

WHEN THE GANGSTERS CAME TO GREYFRIARS!

The Magnet 2^D



THE GUNMAN AT GREYFRIARS!



COME INTO *the* OFFICE, BOYS - AND GIRLS!

Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. Write to him: Editor of the "Magnet," The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped, addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

As a kick-off to this chat of mine, chums, I feel that I must once again draw your attention to the grand yarn telling of Harry Wharton's early schooldays which appears in this week's issue of our companion paper, the "Gem." This splendid treat will appeal specially to new readers of the MAGNET who would like to know how Harry Wharton first came to Greyfriars, how he quarrelled with Frank Nugent, and the exciting adventures at Greyfriars that changed his whole character.

"THE MAKING OF HARRY WHARTON!"

is undoubtedly one of the very finest stories ever written. This splendid story also tells how Billy Bunter, the world's funniest and fattest laughter-merchant, first found a footing in the Remove Form. If you have not already purchased a copy of this week's "Gem" I should advise you to do so right away as this particular issue will sell like hot cakes!

Do you know what is

THE SMALLEST BOOK IN THE WORLD?

"Constant Reader," of Coventry, asks me if I can answer this question. Yes, the smallest volume in the world was sold by auction in London recently. It is a translation of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam. It is only a quarter of an inch in length, and its weight is just over one grain! It is printed with minute copper plates. The pages have been stitched by hand and bound with leather. Needless to say, it is impossible to read the book without the aid of a powerful magnifying glass. The book was printed in Massachusetts in 1932. So tiny is the type, that when the book was being printed, work had to stop whenever a motor-car passed by the printing establishment. It was found that the vibration of a passing motor-car was sufficient to blur the type!

Now let's talk about something big. What is

THE BIGGEST ARTIFICIAL LAKE

in the world? G. K. D., of Bridport, asks me that. It is the new lake which has just been completed at Boulder Dam, on the Colorado River, Arizona, U.S.A. The lake hasn't filled up yet, and it will take between four and five years to do so. But when it is filled, it will be 115 miles long. In certain parts the depth will be as great as 1,000 feet, and it will spread into distant valleys and canyons. The newly-constructed Boulder Dam is one of the big engineering feats of the world. It is the highest embankment in the world, and stands in seven million tons of massed concrete. No less than 1,800,000 horse-power will be created by it, and this will be distributed over the States of

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Arizona, Nevada, and Southern California. Passenger boats will ply on the lake, new industries will be created, and the district—once a mass of barren rocks and mountains—will become a tourists' paradise!

Harry Farmer, an Australian reader of Sydney, has sent me along a paragraph which he thinks will interest fellow-readers of the MAGNET. It might well be headed

SNAKES ALIVE!

A resident of Bungowannah, South Australia, decided to have a day's duck shooting. His wife and his two sons went with him. As well as ducks, they found the place infested with poisonous snakes. Before they could settle with the ducks, they had to deal with the snakes. Many people might have beat a hasty retreat, but not this family. Snakes or no snakes, they weren't going to be done out of their day's hunting. So they "sailed in" on the snakes.

Before the day was out the four of them had killed seventy-two poisonous snakes—and had managed to get a large "bag" of ducks!

Good hunting, eh, chums?

Here is another paragraph that might interest my readers. It concerns

AN INTERESTING AMATEUR EDITOR,

who lives at Union, New Jersey, U.S.A. Clark Johnston is only a schoolboy of nine years of age, but he already edits, prints and publishes a newspaper of his own, called the "Boulevard Bugle." It is printed by means of a typewriter and a duplicator, but it hasn't much of a circulation. As a matter of fact, Clark turns out only sixteen copies a week, but these are eagerly snapped up by his schoolfellows.

In a recent issue this juvenile editor printed an article wishing good luck to King Edward VIII, and posted a copy to the King.

HERE'S a yarn which comes from Tanganyika, and will appeal to animal lovers. It's about

THE MAN WHO PALLED UP WITH A LION

He's an African native, and he says he has been friends with this particular wild lion for years. Furthermore, the lion appreciated his friendship so much that whenever it made a "kill" it always left a portion of its prey for this elderly native.

Of late, lions have been making themselves a nuisance in the Tabora district by raiding stock. The native authorities therefore constructed a number of traps to catch the lions. This particular lion was caught in one of the pit traps. The

native found him and, by means of a ladder, went into the trap and helped the lion to escape. Unfortunately, the authorities did not agree with the native, and the result was that he was fined fifty shillings in a native court for saving the lion!

Here is an item that will interest those of you who are film fans. The very latest in cinemas is

PARACHUTING CINEMAS.

How would you like your cinema fare literally dropped on you from the skies? This is what is happening in certain rural districts of Russia. Operators, projectors and films are carried by aeroplane to districts which are far off the beaten track. As the aeroplane passes over the selected spot, the operators and the apparatus are dropped by parachute, and film shows are then given. The films are generally "silent" ones, and music is supplied by an accordion. Some of the collective farms where these shows are given are forty miles away from the nearest railway, and the people working upon them would probably never see a cinema show unless it was delivered to them in this unusual manner.

JUST to finish up this chat, here are a few more

THINGS YOU'D HARDLY BELIEVE!

The Ticking Cow! A farmer in New Jersey lost his watch. Months later, one of his cows was slaughtered—and the watch was found inside it, still ticking away merrily! Every time the cow breathed she had wound up the watch one notch!

Another Snake Yarn. A resident of Tarago, New South Wales, was quietly reading when, looking down, he spotted a big tiger snake. He was able to reach for his gun and shoot it. He had just disposed of the snake when thirty more snakes wriggled into the room. They were the young offspring of the snake he had shot. Luckily the Australian managed to dispose of these, too—a bag of thirty-one snakes in a few minutes!

A Million Pounds of Hidden Treasure! A Russian refugee claims to know the whereabouts of a million pounds' worth of hidden treasure in gold roubles. He says it was buried in the mountains after the fall of Port Arthur in the Russo-Japanese war. He also says that unless he can get the treasure, he will carry his secret to the grave.

A Dream of Wealth. A doctor in Austria dreamed that he received a shoal of letters headed with the number 13.49.1. He bet on these numbers at a gambling resort—and won £800.

I have left a little space to tell you something about next week's programme:

"HORACE COKER'S DARK DEED!" By Frank Richards,

is the title of the next complete yarn in our grand new series. The great Horace is on vengeance bent and things happen! I do not wish to delve more into the plot for fear of spoiling your enjoyment. Anyway, the tale itself is a real good one, and will be voted on all sides as one of Frank Richards' best. The "Greyfriars Herald," too, is bang up to standard. Next we come to more snappy verses by the Greyfriars Rhymester, and last, but not least, the opening chapters of our grand new tale of modern piracy—further particulars of which appear on page 26 of this issue. Why not give a regular order for the MAGNET, chums? It will save you being disappointed!

YOUR EDITOR.

GUN PLAY *at* GREYFRIARS!

By FRANK RICHARDS



Poker Pike, bodyguard to Putnam van Duck, is rather like a fish out of water at Greyfriars. But when the gangsters come to Greyfriars, Poker Pike is on the job!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Going Back to Greyfriars!

FULL!" said Bob Cherry.
 "What!" roared Coker.
 "Full!" repeated Bob.
 Why Coker of the Fifth looked so fearfully annoyed, indeed, enraged, was rather a puzzle to the chums of the Greyfriars Remove.
 The carriage was full! Bob's statement to that effect was hardly needed—Coker could see that the carriage was full.

That carriage seated six, and there were six fellows in it. Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, Hurree Singh, Johnny Bull, and Bob, going back to Greyfriars for the new term, and Putnam van Duck, of Chicago, a now fellow.

Lantham Junction swarmed with Greyfriars men, who mostly wanted to go by that train, rather than wait for the next. Still, everybody couldn't go by that train, and Coker of the Fifth was one of those that couldn't. At all events, he couldn't go in a carriage that was already full!

When Coker looked in and saw six fellows in six seats, it was up to Coker to pass on. Coker was not a whale on arithmetic, but he could, of course, count up to six correctly. But instead of passing on, he glared in at the window at the Remove fellows in towering wrath.

"What did you say?" he roared.
 "Full!" repeated Bob.
 "By gum!" gasped Coker. And he gripped the door-handle, to wrench the door open. "I'll teach you to call me a fool, you cheeky young tick!"
 "Wha-a-t!" stuttered Bob.
 "Ha, ha, ha!" came a yell from the rest of the carriage.

Evidently Coker had misunderstood! Bob had simply been making a plain statement that the carriage was full. Coker's impression was that the junior was telling him what he thought of his intellect. Hence his wrath!

"I say—" gasped Bob.
 But there was no time to explain. Horace Coker wrenched the door open. He barged in. Bob, hurled headlong by that hefty barge, was strwn along the floor of the carriage amid innumerable feet. He yelled as he was strwn.

"Now, then—" roared Coker.
 But Coker got no farther than that, the whole carriage rose on Coker. Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent grasped his arms. Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh seized his oars, which were large and gave a good hold. Putnam van Duck took possession of his neck. Bob, sprawling among dust and feet, grabbed his legs.

Coker collapsed.
 Coker of the Fifth, when he was wrathful, did not count odds. But the odds, counted or uncounted, were there, and too many for Coker. For a whole minute the interior of that first-class carriage was the scene of a first-class shindy. Coker hardly knew what was happening. What he next knew, clearly, was that he was dropping on the platform of Lantham Junction and dropping rather hard.

Bump!
 "Oooogh!" gasped Coker.
 He sat up dizzily.
 His hat was gone, his necktie hung at the back of his neck, and his collar was curled round one ear. He had a dismantled look.

"Oooogh!" he repeated breathlessly.
 "I—I—I'll—ooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came from the fellows along the platform. Witnesses of Coker's sudden descent from the carriage seemed amused thereby.

"Coming in to have some more?" asked Harry Wharton.
 "Oh, do!" said Johnny Bull.
 "Lots more on tap, Coker!" chuckled Frank Nugent.

"Oodles and oodles, if you're honing for it!" grinned Putnam van Duck.
 "Urrrgh!" gurgled Coker. He staggered to his feet.

Potter and Greene of the Fifth rushed up.
 "Oh, here you are, Coker!" exclaimed Potter. "Come on, we've got a carriage along—"

"Those cheeky young rotters—" gasped Coker.
 "Come on!" urged Greene. "No time to rag with fags, Coker."

"Those cheeky young ticks—" "Look here, our places will be bagged—"

"Think I'm going to let a cheeky fag call me a fool!" roared Coker. "I'm going to smash him! See? Smash him to small bits! You fellows lend me a hand."

"You silly ass!" howled Bob Cherry "I never called you a fool—"

"Why, you lying young sweep—" "I said 'full'—" shrieked Bob.
 "Yes, I heard you say fool, and I'm going to jolly well smash you for it," hooted Coker, recklessly splitting his infinitive. "Come on, Potter! Come on, Greene! You handle the other little brutes, while I whop that cheeky tick!"

And Coker rushed to the assault. Potter and Greene did not come on. They scudded off, to make sure that their places on the train were not

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bagged. They seemed to consider that more important than scrapping with a mob of fags.

Coker, unheeding, charged.

The doorway of the carriage was crammed with juniors on the defensive. Harry Wharton & Co. packed their goal, so to speak.

Coker of the Fifth was heavy and hefty, and full of beans. But really, he had no chance. He broke on the Remove defence like a wave on a rock.

Instead of smashing through, knocking cheeky juniors right and left, which was his intention, he went backwards on the platform again, which was far from being his intention.

Crash!

For the second time, Coker hit the Lantham platform with his burly back, and tapped it with his bullet head.

"Man down!" chortled Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on, Coker!"

"Have some more!"

Coker sat up as a porter came along and slammed the carriage door. The train was full up and about to start. Coker, breathless, sat up and blinked at it. Bob waved a parting hand from the open window.

"Good-bye, Coker!"

"Oooogh!" gasped Coker. He picked himself up, and tottered to the carriage. Even yet, Coker did not seem to have had enough.

"Stand clear, there!" shouted a porter.

"Chuck it, fathead!" said Bob, holding the handle of the door inside. "We're starting, you frabjous ass!"

The engine was screaming. Doors were shut along the train. Even Coker realised that there was no time to deal with the heroes of the Remove as they deserved. He glared in at the window.

"You cheeky young scoundrels!" he spluttered. "You wait till we get to Courtfield! Just wait, and I'll jolly well—gurrrrrgggggh!"

Coker did not mean to say that. He said it involuntarily as Putnam van Duck reached through the open window and nipped his prominent nose between a finger and thumb that felt like a steel vice.

"Wurrgh!" gurgled Coker. "Oogh! Led do my dose—gurrgh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Urrrrgh!"

"I'll say you've asked for it, big boy!" said Putnam van Duck cheerily. "I'm pulling that probiscus a few."

"Yurrgh! Led do—grooogh!"

The train was moving. Coker had to move as the train moved, with that vice-like grip on his nose. For a moment or two Coker was led along by his nose. Then Putnam, releasing him, pushed, and Coker sat down for the third time.

He was still sitting clasping his nose with both hands and gurgling horribly as the train ran out of Lantham and the Removes lost sight of him.

He had told the juniors to wait till they got to Courtfield—but clearly, if they did, they would wait in vain, for Coker was not going to Courtfield on that train. He was left behind at Lantham, nursing a crimson beak—which was still flaming red when Coker got on the second train.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Surprise for Loder!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Blow away, Bunter!"

"I say, sorry I missed you at Lantham—"

"Nobody else is!"

"But here we are again!" said

Bunter, unheeding. "I'll go on to Friardale with you. I say, got any chocs?"

"No!"

"Got any toffee?"

"No!"

"I say, there's lots of time to dodge into the buffet here before we get on the local."

"Good—dodge in."

"You fellows coming?"

"No!"

"Beasts!" said Billy Bunter.

The fat Owl of the Remove blinked morosely at the Famous Five through his big spectacles. He had descended from another carriage when the train stopped at Courtfield, where the Greyfriars fellows had to change for the local train for Friardale and the school.

Bunter had intended to join up with his old pals at Lantham. They had seen him. Bunter, fortunately being short-sighted, hadn't seen them. But he saw them now, and here he was!

"This way, Van Duck!" said Harry Wharton to the American boy. "We get over the line for the local."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Roll off, Bunter!"

"I say, I was packed in a carriage with a lot of Sixth Form cads," said Bunter. "Looking for you fellows, you know, I had to jump in at the last minute, and the carriage was full of seniors. That beast Loder pulled my ear. He made out I trod on his foot! He's come back this term a worse bully than ever."

"Shut up, you ass!" said Bob Cherry hurriedly.

Loder of the Sixth was standing with Carne and Walker, of that Form, only a few yards away. He glanced round at Bunter.

Bunter, happily unaware of the proximity of the bully of the Sixth, rattled on unheeding.

"Rotten bully, you know! I'd have knocked him down if he hadn't been a prefect! It's a bit thick, isn't it, the Head making a rotter like Loder a prefect! I say, what's the matter with you fellows? What are you making faces at a chap for? What—Yarooooh!"

A finger and thumb closing on Billy Bunter's fat ear made him jump and utter a yell simultaneous with the jump.

"Ow! Leggo, Coker, you beast!" howled Bunter. "Oh, is it you, Loder? I—I say, leggo my ear! I—I say—Yaroooh!"

"What were you saying about me?" asked Loder of the Sixth, grimly compressing his grip on the fat ear.

"Ow! Nothing! I was only saying—yaroooh! I mean, I never said a word, only—whoop! Leggo my ear! Wow!"

Billy Bunter hopped.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at Loder. But for the fact that he was a prefect of the Sixth Form, they certainly would have up-ended him on the platform on the spot. But Sixth Form prefects were not to be lightly handled by juniors of the Lower Fourth.

Loder was looking cross. Perhaps he had come back for the new term in a bad temper. Anyhow, he was in a bad temper now. Still, even a good-tempered fellow might have been annoyed by hearing Bunter's description of him.

He nipped Bunter's fat ear like a pair of pincers with finger and thumb.

Bunter almost danced.

"Yow-ow-ow!" he howled. "I say, you fellows, make him leggo! Wow! Oh lor'! Yow-ow-ow!"

"Say, who's that guy?" asked Van Duck, staring at the scene.

"That's Loder!" answered Harry.

"He— Oh, my hat! Here, hold on!"

Van Duck stepped towards Loder of the Sixth and caught him by the arm.

"Forget it, bol!" he said. "I guess that fat guy's had enough, and a few over. Take a rest, see?"

He jerked at Loder's arm, and Bunter's fat ear was released.

Loder, in sheer astonishment, glared at the American boy. As he had never seen him before, he could guess that he was a new boy for Greyfriars. Indeed, only that circumstance accounted for his cool check in interfering with the lordly and lofty proceedings of a Sixth Form prefect.

"Why, you—you—you—" gasped Loder. He wrenched his arm away from Van Duck, and grabbed the youth from Chicago by the collar.

"Hold on, Loder!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Van Duck's a new kid!"

Loder of the Sixth did not heed.

Holding Putnam van Duck by the collar with one hand, he smacked his head with the other.

Even a prefect of the Sixth was not entitled to smack a fellow's head; but Gerald Loder did not always stop to consider whether he was entitled to do a thing before he did it, and he did it—hard!

"Aw, wake snakes!" roared Van Duck, as Loder smacked. "Say, you pesky geck—Yoo-hooop!"

Smack, smack, smack!

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged glances. They did not want to begin the term with a row with a Sixth Form prefect. And although Loder was exceeding the limit, it was a very dubious and perilous matter to handle a prefect. Before they could make up their minds what to do, a man in a black bowler hat which seemed screwed down on his bullet head, pushed through and grabbed Loder by the neck.

"Oh!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Jolly old Pike!"

It was Poker Pike, the gunman hired by Van Duck's "popper" to guard him from kidnappers.

Mr. Pike had been travelling in the carriage next to that occupied by the chums of the Remove. He had alighted when they did. So he was right on the spot when he was needed.

Van Duck knew little of Public schools, of the prefectorial system, and of what an important person a Sixth Form prefect was. Mr. Pike knew less. And he cared less still.

All Mr. Pike knew was that Putnam van Duck, entrusted to his charge by Mr. Vanderdecken van Duck, the multi-millionaire of Chicago, was having his million-dollar head smacked. It seemed to Mr. Pike time for him to horn in, as he would have called it. He horned in.

Loder of the Sixth, with a grip on his collar that there was no resisting, was plucked off his feet.

He gave a gasping howl as he went.

