not fear his firearm now. It was not likely to be serviceable, after soaking in the river; neither was he in a position to use it with much effect, if it had been. They were ready to fling themselves upon him, like hounds on a stag.

"He's coming!" breathed Nugent.

"Stand ready!"

For some moments the desperado seemed uncertain how to act, confused and half-suffocated by his sudden plunge under water. Probably he was unaware that the boat was now beyond his reach. He came splashing back, and as he did so his legs struck on the gunwale of the boat, lying in the shallows, with a foot of water flowing over it.

"Blue blazes!"

The juniors heard his gasp.

Crash!

A heavy chunk of turf, hurled by Bob Cherry, landed full on the gunman's head. He gave a howl, staggering over the sunken boat.

"Come on!" breathed Wharton.

He made at the splashing ruffian. After him jumped the Bounder and Bob Cherry.

Whether the gunman, in his desperation, would have made some attempt to recover the boat, or whether he would have fled swimming, he had no time for either. Harry Wharton grasped him as he sprawled over the sunken boat.

With a snarl like a wild beast the gunman seized hold of him; and it would have fared ill with the captain of the Remove had not his comrades been ready with their aid.

But even as the desperado's grasp closed on Wharton, Bob Cherry seized him, and the Bounder was next, and then Johnny Bull. Struggling like a tiger, Gunner Briggs went under the water. Nugent and Mauleverer and

Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh had hold of him in another moment. A dozen fellows, knee-deep in water, crowded and splashed round. Every fellow was eager to get at the scoundrel who had threatened them with the automatic. Half-drowned, struggling, gurgling, Gunner Briggs was dragged out of the shallows, dragged on the landing place, and pinned down.

"Hold him!" panted Wharton.

"We've got the brute!" gasped Bob.

The ruffian was still resisting. But a dozen fellows had hold of him now, and he could hardly stir a limb. The tables were turned on Popper's Island with a vengeance.

"Get a rope!" shouted the Bounder.

"Here you are!"

Still squirming in many hands, the Bounder was bound hand and foot, the Bounder fastening the knots with grim thoroughness. Hardly able to move a finger, let alone a limb, Gunner Briggs lay dripping and panting in the grass, surrounded by drenched, but delighted juniors.

"We've got him!" grinned the Bounder. "What luck! Old Grimey will be pleased, what?"

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

The Bounder stepped to the water's edge and shouted across to the bank. Wingate and Gwynne, startled by the sudden outbreak of shouting and yelling, had stepped out of the shadow of the ash and were staring across. The Bounder waved his hand to them, and shouted:

"Here, Wingate!"

"Great Scott!" The juniors heard Wingate's startled exclamation. "That's Vernon-Smith! The young rascal has dodged us—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Are the jolly old prefects there!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What are you doing out of bed at this time of night, Wingate? You'll get six for breaking bounds after lights-out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Bounder chuckled.

"They were after me," he said. "They can have the jolly old gunman instead. Wingate, old bean—"

"You cheeky young rascal!" roared the Greyfriars captain.

"We've got the gunman!"

"What?" yelled Wingate.

"We've got him, Wingate!" shouted Wharton. "Wait there, and we'll bring him across, and you can take charge of him!"

"If you're trying to pull my leg, you young ass—"

"We've got him, fathhead!"

"The gotfulness is preposterous, my esteemed Wingate!"

"Get the boat out!" said Smithy.

The juniors, after their struggle with the gunman in the water, could not get much wetter. They waded in for the boat, and it was dragged out of the Sark. It was soon afloat once more, and the gunman was heaved into it like a sack of potatoes. He lay panting, his eyes glittering like a snake's as half a dozen juniors crowded in and pulled across to the bank. Wingate and Gwynne stood there, staring blankly. That the rebels on the island had captured the desperado, who had kept the whole countryside in a state of excitement for days, they could hardly believe. But they had to believe it when they saw the savage ruffian lying bound in the boat.

"My only hat!" said Wingate. "If that's the man, they've got him."

"It's the man and we've got him!" grinned the Bounder. "You can have him, if you like, and present him to

Inspector Grimes, with the compliments of the Greyfriars Remove."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No larks!" added the Bounder, picking up a boathook. "Tell the Head I shan't see him again till he makes up his mind to do the sensible thing. Pax, you know."

Wingate eyed the scapegrace of Greyfriars rather grimly. But he nodded. The boat bumped in the rushes of the bank, and the two astonished prefects received the prisoner from the hands of the boat's crew. If they had some lingering doubt as to whether this was the man who was wanted, that doubt was soon resolved. A black bag, strapped on his back, was crammed with banknotes. In one pocket was a black beard; in another an automatic pistol. It did not take Wingate and Gwynne long to make sure.

"Faith, it's the man they want!" said Gwynne. "And those cheeky fags have done the trick entirely! It's a walk to Courtfield for us, Wingate."

"Looks like it," agreed Wingate. "Untie his legs so that he can walk! My hat! Old Grimes will be pleased when we walk him in."

The ruffian's legs were freed, and he stood up, with the two stalwart prefects grasping his bound arms.

"Good-night, you little rascals!" said Wingate.

"Good-night, you big rascal!" said Bob.

And the gunman, sullen and savage, was marched away between the two Greyfriars prefects, and they disappeared by a path through the wood.

"Shove off!" said Harry.

"Hold on a minute," answered Vernon-Smith. "I've got something on shore. Have you forgotten that I went for grub?"

"But you haven't—"

"Bow-bow!"

"Oh, Smithy!" gasped Bob.

The Bounder jumped ashore and retrieved the packed rucksack he had hidden in the ferns. He tossed it into the boat. The juniors pulled back to the island in great spirits.

"I say, you fellows!" Billy Bunter met them on the landing-place. "Is—is that beast really gone?"

"The gonefulness is terrific."

"Of course, I wasn't afraid of him, you—"

"Of course not," agreed Bob Cherry. "No more than Fishy was! Pair of jolly old heroes!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't cackle!" said Bunter. "I say, Smithy's got back, hasn't he? I say, did he bring any grub?"

"Catch!" said the Bounder.

He tossed the heavy rucksack to Bunter, who caught it with his podgy chest, and sat down with a bump that nearly shook Popper's Island.

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Beast! What's that—what—"

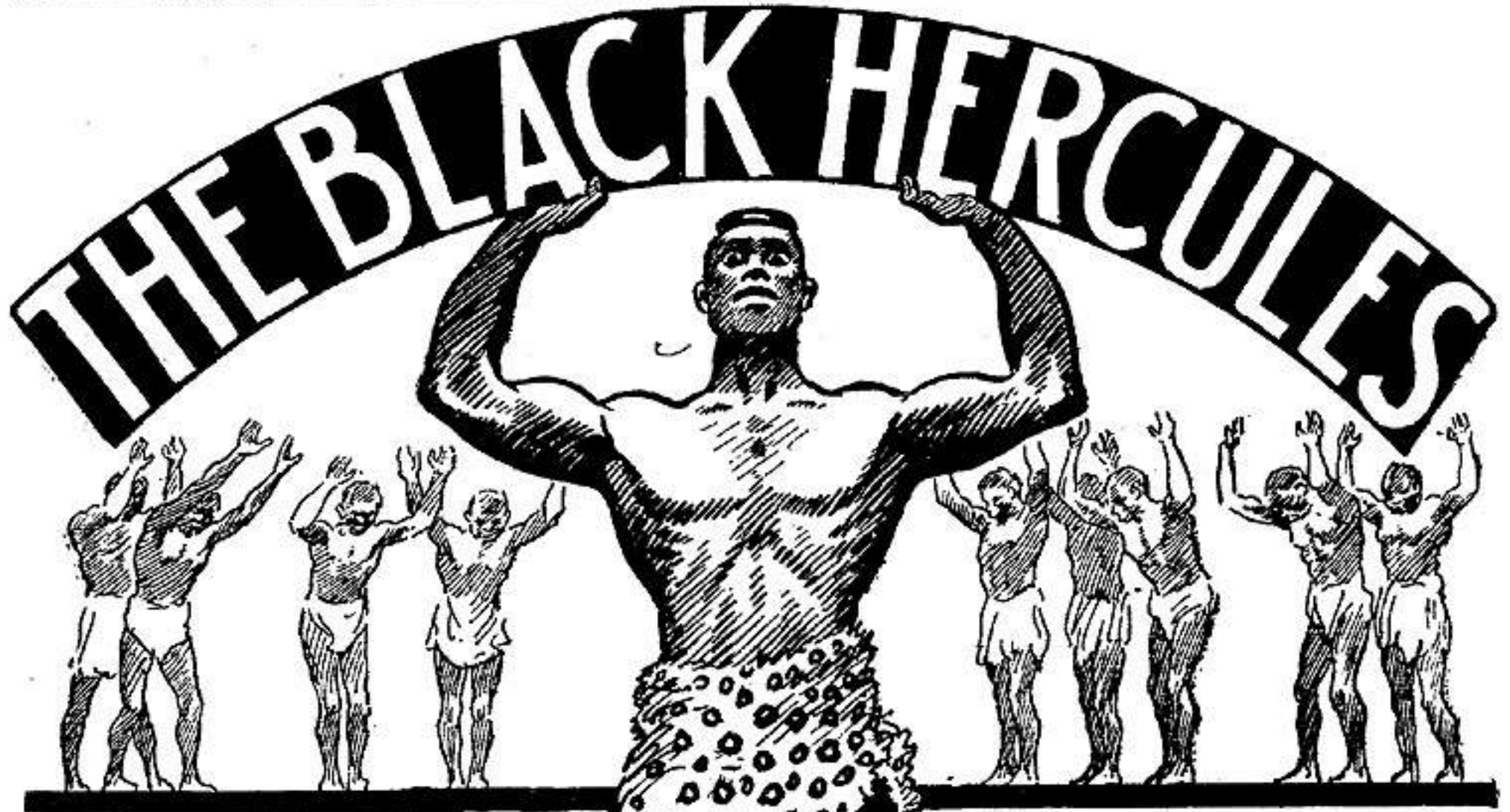
"Grub!" said the Bounder.

"Oh!" Bunter scrambled up. "Oh! All right! I say, you fellows, what about supper? I'm fearfully hungry!"

It was a late, but very cheery supper on Popper's Island that night. And at Courtfield, Inspector Grimes was very cheery, too, as he turned the key on the desperate gunman who had been the terror of the island.

THE END.

(Now look out for the next ripping yarn in this exciting rebellion series. It's entitled: "THE REBELS AT BAY!" and is calculated to hold your interest from the very first line to the last. See that you get your copy of the MAGNET in good time, chum!)



A Bold Move!

SPEEDY JACK CARTER, air mail pilot, sat reading the "Cape Argus" while his friend, Tickler Johnson, gazed out across the Great Karroo.

"The Amarob forces have taken Durban and East London," remarked Jack gloomily, "and according to the paper Port Elizabeth will soon fall. After that they will sweep across the country and Cape Town itself will go west!"

Tickler nodded.

"It looks as if Hercules will do all be threatened. Do you remember how he told us all about it? Gosh! To think that was only a few weeks ago; it seems like years!"

A little over a month earlier, the two English chums, while on an experimental flight, had crashed in Portuguese South-West Africa, and had discovered a wonderful steel city. This city was operated entirely by the radio activity generated from immense radium deposits which had been found by a giant negro. King Hercules, as the huge black man called himself, was a genius and planned to drive all the whites out of Africa with a view to establishing a Black Empire throughout the Continent.