In his native city of Chicago it was Mr. Pike's way to depend chiefly on his "gun." But he had already learned that he was in a strange land where guns were looked on with disfavour. He had learned, with surprise and disapproval, that in England a guy could not flourish a six-gun without attracting an extraordinary amount of attention—let alone "shoot up" another guy and walk away as if nothing had happened!

Still, Mr. Pike could use his hands as well as his gun. And he was as strong as a horse, or nearly so.

Having fastened an iron grip on the back of Loder's collar, he swept him off his feet with a single jerk of his sinewy, wiry arm.

Loder, in a state of spluttering amazement, found himself in the air, swinging round.

The astonished spectators hurriedly jumped back out of reach. Billy Bunter, however, did not jump quite in time.

"Whoop!" roared Bunter, as Loder's feet established contact with his fat ribs. Bunter went over like a fat ninepin.

Loder swung on.

Revolving on his axis, as it were, the gunman swung Loder round and round by his collar, with a grim and serious face, evidently seeing nothing of a comic nature in the lesson he was giving him.

But from the swarm of Greyfriars fellows on the platform there came a yell of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And the rowfulness will also be preposterous!"

"Say, Poker, you guy, let up on that geck!" shouted Putnam.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A buzzing, excited crowd surrounded the scene. But they kept out of reach of Gerald Loder's whirling feet.

"Ooooooogh!" came in a suffocated gurgle from the bully of the Sixth.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let up, Poker, I'm telling you!" yelled Van Duck.

"You said it!" agreed Poker.

He let go Loder's collar, and the hapless Sixth Former dropped on the platform. He rolled there, spluttering.

Mr. Pike looked down at him with his grave and serious eye.

"I guess that lets you out, feller,"

Vanderdecken van Duck was very urgent in the matter, and it really appears that the boy is in danger of kidnapping."

"In this country, sir—"

"It is a fact, Mr. Quelch. You have, of course, heard of the kidnapping of wealthy men's sons which appears to be carried on in the United States as a sort of industry—a very extraordinary industry. Well-known people have left that country, Mr. Quelch, and come to live in England for no reason but to protect their sons from professional kidnappers."

"I am aware of it, sir. But at a school like Greyfriars—really, sir, I cannot imagine any danger." Mr. Quelch gave a sniff. "It is unthinkable,



"Wurrrrgh!" gurgled Coker, as Putnam van Duck reached through the open carriage window and nipped his prominent nose between a finger and thumb that felt like a steel vice. "Oooooogh! Led do by dose—gurrgh!" "I'll say you asked for it, big boy!" said Van Duck, as the train began to move.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Grooogh!" gurgled Loder, half suffocated, and wholly amazed and flabbergasted. "Oooooogh! Owwoch!"

Walker and Carne ran forward. They had never seen Mr. Pike before, and certainly had no idea that he had been sent to school with a new boy as his guardian against kidnapers.

"Here, chuck that!" exclaimed Walker.

"Stop that, you hooligan!" shouted Carne.

They clutched at Mr. Pike together. Hardly glancing at them, Poker Pike swept round his left arm and knocked them both over like skittles.

He did not even pause in swinging Loder! Gerald Loder, like the music in the song, went round and round.

"Here we go round the mulberry-bush!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The roundfulness is terrific!" chortled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh,

he said. "You don't want to lay a paw on that Putnam van Duck—not while this guy is around!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton & Co. were almost weeping with merriment as they went along the platform. They could foresee high old times at Greyfriars if Poker Pike was going to take care of his charge in this way.

Leaving Loder sprawling and spluttering, Mr. Pike followed them.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Some Shindy!

"EXTRAORDINARY!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Very!" agreed the Head. The Remove master pursed his lips. The headmaster looked thoughtful and a little worried.

"Extremely unusual!" said Mr. Quelch.

"I agree," said Dr. Locke. "But Mr.

sir, that the most lawless American kidnapper would venture—"

"It would appear so, Mr. Quelch; yet such is actually the case," said the Head. "I learn that this boy, Van Duck, has been passing the Easter holidays at the home of a boy in your Form—Wharton—and while he was there an attempt was made to kidnap him, which was only prevented by his guard."

"Indeed, sir?"

"Yes, indeed, Mr. Quelch! Mr. van Duck had the very singular idea of engaging a man of similar character to the gangsters to guard his son—on the principle, I suppose of setting a thief to catch a thief." The Head smiled faintly. "It appears to have been a success. Certainly this man Spike—I think his name is Spiko—saved the boy from kidnapping at Wharton Lodge."

"But here, sir—"

"Mr. van Duck was so very earnest in the matter, sir, and so very anxious

for his son's safety, that I have consented to allow the guardian to take up his residence at the school during the term."

"If you have consented, sir, there is nothing more to be said," observed the Remove master, carefully suppressing another sniff.

"The situation is, indeed, very unusual," said Dr. Locke. "But no doubt the man Spike—or Pike—I am not sure whether his name is Spike or Pike—will be tactful, and will keep himself in the background, and be very careful not to attract undue attention."

"I should certainly hope so, sir."

"I have not yet seen the man, Mr. Quelch," said the Head. "I understand that, although he has been a gangster himself, he is very faithful to his charge—quite devoted. I have arranged for him to have a room in Gosling's lodge, where he will be out of contact with the boys. Indeed, if he exercises a certain amount of tact and reticence, probably most of the boys will remain unaware that he is in the school at all."

"I hope so, indeed!" said Mr. Quelch.

"No doubt he will be careful not to bring himself into prominence in any way," said the Head. "I shall, indeed, when I see him, impress the necessity of this upon him very carefully. I shall—Bless my soul! What is that disturbance in the quadrangle?"

Dr. Locke glanced towards his study window in surprise and annoyance.

On the first day of the term some latitude was allowed. Fellows fresh back from the holidays were liable to be a little exuberant before they settled down for the new term.

Still, there was a limit, and the sudden uproar in the quadrangle, almost

under the headmaster's window, sounded rather beyond the limit.

"What ever can that mean?" exclaimed the Head.

"Something unusual appears to be going on," remarked Mr. Quelch. "I will ascertain, sir."

He rose and stepped to the window of the Head's study. Dr. Locke rose and followed him there.

From the quad came roars of laughter. A swarm of fellows of all Forms was to be seen. Mr. Quelch spotted the Famous Five of his own Form howling with laughter; but those cheery youths for once did not seem to be mixed up in the disturbance, whatever it was.

Near the old stone fountain, in the middle of the green old quad, the crowd was thickest. There, above a sea of heads, arms and legs, could be seen waving in the air—a pair of arms and a pair of legs!

Somebody, it seemed, was being carried along, and objecting strenuously to the process. Whoever it was, he was being borne directly towards the fountain, amid a roaring mob of Greyfriars fellows.

"Extraordinary!" ejaculated the Head. "What—who—"

"I cannot imagine."

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a roar. "Poor old Coker! Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is a Fifth Form boy, I think," said the Remove master. "The boy Coker—a rather troublesome boy in Mr. Prout's Form. But what—"

He threw open the window.

"Wharton!" he called out.

The head boy of his Form was within hearing.

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

Harry Wharton turned his head.

"What is going on here, Wharton?"

exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "What is the cause of this disturbance?"

"I—I think Coker's getting a ducking, sir."

"Wha-at?" stuttered the Head. "Is—is that Coker of the Fifth Form who is—is being carried along in that—that extraordinary manner? Upon my word! Who—who—who can be doing this?"

"Who is that man, Wharton?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, glimpsing the bowler-hatted man who was carrying Coker of the Fifth like a bundle, heedless of the hefty Horace's wild struggles.

"Mr. Pike, sir!"

"Pike!" repeated Mr. Quelch.

"Pike!" said the Head faintly.

They gazed, petrified.

Amazing as the scene was to the headmaster and the Remove master, the explanation was really quite simple. Coker of the Fifth, after arriving at the school, had spotted the new boy who had pulled his nose at Lantham.

Nothing could have been more natural than for Horace Coker to collar that you and proceed to give him on the spot what any fellow richly deserved for pulling a nose so important as Coker's.

But barely had Coker's grasp closed on Putnam van Duck than Mr. Pike's grasp had closed on Coker, with the result that so astounded the Head as he stared blankly from his study window.

Mr. Quelch smiled a faint, sarcastic smile.

"So that is Mr. Pike, sir?" he said. "That is the man who is to remain here as guard over the new junior in my Form—"

"Bless my soul!" said the Head.

"The man who will, no doubt, be careful not to bring himself into prominence in any way—" remarked Mr. Quelch.

"Bless my soul!"

"Whose tact and reticence will cause most of the boys to remain unaware of his presence in the school?" murmured the Remove master.

"Really, Mr. Quelch—"

"I fear, sir, that there can be few persons within these walls who are not already aware of the presence of Mr. Pike!" said the Remove master.

"I—I—I fear so!" stammered the Head. "I—I— Goodness gracious, Mr. Quelch, what is he doing with that Fifth Form boy?"

The question hardly needed asking, and did not need answering at all. Mr. Pike's action answered it.

Having reached the fountain, he dropped Coker of the Fifth bodily into the foot of water in the wide granite basin.

Splash!

There was quite a waterspout as Coker of the Fifth landed there. From the whole excited mob in the quadrangle came a roar:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bless my soul!" said the Head faintly.

Leaning from the window, he gazed with a petrified gaze.

Coker struggled up in the fountain basin. He struggled to his knees, drenched and dripping, dazed and dizzy. Mr. Pike gave him a grave and serious look from the slits of eyes under his clamped-down bowler.

"I guess," said Mr. Pike gravely, "that you don't want to man-handle that Putnam van Duck! Not while this guy is around. No, sir! I should say surely not. I'm telling you to chew on that!"

"Goooooogh!" gasped Coker.

"Grooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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"Chew on it!" advised Mr. Pike; and turning, he walked away, leaving Coker of the Fifth to scramble out of the fountain, amid shrieks of laughter

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

An Interrupted Whopping!

"**B**EAT it, you!" exclaimed Putnam van Duck, in exasperated tones.

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent grinned.

They were in Study No. 1 in the Remove, unpacking books and other things, with the new junior. They had learned from Mr. Quelch that the new boy was to be quartered in Study No. 1 with them, to which they had no objection, being already on the friendliest terms with the youth from Chicago. Fisher T. Fish, the Yankee junior in the Remove, was far from popular; but Van Duck seemed quite a different sort of American, and all the Famous Five had taken to him.

They had not been ten minutes in the study when a hickory face under a black bowler hat looked in at the door.

Mr. Pike, having been accustomed to wearing his hat in the Chicago "joints" where he had, till recently, "hung out," saw no reason, apparently, for changing his manners and customs at Greyfriars School. At any rate, the black bowler remained clamped on his bullet head, as if it grew there.

Van Duck gave him a glare.

His experience at Wharton Lodge, when Chick Chew, the kidnapper, had so nearly got away with him, had made him realise the value of Poker Pike as a guardian. He admitted that his popper had guessed correctly in appointing Mr. Pike to take care of him.

Nevertheless, he was in a rather fed-up state with Poker, and objected strongly to having the gunman incessantly treading on his tail, as he described it.

It was clear that Mr. Pike, with all his gifts as a guardian, lacked tact. His solid brain seemed capable of assimilating only one idea at a time.

The idea being fixed in his bullet head that he had to watch over Putnam van Duck, he disregarded all other considerations. Greyfriars School, to Mr. Pike, was simply a joint where Putnam happened, for the time, to be hanging up his hat; merely that, and nothing more.

"You pesky bonehead, you!" went on Putnam. "You figure you're a school-boy yourself, or what? You ain't no business horning in here! Beat it, and beat it pronto! You want to disappear! Got me?"

Mr. Pike stood immovable in the doorway.

He seemed to be ruminating.

"I guess I got to keep tabs on you, you, Putnam van Duck!" he said, after a thoughtful pause.

"Nobody's allowed in the studies, Mr. Pike," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "You really will have to clear."

Mr. Pike took absolutely no notice of that intimation. But having given Study No. 1 the once-over, he gave Putnam a curt nod, and walked down the passage to the stairs. There he sat down on a settee on the landing.

Remove fellows stared at him curiously. Shell fellows and Fourth Formers came to give him a look. Fifth Form men glanced out of the games study, and grinned at him.

Mr. Pike remained quite unmoved under the general scrutiny. He sat like a rock, chewing an unlighted cigar.

In Study No. 1 Wharton and Nugent grinned, and Putnam van Duck frowned.

A fat face and a big pair of spectacles glimmered in at the door.

"I say, you fellows—"

"How did Bunter know we were unpacking a cake?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent!" Billy Bunter rolled in. "I say, that looks a decent cake! Not so good as the one I was bringing back from Bunter Court, though! You should have seen that cake—"

"Well, let's see it!" suggested Nugent.

"I forgot to pack it, after all!" said Bunter. "But they'll send it on, and then I'll whack it out with you fellows, same as you're whacking out this one with me."

"Are we?" asked Frank.

"Looks as if we are!" remarked Wharton, as Bunter helped himself to a slice, about a third of the cake, at one fell swoop.

Bunter gobbled.

"Not a bad cake!" he said. "Hardly like the cakes I get at home; but not bad! But I say, you fellows"—Bunter's voice came rather muffled, through cake—"I say, I never came here to see if you had a cake. I say, Loder's coming."

"Oh, bother Loder!" said Harry.

"I say, I heard him asking about that new kid," grinned Bunter. "He's found out that Van Duck's in the Remove, and I fancy he's coming up after him."

"Bless Loder!" said Nugent.

"Say, is that guy Loder a big noise hereabouts?" asked Van Duck.

"He's a Sixth Form prefect," said Harry Wharton, "and a prefect is a big noise in any school, old bean! They have whopping privs."

"What the great horned toad are whopping privs?" demanded Van Duck.

"Privilege to whop!" explained Wharton. "That means that they cane juniors."

"Like masters?" exclaimed Van Duck, with a whistle.

"Exactly."

"Pretty mouldy stunt, I guess!" said Putnam. "Mean to say that that guy can cane me if he likes?"

"Certainly he can—and very likely will! Of course, a prefect has to have a good reason for whopping. But Loder's an artful dodger, and he's always got a good reason. Anyhow, you gave him one, grabbing hold of him to stop him pulling Bunter's ear at Courtfield."

"Gee!" said Van Duck.

"You can't cheek prefects here, Van Duck," said Bunter, with his mouth full. "You've got altogether too much cheek, old chap! You'll get it taken out of you at Greyfriars! Do you good, you know."

"That's Bunter's way of expressing thanks for butting in to help him!" explained Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, I don't want to be here when Loder comes up," said Bunter. "He's in a rotten temper! I shouldn't wonder if he's been losing money on gee-gees in the vac. You know him! I'll take a bit of that cake with me, if you don't mind. It tastes rather good."

Bunter had already had a third of the cake. That, however, was only a taste, to Bunter.

"Take the lot!" said Nugent, with deep sarcasm.

"Oh, all right!" said Bunter, deaf to sarcasm. He picked up what was left of the cake, and started for the door.

"You fat villain!" yelled Nugent.

"Oh lor'! Here's Loder!" gasped Bunter, as a heavy tread was heard in the passage, and he bolted, cake and all, as Gerald Loder appeared in the doorway.

Loder looked in, with a grim brow.

"Oh, here you are!" he said, fixing his eyes on Putnam van Duck, with quite a deadly look in them.

"Sure!" assented Van Duck, eying him warily.

Loder had his official ashplant under his arm. It was evident that he had come up to Study No. 1 to use the same.

Having already smacked Van Duck's head for his cheek, as he regarded it, Loder would no doubt have been satisfied to let the matter drop, but for the consequences that had accrued.

Who Mr. Pike was, and why he had intervened, Loder did not know. But he knew that he had been handled, and made to look ridiculous before a swarm of Greyfriars fellows, and he put it down to Van Duck's account. Having arrived late, he had seen nothing of Mr. Pike at the school, and did not know that he was there. Loder's offended dignity had to be avenged, also his bad temper had to be wreaked, and Van Duck was the only available victim.

He slipped the ashplant down into his hand, and stepped into the study. Van Duck, watching him, backed away.

"I don't know who you are," said Loder grimly, "and I don't care—but you're going to learn here that you can't cheek prefects! Bend over that chair!"

"What for?" asked Van Duck.

"I'm going to whop you!"

Van Duck looked at the other two juniors.

"That O.K. in this joint?" he asked. Greyfriars School was a strange proposition to the boy from Chicago, and prefects with "whopping privs" quite new to him; but he was ready to play the game according to the rules, so to speak, and he was quick on the uptake.

"I'm afraid so, old bean," said Harry. "You see, Loder is a prefect of the Sixth, and you grabbed hold of him and stopped him, and that's cheek in a junior. You have to bend over."

"I guess I ain't got no kick coming, if it's O.K.," said Putnam. "A guy only wants to know."

And he obediently bent over the chair. Loder flourished the cane, and brought it down with a swipe.

Putnam van Duck was tough. But this was, as he would have described it, a new one on him! He gave a yoll that ran the length of the Remove passage.

Loder grinned.

Swipe!

The cane came down again.

"Aw, wake snakes!" gasped Van Duck. "Yoo-hooop!"

There was a swift tread in the passage. A bowler hat appeared in the doorway. Loder's cane was going up for a third swipe, when Poker Pike stepped swiftly in and grasped him by the shoulders.

"Wh-a-at—who-o-o-o—" stuttered Loder, as he was swung away as easily as an infant.

He stared round blankly at the gunman.

"You!" he stuttered, recognising the man who had handled him on the platform at Courtfield. "You! Let go! What are you doing here? Let me go at once, you scoundrel!"

"I guess," said Poker, "that I warned you! Didn't I put you wise on the railroad depot not to get fresh with that Putnam van Duck?"

"Let me go!" shrieked Loder, struggling.

Putnam van Duck jumped up.

"Poker, you pesky gink, you beat it!" he shouted. "You hear me howl? You beat it, and keep on beating it—see?"

Unheeding, the gunman hooked Loder of the Sixth to the door. In amazement

and rage, the bully of the Sixth struggled and struck at him. His fist landed on the hickory face, without producing the slightest effect on Poker. It was quite a hard knock; but it did not make Mr. Pike even wink.

Mr. Pike jerked Loder off his feet, tucked him under his arm, and carried him away down the passage to the stairs.

The Sixth Former yelled, and roared, and struggled as he went. Fellows in the passage and in the doorways of the studios, stared and yelled with laughter.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry, from No. 13. "Jolly old Pike on the warpath again!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A swarm of excited juniors followed as Mr. Pike carried Loder across the landing, and went downstairs with him—kicking and struggling like a fractious infant under the gunman's sinewy arm. Loder was no weakling; but he had no chance at all in the gunman's iron grip. He kicked, he struggled, he yelled, and he roared; but he went, and a yelling crowd followed down the stairs.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Called to Order!