With the aid of a dissipated Portuguese, called Miguel Golanzo, Hercules had built thousands of wonderful planes, including automatic explosive carriers. In addition to these he had incredibly fast bullet-cars and tens of thousands of mechanical soldiers, which he had named Amarobs, all constructed of bullet-proof steel and operated by radium.

Only by putting the main control tower out of action for a time had Jack and Tickler managed to escape in one of Hercules' own marvellous planes, to warn the white population of the approaching terror.

Since that time the hordes of steel men had overrun the whole of the central African colonies and more than half of the Union itself had fallen before their onslaughts. The Government forces were putting up the best resistance they could, but the task seemed hopeless.

"I've been thinking," continued

Tickler slowly, "about that time we got out of Hercules' clutches. Do you remember how, when we put the control tower out of action, practically everything went dead except the few machines which had their own radioactive power?"

"Yes," nodded Jack, puzzled by his friend's remark. "What of it?"

"Well, I've noticed that as the Amarobs get farther away from Radium City their movements become slower and the driving force behind them seems to be reduced, which appears to prove that the control tower is the nerve-centre of the whole plan. If only we could manage by some means or other to destroy that control tower completely, it would put an end to Hercules' plan for the time being, at least, and give the Government troops a chance to catch the black giant and put him in a place where he could employ his genius to better advantage."

"By Jove," exclaimed Jack, slapping his thigh, "you're right, but—" A look of despair crossed his face again. "How on earth are we going to get there?"

"By means of the control plane we took," said Tickler. "Are you game?"

"You bet!"

The two chums considered their desperate plans in Wing Commander Bowman. The airman tried to dissuade

them as there was only one chance in a million that their plan would succeed. But the chums were not to be deterred, and after some persuasion they got Bowman to let them have a small quantity of the most powerful explosive available, together with a slow-burning fuse.

The charge was safely placed in the big control plane, and within an hour Jack and Tickler were off on their dangerous errand.

The Great Karroo, Nieuwveld Berge, Karree Berge, and the broad waters of the Orange River fled past below as Jack, at the controls, let the machine go all out. Apart from the terrific roaring of the wind, the plane made no sound, and Tickler kept his eyes glued to the photographic screen.

"We're over the Kalahari Desert now," he announced. "I think we'd better fly west over Amboland and come back to Radium City from that side. There will be look-outs of some sort to the south and west, and we don't want to run into trouble before we get there."

"Good idea," agreed Jack, pushing the control lever over to the left.

He waited for the compass needle to move, but it remained perfectly still.

"That's strange," he muttered, and shoved harder on the lever without result.

Understanding suddenly dawned on him and he felt a cold sweat break out on his forehead.

"What idiots we are!" he exclaimed. "We might have known it! We've flown straight into the main control area like flies into a spider's web, and Hercules has got us completely now! We're heading straight for Radium City, and I can't divert the machine an inch from its course."

Tickler choked back a cry of dismay. Their wonderful plan was ruined almost before they had started, and they had played right into the enemy's hands.

"Try to land," said Tickler hoarsely. "Perhaps the plane still has enough power for that."

Jack depressed the control lever, and to his relief the machine started to fall rapidly.

"Steady," warned Tickler, as the earth seemed to rush up to meet them.

"Don't forget we've enough explosive aboard to blow us to pieces!"

Struggling with the controls, Jack managed to bring the plane safely down to earth.

"Oh lor!" he groaned, as the machine began to sink. "We've landed in one of those awful swamps. This plane will never be much use to us again."

Collecting the small parcel of explosive, the two chums clambered gingerly from the plane and stepped on to the soft, yielding ground of the swamp.

By treading carefully and testing each step, they managed to make their way to firmer ground, where they sat down to take stock of their position.

"This is a pretty kettle of fish," grumbled Jack. "What are we going to—?" He broke off abruptly. "Look out! Drop into this dip, quick; there are four or five Amarobs just over there!"

They slid hastily into a shallow depression in the ground, scarcely daring to breathe. After five minutes of torture, they felt themselves being gradually drawn into the swamp, and Jack risked lifting his head a little.

Peering over the top of the hummock, he saw that the Amarobs were in a crumpled position and seemed to be completely out of action.

Slowly he dragged himself from the thick mud to get a better view.

"It's all right," he announced to Tickler. "Those chaps are wrecks."

Muttering profusely at having been forced to undergo immersion in the foul-smelling slime, the two chums strode over to the little heap of steel men.

Sure enough, the Amarobs were battered and broken, and it was apparent that the delicate mechanism by which they worked had ceased to function.

Not far away other masses of wreckage were scattered about, and it was evident that, through some fault or other, one of the automatic troop carriers had crashed on an early stage of its journey.

"I've got another idea!" exclaimed Tickler, as the two chums stood looking at the twisted metal bodies. "Let's try to get the mechanism out of a couple of these Amarobs and get inside the steel casing ourselves. We can get to Radium City without danger then!"

Jack was more than a little dubious, but he agreed that the scheme was better than doing nothing, so they decided to make the attempt.

By unscrewing the head and shoulder pieces of the mechanical men, they were able to get at the delicate works, and after much struggling and at the expense of cut hands, they succeeded in extracting the mechanism.

Tickler wriggled inside one of the empty shells and found that there was plenty of room. Jack screwed on the headpiece, which fortunately contained a grille which made breathing possible. Feeling something like a deep-sea diver now, Tickler tried to move in his queer garb. He found that he could walk all right, although with considerable difficulty and in a stiff, jerky manner.

Jack then clambered into his case, drawing the little packet of explosive after him, and the two were able to screw the headpiece safely into place.

"Right?" said Jack, his voice oddly muffled. "We'll start."

Together the two queer figures set off on their painful march.

The Plan Succeeds!