"THE Head!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Ow! Help!"

Loder was yelling. "You fellows—Ow! Help! Lend me a hand! Drag-gimoff! Ooooh!"

Dr. Locke swept on the scene, with rustling gown and thunder in his brow. His eyes almost bulged from his head at the sight of a Sixth Form prefect, tucked under Poker Pike's powerful arm, kicking and wriggling.

"What—what—what does this mean?" gasped the Head. "Man—Spike—I mean Pike—release Loder at once! Do you hear me? Release him instantly! How dare you lay hands on one of my prefects?"

Poker Pike looked at the headmaster. He kept Loder pinned under his right arm; but he raised his left, and touched the brim of his hat. Even the hard-boiled gunman was impressed a little by the majestic Head.

"I ain't met up with you afore, bo!" he said genially. "You, the king-pin in this joint?"

"The—the what?"

"It's the headmaster, Pike!" breathed Harry Wharton, over the banisters.

"Sure!" said Poker, with a nod. "I got you, big boy!" He gave the Head a nod. "O.K., chief! This young gink got rather fresh, and I reckoned it was time to horn in. Get me?"

"Release Loder at once!" commanded the Head.

There was a pause! Poker Pike thought it over, and his mental processes, unlike his actions, were slow.

However, it was clear that those processes led him, finally, to decide that the "king-pin" of the "joint" was a man to be obeyed; for he released Gerald Loder. He released him rather suddenly, and Loder went to the floor with a heavy bump and a howl.

"Now, sir, explain yourself!" exclaimed the Head. "I sent for you some time ago, but you were not to be found—"

"I guess I been keeping tabs on young Putnam!" said Poker, with a nod. "I ain't letting that young geek get fur out of my sight! Nope! But if you're honing to chew the rag, I ain't stopping you."

Dr. Locke opened his lips again, but he paused. He had to explain to Mr.

Pike where he got off, as Poker himself would have put it. But he preferred not to have the interview in the midst of a buzzing, staring crowd of excited Greyfriars fellows.

"Follow me, please!" he rapped.

"Treading on your tail, sir!" answered Mr. Pike cheerfully; a reply that made the Greyfriars fellows chortle. And he followed the Head.

Loder staggered to his feet.

He tottered away to his study. His face was crimson with rage and mortification; and he was only too keenly conscious of the chuckles that followed him. It was likely to be a long time before Greyfriars forgot the sight of Gerald Loder carried downstairs, tucked under Poker Pike's arm.

Mr. Pike followed the headmaster into his study. Arrived there, Dr. Locke looked very expressively at the bowler hat that was still screwed down on the bullet head.

It did not seem to occur to Mr. Pike to take it off. He sat down on a corner of the Head's writing-table, and crossed one tightly trousered leg over the other—a proceeding that made the Head gasp a little. Sitting there, in that elegant attitude, Poker chewed his stump of a cigar, and waited stolidly for Dr. Locke to speak.

"Really!" gasped the Head, at a loss.

"Spill it!" said Mr. Pike encouragingly.

"Wha-a-t?"

"Shoot!" said Mr. Pike.

"Bless my soul! Mr. Pike, you are sent here by Van Duck's father to guard him against kidnapping. I have consented to allow you to remain in the school, and you will stay here—"

"Surest thing you know!" assented Mr. Pike.

"But you must learn, sir, to keep the peace, and to behave yourself with tact and discretion!" snapped the Head. "You have laid hands on one of my prefects—"

"That guy got too fresh, sir!" explained Mr. Pike. "I piped him lambasting young Putnam, and horned in. O.K.!"

"Prefects in this school, Mr. Pike, are entitled to administer canings to junior boys," said the Head. "You had no right to intervene, and you must never let anything of the kind occur again!"

"Sez you!" remarked Mr. Pike.

"What—what do you mean?"

"You're telling me!" said Mr. Pike.

"Certainly, I am telling you how you must conduct yourself here," said Dr. Locke. "Your rooms have been prepared in the porter's lodge. I will send the page with you, to show you there. And I impress upon you, Mr. Pike, that there must be no more disturbances of any kind. In such a case, it will be necessary for you to leave."

"Says you!" repeated Mr. Pike, unmoved.

"Certainly I say so, and you must remember it!" said Dr. Locke. "I quite understand that you are new to our ways here, and can make allowances; but there must be no more disturbances—nothing at all of that kind. I trust that I make myself clear."

"Clear as mud!" said Mr. Pike.

"Van Duck is here, like any other boy—the fact that he is a millionaire's son, and perhaps a person of some consequence in his native country, makes no difference—none whatever!" explained the Head. "You must not dream of interfering on his account."

"You're sure spilling a bibful!" said Mr. Pike.

"Eh! What? Your duties here are strictly limited to protecting the boy

from enemies outside the school!" said the Head. "Bear that in mind! Now I will send the page with you." He touched a bell. "You will not return to this building unless specially sent for."

"I got to keep tabs on Putnam!" said Mr. Pike.

"I do not quite follow your meaning. Tabs are not worn by Greyfriars boys," said the Head. "Van Duck will dress exactly like the other boys. Neither is any boy at Greyfriars allowed the attentions of a personal servant."

Mr. Pike looked at the Head, and the Head looked at Mr. Pike.

"I guess Old Man Vanderdecken sent me here to keep tabs on Putnam!" insisted Mr. Pike.

"That is absurd!" said the Head. "Mr. Van Duck can have had no such intention. I repeat that tabs, or any kind of personal decoration, cannot be worn by Greyfriars boys!"

"I don't seem to get you," said Mr. Pike, puzzled.

"I think I speak plainly enough," said the Head. He glanced round as Trotter appeared in the doorway. "Trotter!"

"Yessir!"

"Please conduct Mr. Pike to Gosling's lodge."

"Yessir!" gasped Trotter.

Trotter's eyes opened so wide at the sight of a man with his hat on, sitting on the Head's writing-table, that they looked like falling out of his face.

Mr. Pike detached himself from the table.

"I don't quite get you, feller," he said slowly. "I got to keep tabs on Putnam, and that's a cinch. No hoodlum ain't going to cinch that young geek while I'm drawing old man Vanderdecken's pay. No, sir! I guess I'm going to see that baby safe."

"Quite so—quite so! I fully approve," said the Head. "Now please follow Trotter."

"You said it, sir," said Mr. Pike.

He followed Trotter.

There was a roar when he appeared in the quad.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is!"

"Here's the jolly old gunman!"

Quite an army of Greyfriars fellows followed Mr. Pike to Gosling's lodge. They were quite disappointed when the door shut on Mr. Pike and his bowler hat.

Poker Pike had the spotlight at Greyfriars that day. The Head had hoped that, by the exercise of tact and reticence, he would keep himself out of the public eye—to such an extent that Greyfriars fellows would hardly know that he was there at all. That hope, it was clear, was going to be disappointed. Mr. Pike had many gifts, but it was plain that tact and reticence were not included in the list.

In fact, though it was the first day of term, and on the first day of term fellows naturally had plenty of things to talk about, Van Duck's gunman guardian reigned as the chief, if not the sole topic. Poker Pike had the spotlight, and it was probable that, unless he changed his manners and customs very considerably, he would keep it.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Unexpected!

"HENRY'S beginning badly," remarked Bob Cherry.

There was a chuckle in the Remove Form Room.

"Henry," otherwise Henry Samuel Quelch, master of the Remove, had not



Fastening an iron grip on the back of Loder's collar, Mr. Pike swept the Sixth Former off his feet and swung him round and round. The astonished spectators jumped back out of reach, with the exception of Billy Bunter. "Whoop!" roared the fat junior, as Loder's feet established contact with his fat ribs. "Oooogh!"

arrived to take his Form. When the Lower Fourth came in after morning break, Mr. Quelch was not there, so they marched into the Form-room, prepared to wait for Henry quite as long as Henry might keep them waiting. Nobody was fearfully anxious to settle down hard to the term's work.

"I say, you fellows, there was a phone call for old Quelch," said Billy Bunter. "I heard the bell go in his study."

"Let's hope the other man will keep him talking," remarked Herbert Vernon-Smith. "I can do without quite a lot of Quelch."

"Hear, hear!" grinned Skinner. "Yaas, begad!" remarked Lord Mauleverer. "Jolly decent chap, whoever he is, to ring Quelch up when a lesson's just startin'."

"What about a spot of leap-frog?" asked Bob Cherry.

Bob found it difficult to keep still, even when a master was present—impossible when the master was absent.

"Fathead!" answered Harry Wharton. "Quelch may blow in any minute. And he's not in the best of tempers this morning."

"Beaks never are first day of term," sighed Bob. "And I fancy Van Duck's jolly old gunman got on Henry's nerves yesterday."

"Where is that jolly old gunman?" asked Peter Todd. "I haven't seen him this morning."

"I have," chuckled Bunter. "He asked me where Van Duck could be found. I believe he was looking for him in first lesson."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Did you put him wise?" grinned Fisher T. Fish.

"Oh, I told him how to find our Form-room," said Bunter. "You see,

if he comes barging in, it will interrupt class. Even if it's only for a few minutes, it's so much to the good."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes Henry!" said Bob, as footsteps were heard coming up the corridor.

Few of the juniors were in their places. But there was a rush to get into them as the footsteps came along to the door. Whether it was the worry of beginning term, or the effect of the gunman, or both, it was certain that Mr. Quelch was not in his bonniest mood. And nobody wanted to attract the Remove master's gimlet eye specially to himself.

But it was not the angular form of Henry Samuel Quelch that appeared in the doorway of the Remove-room. It was the thickset, stocky, wiry figure of Poker Pike, gunman guardian of the millionaire's son. And there was a general chortle from the Lower Fourth.

"Jolly old Pike!" chuckled Bob.

"The esteemed and ridiculous Poker!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Aw, carry me home to die!" murmured Putnam van Duck.

The Remove welcomed the sight of the gunman. Some fellows, like Bunter, would have welcomed any interruption to work. All the fellows wondered what would be the effect on Mr. Quelch, if he arrived and found the man from Chicago there. There might be trouble; there might even be a "row," which was quite a delightful prospect to most of the young rascals of the Greyfriars Remove.

Mr. Pike looked in, his hickory face serious as usual. He gave Putnam van Duck a nod.

"Aw, there you are!" he grunted. "I guess I been rubbering around

looking for you, you Putnam van Duck."

"You pesky goob!" roared Van Duck. "You ain't allowed in here."

"Forget it," said Mr. Pike, and he marched in. Looking round for something to sit on, he spotted Mr. Quelch's high chair at the Form-master's desk, and sat on that.

Sitting on it he tilted it back at a rather dangerous angle, in order to rest his legs across the top of the high desk.

Mr. Pike was accustomed to such attitudes in the joints he frequented at home in Chicago. But it looked rather out of place in a Form-room at Greyfriars School, and it made the Removees yell.

"Look here, you gink Pike!" yelled Putnam van Duck. "You got to beat it! I'm telling you, you can't horn in here!"

"I got to keep tabs on you, Putnam," answered Mr. Pike.

"Will you beat it?" yelled Van Duck.

"Not so's you'd notice it," answered Mr. Pike.

"Look here, Mr. Pike!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. As head boy he felt impelled to weigh in. "You really can't stay here."

Mr. Pike glanced at him. "What's biting you, bo?" he inquired. "Pack it up!"

"But I tell you—"

"Don't spill any more," said Mr. Pike. "You make me tired."

"I say, you fellows, Quelch will go off at the deep end when he finds that ruffian here," chuckled Billy Bunter.

"I'm telling you to absquatulate, you Pike!" roared Van Duck.

Poker Pike did not take the trouble to answer again. Tilted back on the

high chair, with his legs sprawling across Mr. Quelch's desk, he chewed his stump of a cigar, unregarding.

There was a deep breath among the juniors as hurrying feet were heard in the corridor a few minutes later. Mr. Quelch, having got through his talk on the telephone, was hurrying to take his class.

"Now look out for the fireworks!" murmured Bob Cherry.

Mr. Quelch hurried in a little breathless, and evidently in a state of annoyance. He was the soul of punctuality, as a rule, and hated being late for class.

Had he found leap-frog going on, there was no doubt whatever that Henry Samuel Quelch would have come down hard and heavy on the leap-froggers. Fortunately all the Remove were in their places.

Not noticing the stranger within the gates for the moment, Mr. Quelch glanced at his class.

"I am sorry that I have been detained for a few minutes," he said. "We will now proceed without further delay."

He stared at his class. He could not mistake the breathless expectation in every face there. Something, he realised, was "on," though he did not know for the moment what it was.

His grim face set severely. If his Form fancied that there was going to be any relaxation of discipline on the first day in the Form-room, Mr. Quelch was the man to undeceive them on that point.

There was quite a row going on in the Third. Wiggins had not yet got his Form into order. Books were dropping, and desk lids slamming. But nothing of that kind was practicable with Mr. Quelch.

He gave his Form a long, long look. But every fellow was quiet in his place, only looking breathlessly expectant.

Puzzled and irritated, Quelch turned towards his desk. Then he understood, as he became aware of the presence of Poker Pike.

"What—what—who—what—" stammered Mr. Quelch, as he gazed at the gunman.

Poker Pike did not move from his elegant and rather precarious position. But the bowler hat nodded genially at Mr. Quelch.

"What—what—what are you doing here?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Setting around," answered Poker affably.

"Upon my word!"

"Keepin' tabs on Putnam," added Mr. Pike. "You horn in with them young rubes, feller; I ain't going to interrupt you none. I guess I know how to beyave, and I ain't chewing the rag in this here joint."

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a yell from the Remove.

Mr. Quelch whirled round at his class. "Silence!" he hooted.

Then he fixed his eyes on Poker again.

"Leave this Form-room! Do you hear me? Leave this Form-room at once!"

"You mean beat it?" asked Mr. Pike.

"Eh? What? I mean go—go at once!" gasped the Remove master.

"Forget it, feller!" said the gunman. "I sure ain't worrying you any, setting around! Pack it up, bo!"

"Will you go at once?" almost shrieked Mr. Quelch.

"Not so's you'd notice it."

Mr. Quelch stepped up to his desk, picked up his cane, and swished it threateningly. The Remove watched him breathlessly. His face was almost crimson.

"Leave this Form-room!" he rapped, and he tapped the gunman on the shoulder to emphasise that order.

"Whurrrooooh!" roared Poker.

In his precarious, balanced position, with the high chair tilted back, and his feet on the desk, that tap on the shoulder did it.

Poker Pike went over backwards.

Having lost his centre of gravity, the well-known law of gravitation did the rest. Under the influence of that well-known law, so ably expounded by Sir Isaac Newton, Mr. Pike shot towards

the centre of the earth as unerringly as Sir Isaac's apple.

He did not, of course, reach the centre of the earth, the floor of the Remove Form Room stopped him in transit.

It stopped him suddenly and hard.

Crash! Crack!

His shoulders hit the floor first; the back of his head hit it a split second later. It sounded like a postman's knock.

"Yurrrrooop!" roared Mr. Pike, sprawling dizzily on his back.

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Quelch, staring.

And from the Remove came a roar: "Ha, ha, ha!"

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Remove to the Rescue!

MR. QUELCH stared down at Mr. Pike.

Mr. Pike stared up at Mr. Quelch.

The Remove rocked with merriment.

"Upon my word!" stammered Mr. Quelch. "I—I am sorry you—you have fallen down but—but you must leave this Form-room at once—"

"Carry me home to die!" gasped Mr. Pike.

He scrambled to his feet.

He stood rubbing the back of his head. It was a hard and solid head, shaped like a bullet, and nearly as hard. But that crack on the floor seemed to have hurt it; it had even dislodged the bowler hat—without which Mr. Pike had not, so far, been seen in the school.

"Search me!" said Mr. Pike.

He picked up the black bowler and clamped it on his head again—he clamped it down hard—then he turned to Mr. Quelch with a glint in his icy slits of eyes.

"Feller," he said, "you're the guy to ask for it, and that ain't no dream! But I ain't going to shoot you up."

"Wha-a-at?" stammered Mr. Quelch.

"Nunk!" said Mr. Pike. "Old Man Vanderdecken put it to me—no gun-play, 'cept when kidnappers is around. I'll say I feel powerful inclined to fan you a few, but I ain't going to do it."

"Upon my word! I—"

"But I'll tell all this little island," went on Mr. Pike, "that I ain't the guy to be throwed about like I was a sack of potatoes! No, sir! Surest thing you know! I ain't going to pull no hardware on you, but I sure am going to beat you up a piece."

To Mr. Quelch's amazement and horror, the gunman advanced on him with his knuckly fists clenched.

Quelch backed away, wondering whether this was some fearful dream.

Quelch was no coward. But he was long past the age for a rough-and-tumble, even had such a thing been imaginable in a Form-room at Greyfriars.

"Man!" gasped Quelch.

"I guess you got it coming to you, feller!" said Mr. Pike, following him up. "You sure have asked for it, hombre!"

"Goodness gracious—"

"You locoed gink, Poker!" shrieked Putnam van Duck. "Hold in your hosses, you pesky bonehead!"

Unheeding, the incensed gunman followed Mr. Quelch as he backed in almost dizzy horror across the Form-room.

"This is where we barge in, I think," remarked Harry Wharton.