RADIUM CITY presented a scene of activity, when, weary and sore, the two chums reached their destination after a terrible struggle.

Hercules had already built a broad highway through what before was dense jungle, and along this road bullet cars raced at terrific speed, drawing behind them trailers laden with bright steel sections, something like electricity pylons.

"Hercules has realised his weakness and is building subsidiary towers to pass on the energy, by the look of things," said Tickler, breaking the silence.

"Yes," agreed Jack. "We shall have to buck up and put our plan into action before he gets a reserve power station built. Our job is to get to the main control tower."

The two chums waited on the outskirts of the steel city for a chance to proceed without making themselves conspicuous. After a time, a body of Amarob labourers, who had been engaged on road building, came marching along.

Jack and Tickler trailed on behind the working party and marched boldly down the broad road. Suddenly the steel men halted in front of the control tower in the central square and stood motionless. Evidently their work was finished and they would stand like that until they were required again.

Through the protective eye-holes the chums could see that numbers of the huge Zulus who formed Hercules' bodyguard were lined up outside the main entrance. In a few moments the giant figure of the black genius himself appeared. Zulus and Amarobs all bowed low before their master, but fortunately Hercules took no notice, or he would have observed that two of the Amarobs did not make the obeisance.

Hercules stepped into one of his fast bullet cars and was whisked away, while the bodyguard dispersed, to take up various positions about the big square.

Jack tapped his friend on the arm and together the two chums marched with stiff, jerky strides towards the big jet black tower. Their hearts were beating frantically, for they both realised they were engaged on a gigantic piece of bluff and that failure meant the end of their plans and probably an unpleasant death as well.

One of the big Zulus took a step forward as if to restrain them, but withdrew as the two figures strutted past him and marched in through the main entrance.

As nobody was about they went down in the automatic lift to the basement. Passing along a deserted passage, they came to the room in which they had been imprisoned when first they were captured by Hercules.

"This is just the place," announced Jack. "We'll lay the charge here."

Jack's headpiece was quickly unscrewed, and he crawled out of the metal garb.

Anxious to give assistance, Tickler also discarded his metal shell, and with great care, the two unwrapped the parcel of deadly explosive and set it in position against the inner wall.

Adjusting the slow fuse, Jack measured it with his eye.

"About five minutes before it explodes," he said. "Just about enough time for us to get back into our metal garbs and clear."

Tickler nodded, then, striking a match, applied a light to the fuse which smouldered and spluttered before turning to a slowly moving red glow.

"That's that!" he said. "And now let's get out as soon as we can!"

Hastily the two chums started to wriggle back into the steel cases. The sound of voices and heavy footsteps in the passage outside, however, made them stop.

"Gosh! It's Leopold and the Portuguese!" hissed Tickler. "What shall we do—make a bolt for it before they find us?"

Jack shook his head.

"No," he said, "we've got to stick it now. If they discover our plan they'll nip it in the bud. Let's keep quiet and wait till they've gone."

Tickler nodded, realising only too well what it meant. But the sacrifice of their own lives was nothing compared to the prospect of ridding the country of the Black Terror.

Slowly the seconds dragged by while the two chums, white-faced, but grimly determined, watched the red glow on the fuse move slowly but steadily along.

"Shan't be long now," said Tickler in a cracked voice, trying hard to twist his set, drawn face into a grin. "The fuse has only got about a couple of minutes to burn."

Outside, the voices came nearer, then, with a startling suddenness, the door opened.

Miguel Golanzo, the dissipated Portuguese, jumped back as if he had been shot when he saw the two white boys, but he quickly recovered his composure, and exposed his yellow teeth in an evil grin.

"So!" he smiled. "The young senhors have returned?"

Leopold, the mulatto henchman of Hercules, pushed by his companion and seized the two chums in a powerful grip.

"Ha!" he scoffed. "You come back to Mister Leopold. The Master will be very pleased. He will—"

The half-caste broke off suddenly and distended his broad nostrils. At the same instant Golanzo uttered a yell of terror, and his eyes almost started from his head as he pointed a trembling finger to the glowing fuse. The next moment he fled out of the room like a maniac.

Leopold, a trifle more brave than his companion, made a move towards the spluttering fuse. Before he could put his foot on it, however, Jack and Tickler sprang at him.

Mouthing violently, Leopold fought them off and leaped through the doorway, without making any further attempt to interfere, and raced along the passage with stark terror in his eyes.

As if actuated by the same spring, the two chums tore after him at top speed. Bounding up the steps, they shot out of the main entrance just behind the frightened mulatto.

The Portuguese was already half-way across the great square, running for his life, while the group of giant Zulus stared at him in open-mouthed amazement.

With one startled glance behind him, Leopold scuttled across the square, the two chums close on his heels.

Suddenly an ear-splitting report rent the air, followed by the crash of falling

metal and the yells of the terrified natives.

The huge jet-black control tower seemed to tremble and split in two before it slowly collapsed in a heap of shattered, twisted metal. Where, but a second before, there had been a busy hum of industry, the steel city became silent, except for the rumbling crash of the falling building.

Speeding bullet cars suddenly ceased to function; parties of Amarob labourers stood motionless; giant control planes and smaller automatic planes crashed lifeless to the ground, and the eerie stillness was broken by more terrific reports as explosive carriers fell headlong with their deadly burdens, causing enormous damage.

The Secret Room!

BRUISED and battered, Tickler found himself pinned beneath dozens of Amarobs, who had been blown upon him by the force of the explosion.

Struggling violently, he managed to get free, and looked round for his chum.

His heart missed a beat when all he could see was masses of wreckage strewn all over the square, with no sign of Jack. Here and there huge Zulus struggled to their feet and tottered about in a helpless manner, evidently completely mystified by the disaster which had suddenly overwhelmed the city.

With blood streaming from his face, Leopold emerged from a pile of wreckage, and his movement disclosed a pair of boots sticking out beneath the mass of broken steel men.

With a cry, Tickler sprang at him, putting his whole weight behind a straight left, which caught the mulatto under the chin and sent him crashing like a ninepin.

Tickler seized his friend's boots, and, with a prodigious effort, he yanked Jack free.

Soft footsteps behind caused him to swing round suddenly. But he was too late. A crashing blow caught him on the back of the head, and he sank to the ground beside the unconscious Jack.

The two chums revived within a few seconds of one another, for Jack had, fortunately, only been stunned by the force of the explosion.

They looked up, to find themselves gazing at the leering face of the Portuguese, who had by this time recovered from his fright.

Leopold, his ugly face distorted with rage, scrambled to his feet and gave Tickler a brutal kick in the ribs.

"For what you have done," he hissed, sweeping his hand round to show the dreadful scene of devastation, "the Master will see that you die slowly and painfully, and I, Mister Leopold, will carry out the penalty myself."

Jack and Tickler smiled cheerfully; battered and racked with pain as they were, they did not care what happened to them now. They had brought their plans to a successful conclusion, and had seen enough to know that the destruction of the control tower meant the end of all Hercules' plans. They had delivered Africa from the awful, brooding menace of the Black Terror, or so they thought, until Leopold's next words disillusioned them.

"Let us take them to the reserve tower," said the mulatto. "That is the first place for which the Master will make."

Tickler looked at his friend blankly. So Hercules had a reserve tower; he had been prepared for such an emergency, and they had under-estimated the cleverness of the black genius!

They felt sick at heart as they were marched off by Leopold and the Portuguese.

For all their planning and desperate courage they had only succeeded in holding up the Black Terror for a few moments at the most, and soon it would be in full swing again.

Their thoughts were interrupted by the arrival of the little party at a small tower which was a miniature replica of the one they had destroyed.

Leopold thrust his prisoners into a small room and barred the door outside, telling them they could wait there for the arrival of Hercules.

The two chums did not have long to wait. In a few minutes the roaring of a powerful voice outside denoted that the black giant had appeared and that he was in a towering rage.

Jack went to the small window and peered out. He could see Hercules literally frothing at the mouth as Colanzo and Leopold described what they had discovered in the control tower.

Hercules stood towering above his two companions, while his jaws worked convulsively and his enormous hands clenched and unclenched like clockwork.

"Idiots!" he shrieked, in a voice like a fog siren, as Leopold told how they had run for their lives. "Why did you not break the fuse?"

With a swift movement of his bare muscular arms, Hercules seized his two companions by the neck and brought their heads together with a force that would leave them senseless for half an hour.

Then, throwing the unconscious figures from him and dusting his hands as if he had touched something unclean, the giant negro strode into the building. With one powerful kick he splintered the door of the room in which the pals were imprisoned and sprang at them like an infuriated gorilla.

For once the two chums were thoroughly frightened, as well they might be. The enormous figure of Hercules, his huge muscles rippling, the sinews of his neck standing out like cables, his nostrils distended like those of an angry beast, was enough to strike terror into the bravest heart.

Some instinct came to Tickler as the fearsome apparition jumped at them with outstretched hands to get them in a clasp which they knew full well would crush their ribs. He remembered reading somewhere that there was one thing the strongest of black men could not stand.

Dodging under the mighty arms, and with all the power of desperation, he aimed a terrific kick at the black man's shins. As his steel-shod boot cracked against bone, the effect was amazing. The foaming, homicidal giant suddenly became like a howling baby, his big arms dropped, and he started to hop about on one leg, blubbering like a child.

Without a moment's hesitation Jack and Tickler dived for the splintered door. Outside, the unconscious figures of

Colanzo and Leopold were sprawled across the steps.

"This way!" cried Jack.

He dodged behind the small tower, raced along, jumped on to a high steel wall and scrambled over it, with Tickler close behind.

The two chums found themselves in an enclosed space with a low, square building set in the centre so that it was invisible from outside.

The building was made of shining chromium steel and contained no windows except sloping roof lights of frosted glass. A heavy steel door confronted them, but it would not yield.

By standing on Tickler's shoulders, Jack was just able to reach the edge of one of the roof lights. Hoping that no one would hear the crash, he stove in the window with his fist. Scrambling through the broken glass and finding a foothold inside, Jack next took off his jacket and lowered it to within reach of his companion. In a few seconds Tickler had grasped the jacket and was up beside his chum. The two then dropped down inside the building.

Jack and Tickler found themselves in the most amazing room they had ever beheld. All around were the most peculiar scientific instruments, models of remarkable machines, hundreds of various coloured bottles and jars, retorts by the dozen, and all the paraphernalia which goes to the making of an extensive scientific laboratory.

In a smaller room they discovered a big desk littered with calculations, while beside it was a huge glasslike screen.

"Look!" exclaimed Jack, gazing into the big screen. "In this you can see everything that is going on in the city!"

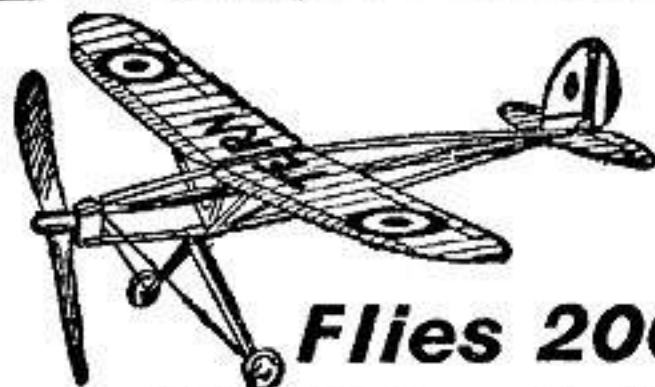
Sure enough, by peering into the screen the two chums could see the whole of Radium City in perfect miniature. They saw Hercules, more composed now, come striding from the reserve tower, while motionless Amarobs suddenly sprang to life again and continued with the tasks on which they had been engaged when the main tower was thrown out of action.