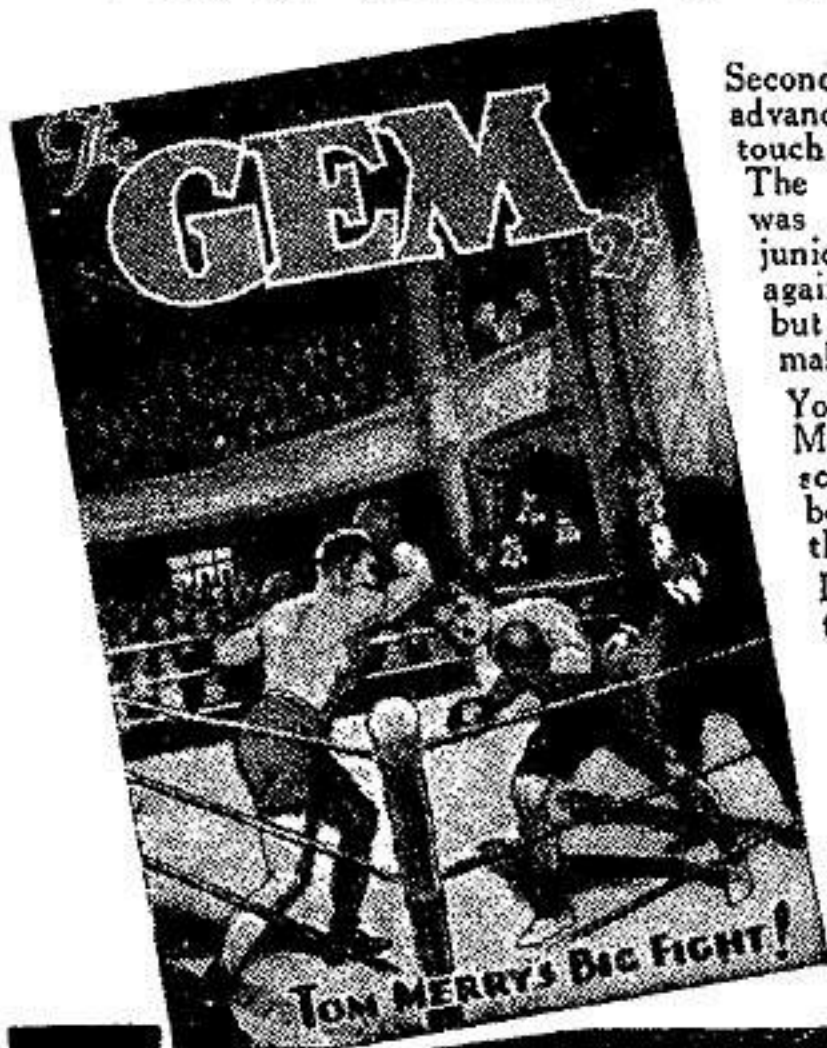
"What-ho!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Come on!" shouted Johnny Bull.

"Back up, Remove!" yelled the Bounder, always ready for a shindy.

Five or six fellows rushed out of their places and rushed at Poker Pike; after them rushed a dozen more.

"TOM MERRY'S BIG FIGHT!"



Seconds out! Time! The two boxers advanced to meet each other... a touch of the gloves... then Biff! The big fight at Wayland Empire was on! Tom Merry, champion junior boxer of St. Jim's, is up against an opponent twice his size, but what Tom lacks in weight he makes up for in skill!

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They were none too soon.

The horrified Form-master had backed up to a wall, where he stood waving Mr. Pike off with his hands as if he were a bluebottle.

But Mr. Pike was no bluebottle to be waved off. He was closing in on Henry Samuel Quelch when the rush of the Removites stopped him.

That sudden charge sent Mr. Pike staggering and just saved Mr. Quelch from a punch that would undoubtedly have done serious damage.

Leaning on the wall, Quelch spluttered for breath. While he spluttered most of his Form were busy.

Billy Bunter, Skinner, Snoop, and one or two other fellows kept their places, but nearly all the Remove joined in.

Many hands were needed to deal with Mr. Pike. The man who had carried Loder of the Sixth, wriggling under his arm, was not easily handled by juniors; but many hands made light work.

The Famous Five collared him all at once. Vernon-Smith, Redwing, Peter Todd, and Squiff got hold. Struggling, Poker Pike went over and crashed on the Form-room floor a second time.

"Cinch him!" yelled Van Duck.

"Bag him!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Sit on him!"

"Jump on him!"

"Roll him out!"

"Whoo-hoo! Hoooh!" gasped Johnny Bull, as Mr. Pike's knuckles caught him on the jaw. Johnny went over like a skittle.

But the gunman was down, and the swarming juniors kept him down. He was active, strong, and witty, but the Remove were many too many for him.

With two or three fellows grasping each arm and each leg, even the hefty gunman struggled in vain.

They surged to the door, half-carrying and half-dragging Poker Pike. Putnam van Duck was foremost in the fray, but all the fellows were eager for front seats. It was a tough struggle, but it was ever so much more entertaining than Latin grammar.

"Chuck him out!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"Boot him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Say, you, Putnam van Duck, you leago my years!" yelled Poker Pike, in wild wrath and indignation. "Ain't I here to keep tabs on you?"

"You locoed geck!" snapped Van Duck. "You got to learn where you get off, Poker—and this is jest the spot!"

"I guess—Ow! I reckon—Whoop! I'll say—Yurrrroooooop!" howled Poker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Out he goes!"

"Goodness gracious!" gasped Mr. Quelch feebly. "Upon my word! Oh dear! G-g-g-goodness gracious!"

A struggling mass reached the doorway of the Form-room; a bowler hat was left behind, rolling.

In the doorway Mr. Pike rallied. But it booted not; he was hurled forth, and landed in the passage in a sprawling heap.

The Removites packed the doorway as he sprawled and gasped for breath.

Putnam van Duck shook a warning finger at him.

"Now you beat it, you big stiff!" he roared. "You get me? Beat it—and beat it pronto! And keep on beating it!"

"Urrrrrrgh!" gurgled Mr. Pike.

He sat up, blinking.

"My boys!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"My bib-bib-bib-boys—"

"Carry me home to die!" gasped Mr. Pike.

He picked himself up.

Standing in the passage, he gasped

for breath, and eyed the breathless mob of schoolboys in the doorway.

He was clearly debating, in the depths of his slow and stolid brain, whether to charge back into the Remove-room. Harry Wharton & Co. stood ready to stop the charge, if it came. Some of them had had some rather hard knocks in the tussle, and it was certain that there would be some more, if Poker Pike charged. But they packed the doorway and stood ready.

"Will you beat it, you geck!" howled Van Duck. "You figure you can kick up a rookus here, like you was in a joint back in Chicago! Beat it!"

Mr. Pike nodded slowly. Apparently he had made up his mind to beat it. He turned and went down the passage, stopping at the end, and sitting down in the window-seat there. And he sat there without his hat!

"Boys," gasped Mr. Quelch, "go to your places!"

The juniors moved back from the doorway. Mr. Quelch looked out into the passage. He frowned at the sight of the gunman in the window-seat. Mr. Pike, it seemed was going to "keep tabs" from that spot.

Quelch breathed hard, and shut the door of the Form-room.

"Silence!" he barked.

The Remove was in a buzz of excitement. No doubt Mr. Quelch was grateful to his boys for coming so promptly to his rescue. But such an extraordinary scene in his Form-room was intensely irritating and exasperating to the Remove master. He barked at the Remove—indeed, he looked really as if he might bite! The buzz died away, and the juniors took their places.

After which, during third school, Quelch carried on as if nothing had happened. But when the Remove were dismissed, Quelch was seen to direct his steps towards the Head's study, no doubt to acquaint his chief with Mr. Pike's startling proceedings that morning—from which the Removites deduced that Poker's days at Greyfriars were probably numbered.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Inky!

"YOUR hat, sir!" said Peter Todd politely.

Mr. Pike was seated on the bench outside Gosling's lodge, where he had his quarters.

He sat hatless.

His black bowler had been left behind, in that tussle in the Remove Form Room; it had rolled, unregarded, under the desks. As Poker Pike seemed to live, move, breathe, and have his being in that hat, some of the fellows had rather expected him to come back for it.

But he had not come; and after the Remove were dismissed, he went back to the lodge, still without it. His greasy, well-brushed hair glimmered in the sunshine as he sat—still "keeping tabs." Nobody, kidnapper or otherwise, could have come in at the gates without Poker Pike giving him the once-over.

His hickory face expressed satisfaction as Toddy came up with the hat in his hand and presented it.

Five or six fellows who had followed Peter, were grinning—Billy Bunter, especially, exploding in a series of chuckles like a fat Chinese cracker.

They seemed to see something comic in Peter taking the gunman's

hat back to him. Peter's face, however, was as serious as Mr. Pike's own, and nobody could possibly have guessed, from Peter's face, that he had spent ten minutes carefully packing ink under the inside lining of that hat.

Certainly, Mr. Pike did not dream of suspecting it.

He was "wise" to the ways of gangsters and gunmen; nobody could have taught him anything about boot-legging, or racketeering, holding up a guy for his roll, or putting a rival gangster "on the spot." But he was not so wise to the playful ways of schoolboys.

Quite unaware that the hat had been tampered with, Poker Pike jammed it on his oily head, jamming it down with firmness. He seemed comforted when it was fixed there again. He thanked Peter with a nod, and resumed chewing his unlighted cigar and watching the gate.

"He, he, he!" chuckled Billy Bunter. "I say, you fellows, wait till it begins to run—"

"Shut up, fathhead!" said Peter.

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"I give him about ten minutes," remarked Peter, when the juniors were out of Mr. Pike's hearing, "then he will begin to look like a zebra."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was quite a warm day, and where Mr. Pike sat was a sunny spot. Two or three drops of perspiration glistened on his forehead, under the brim of the clamped-down bowler.

If Mr. Pike noticed any dampness about his brow, he naturally attributed it to the same cause. He had no suspicion that ink was oozing through the lining of his hat, mixing with the oil on his hair, and beginning to streak his forehead.

Harry Wharton & Co., taking a trot round the quad before dinner, came on the group of juniors, who were watching the gunman from a distance, with smiling faces.

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

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter.

"Look at Pike!"

The Famous Five looked.

"What the dickens—" exclaimed Harry Wharton, in astonishment.

Poker Pike was sitting, unmoved, on the bench by the porter's lodge. If he noticed the juniors at all, he gave them no heed.

The expression on his hickory face was thoughtful. Perhaps he was still thinking, in the slow depths of his solid brain, about the "rookus" in the Remove Form Room, and whether to get on with beating-up the schoolmaster guy!

In a place so strange to him as Greyfriars School, Mr. Pike realised that he had to walk delicately, like Agag of old. He was by no means satisfied with the outcome of that "rookus," and now he was putting in a big "think."

But there was something on Mr. Pike's face besides a thoughtful expression. There was a red streak of ink running over his left ear to his left eye. Several streaks of red and black were dawning on his forehead.

Peter had used ink, both red and black, and plenty of both. As the lining of the hat pressed on Mr. Pike's hard skull, the ink oozed slowly through, and now it was beginning to give Mr. Pike's countenance a highly decorative appearance.

He was obviously quite unaware of it. Harry Wharton & Co. looked at him blankly.

"He's got his hat again!" remarked Bob.

"And something in it!" chuckled Hazeldene.

"Somebody been japing him?" asked Harry, laughing.

"I fancy so!" said Peter Todd gravely. "I believe some fellow parked ink in that hat, before handing it back to him."

"Ha, ha, ha!" That outburst of merriment drew Mr. Pike's attention at last. He looked at the group of juniors rather grimly.

"Hallo, there's that ruffian!" Coker of the Fifth came along, with Potter and Greene. "Great pip! Look at him! Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker of the Fifth disliked Mr. Pike. His ducking in the fountain had annoyed Coker extremely. Coker was annoyed to learn that the man was allowed to remain within the walls of Greyfriars. But at the sight of the streaky face, looking more and more like a zebra's every moment, Coker forgot his wrath, and burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker, and Potter and Greene grinned.

Mr. Pike's expression grew grimmer. But at that moment Trotter came down from the House, and headed for the porter's lodge. He had a message for Mr. Pike.

At the sight of the streaky face, Trotter jumped and stared.

"Oh, my eye!" ejaculated Trotter.

"What's biting you, bo'?" asked Piker.

He rose from the bench. The look on his streaky face made the House page jump back about a yard at one jump.

"Oh, nothing!" gasped Trotter. "The 'Ead wants to see you in his study. He's sent me to tell you."

And Trotter cut off, grinning.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Peter Todd, in dismay.

It had seemed, to the playful Peter, quite a lark to decorate Mr. Pike in that extraordinary way. But he had not foreseen that Piker would be called in to see the Head.

"Oh crumbs!" said Bob, with a gasp. "If he goes in to the Head like that—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Pike was starting for the House. He passed the group of juniors, who strove to subdue their merriment as he came by. Coker of the Fifth, however, saw no reason for subduing his merriment. He roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Poker Pike turned towards Coker. "Say, big boy, you sure do snicker a whole lot!" he remarked. "You asking for a lambasting?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker.

He almost doubled up with mirth, at a close view of Mr. Pike's streaky countenance.

"I guess," remarked Mr. Pike, "that you've sniggered more'n a few, and I'll say you make me tired! You got it coming!"

He made a stride at Coker of the Fifth. Before Coker quite knew what was happening two hands that seemed made of iron were grasping him. Coker was hefty, and he was beefy; but he crumpled up in that iron grasp.

"O o o o g h!" spluttered Coker. "Leggo, you ruffian! Potter—Greene—whooooop!"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Nugent.

"Here, you chuck that!" exclaimed Potter.

Unheeding, Mr. Pike dropped on one

knee and "made a knee" for Coker with the other. Across that knee Horace Coker sprawled, face down.

He kicked and struggled and roared.

Mr. Pike swept up his right hand. It came down on Coker's trousers like a flail! It landed with a whack that rang across the quad like the report of Mr. Pike's own six-gun!

Smack!

"Yoo-hooop!" roared Coker. A moment ago Coker had been roaring with merriment. He was still roaring. But now it was not with merriment.

Whack! came from Mr. Pike's heavy hand again.

"Yaroooh!"

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

Whack!

"Whooooop!"

Coker's legs kicked wildly in the air. Potter and Greene made a quick forward movement—and then a quicker backward one, as Mr. Pike's flail-like arm swept round, and they barely missed it.

Smack!

"Yoo-hoo-hooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess," said Mr. Pike, with his usual gravity, "that that lets you out, big boy!"

He pitched Coker off his knee. Horace rolled and roared. Mr. Pike walked off towards the House, leaving Coker roaring with wrath and anguish, and the other fellows with laughter.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Poker Pike is Puzzled!

"**H**A, ha, ha!"

"Look!"

"What's that game?"

"It's the wild man from Borneo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The quadrangle was crowded with fellows; and the eyes of every fellow in the quad turned on Mr. Pike as he progressed towards the House.

Mr. Pike had not been long at Greyfriars, but he had already caused considerable entertainment there. But this was the climax! Now he had, so to speak, brought down the house!

He was puzzled, and he was getting angry. There was a glitter in his slits of eyes as he stared round at innumerable laughing faces.

It was not the best of manners, perhaps, to burst into a yell of laughter at the sight of Mr. Pike. But the fellows really could not help it. By this time more and more of the ink had oozed out of the hat. A black streak was oozing down Mr. Pike's pug nose. It gave him a most remarkable aspect.

Quite unconscious of it, Mr. Pike was only surprised and annoyed. His grim face grew grimmer and grimmer. On the steps of the House, Loder and Walker of the Sixth were standing, and, like the rest, they burst into a yell as Mr. Pike and his remarkable face dawned on them.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Pike gave them a glare as he came up the steps. That glare might have had a terrifying effect, but for the streaks of ink that made the gunman look like a zebra. But Poker Pike, at the moment, did not look terrifying—he looked comic, and the two prefects only laughed the louder.

"What on earth is the man doing that for?" asked Walker, chuckling. "Is he potty, or what?"

"Must be, I think!" said Loder.

"Potty or pipsy! Ha, ha, ha!"

"You guys surely do hone to snicker!" said Piker Pike. "I guess I'll hand you something to snicker for."

He made a grasp at Loder and Walker. The fact that they were Sixth Form men and prefects mattered not a boiled bean to Piker Pike. He got Loder by the collar with one hand, Walker by the other.

Crack!

Two heads came together with a loud concussion. Two fearful yells were blended into one!

"Yoooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a howl from the swarm of fellows in the quad. It was the first time that the Greyfriars fellows had seen two Sixth Form prefects having their heads knocked together!

Loder and Walker, yelling frantically, wrenched themselves away from Piker Pike. They got away—leaving their collars in Piker's hands.

Collarless, they scrambled out of his reach. Mr. Pike was left standing on the steps, staring at the two crumpled collars in his hands.

"Search me!" ejaculated Mr. Pike.

He threw the collars into the quad, and marched on into the House. Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, met him as he entered.

Prout, hearing the uproar in the quad, was coming out to see what was going on. He met Piker Pike face to face, and jumped at the sight of him. In his surprise Prout would have jumped clear of the floor had he had a little less weight to lift.

"Who — who — what — what —"

stuttered Prout. He stared at the streaky face with starting eyes.

Mr. Pike gave him a resentful glare.

"What's got you, you old gink?" he demanded.

"Wha-a-t?" stuttered Prout. "What — what does this mean? Are you mad? What do you mean by appearing here with a face like that?"

Mr. Pike breathed hard.

His best friend had never called Mr. Pike handsome. If his face had been his fortune, he would have been extremely hard-up. Still, such as it was; it was his face—a poor thing, but his own, so to speak.

Unaware of the unusual decoration on his face, Mr. Pike considered Prout's remark very personal and very unpleasant. Even in a Chicago joint, where manners were far from polished, nobody had ever asked Piker Pike what he meant by going about with a face like that! It would, indeed, have been a perilous question to put to a guy so handy with a gun as Mr. Pike.

"Why, you fat old geck!" said Piker. "You ornery, dog-goned old stiff, I guess your own face looks like a piece that the cat brought in. I'd sure hand you a sockdolager, if I didn't figure that it would burst you all over this here shebang! Pack it up! You get me? Pack it up, while you're still in one piece, you pesky old bonehead!"

He gave Mr. Prout a push on his portly chest.

Mr. Pike was really a considerate man. Had he handed Prout a "sockdolager," as he was tempted to do, Greyfriars might have been in need of a new master for the Fifth Form.

He gave him a push instead—but there was a lot of beef in a push from the hefty gunman.

Prout staggered back as if a battering-ram had tapped him. He staggered, stumbled, and sat down, with a bump that almost shook the floor.

"Oooooogh!" gasped Prout.

He sat and gasped, in a dizzy state. Piker gave him a glare, and walked on to the Head's study.



Reaching the fountain, Mr. Pike dropped Coker bodily into the wide granite basin in which was about a foot of water. Splash! There was quite a waterspout as Coker landed there. From the excited mob in the quadrangle came a roar. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Arrived there, he opened the door and walked in. Poker had not learned to tap at doors before entering in his native haunts in Chicago.

Dr. Locke was seated at his writing-table, by which stood Mr. Quelch. The Remove master was looking very grim; the headmaster very worried.

Both of them jumped at the sight of Poker Pike.

Mr. Pike did not remove his hat. Had he done so, he would have found it dripping with ink, and would have discovered the cause of the hurricane of merriment that had accompanied him on his way to the House.

But it did not occur to him to remove his hat. He lived in that hat; indeed, it was uncertain whether he took it off when he went to bed!

With the black bowler screwed down on his skull, and streaks of red and black ink oozing from under it, Mr. Pike faced the two masters—who fairly goggled at him.