Relief at Last!

IGNORING the figures of his two lieutenants who were beginning to show signs of returning consciousness, Hercules called his body-guard together and addressed them.

When he had finished the Zulus dispersed and each took a party of Amarobs.

Then followed a careful and systematic search covering every square inch of the city in an endeavour to find the fugitive white men. Fascinated by the scene before them, Jack and Tickler watched the comb-out drawing nearer
(Continued on next page.)



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and nearer until finally the whole of the city had been covered with the exception of the building in which they were hidden.

From their observation the two chums saw that for some reason or other the natives treated the high steel wall around the laboratory with a reverential awe and would not come anywhere near it. Even Golanzo and Leopold, who by this time had recovered and were joining in the search, could not persuade the Zulus to clamber up on the wall.

"That's funny," remarked Tickler. "I suppose he doesn't want anyone else nosing about in his laboratory."

"Suppose so!" agreed Jack. "Look, there's Master Leopold plotting some mischief or other."

On the screen they saw Golanzo and the half-caste in deep conversation, and by the gesticulations of the rascally pair it was evident that they were anxious to know why Hercules would not allow a search to be made behind the steel wall.

The Portuguese disappeared inside the reserve tower and returned again in a few minutes, evidently to report that Hercules was engrossed in some task or other.

With furtive glances the two plotters stealthily made their way to the steel wall, and Golanzo produced a key, with which he opened the gate. A minute later, the pals heard a key scrap in the lock of the laboratory door.

"Be careful, Senhor Leopold, that those English rats are not hiding somewhere," came the voice of Golanzo.

"That is all right. I have my radium gun," replied the mulatto, "and all I ask is a chance to kill them."

The two scoundrels entered the laboratory and stood for a moment in surprised wonder.

"So!" whistled Leopold. "This is where the Master keeps his secrets! No wonder we could never find them!"

"The Master!" snarled Golanzo. "How I hate him now!"

"Yes—yes," replied the half-caste slowly, "but you do not hate him as I do—" He broke off and started to rummage around the big room. "Suppose, Senhor Golanzo, that we could find here all the secrets of his power! Suppose Mister Leopold and Senhor Golanzo were the only possessors of those secrets!"

"You mean we—we might kill him?" said Golanzo hoarsely.

"Exactly! The secret of radio-active

machinery would make us rich beyond dreams if disposed of in the right quarters, would it not?"

"Dios! But you are right! And think of what the money would mean to us in a civilised world!"

Leopold was the first to find the mass of documents which comprised the secret formulae of the black genius.

"That's good!" said Golanzo. "Now we will leave them there and dispose of Senhor Hercules, yes? I think he will not be the master for much longer!"

In their excitement the plotters had apparently forgotten all about the two English boys.

"Gosh!" breathed Jack, as the door closed behind the pair of ruffians. "What are we going to do. We can't stand by and let those fiends murder Hercules in cold blood!"

"It's terrible, I know," replied Tickler, "but don't forget we came here to try to put an end to the Black Terror."

Jack clasped his forehead in mental agony while Tickler stared into the screen.

"Look!" he exclaimed.

In the picture they saw Leopold standing outside the control tower entrance, while Golanzo crouched in cover near by. The huge figure of Hercules appeared in the doorway, and there was a flash of steel as the Portuguese hurled himself forward.

The two chums shuddered as they saw the giant with the haft of a wicked-looking knife sticking from between his shoulders, twist round, fall flat on his face, and lay very still just inside the portico.

With leers of triumph on their evil faces, Golanzo and Leopold bent over their victim, to make sure that he was dead.

They backed hastily as a convulsive shudder racked the magnificent frame. But they were not quick enough to dodge those powerful hands.

Summoning his fast-ebbing strength, and with the lifeblood pouring from the cowardly wound, Hercules slowly dragged himself to his feet.

There was no fierce anger in his eyes, only sorrow and regret, as, with an effort which drew a spasm of pain across his face, he crushed his assailants against his mighty chest in a dreadful embrace.

Then, slowly but deliberately, he staggered from the tower and made his way towards the laboratory, dragging his groaning murderers with him.

Torn with sorrow and pain at the terrible scene, and with a feeling of intense admiration for the huge negro, Jack and Tickler stepped forward as they heard Hercules fumbling painfully at the lock.

The door opened, and Hercules threw his assailants inside before he staggered after them and came face to face with the two English boys.

"I knew you would be here, my young friends," he gasped, leaning against the wall. "You were here to see the birth of the Black Empire, and now"—his voice broke with emotion—"you will see its death."

Slipping a big ring from his thick finger, Hercules handed it to Jack.

"Take this. It will serve to protect you from my people." Once more the black giant faltered as he was stricken with pain. "Go—go quickly, for the reign of the Emperor Hercules is about to end!"

With an unutterable sadness in their hearts, Jack and Tickler obeyed.

At the sight of the ring which Hercules had given to Jack the natives let the two chums pass in peace, and they hastened to the outskirts of the city, where they paused on a small hill to look back on rows of steel buildings.

From their vantage point Jack and Tickler could see the big laboratory, and as they looked, the huge figure of Hercules appeared on the roof. For a moment he stood drawn up to his full magnificent height, clad only in a leopard skin, and with his arms raised on high, as if in supplication.

The next instant there was a blinding flash, followed by a terrific explosion. The air was filled with a fine dust, and when it settled the laboratory had completely disappeared.

Hercules, together with his treacherous lieutenants and his secrets, had gone for ever!

Jack and Tickler returned to England in due course, and time and time again they had to relate the story of their amazing experiences with the Black Hercules. It was an adventure they were not likely to forget!

THE END.

(Next week's MAGNET will contain a short complete tale telling of a thrilling fight between three Old Boys of Greyfriars and a gang of villainous kidnapers! Meanwhile, don't forget about our super cover to cover stories of Harry Wharton & Co.—the first of which will appear in the MAGNET the week after next!)

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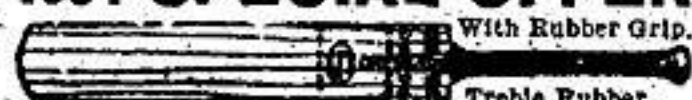
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THE NEW Greyfriars Herald



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No. 96 (New Series).

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

August 4th, 1934.

NOT CRICKET

Hobson's Lingo Beats Remove

It wasn't superior play that gave the Shell cricket team victory against the Remove; but it may well have been Hobson's superior lingo!

We've known for some time that Hobson has been studying business letter-writing, but until he met the Shell at cricket, we had no idea how badly it had affected him.

When he called round to Wharton's study to fix the date of the match, Hobson didn't merely ask "Will the eighteenth do for you?" He put it like this:

"In re cricket match, kindly state at your convenience whether the eighteenth instant meets your requirements as to date."

Wharton managed to gasp out:

"Yes, that'll do us all right," and Hobson immediately said:

"I am in receipt of your favour of even date for which I beg to thank you, and I note that the date suggested is in accordance with your requirements. I trust that the game will be to our mutual satisfaction!"

And he walked out of the study, leaving Wharton feeling dizzy!

That didn't matter much in the House, of course; but when Hobson brought his new-style lingo with him to the match, it was more serious. After winning the toss and deciding to put the Remove in to bat first, he turned to Wharton and remarked:

"I should esteem it a favour if you would kindly bat first. Thanking you in anticipation."

And that was how he carried on right through the game. When Vernon-Smith protested against Hobson's fast bowling injuring him three times in succession, Hobson, smiling blandly, called out:

"I note your request, and the matter is receiving my careful attention!"

When he managed to catch Redwing out in the slips, he chirruped:

"Your favour to hand, for which I beg to thank you."

When the Remove's innings ended prematurely early, he shouted across to Wharton:

"Be so good as to advise me whether tea at this juncture will be to your satisfaction!"

And over the tea-table he remarked loudly:

"You scoured an advantage over us at our last meeting, but I confidently anticipate a reversal of that issue in our contest of even date."

Can you wonder at it that several members of the Remove got all hot up over Hobson, and lost the blessed game? We can't!

Wharton was quite pale when he came off the field.

"Good game, Hobson," he said. "You won all right."

Hobson's reply was:

"We are duly in receipt of your communication, and are pleased to note that the game has met with your approval."

The Remove team, without waiting to hear more of Hobson, fled into the pavilion, howling hysterically. They can stand anything from body-line bowlers to barrackers; but when business-letter-writers invade the cricket field, they give up!



GREYFRIARS 100 YEARS AGO

the captain, a brutal villain who carried with him a length of knotted rope with which to beat all who came near him, and told them that they were going to be carried away from England and made to work before the mast!

As soon as the boys had recovered from the first shock of surprise, they made to run up on deck to shout for help. Ere they were anywhere near the companion-ladder, however, rough hands had seized them and flung them to the floor, where the captain belaboured them with savage violence till they roared for mercy!

When the captain had finished his foul work, he had the luckless trio thrown into the hold and there they remained until the ship set sail. Deeming it then safe, he had them fetched up on deck and ordered them to set about polishing the brass-work.

But he had reckoned without George Wharton. Wharton, as many of the readers of these notes are aware, is an extremely strong swimmer, and the fact that the shore was at least half a mile distant did not daunt him. The moment the captain turned his back, Wharton sprang to the side of the barque and dived into the water.

Five minutes passed before anyone on the ship other than his friends noticed his absence. In that considerable interval, Wharton put a good distance between himself and the barque, and by the time his flight had at last been noticed, it was too late for the foreigners to attempt to recapture him

without calling undesirable attention to themselves. They therefore, contented themselves with keeping Torrence and Abbott, and put out every inch of sail they possessed in order to make good their escape from possible pursuers.

Wharton landed on the beach in a state of exhaustion, but managed to give an account of what had happened to the longshoremen who helped him out of the water, and coastguards were quickly on the scene for the purpose of obtaining full details. The coastguards were sympathetic, but could not promise to do much, more particularly since Wharton was unable to supply even the name of the barque.

There will be general anxiety among Greyfriars scholars for news of the kidnapped Fourth Form boys, and all will hope sincerely for their safe return. As we prepare this article for the Press, we learn that Wharton's father has arrived at Folkestone and chartered a small schooner, intending to track down the missing lads himself, and a letter from Wharton junior states that he is accompanying his father, so that he can pick out the Flemish barque if and when he sees her.

May good luck attend their efforts!

(It looks as though seaside holidays in the early nineteenth century weren't all honey! We've found the sequel to the above from our archives, so next week you'll learn how my ancestors got on in their quest for the Flemish four-master. Don't miss it!—H. W., Ed.)

PREFECTS' PRIVATE POW-WOW

By One Who Was NOT There

The prefects thought we'd be awfully annoyed when they decided not to allow a Press representative to attend their private pow-wow; but trifles like that never trouble us, and we soon solved the difficulty by getting Bob Cherry to write up a report from imagination. Here it is:—

The keynote of the prefects' pow-wow was enthusiasm. Loder and Walker sat in a corner and played nap with enthusiasm, Doone and Faulkner and Tremaine were wildly enthusiastic over an orgy of leapfrog, and North and Wingate displayed the utmost enthusiasm in a splendid game of Ludo.