"Bless my soul!" said the Head faintly.

"Upon my word!" gurgled Mr. Quelch.

Poker eyed them none too agreeably. He was getting angrier and angrier.

"I guess you allowed you wanted me to horn in!" he said gruffly. "I'll say I've come! Shoot!"

"You—you—you are Mr. Pike!" stuttered the Head. Really, Mr. Pike was hardly recognisable in his decorated state. "What—what does this mean, Mr. Pike? Why have you done this?"

"Ain't you sent for me?" demanded Poker.

"Yes, yes!" gasped the Head. "But—but—but—your face—"

"My face?" repeated Poker, in a voice rather like the growl of a tiger.

He had not expected this from a courteous old gentleman like the Head!

Anyhow, he had had enough about his face from the stout old guy he had sat down in the passage. He did not want any more.

"Mebbe you'll put a guy wise what the matter with his face, you old gook?"

"Are you mad?" hooted Mr. Quelch.

"I guess," said Poker, "that if any guy here is locoed, it ain't this baby. I'll tell a man!"

"Your face—"

"Forget my face!" roared Mr. Pike.

"I guess if you went digging in a scrap-heap, you'd dig up a better-looking face than the one you've got on, dog-gone you! And then some!"

"But—" stuttered the Head. "Your—your face—"

"I'm telling you," hooted Mr. Pike,

"that I've heard enough about it, and a few over, and then some more! You get me? I'm whispering to you, you pesky old mugwumps, that if any guy at home talked to me that-a-way, his friends would have to go around picking up what was left of him! And for jest one Continental red cent, I'd wade in and beat you up a few! Surest thing you know!"

Mr. Pike glared at the headmaster and the Remove master.

They gazed at him.

"But—" gasped the Head.

"But—" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Pack it up!" roared Mr. Pike.

"Pack it up, and put the lid on! I've had jest all I want!"

"B-b-b-but—" stuttered the Head.

"Aw, can it!" snarled Mr. Pike.

He swung round to the door. In great wrath, he tramped out, slamming the door after him with a terrific slam.

"Bless my soul!" said the Head faintly.

"Goodness gracious!" murmured Mr. Quelch.

Mr. Pike tramped out of the House, with a black brow under his bowler hat.

In the sunshine of the quad his streaky face showed up to great advantage, and a yell greeted him.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here's the jolly old zebra!"

"I say, you fellows— He, he, he!"

Mr. Pike gave an almost deadly glare round. He looked like running amuck in the laughing crowd.

Putnam van Duck rushed up to him.

"Poker, you locoed gink," he shrieked, "what's the game? What you playing this fool game for, you bonc-head?"

"What game, dog-gone you, you Putnam van Duck?" howled the exasperated Poker. "What the great horned toad—"

"Your face—" gasped Putnam.

"My face!" yelled Poker. "Great jumping toads, you whisper jest one word about my face, and I'll sure hand you a few!"

"What have you inked it for?" yelled Putnam.

"Eh?"

"Like you was a Red Indian with his war-paint on!"

"What?"

"What you done it for, you locoed bonc-head?"

In great surprise, Mr. Pike passed his hand over his face. His hand came away streaked with red and black, and he gazed at it in still greater surprise.

That rub on his face changed the inky streaks into a general smudge, and there was another howl:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Say, this here has got me beat!" said the amazed Poker. He passed his hand over his astonished face again, smudging ink right and left, amid shrieks of laughter. "Say, how come?"

He took off his hat and stared at it. It dripped mixed inks. The amazement

(Continued on page 16.)

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GUN PLAY at GREYFRIARS!

FRANK RICHARDS



(Continued from page 13.)

in his inky face made the Greyfriars fellows yell.

"Ink!" said Poker dazedly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's sure ink—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Can you beat it?" said Poker, in wonder.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Slowly the truth dawned on Poker's solid brain as he gazed at his inky hat.

"I guess that pesky young guy doctored this here hat afore he handed it up to me!" he said. "Yep! I'll say that's the how of it! Surest thing you know. And I'll mention that I'm going to cinch that young guy, and beat him up a few! I'm sure going to lambaste that galoot!"

And Poker stamped away, to search for Peter Todd. And it was fortunate for the playful Peter that Poker did not find him.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Snaffled!

"I GUESS I got to lose him!" groaned Putnam van Duck.

"I guess, calculate, reckon, and opine that you dog-goned well have!" said Bob Cherry, with great gravity.

And there was a chuckle in the Rag.

It was some days later, and a half-holiday, and the Famous Five and their new American chum were talking it over. A run up the river, that bright and sunny spring afternoon, seemed a good idea to the chums of the Remove, and it was an attractive idea to Putnam. He had not yet seen much of the surroundings of Greyfriars—which, naturally, he wanted to do.

But there was, so to speak, a lion in the path—in the shape of the gunman guardian, Poker Pike.

Mr. Pike was, as Bob described it, understudying Mary's little lamb, whose flecco was white as snow; for everywhere that Putnam went, that gunman was sure to go!

True, he had not "horned" into the Form-room again. Mr. Quelch, under the Head's gentle persuasion, had agreed to overlook what had happened there, on the strict condition that it never happened again. And it seemed to dawn on Poker that his charge would be safe in lesson-time under his Form-master's eye, not requiring "tabs" to be kept on him in the Form-room.

But in the quad he kept a wary eye on Van Duck; and if the American junior went out of gates, after him went Poker, treading on his tail, as Putnam put it.

Every now and then he would look into Study No. 1, at tea-time or in prep, or into the Rag, giving Putnam the once-over to make sure that he had not been spirited away somehow.

Certainly, under that watchful care it seemed unlikely that Chick Chew, the kidnapper, would have any chance of

getting away with the millionaire's son.

But Putnam could not help feeling that Poker overdid the watchful stunt. His friends felt the same.

It was a standing joke in the school, though fellows soon got used to seeing the serious, hickory face, under the immovable bowler, pop up in all sorts of places, at all sorts of times.

Now that the juniors were planning a run up the Sark on the half-holiday, they all knew that Poker would be on the trail as soon as they started. And they all agreed that Poker was superfluous.

Putnam guessed that he had got to lose him for the afternoon, and his friends agreed that it was so.

"Soon's we beat it, we're going to see that guy Poker treading on our tail," said Putnam. "I'm confiding to you guys that I don't want any more Poker on my plate. I've had enough, and then some!"

Whereupon six heads were put together, and a plot was plotted, amid many chuckles. And when the plot had been duly plotted and out and dried, the juniors left the Rag, and Bob Cherry went to look for Poker Pike.

He found him walking in the quadrangle, getting a good many glances from Greyfriars fellows, most of them amused, though Coker of the Fifth frowned at him severely.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Mr. Pike," Bob greeted him cheerily, "got your gun about you?"

"I guess it ain't fur away, bo!" answered Mr. Pike. "I'll say my hardware'd show up, pronto, if a galoot about Chick Chew's size came cavorting around!"

"You haven't seen him about yet?" asked Bob.

"Nope!"

"Shall I tell you where to spot him?" asked Bob.

Mr. Pike became attentive at once. With sudden alertness, he whipped hand to hip to make sure that his six-gun was there and ready.

"You seen him?" he rapped. "I'll say I been surprised that Chick ain't horned in yet. He ain't the guy to let up on a racket once he's got his molars into it! You see that hombre?"

"Well," said Bob, with a grave and serious face, "it's a bit suspicious to spot a man hiding in the woodshed, isn't it?"

"I'll say so!" said Mr. Pike, still more alert.

"I've never seen Chick Chew," went on Bob. "But is he a big, fat man, with a nose like a pimple and a mouth like a coal-mine, and gold-stopped teeth, and plenty of them?"

"You said it!" exclaimed Mr. Pike eagerly. "Where's that guy?"

Mr. Pike was aware that Bob Cherry had never seen Chick Chew. It did not occur to him for the moment that Bob Cherry had received a complete description of him from Harry Wharton, who had. So it naturally appeared to Mr. Pike that Bob had now seen the kidnapper about Greyfriars.

Bob certainly did not say so. He had no intention of saying so. If Mr. Pike drew incorrect conclusions from his remarks, that was Mr. Pike's own affair.

"I'll show you to the woodshed, if you like," said Bob. "But, look here, I shan't go in with you if Chick Chew's there and he's got a gun! Do you think he would have a gun?"

"I should smile!" answered Poker.

"Well, then, I'll take you there, but I shall jolly well stay outside!" said Bob. "That all right?"

"You young bonehead!" said Mr. Pike. "You figure that I'd let a

schoolboy horn into a rookus with that hombre? I guess I want you to point out the spot and keep clear! Get to it!"

"This way!" said Bob.

And he led the gunman away to Gosling's woodshed.

The door of that building was closed, and the key was in the outside of the lock. Gosling sometimes kept that shed locked, but as often as not he left the key there. It was there now.

"That's the shed!" said Bob.

"You stick here!" said Mr. Pike briefly.

Bob remained at a distance. He watched the proceedings of Van Duck's gunman guardian with keen interest.

Poker Pike pulled out his six-gun and gave it a glance, and gripped it firmly in his right hand. Then, with cautious tread, he approached the door of the woodshed. His slits of eyes were on the little window of the shed. He was watchful as a cat.

If Chick Chew, carrying on his kidnapping stunt, had insinuated himself within the precincts of the school, and taken cover in the woodshed to wait for an opportunity, Poker was the man to root him out, round him up, and fill him full of lead if he did not put up his hands when ordered to do so.

But knowing the gangster as he did, Poker rather expected him to spot the enemy bearing down, and to open the ball by potting at him from the window. So it was with extreme wariness that Poker Pike approached the woodshed.

There was no alarm, however, and he reached the door and threw it open. Then, with uplifted gun, he marched in.

Had a fat man with gold-stopped teeth been in that shed, there was no doubt that Poker would have put paid to him. As it happened, however, nobody was there—and Poker Pike glared round in vain for a kidnapper.

Slam!

Click!

The gunman spun round towards the door.

"Search me!" he ejaculated.

The door had slammed and the key had turned!

Poker Pike was not only alone in the shed, but he was a prisoner there! As that fact dawned on him, Poker replaced the gun in his hip-pocket. He realised that he had not to deal with a kidnapping gangster, but with playful schoolboys who were pulling his leg!

"Carry me home to die!" murmured Poker.

He banged fiercely at the door. There was a chuckle audible outside.

"Snaffled!"

It was Bob Cherry's voice.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Say, you young ginks," roared Poker Pike, "you let me out of this here shebang! How you figure I'm going to keep tabs on that Putnam van Duck?"

Nobody answered that question. There was another chuckle, and a sound of retreating footsteps.

Leaving the watchful gunman locked in the woodshed, Harry Wharton & Co. walked cheerfully down to the school raft, to get their boat out into the river.

"Search me!" gasped Mr. Pike. "I'll tell a man, this is the bee's knee! Say, you pesky young geeks, you want to let a guy out of this here shebang! You hear me whisper?"

But answer there came none.

Mr. Pike, breathing hard, examined the window. There was no escape that

way for a guy of Mr. Pike's dimensions. He wrenched at the door. It was immovable—as immovable as Mr. Pike's own bowler hat!

He breathed wrath. Mr. Pike was a little slow on the uptake; but he had a pretty clear idea that this was a trick to keep him busy, while Putnam, for once, took a trip out of gates without his gunman guardian treading on his tail!

Mr. Pike thought it out. Then he pulled the six-gun from his pocket again. Taking aim at the lock of the door, he loosed off lead.

Bang, bang, bang!
The unusual sound roared all over Greyfriars. The Head, in his study, started. Fellows in the quad—fellows at cricket practice—fellows up and down and round about—stared round them. Some thought it was a oar back-firing somewhere.

Bang, bang, bang!
It was not a backfire! It was Mr. Pike shooting the lock of the woodshed to pieces. Having done this, he hurled the door open, and rushed forth in search of Putnam van Duck!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

On the River!

"HERE, clear out!" snapped Coker of the Fifth.

A good many fellows were going on the river that bright spring afternoon. Among them was Horace Coker, of the Fifth Form. Coker was taking out his handsome, expensive boat, with the help of Potter and Greene—what time the Famous Five were getting their roomy old tub down to the water. And Coker, of course, was annoyed by such microbes as Remove juniors getting between the wind and his nobility!

"Gerrout of the way!" snapped Coker.

"Fathead!" answered Bob Cherry politely.

"Barge 'em over!" growled Coker.

"Oh, don't row!" urged Potter.

"Shut up, Potter!"

"Look here—" began Greene.

"Shut up, Greene!"

Coker had a short way with fags.

Now his friends in the Fifth were getting the benefit of it.

"I said 'Barge 'em over!'" continued Coker. "Come on!"

Potter and Greene did not come on.

They had set out for a pull on the river, not for a shindy with the Remove. They left the barging to Coker.

He barged! But, as it turned out, Coker of the Fifth proved to be, not the barger, but the bargee, so to speak!

For six juniors barged all at once, and Coker of the Fifth was strewn end-wise along the school raft—roaring.

The chums of the Remove slid their boat into the water, and crowded in.

A fat figure came rolling in pursuit.

"I say, you fellows!" yelled Billy Bunter.

Bob took an oar to push off. Coker, sitting up, was gasping for breath.

Billy Bunter came to the edge of the raft.

"I say, wait for me!" he gasped.

"I'm coming! I—I want to help you look after Van Duck, you know, in case those kidnappers get after him."

"I'll say you'd be a lot of use!" chuckled Putnam.

"Oh, really, Van Duck! I say, keep that boat in, Cherry, you beast—I mean, wait for me, old chap—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" howled Bunter. "Look here, I'm coming! I—I'm really anxious about Van Duck—"

"Oh, hop in, fathead!" said Harry. "Buck up! We want to get off without having to stop and slaughter Coker."

"I say, got the grub on?" asked Bunter.

"What grub?"

"Isn't it a picnic?"

"A picnic! No!"

"Mean to say you haven't got any tuck?" hooted Bunter.

"Ha, ha! Not a ghost of a doughnut!" chuckled Bob. "Jump in, if you're coming, old fat man!"

Billy Bunter did not jump in. He gave the grinning juniors a devastating glare through his big spectacles.

"You silly asses! I thought it was a picnic! I'm not coming! If you think I'm going to slog about, rowing that rotten old tub up the river, you're jolly well mistaken, I can jolly well tell you!"

"What about looking after Van Duck?" grinned Johnny Bull. "Ain't you anxious about Van Duck?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blow Van Duck!" sported Bunter. "Van Duck can go and eat coke!"

The fat Owl's concern for Van Duck seemed to have evaporated suddenly at the discovery that it was not a picnic.

"Here, gerrout of the way!" Coker had arrived. He slung Billy Bunter aside, and the fat junior, with a yell, sat down on the planks. "Now, you cheeky young sweeps—"

Coker would have boarded the Remove boat the next moment. But at that moment Bob shoved off with his oar.

Instead of shoving off from the raft, however, he planted the end of the oar on Coker's broad chest, and shoved off from that.

Under the force of that hefty shove, the boat shot out into the Sark, and Horace Coker shot over backwards and distributed himself along the raft.

(Continued on next page.)

GREYFRIARS INTERVIEWS

A life on the ocean wave may suit some people—but it doesn't appeal to our long-haired poet who, in the following brilliant verses, introduces

TOM REDWING,

the sailorman's son, of the Remove.

(1)
A life on the ocean wave, my lads,
Is Redwing's constant plan,
He loves the sea, although his dad's
A fine old sailorman.
It's odd that he should love the sea,
It proves he does not shrink,
If Tom was anything like me
He wouldn't love his work.

(2)
John Redwing owns his gallant craft,
And Tom will own one, too.
A boat of deep or shallow draught,
A cruiser or canoe!
Don't talk of steam when Tom's about,
Such things he does not heed.
"Just let me shake my canvas out,"
Says he. "I'll show you speed!"



(4)
He took me for a sail to-day,
A dinghy was our boat,
And as we gaily sailed away
He told me, while I wrote,
Exactly how to sail a ship
And manage her white wings,
And showed me, too, throughout the
trip,
With ropes and spars and things.



(5)
Of course, I didn't understand
A single thing he said,
I wrote them down with shaking hand,
But now they can't be read.
"You hold the foe's'le!" he cried,
"And weave the mixzen mast,
Then batten down the poop inside
And make the bo'sun fast!"

(6)
"You then wind up the starboard watch,
Belay it, if you like,
And splice and reef the after-hatch,
And furl the marlinspike!
The stuns'ls and the tons'ls spread
Abaft the lazarette,
Then drop two points the for'ard lead,
And there you are—all set!"



(7)
I promised I'd remember this
When next I went to sea.
"We need six knots or we shall miss
The blessed tide," said he.
"And when we've tied the knots!" I
cried,
"They'll have to be undone!
With six big knots to be untied,
What chance have we of fun?"



(8)
He let me steer the little craft
When it was getting late,
Said he: "The sail is fore-and-aft,
So mind you keep her straight!"
What happened after that, I've found,
Can hardly be described,
But Redwing says I "brought her
round
Until the darn thing gybed!"

(9)
The boom caught Redwing on the ear,
I'm sorry to record,
And poor old Redwing—well, I fear
He went clean overboard!
I think my steering might be blamed,
Tom Redwing thinks so, too.
"And that's the last time!" he
exclaimed,
"I'll sail a boat with you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors, as Coker was distributed.

"Oooooogh!" gasped Coker. "I—I—I'll— Yooooogh!"

"When you've finished, Coker," said Potter, with deep sarcasm, "we might get this boat out! I thought we were going for a row!"

"Ooogh!" spluttered Coker, as he staggered up. "Don't jaw! Ooogh! I'll smash 'em! Ooogh! I'll— Oooooogh!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" yelled Bob Cherry suddenly. "Look!"

A running figure came in sight. In great surprise, the juniors in the Remove boat stared at Poker Pike.

As they had left him locked in the woodshed, and had taken away the key, they had not expected to see Mr. Pike again so soon! But there he was! Evidently it was not easy to lose him!

"Row, brothers, row!" chuckled Frank Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors pulled, increasing the distance between the boat and the raft, as Poker Pike came panting up. The gunman waved excited hands at them.

"Say, you guys, you pull in!" shouted Poker. "You hear me? I guess I want that Putnam van Duck! You hear me toot?"

"Aw, take a rest, Poker!" called back Van Duck.

"Pull!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

Poker Pike stood staring after them. With a dozen yards of water between, they were safely out of the reach of the gunman, and it looked as if Mr. Pike was beaten to it. Grinning back at him, the juniors pulled up the river.

But Mr. Pike was not beaten yet.

Coker & Co. got their boat into the water. They were pushing off, when Mr. Pike, with a sudden leap, landed in among them, making the boat rock as he landed. His weight sent it spinning out into the river.

"What the thump!" ejaculated Potter.

"What the dickens!" gasped Greene. Coker fairly roared with wrath.

"Here, you! Get out of this boat! You hear me? You cheeky ruffian, gerrout of this boat! What the thump do you mean? Pitch him out, you men!"

"I guess," said Poker Pike, with his usual serious calmness, "that I got to get after that Putnam van Duck! You guys foller that boat."

"We're going down the river!" gasped Potter.

Mr. Pike shook his head.

"You ain't!" he contradicted. "You're going arter that Putnam van Duck, and I'm mentioning it!"

"Look here!" bellowed Coker.

"Pack it up!" said Mr. Pike tersely. "You get after them guys! Get me? I ain't honing to damage you any, but if you don't get after them guys pronto, I'm going to beat you up a few! Get to it!"

Coker, almost foaming, hurled himself at Mr. Pike. The next moment he was in the bottom of the boat, hardly knowing how he got there. Mr. Pike gave the startled Potter and Greene a grim look, brandishing a fist that looked like a lump of wrought iron.

"You getting after them guys?" he inquired.

Potter and Greene decided on the spot that they were!

They did not want what had happened to Coker to happen to them! They exchanged a furious look, and settled down to the oars.

Coker lay gasping. Mr. Pike sat in the stern, and Potter and Greene pulled

as if they were rowing in a boat race, in pursuit of the Remove boat. And a crowd of fellows on the raft and the towpath stared, as the chase swept out of sight up the Sark.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Chick's Chance!

"THE jig's up, Chick!"

"Not by long chalks, Bud Parker!"

"I'm telling you——"

"Park it!" snapped the fat gangster. Chick Chew was leaning on a tree on the towpath by the Sark, a mile or more from Greyfriars School.

Smoking a long cigar, Chick was gazing meditatively at the sunny river, rippling between green banks, clothed in woods.

Bud Parker sat in the grass, his horn-rimmed spectacles gleaming in the sunshine. His look was pessimistic.

Ever since the gangsters had crossed the "pond," on the track of the millionaire's son, Bud had been pessimistic. He was in a strange land, where guns were at a discount. Even the police did not pack guns, and yet somehow managed to keep law and order in a way never dreamed of in Chicago.

Mr. Parker had the deepest contempt for a country where a "cop" was armed only with a truncheon, which he hardly ever had to handle. Yet he realised that these unarmed "cops" somehow did their job in a way that made the gangster game much more difficult than it was on the other side of the pond.

Bud would have been glad to throw down the whole thing and get back to Chicago, where a gangster had a chance. But Mr. Chew was as determined as ever. He was not going to be beaten. His professional pride, as America's greatest kidnapper, was at stake!

"We ain't bitten it off yet," said Mr. Chew. "But we're going to bite it off, you Bud! We nearly had that gilt-edged gink at that place in Surrey. Now they've parked him in a school——"

"And Pike watching him!" said Bud.

"I guess," said Mr. Chew, "that Poker Pike can't be keeping tabs on him all the time. I guess that young guy will be wandering around a few. And when he goes wandering around, I'll mention that he is going to meet up with this bunch."

"Says you!" grunted the horn-rimmed man.

"Yeah!" said Mr. Chew.

He glanced along the towpath. "We was piping him the day he left that shebang with the other young ginks," he went on. "I got it firm that he was at Greyfriars—ringing up a schoolmaster guy there, the first day, and getting it straight. We know where he is. All we got to do is to rope him in."

"And that's a heap!" said Bud.

"Any fine day," said Mr. Chew, "he may be wandering around. This very afternoon, as like as not, he'll be giving this here river the once-over."

"Says you!" repeated Mr. Parker pessimistically.

"This very minute," went on Mr. Chew, "there's a boat coming up, and I wouldn't be a heap surprised to see young Putnam in it."

"You got another guess coming, Chick!"

"Aw, can it, you Bud!"

Bud grunted, and Chick Chew watched the river. His look grew more and more intent as he watched the boat pulling up the Sark.

"Jumping toads!" ejaculated Mr. Chew, at length.

"Pipe him?" asked Bud sarcastically.

"You said it!" breathed Mr. Chew.

"Wha-a-t!"

Bud bounded to his feet. He stared at the boat on the sunny Sark, still at a distance.

Six schoolboys were in it. The gangsters had seen them all before. They knew the Famous Five by sight. Better still, they knew Putnam van Duck.

"Search me!" gasped Bud.

His eyes nearly popped through the horn rims of his spectacles, in his surprise.

Mr. Chew grinned, with a gleam of American dentistry.

"Did I mention we might pipe him wandering around, or did I not?" he inquired.

Bud gave his great chief a look almost of veneration.

"Chick," he said, "I pass it up to you!"

"I'll buy it!" said Mr. Chew.

He backed round the tree on which he had been leaning. Bud Parker followed him quickly.

The boat was still at a distance. The schoolboys had seen nothing of the gangsters on the bank; but wariness was second nature to the kidnapers. Very quickly they were in cover, cautiously watching the boat.

Four of the juniors were pulling. Frank Nugent and Putnam van Duck sat in the stern, the former steering. The gilt-edged schoolboy's face showed up clearly in the bright spring sunshine. Chick and Bud watched that face as the boat drew nearer.

The oarsmen were pulling hard. It was a rather big and roomy old boat, but it moved swiftly under the pull of four oars.

Coker's craft had been dropped behind and was out of sight beyond the winding banks of the Sark. But Harry Wharton & Co. had no doubt that the persistent Poker was still in chase, and they were losing no time.

Putnam was very keen to get away from the ubiquitous Poker on that half-holiday, and lose him for a time. His friends cheerfully backed him up. Certainly none of them had the remotest suspicion that the gangsters were anywhere in the neighbourhood of Greyfriars School.

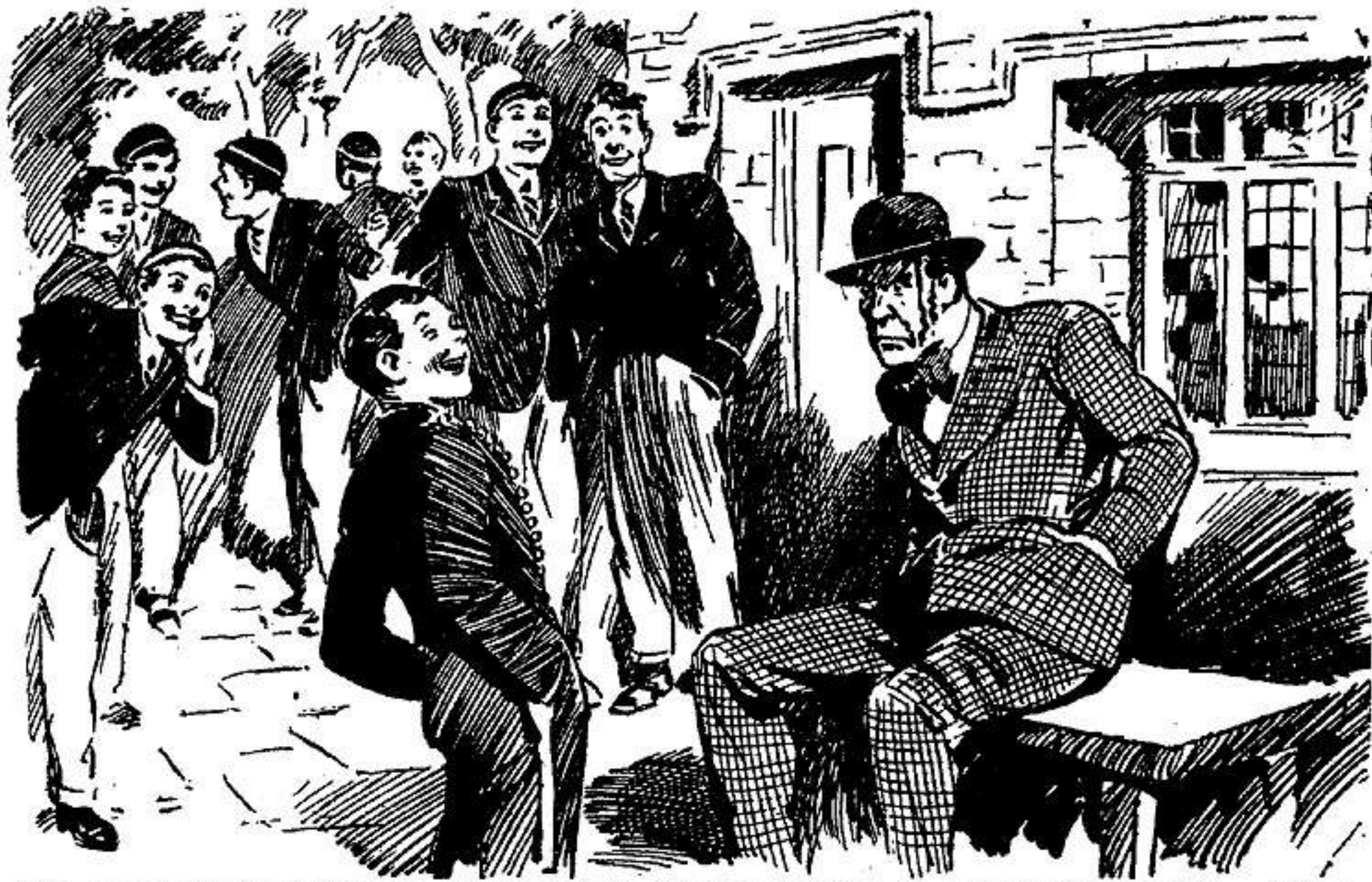
It was difficult to imagine danger lurking in that quiet, sunny English countryside. The whole thing seemed rather a "lark" to the juniors, and they were getting away with the lark. Coker's boat had been pressed into service for pursuit, but they were dropping the pursuit.

Voices floated to the hidden gangsters as the boat pulled nearer, drawing in a little towards the bank.

Mr. Chew had spotted Van Duck's intended game. But his game was afloat, and Chick was ashore, and he had yet to solve the problem of getting hold of Putnam van Duck. He was debating in his mind whether to "hold up" the boat's crew at the muzzle of an automatic, and order them to pull in to the bank. But he was not quite sure that it would work. He was not pessimistic, like Mr. Parker; but his faith in gun-play as a method had been a little shaken.

Holding up a guy at the end of a gun worked all right in Chicago. Such a guy would put up his hands automatically, as it were, playing the peculiar game according to the rules.

In this strange land it was different. And if these schoolboys disregarded the



"Oh, my eye!" ejaculated Trotter, as he reached the school porter's lodge with a message for Poker Pike. "What's biting you, bo?" asked Poker. The look on his streaky face made the school page jump back with a grin. "Oh, nothing!" he gasped. "The 'Ead wants to see you in his study!"

levelled gun, what was Chick going to do?

Really, he was not prepared to sweep the boat fore and aft with death-dealing lead! Such a proceeding would have made altogether too tremendous a sensation in the sleepy little island which was so unlike Chicago.

The gangster's gun was, in point of fact, chiefly bluff; and if a guy "called" the bluff, the gangster was rather at a loss.

Debating this difficult matter in his mind, Mr. Chew watched the approaching boat, and listened to the cheery, boyish voices that floated to his ears on the breeze.

"We've beaten them, you men!" came Bob Cherry's voice.

"Yes, rather!"

"Beaten them to a frazzle, I guess."

"They been racing with some other school kids, I reckon!" murmured Bud Parker; and Mr. Chew nodded.

"I fancy they're still after us!" came Harry Wharton's voice. "Look here! We don't want Coker's boat barging after us all the afternoon. Pull in, and let them pass."

"They'll spot us!"

"Not if we shove the boat under these willows and keep doggo till they've gone on!" said the captain of the Remove.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a yell of laughter, and the boat pulled into the bank—at a spot where thick bunches of willows drooped, within a stone's throw of the spot where Chick and Bud stood behind the tree.

The idea of keeping "doggo," and letting the persistent Poker pass on up the river, hunting for a boat that was not there, appealed to the juniors' sense of humour.

Mr. Chew, watching, could scarcely believe in his good luck. His problem was solved for him.

The Remove boat slid into the bank, and the six schoolboys scrambled ashore. The boat was pushed under the willows,

where the drooping branches quite hid it from sight from the river. Coker's boat was not yet round the lower bend. There was plenty of time.

"Give them ten minutes," said Harry Wharton. "We'll watch them pass from the trees—keep in cover!"

"What-ho!"

Chuckling, the chums of the Remove backed into the trees along the towpath. From that cover they were going to watch the river, and watch Coker's boat pass, with the watchful Mr. Pike in it. After it was out of sight, they could resume their own trip, untroubled further by Mr. Pike.

They grinned as they watched.

So did Chick Chow.

"I guess," he whispered to Mr. Parker, "that we got these here babes in the wood jest where we want them."

"I should smile!" murmured Bud.

"Pull your gun, old-timer—but don't you be too sudden with it—we ain't in Chicago now!"

"Don't I know it?" grunted Bud.

"I guess a few sockdolagers from the butt will keep them young rubes quiet, if they horn in," whispered Chick.

"We got to get a cinch on young Putnam, and walk him through this here timber to the car. Easy as pie, and as good as clam pie! Did I mention we was going to cinch that guy, you Bud, or did I not?"

"You surely did!" assented Mr. Parker.

Harry Wharton & Co., as they watched the river from the edge of the wood, heard a sudden rustle behind them. They glanced round.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" yelled Bob Cherry. "Look out!"

"Great pip!"

There was a rush.

Chick Chew's grasp was on Putnam van Duck, when the American junior, with a swift spring, eluded it, and bounded out into the towpath.

In an instant he was running down

the towpath. After him thundered the fat gangster. After Chick tore Bud Parker.

"The—the kidnapers!" stuttered Harry Wharton.

"That blighter Chick!" gasped Bob.

"They're after him!"

"Come on!"

The Famous Five rushed down the towpath, after the pursuing gangsters, who were at the heels of the fleeing millionaire's son.

Big and fat as he was, Chick ran fast and hard, and it was clear that Putnam van Duck had little chance of escape. The Famous Five tore in pursuit. How this was going to end they did not know; but they knew that they were going to stand by Putnam van Duck to the finish.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Gun Play!

"YOU cheeky rotter!" gasped Coker.

Poker Pike did not answer.

He was a man of few words, and he saw no occasion for chewing the rag. If Coker of the Fifth started trouble, Poker was prepared to stretch him in the bottom of the boat again. So long as he merely blew off steam, Poker did not mind. He was a considerate gunman.

"You dashed ruffian!" hissed Coker.

Potter and Greene did not speak. Their feelings, indeed, were too deep for words.

Besides, they needed their breath to pull. Mr. Pike was keeping them at it, hard!

If they slacked down, the gunman's jey eyes were turned on them, with such a significant look, that Potter and Greene pulled again, with all their leaf.

"You rotten rascal!" hooted Coker.

Mr. Pike, watching the river for the

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boat ahead, allowed Coker's remarks to pass him by, like the idle wind which he regarded not.

He was deeply anxious to spot the Remove boat, hidden from his sight by the windings of the river. Potter and Greene were doing their best; but four oars beat two, and the junior boat was far ahead. It was a worry to Mr. Pike, and he had neither time nor inclination to bother about Horace Coker and his indignant wrath.

Coker was the man to proceed from words to deeds—in fact, it was usually his way to act first and think afterwards, if he thought at all. But he did not handle Mr. Pike as he longed to do.

Once was enough, even for Horace Coker! One smite had landed the hefty Horace on his back, and it had been five minutes before he felt able to resume the perpendicular. He did not want another of those mighty smites. Poker Pike was too large a proposition for him, and even Coker understood it.

So—little as it was his custom—Coker contented himself with words. They were bitter words, angry words, emphatic words; but they had no more effect on Mr. Pike than water on a duck's back.

Potter and Greene pulled, while Coker raged like the heathen of old. Potter and Greene would have preferred to swipe Mr. Pike with the oars. But they were disinclined to have their features pushed through the back of their heads. And Mr. Pike meant business—cold business from the word go, as he would have said.

His press-gang methods infuriated the Fifth Formers. Coker could barely restrain himself from punching. Fortunately he managed to do it. Potter and Greene rowed hard, suppressing their fury. Poker Pike watched anxiously for a sight of the Remove boat.

He did not sight that boat. Indeed, but for the interposition of the gangsters, there was no doubt that Coker's boat would have pulled past the spot where the Removites had landed, and that Mr. Pike would have gone onward to explore the upper reaches of the Sark for the fellows who had stayed astern of him.

But suddenly, as he watched the river, a running figure on the towpath dawned on Mr. Pike.

His slits of eyes gleamed with alertness.

It was Putnam van Duck running his hardest! Fast on his track, the next moment, appeared another figure—that of a fat man, running still harder, and gaining on the American junior.

Then, behind Mr. Chew, appeared Bud Parker, going all out—and trailing in the distance, five schoolboys, running breathlessly.

"Search me!" said Mr. Pike.

He rose to his feet, his hand flying to his hip. Coker's tirade was cut short by astonishment. Potter and Greene stared at the gunman, and rested on their oars.

"You guys, you pull in to the bank!" barked Mr. Pike. "Pronto!"

Then the Fifth Formers saw the chase on the towpath.

"Oh crumbs!" said Potter.

"Oh crikey!" said Greene.

"Oh scissors!" ejaculated Coker.

"You hear me toot?" snapped Mr. Pike. "Pull in, you geeks! I got to get that Putnam van Duck!"

Potter and Greene pulled for the bank. Standing up in the boat, Mr. Pike calmly and coolly took aim with his six-gun.

Bang!

The report of the revolver rang across

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the river, and echoed through the woods. Chick Chew gave a sudden bound.

His eyes, as he chased, were on Putnam van Duck. He had not wasted a glance on the river. He did not even know there was a boat there till Poker Pike's gun roared.

He gave an astonished yelp, and a wild jump, as a bullet kicked up earth at his feet. Losing his footing, he stumbled, and rolled in the grass of the towpath.

Bang!

Bud Parker let out a yell that would have done credit to a Red Indian. The bullet that cut through the crown of his hat, grazed the top of his head. It was enough—and more than enough—for Mr. Parker.

Without stopping a second, Bud Parker swerved, and shot off the towpath into the wood, and vanished.

Bang, bang!

"Search me!" spluttered Chick Chew.

He scrambled wildly up, with hot lead from Poker Pike's six-gun spattering earth round him.