These solemn rites, of course, were merely a preliminary to the real business of the evening, which began with a supper of herrings, fried over a spirit stove, and jam-tarts and ginger-pop.

Supper being over, the prefects held a noughts-and-crosses tournament which was remarkable for the high quality of the play. After a dour struggle, the prize was won by North, amid great excitement and tremendous cheering.

A game of darts followed, Faulkner winning easily with a score of 130.

A riotous game of hunt-the-slipper soon had the seniors scampering round the room again till they were thoroughly tired. When this stage was reached, they settled down to Competitions, which proved exceptionally enjoyable.

Walker won the Impromptu Speech Contest with an excellent speech on "Ancient Chinese Tortures and Their Place in the Modern School!"

Loder simply walked away with the "Pulling the Most Terrifying Face Contest."

Finally, to the accompaniment of ungrudging cheers, North scored top points in the Ashplant-wielding Contest.

After planning apple-pie beds for all the masters and an extra-special booby-trap for the Head, the prefects concluded their evening with a short concert on their mouth-organ and Comb-and-Paper Band.

That's all. Nobody can say now that we don't report Prefects' pow-wow—even though our men are barred.

CLAIM FOR LOST EYEBROWS

Bunter Sues School Gardener

An unusually interesting action came up for hearing before the Remove Civil Court, when W. G. Bunter, Remove, sued Joseph Mimble, School Gardener, for damages in respect of the loss of a pair of eyebrows.

To a crowded Court, Bunter, who conducted his own case, said that this was a typical example of the criminal negligence of the lower orders in going about their daily work. Mimble ought to have looked where he was going when he was cutting the grass on the playing-fields. He didn't, and this shocking accident was the result. The mowing-machine went right over the top half of his (Bunter's) face, as he lay snoozing in a hollow on the other side of the playing-fields, and when he got back to the House, he discovered, on looking in a mirror that he had lost the wavy coil that previously crowned his forehead, together with his shapely eyebrows. It had deprived him of half his beauty! (Loud laughter.)

On the question of what amount of damages would compensate him, Bunter asked the Court dramatically what sort of sum they thought could ever buy such good looks as had been his before the accident. (A voice:



"Wot I Says Is This 'Ere:—"

Thankee kindly, one and all, for the generous tips wot you've given me in the past afore leavin' for your summer 'olidays, an' 'ere's 'opin' you'll 'ave a tip-top time this summer. Which this doesn't apply to young rips like Master Bunter an' Master Fish, wot 'ave never given me a 'apenny, an' wot I says is this 'ere, why such as them wasn't drowned at birth, I fail to hunderstand.—Yours, respectful, WILLIAM GOSLING, Porter's Lodge.

in tuck and would consent to, say, unlimited tuck for his own consumption for a period of five years. It struck Bunter as a jolly fine way out of the difficulty, and he sincerely hoped the Court would consider the suggestion seriously.

Joseph Mimble, defending himself, denied that there was any negligence on his part. If he had known it was Master Bunter, he naturally wouldn't have run the machine over him; but, as a matter of fact, he hadn't dreamed for a moment that it was Master Bunter—he thought it was an ant-heap! In any case, he was quite sure he had deprived Master Bunter of nothing in the way of beauty. You couldn't deprive a young gent of what he hadn't got, could you? With all due respect to Master Bunter, he'd never noticed any eyebrows there before the accident, while as to that tuft of hair in front, that would grow again in a fortnight!

The jury, after a short retirement, found for Bunter. Judge Wharton: "What sum do you award in damages?"

Foreman Tom Brown: "The cost of engaging Wibley to paint a new pair of eyebrows on the plaintiff's forehead, m'lud. Our suggestion is that the operation be performed in Court."

For some reason the plaintiff seemed to object to the award and made a dash for the door. Ushers grabbed him before he could get away, however, and detained him till Wibley arrived. In the space of a few seconds, Wibley had adorned him with a pair of artistic eyebrows, supplemented, on the judge's advice, by side-whiskers and a curly moustache.

Thus is justice dished out in the Remove!

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?



When Bolsover major arrived at the nets with a cricket bat almost twice the regulation size, there was an outcry! "Inky," however, turned wrath to laughter by proceeding to bowl Bolsover out half a dozen times—in spite of his big bat!



Wun Lung showed his ingenuity by building a small helicopter, in which he made an unexpected flight over Little Side. He "crashed" in the midst of the Remove cricketers—fortunately without injuring anything but the helicopter!



When Alonzo Todd went hiking, he startled Removites by appearing in a pair of blue and white hiking shorts. Though he created quite a sensation, "Lonzy's" idea of a hike was only a couple of miles. After that, "Lonzy" was "tagged"!



Mr. Frout is very fond of salmon fishing, and was telling Mr. Quelch about some of his tremendous "catches." But when Mr. Quelch asked if he had ever had any of them stuffed, to show people, "Prouty" dried up. Perhaps he felt "caught," too!



Fisher T. Fish built a wireless set and claimed to get programmes from America. He was doing quite a "trade" allowing Removites to listen-in when Cherry discovered the American "programmes" were reproduced from a gramophone record!



It is computed that Coker of the Fifth uses the pronoun "I" more frequently than any other fellow. Coker is always ready to talk about himself—oblivious to the fact that Potter and Greene, his chums, let it go in one ear and out of the other!

GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT!

SITUATION VACANT

The Editor of the "Greyfriars Herald" wants a first-class Football Reporter for next season. Must be able to combine absolute impartiality with intense enthusiasm for the Remove team, and strict truth with at least one terrific sensation per article. State previous experience and salary required.—H. WHARTON, Editor.

DICKY NUGENT'S WEEKLY WISDOM

They say that Sammy Bunter has eaten a large lump of chalk, thinking it was Margate rock. But the yarn is not jennerally believed to be true. Most people feel that it's too much to swallow!