Putnam van Duck, running like a deer, got ahead. Chick glared after him as he ran, and glared at the gunman standing in the boat. As he glared, another shot whizzed by an inch from his ear.

He spluttered with breathless rage. He had caught Putnam without his gunman guard; but that faithful guard, it was clear, had not been far away. Here he was, taking pot-shots at Mr. Chew from Coker's boat!

Resuming the chase of the fleeing millionaire's son, with Poker raining bullets at him from the river, did not seem a practical proposition to Mr. Chew.

He gave Poker Pike an astonished and infuriated glare, and for a second groped for his automatic. But he remembered in time that he was no longer in Chicago, and left the automatic where it was! He swerved off the towpath and darted into the wood.

Bang!

Poker's gun roared after him as he went. The bullet clipped the rim of the disappearing slouched hat.

Coker's boat bumped into the rushes under the bank. Mr. Pike leaped ashore, the smoking six-gun in his hand. But the gangsters were gone—running, and not likely to stop running till they reached their car and started the engine!

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Out of Bounds!

"LOOK out!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Oh crumbs!"

Harry Wharton & Co., racing down the towpath, stopped, panting for breath. They had forgotten Poker Pike; but they were reminded of him as they heard the six-gun roar.

They stopped—as they did not want to stop any of the bullets that were whizzing across the towpath.

But as Mr. Pike stepped on the bank they came on. The gun-play was over, and Mr. Pike, with sedate carefulness, was reloading his six-gun. In the distance Putnam van Duck had stopped, and was looking back. Seeing how matters stood, the American junior walked back to rejoin his friends with a cheery grin on his face.

Coker & Co. pushed off in their boat. They were glad, at least, to have done with Mr. Pike. Whether Mr. Pike wanted that boat any longer they did not know; they pushed off in haste, in case he did!

Mr. Pike had no further use for

Coker and his craft. He had found Putnam van Duck—though in a rather unexpected manner. Having found him, he was freezing on to the gilt-edged youth.

"Well," remarked Van Duck, with a chuckle, "I'll say that was some rookus! And then a few!"

"Lucky Mr. Pike turned up!" remarked Harry Wharton.

"The luckfulness was terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The esteemed and absurd kidnappers were nearer at hand than we supposedly considered!"

"You said it!" agreed Putnam. "I'm telling you, Poker, I'm glad to see your face jest about now, though it ain't a sight for sore eyes, and that's a cinch. You sure got that bunch hopping like they was sent for."

Poker Pike nodded. Having reloaded his gun, he packed it away at his hip. The gangsters were gone, and very unlikely to be seen again. They were looking for a chance to kidnap Van Duck; but not for a pitched battle with his gunman guardian.

"The fact is, we were rather fat-heads!" said Bob Cherry. "You oughtn't to have come out without your jolly old shadow, Van Duck, and we oughtn't to have helped you."

"Boneheads!" agreed Putnam. "But I never reckoned that Chick was rubbering around in this vicinity. I guess we're sticking to Poker now."

"Surest thing you know!" said Poker. That detail was already settled in Mr. Pike's mind. "Now I got a cinch on you agin, I'll say I ain't letting up, you Putnam van Duck."

"Like a trip on the river, Mr. Pike?" asked Harry, with a laugh. "Come on, let's get back to the boat."

The Greyfriars fellows walked back to the willows, where the boat had been hidden. Mr. Pike's solemn face expressed nothing as the boat was pulled out of its hiding-place; though no doubt he guessed the trick the playful juniors had intended to play on the pursuer.

But Mr. Pike had nothing more of that kind to expect. The chums of the Remove had succeeded in "losing" him that afternoon; but they had been very glad to find him again, as matters had turned out.

When the Remove boat pushed off, Mr. Pike sat in the stern—an honoured guest. He was not exactly merry or bright company, with his serious hickory face under his immovable bowler hat; but he was indispensable.

Whether the juniors agreed or not, Poker was going to keep "tabs" on the millionaire's son till he was safe within the school gates again. Fortunately, they agreed.

It had been an exciting interlude, but it was over; and the juniors pulled cheerily on their way up the river, what time two disappointed and disgruntled kidnappers were packing into a car on the Courtfield road and hitting the open spaces!

Coker & Co. had gone down the river, and were out of sight. Far from the school, the juniors had the Sark to themselves, so far as Greyfriars fellows were concerned. They pulled on till Popper's Island came in sight.

That island was "out of bounds"—a little circumstance that juniors sometimes forgot on a half-holiday. Putnam van Duck had never seen that little wooded island in the broadest reach of the river, opposite Popper Court woods; and they were going to show him over it.

Bob Cherry scanned the banks as they approached it.

"All serene!" he remarked. "No jolly

old keepers about—and jolly old Popper is away! Safe as houses!”

The boat nosed in under the trees at the landing-place on the island, and was tied up. The juniors scrambled ashore, followed by Poker Pike.

There was a path through the thickets to the glade in the centre of the island, under the branches of a big oak-tree. The Removites followed it, while Poker Pike, watchful as ever, stood scanning the river and the opposite bank, to make sure that there was no sign of the kid-nappers.

“Hallo, hallo, hallo!” ejaculated Bob Cherry. “Somebody else knows that old Popper is away from Popper Court.”

He glimpsed a straw hat through the thickets. Evidently Popper’s Island was already tenanted.

That, however, did not matter to the juniors. Any other Greyfriars fellow there was as much out of bounds as the juniors, while common-or-garden members of the public had no concern with them. They walked on cheerily into the glade.

A startled exclamation greeted them.

Two fellows were seated on a log under the big oak-tree. They were Loder and Walker of the Sixth.

“Oh, my hat!” ejaculated Harry Wharton, in dismay.

It had not occurred to the juniors that prefects might be on the island. Prefects of the Sixth Form were not subject to “bounds” like juniors; though certainly Sir Hilton Popper, had he discovered them on his island, would have made as much fuss about senior trespassers as any other.

What two Sixth Form men were doing on the island was rather a mystery—or would have been but for a lingering scent of cigarette-smoke in the air, and the fact that Gerald Loder hastily shoved something out of sight, into his pockets, as the juniors appeared. But

neither cigarettes nor cards were to be seen.

Loder and Walker jumped up from the log, and stared at the newcomers. Walker coloured—and Loder glared.

“Sorry to interrupt, Loder!” said Bob Cherry politely.

And the juniors grinned. All of them knew that the two black sheep of the Sixth had been smoking and playing nap in that secluded spot, far from the eyes of authority. Loder and Walker would not have remained prefects long had their headmaster witnessed their proceedings.

“You young rascals!” exclaimed Loder. “Out of bounds—as usual! Get off this island at once! I shall report this to your Form-master!”

“I guess you’ll get reported about the same time!” remarked Putnam van Duck. “You’re here, too, ain’t you? You kind of look as if you are.”

Loder’s eyes fixed on the American junior with a deadly glare.

He had not forgotten the episode in Study No. 1 on the first day of term.

As a prefect, invested with “whopping privs,” Loder might have completed the interrupted whopping at a later date; but he had never done so, for the simple reason that he did not care to risk being tucked under Mr. Pike’s arm again. The Head had solemnly warned Poker Pike not to interfere with the prefects in the execution of their duties; but Loder did not feel at all sure that that would cut much ice with the gunman.

Now, however, Putnam was there without his gunman guard. Mr. Pike, who was standing by the boat watching the river, was out of sight, and Loder did not know that he was on the island at all.

“You cheeky little scoundrel!” said Loder, in measured tones. “We came here to look for juniors out of bounds, as we are quite prepared to explain to

the Head. But you are breaking bounds, and you will be reported; but, first of all, you’re going to have a lesson about cheeking a prefect!”

A light walking-cane lay on the log. Loder picked it up and stepped towards the juniors.

“Look here, Loder—” began Harry Wharton.

“Hold your tongue!” snapped Loder. “I’ll give you six all round, if I have any lip from you! Van Duck, bend over and touch your toes!”

“Guess again!” said Putnam.

“Are you going to bend over?” roared Loder.

“Not so you’d notice it.”

Loder made a stride at him: and as Putnam dodged, swiped with the stick. There was a terrific yoll from Putnam as he caught the swipe on his shoulders. It rang over the island, and both banks of the Sark.

It was followed by a rapid footstep in the thickets. The next moment a hickory face and a bowler hat dawned on Loder, and he was grasped, and swept off his feet, in the wiry hands of Poker Pike.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Not Reported!

“CAN it, you!” said Mr. Pike.

“Ow! Leggo!” panted Loder. “You ruffian! You—you—Oooh!”

“Hold on!” gasped Harry Wharton. “I guess I’m holding on,” remarked Mr. Pike.

He was, and the bully of the Sixth crumpled helplessly in his sinewy hold.

“I mean, let go!” said Harry. “Loder’s a prefect—”

“I guess I ain’t wise to what that
(Continued on next page.)

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might happen to be," said Poker. "But I'll say I ain't lambasting that Putnam van Duck, s'long as this here baby is looking after him. Nopo!"

"Will you leggo?" shrieked Loder.

Had he been aware that Poker Pike was on hand, the bully of the Sixth certainly never would have administered that swipe. Evidently the Head's solemn warning on the subject had "cut no ice" with Mr. Pike.

Walker of the Sixth made a move forward to Loder's aid. But one glint from the gunman's icy eyes made him step back in a hurry.

"Look here——" began Walker.

"Pack it up, you!" snapped Poker.

"Let me go!" yelled Loder, struggling frantically. "You ruffian, I'll have you turned out of the school for this. I'll have you kicked out of Greyfriars. Do you think you can handle Sixth Form men, you hooligan?"

"Surest thing you know," answered Poker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors chuckled. But they were feeling rather uneasy. Loder, after all, was a prefect, and he had a good case to put before the Head. He had caught the juniors out of bounds. Putnam had cheeked him, and he was acting within his rights and powers. And Poker, in stopping him, was disregarding the headmaster's solemn warning.

For the moment Loder was helpless; but when they got back to Greyfriars the case was going to be very much altered.

Certainly the juniors knew that Loder and Walker were black sheep, and had no doubt why they were on the island that afternoon. Had the Head known as much as the juniors know, it would have been the "sack" for both the sportsmen of the Sixth.

But there was no proof of that, and Loder was on safe ground. Whoppings all round, and the "boot" for Mr. Pike, seemed to be the probable result of this unfortunate encounter.

Loder wrenched furiously to free himself from the gunman's grasp. But that grasp was like iron.

"Let me go!" raved Loder. "You ruffian—— Yaroooh!"

Mr. Pike did not seem to like the names Loder was applying to him. Holding Loder with one hand, he smacked his head with the other.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Yooop!" howled Loder. "Oh, my hat! You—you—you—— I'll have you turned out of the school this very day! Wait till I see the Head! Ow!"

"Forget it!" said Mr. Pike stolidly. "I guess I'm a fixture at that pesky school, so long as that Putnam van Duck hangs up his hat in the shebang. Surest thing you know."

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Harry Wharton.

There could be little doubt that when Loder reported this to the Head, Mr. Pike would be politely but firmly told to quit. How he fancied that he could remain, if the Head ordered him to go, was rather a mystery. But it was quite clear that he did.

"You—you fool!" panted Loder. "I tell you, you fool, that—— Yaroooh!"

Smack!

"You don't want to talk to me that-a-way," said Mr. Pike seriously. "I guess I ain't taking all that back-chat, feller. Nunk!"

Loder, foaming with rage, twisted round in Poker Pike's grip, and struck at the hickory face with all his strength.

His fist crashed hard.

Mr. Pike blinked. Even the tough gunman was not impervious to a hefty blow like that at close quarters. He blinked, and blinked again.

"I'll say you're the guy to ask for it, feller," said Mr. Pike. "You surely are one hog, and don't know when you've had enough. Mebbe a dip in the water will cool you down a few."

With a grip on the back of Loder's collar, Poker Pike jerked him along the path through the thickets to the water.

Loder struggled frantically as he went.

He clutched at bushes and trees; he struggled and twisted and kicked, but the grip on his collar was irresistible, and he went along in a scrambling heap.

"Oh, my hat!" yelled Bob Cherry. "Look!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

From Loder's pockets, as he twisted and scrambled and rolled, all sorts of things were shed. The pack of playing cards which he had thrust hastily out of sight when the juniors arrived, came unexpectedly to light.

Cards were shed in a shower, dropping all along the path as if Loder was leaving a "scent" in a paper-chase.

A cigarette-case opened as it dropped, shedding cigarettes. They scattered among the cards.

"Oh gum!" gasped Walker, staring in horror at that unexpected revelation. He rushed after Loder—not to the rescue, but to gather up those evidences of guilt, and get them out of sight.

Bob Cherry promptly put a foot in his way. Walker tripped over it, and went headlong.

"No, you don't, Walker!" grinned Bob. "We'll take care of Loder's property for him. It will be awfully interesting to the Head when he reports us at Greyfriars."

"Yes, rather!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"The ratherfulness is terrific!"

With many chuckles, the juniors followed Loder and Mr. Pike, gathering up cards and cigarettes. Walker staggered to his feet.

"Look here, you young rascals!" he stammered. "Look here! Hand those things over to me, and—and I'll get Loder to let the matter drop—see?"

"That's all right; we'll take care of them," grinned Bob. "And if you butt in, Walker, we'll send you where Pike's taking Loder. You can't come the jolly old prefect in the giddy circumstances."

James Walker was only too well aware of that.

So far from reporting the juniors to their Form-master, or to the Head, Walker was only anxious that nothing should be heard of the affair at Greyfriars now. Visions of a stern-faced headmaster, pronouncing the dread words: "You are expelled," rose before Walker's mind.

No doubt they would have risen before Loder's, too, but Gerald Loder was too busily occupied to think of anything but what was happening to him at the moment.

Jerked along by the collar, strewing the ground with cards and cigarettes as he went, Loder reached the landing-place. Close in under the trees the water was shallow; but if there was not much water, there was plenty of mud. Into the muddy shallows Mr. Pike landed Loder, with a swing of his powerful arm.

Splash.

"Ooooooch!"

Loder sat in water up to the shoulders. His legs disappeared in soft, clinging mud as the Sark rippled round him.

He sat and spluttered wildly.

"I guess," said Mr. Pike solemnly, "that lets you out, you Loder! Yep! You don't want to hand out sock-dolagers to this guy. You get me?"

"Ooooooch!" spluttered Loder.

He scrambled wildly to his feet, stirring up a sea of mud. As he would have scrambled back to the island, Mr. Pike raised a warning hand.

"Stick there!" he said. "I guess you got a boat somewhere, and your side-kicker can mosey round with it and pick you up. Don't you come any nearer, feller. You'll get damaged, a few."

Loder stood with water up to his knees, drenched and dripping. His straw hat floated away down the Sark.

"You—you—you——" he panted.

"Park it!" said Poker Pike. "I guess you can howl to the other guy, and he can fish you out. You ain't coming back here."

"Walker!" yelled Loder. "Where are you, you fool? Bring the skiff round, you dummy! Do you hear, you idiot?"

The Sixth Form skiff was on the other side of the island. Walker, thus politely adjured, went for it, and sculled round the little island. Loder clambered savagely into it when it arrived.

He sat and streamed water and mud. There was a chuckle from the island, and Loder glared back at a bunch of grinning juniors. He shook a wet and muddy fist.

"Wait till you get back to the school!" he yelled. "Just wait! The minute you get back, you go to the Head!"

"Right-ho!" yelled Bob. "We've got something for him, Loder!"

He held up a handful of playing-cards. The other fellows, grinning, followed suit. Loder's eyes almost popped from his face at the sight of his pack of cards, thus displayed to his startled gaze.

"Oh!" he gasped. "You—you—— Give me those cards! Throw them into the skiff! Do you hear?"

"That's all right, Loder!" said Harry Wharton reassuringly. "We're going to hand them to you when we see the Head——"

"In the Head's study!" grinned Bob.

"And the cigarettes along with them!" said Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"For goodness' sake, shut up, Loder!" hissed Walker. "Those young scoundrels have got us in a cleft stick. If you want the sack, I don't! Shut up!"

Walked rowed away. Loder sat staring back, with a furious muddy face. Bob Cherry hurled his handful of cards after the skiff, and they scattered over Loder as he went, and fluttered round on the water. There were plenty more left for evidence—if required!

But it was pretty certain that they would not be required! Loder was not likely to make a report to any master at Greyfriars—in the circumstances. He was likely to be only too eager to keep the whole matter dark.

"Good-bye, Loder!" yelled the Removites.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton & Co. were left in possession of Popper's Island.

And when, later, they returned to Greyfriars in time for calling-over, they did not expect to be called before either



Coker was about to board the Remove boat, when Bob Cherry planted the end of an oar on the Fifth Former's broad chest, and shoved off from that. Under the force of that hefty shove, the boat shot out into the Sark—and Horace Coker shot over backwards. "Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors.

Form-master or headmaster for having been out of bounds! And they were right! In Hall, Loder of the Sixth gave them a black look—and that was all! Loder had said nothing—and, in fact, his chief anxiety was that the juniors should not say anything, either! Which was quite satisfactory to the cheery chums of the Remove.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Poker Pike Plays Cricket!

"STICK him in the field!" suggested Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Know anything about cricket, Mr. Pike?" he asked.

Poker looked thoughtful.

Putnam van Duck did not know much about the great game, and his friends in the Remove were only too glad to instruct him. But Putnam, of course, could not walk down to Little Side after class in flannels without Poker Pike walking after him. Fellows on the cricket ground stared at the gunman in his black bowler—rather conspicuous among the junior cricketers.

Many of them grinned. But Mr. Pike's face was quite serious and solemn. If he looked incongruous there, he did not feel incongruous. Nothing mattered to Poker except keeping tabs on the son and heir of the Chicago multi-millionaire.

"Keep off the grass, you!" Van Duck hooted at him; to which Poker turned a deaf ear. Then Bob suggested sticking him in the field. Which, as Mr. Pike was determined to stick there, was really not a bad idea.

"Cricket!" repeated Mr. Pike. He nodded slowly. "Yep! I guess I read a book about it once."

"Great pip! That's good!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove, in surprise. He had not supposed that a gunman from Chicago would know anything about cricket, if he had ever heard of the game at all! It was quite surprising to hear that Poker Pike had read up the subject.

"Yep!" said Poker, with another nod. "I ain't no big reader, but I guess I read that book when I was a small nipper. Surest thing you know! Wrote by a guy named Dickens, and I'll mention that he was no slouch of a writer guy."

"Dickens!" repeated Harry. "I never heard that Dickens wrote anything about games—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Bob Cherry. "I don't think Dickens wrote about this sort of cricket!"

"Sure!" said Poker. "I'll tell you, it was some book—I guess it was called 'Cricket on the Hearth,' if I don't disremember."

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

Evidently Poker was, after all, unacquainted with the game. The cricket he was thinking of was the cricket that chirped on the hearth—quite a different kind of cricket!

"Oh dear!" gasped Wharton. "Cricket on the hearth is a bit different from cricket on Little Side, Mr. Pike. This is a game. Played with a bat and a ball—"

"On a pitch!" said Bob Cherry.

Mr. Pike glanced round him, puzzled.

"I guess I don't see no pitch!" he remarked.

"You don't see it?" exclaimed Bob. As Mr. Pike was standing on it, and was blessed with good eyesight, that was a surprising statement.

"Nope! There ain't no pitch here—about that I can see! Where'd that pitch be?" asked Poker.

"Under your feet!" gasped Bob.

Mr. Pike jumped a little as he glanced down. He was quite unaware that he was treading on pitch. The suggestion startled him.

"Aw, pack it up!" he grunted. "I ain't walking in no pitch, I ain't! I guess I'd feel it sticking to my boots if I was. You young guys may be powerful smart, but I'll tell a man you can't string me along."

"Oh, scissors!" gasped Bob, realising that there was another misunderstanding. "Not pitch—pitch! A cricket pitch—"

"If there was any pitch here, I guess I'd pipe it as soon's the next guy!" grunted Poker. "Pitch is black, I reckon, and I can't see nothing but green."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You ornery bonehead!" snapped Van Duck. "They call the location where they play cricket a pitch."

"You're telling me!" said Poker.

"Stick him in the field!" said Bob, grinning. "Make him useful as well as ornamental."

"Will you go into the field, Mr. Pike?" asked Harry, smiling.

"I'll call that a fool question," answered Mr. Pike. "Ain't I in this here field already, along of you guys?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Evidently Mr. Pike had much to learn on this abstruse subject.

"If you mean the next field, you can forget it!" said Poker. "I'm sticking in this hyer field, to keep tabs on that Putnam van Duck."

"I don't mean the next field!" chuckled the captain of the Remove.

"Fielding's a part of the game. You see, one fellow slings down the ball, and another fellow whops it with the bat, and a fellow keeps wicket, and other fellows stand round to stop the ball going into the next county. That's called fielding."

"Sho!" said Mr. Pike.

"Put him in the deep field," said Bob. "The dear man will be out of the way there, anyhow."

"Where's that deep field?" asked Mr. Pike suspiciously. "Looks to me all on a level."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Apparently Mr. Pike guessed that the "deep" field was on a lower level than the rest! Really, it was a natural mistake for a guy who knew as much about cricket, and the language thereof, as he knew about the language spoken in the planet of Mars.

"This way!" said Harry, laughing, and he guided the gunman to the spot selected for him. Poker went slowly, glancing back every now and then. He did not mean to be led out of sight of Putnam van Duck.

Really, it was improbable that Chick Chew would make any attempt on the millionaire's son, in bright daylight, in the midst of a crowd of schoolboy cricketers. But the cautious Poker was taking no chances.

However, he found that he was not led out of sight of the junior. He was satisfied to stand where Harry Wharton placed him.

It was not, of course, a match, or certainly the Remove fellows would have shifted Mr. Pike right off the ground, gun and all. Six fellows a side were putting up some practice, for the benefit of Van Duck—who, though he knew little of the game, was quick on the uptake and keen to learn. It did not matter which side Mr. Pike supported, as he was not likely to be of much use to anybody; the chief consideration was to keep him out of the way.

"Now," said Harry, "if the ball comes this way, you stop it. Catch it if you can—but stop it, anyhow."

"I get you!" agreed Mr. Pike. He seemed willing to learn, and willing to oblige. Perhaps he was rather keen to learn some of the strange manners and customs of this strange country, to relate to his gun-slinging friends when he got back to Chicago. "What'll I do with it when I stop it? Do I keep it?"

"Keep it?" gasped Wharton. "Nunno—not exactly! You send it back to the bowler."

"Who's that?"

"The chap who bowls—Inky, at the present moment."

"I get you!" assented Mr. Pike. "I seen some bowling—I've played ten-pins back in Chicago."

"Oh! This is a bit different from ten-pins! But you'll soon catch on. Anyhow, don't let the ball pass you if you can help it. You see, the batsmen will be running all the time the ball's away."

"They run after the ball?" asked Poker.

"Oh! No! They run between the wickets. Those stumps sticking in the ground are called wickets. Now, you stick here, and—and keep tabs on the ball, see?"

"Surest thing, you know."

Mr. Pike stood—alert and watchful. Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh took the ball, to bowl to Bob Cherry. All the cricketers were grinning. And though cricket practice among the juniors seldom drew attention, on this occasion quite a number of fellows strolled over to Little Side to look on. Mr. Pike, in his bowler hat, was a conspicuous and

remarkable object on a cricket field. Grinning fellows looked on, to watch his performance.

But Poker Pike did not grin. He saw nothing to grin at. He took cricket as seriously as he took everything else. He gave his bowler hat a shove to jam it a little more tightly on his bullet head, though it already seemed to be screwed there. Then he stood alert. He was not going to let the ball pass him if it came his way—if he could help it.

It did not come his way at first. But when Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh sent down the last ball of the over Bob Cherry delivered a terrific swipe at it, and sent it right down to Poker Pike like a bullet from his own six-gun.

Mr. Pike stopped it!

He did not even see it coming, alert as he was! But he stopped it, because he was directly in the line of its flight! He stopped it with his waistcoat.

Bang!

"Yurrrrooooooooooh!" roared Poker Pike.

He leaped clear of the ground and sat down with a heavy bump. He pressed both hands to his waistcoat as he sat.

"Urrrrgh!" he gurgled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Some fielding!" yelled the Bounder.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Urrrrgh!" gasped Poker Pike, staggering up. "Carry me home to die! I guess I'll hand that guy a sockdolager or two! Urrgh!"

"Send that ball in!" shouted Harry Wharton.

Mr. Pike blinked at him. His first impression seemed to be that it was a case of assault and battery, and that it was up to him to hand the batsman a few "sockdolagers." His second impression was that this was the way cricket was played.

"Aw!" he gasped. "Is that how you play this here game? I'll say I don't like it a whole heap—it sure does shake up my eats!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Send that ball in!"

"I get you!" said Mr. Pike, and he picked up the ball. He had been told to send it back to the bowler—and he did so, delivering it with a quick throw straight at Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh's dusky head.

The Nabob of Bhanipur had barely time to dodge it. It whizzed past his head and caught Herbert Vernon-Smith on the ear.

The Bounder's yell could have been heard all over Greyfriars.

"That O.K.?" called out Mr. Pike. He only wanted to know.

"Oh crikey!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You mad idiot!" yelled the Bounder. "Do you want to brain a chap? Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ain't that right?" hooted Mr. Pike. "I got one of 'em!"

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

Poker Pike apparently had the idea that cricket was run on gun-play lines, and that the ball was a weapon of offence, with which fellows were to be knocked over, if possible. His own brief experience seemed to bear out that theory.

Smithy rubbed a damaged ear and glared. The other fellows doubled up with merriment.

Harry Wharton wiped away his tears, and explained matters a little further to Mr. Pike. He was willing to learn; but Rome was not built in a day. However, he got it into his solid brain that fellows were not to be knocked over with the cricket ball. That was so much to the good.

"I get you!" he said. "I get you O.K. I got to stop that ball! I ain't got to do nothing but stop that ball! I guess I'll put it through."

After which Mr. Pike was more alert and watchful than ever. He watched for the ball like a cat watching for mice. He did not want another bang on his waistcoat, shaking up his cats, as he described it.

His watchfulness was rewarded. The next time the ball came Mr. Pike's way it would have missed him by yards and travelled onwards fast and far—but Poker Pike had his eye on it!

He did not jump at the ball! He did not stir from where he stood! His hand flew to his hip.

Poker Pike was no cricketer, but he was a handy man with a gun! In his own haunts in Chicago he was well known to be sudden on the draw!

Bang!

It was not an easy shot! But Mr. Pike could handle a gun!

There was a shattering crack as the cricket ball got the bullet and flew to fragments!

The cricketers stood petrified.

Poker Pike, with the smoking six-gun in his hand, stood grinning with satisfaction.

"I guess I stopped it!" he remarked. "That O.K.?"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Oh crikey!"

"Oh scissors!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You dangerous maniac——"

"Put that gun away!"

"Aw, pack it up!" exclaimed Poker indignantly. "Ain't I stopped that ball, like I was told?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I think," gasped Bob Cherry, "that we shall want a new ball if we're going on with this! And I think we'd better persuade Mr. Pike to sit it out."

There was a howl of laughter round the field. The Greyfriars fellows had rather expected entertainment, when they saw Poker Pike at cricket. But they had not expected fireworks. Mr. Pike's new method of fielding quite took them by storm, and they howled and yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gently but firmly Mr. Pike was led off the field. He declined to go far—he had to keep tabs on Putnam. But he was shifted off the ground, and, giving up the idea of mastering the mysteries of the game of cricket, he sat it out.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Alarming!

"I SAY, you fellows!"
"Buzz off, Bunter!"
"But I say——"
"Hook it!"

On the table in Study No. 1 lay a cake—a large cake—a huge and luscious cake! Five juniors were regarding it with admiration and appreciation. It had arrived for Putnam van Duck, and Putnam was going to whack it out with his friends.

But Putnam van Duck, having been called into Mr. Quelch's study, was not there, and until he arrived his friends could not very well start on the cake.

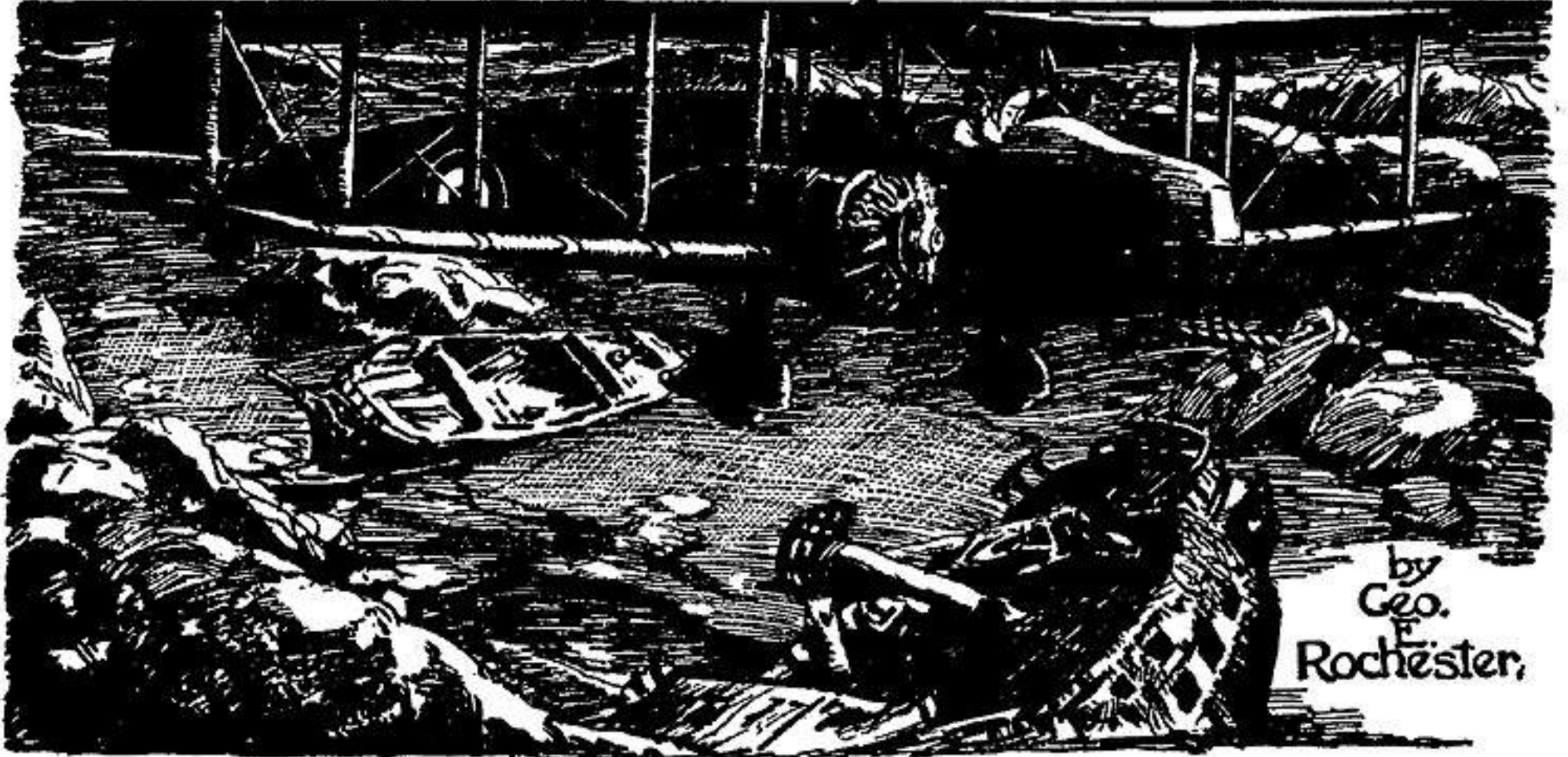
So they waited for him.

Several times, while they waited, Billy Bunter had blinked into the study with longing blinks through his big spectacles. He had, however, rolled away at last and disappeared.

Now he had returned! He barged into Study No. 1 with excitement in his fat face.

(Continued on page 28.)

THE LOST SQUADRON!



by
Geo.
F.
Rochester,

The Golden Day!

SQUADRON-LEADER AKERS and Flight-Lieutenant Ferris are cast away on a desert stretch of land which has risen out of the depths as a result of a huge tidal wave.

After a series of thrilling adventures they meet more survivors, among whom are Coles, Huck, and a negro named Jim Crow, who have made a rich haul looting stranded derelicts.

At long last ships come to the rescue of the castaways. Anxious to get clear with their booty, Coles & Co., together with the aid of Larsen, Crawley, and Baines, seize the tugboat Rosa, overpower the three seamen aboard, and make for the open sea. While replenishing their stock of coal from one of the wrecks, Baines and Crawley double-cross the rest of the party and skip off with the booty. Armed with the tough stem from a lengthy piece of seaweed, the negro is soon racing along the sand, hard on the heels of the precious pair.

Suddenly he came upon his quarry. Rounding a big outcropping of rock, he saw, less than fifty yards away, Baines and Crawley seated on the sand, cooking their breakfast over a fire of driftwood. Near by, lying at drunken angle, was the rusty hull of a derelict, and it was evident that it was from there that they had obtained the food.

Jim saw them before they saw him, and he stepped quickly back behind the rocks. It did not take him more than a few moments to make up his mind what to do. Moving up the beach behind the rocks, he made a detour which brought him out behind the derelict, on the other side of which, in blissful unconsciousness of the big negro's presence, Baines and Crawley were frying tinned bacon and boiling coffee.

Taking a fresh grip on his sjambok of seaweed, Jim rounded the hull and stepped into view.

Crawley had his back to him, and it was Baines, squatting by the fire, coffee mug in hand, who saw him first. If Baines had suddenly seen an apparition, he could not have registered more terrified amaze.

His eyes opened wide, so did his mouth, and the mug of steaming coffee fell from his nerveless hands, its contents

deluging the fire in a miniature and sizzling upheaval of smoke and sparks.

"What'n heck's wrong with you?" demanded Crawley angrily.

"L-l-look!" gulped Baines.

But Crawley had no time to look, for in that same moment a great hand closed on the back of the collar of his reefer jacket, jerking him to his feet.

Wheeling round, Crawley found himself face to face with Jim Crow.

"You?" he gasped.

"Yes, sah, it's me!" said Jim grimly.

Dropping his seaweed, the negro pulled the gun from out of Crawley's belt and thrust it into his own.

"I'll jest take care of this li'l automatic," he went on, retrieving his seaweed without loosening his grip on Crawley. "An' now jest shed yore jackets, both of youse, an' empty yore trouser pockets. D'you hear me, Baines?"

"No man escapes from Nemesis Island!" Such was the proud boast of Governor Zarda—until Convict 333, the world's master-spy, turned the tables on his captors and became

CAPTAIN VENGEANCE.

Meet this dare-devil and amazing character in the opening chapters of our modern pirate story—commencing in next Saturday's **MAGNET**.

"Y-yes; all right, Jim," stammered Baines, proceeding to peel off his jacket.

"Go on, Crawley, git busy," ordered Jim, releasing his hold on Crawley.

For a moment Crawley hesitated, eyeing Jim and the wicked-looking length of seaweed in the latter's hand. Then slowly he took off his jacket, and throwing it to the sand, proceeded to empty his trouser pockets.

"Where'n thunder have you come from?" he snarled.

"From de Rosa," purred Jim. "Surely you ain't forgotten how you left me dere, Crawley?"

No, Crawley had not forgotten, for when next he spoke his voice was unsteady.

"What—what are you figurin' on doin'?" he demanded.

"I'm figurin' on giving you an' Baines the biggest hiding either of you has ever had," answered Jim. "An' if you've discarded all de stuff what you stole from Coles, Huck an' me, I'm starting in right now."

He stepped quickly forward, and Crawley let out a scream of pain as the sjambok of seaweed whistled through the air and thudded cruelly into his back.

Baines was already fleeing and Crawley followed suit. But Jim was far swifter of foot than either of them, and mercilessly he flogged them along the beach bringing from them howls of pain and curses of impotent rage.

Only when the seaweed was broken and useless did Jim desist, and coming to a halt, he stood with hands on hips grimly surveying the fast receding forms of Baines and Crawley.

Then, with a grin on his lips, he turned about, and after collecting the booty discarded by the precious pair, set off back the way he had come, heading in the direction of the Rosa.

What Jim intended to do when he reached the Rosa he did not know. All he did know was that now the Rosa had been re-taken by the seamen his plans were completely and hopelessly wrecked.

He was a fool, he told himself, to return to the Rosa at all. But he was not going to desert Coles and Huck. If they were going to be punished then he was going to stand by them and



take his punishment along with them.

He trudged along the beach, plunged in gloomy thought, but making resolutely towards the bay in which the tug lay at anchor.

Reaching it at length, he seated himself on a boulder and, with chin cupped in hands, sat gazing at the small black-hulled vessel which he had so fondly hoped to sail to America.

A wisp of black smoke was drifting lazily from the long slender smoke stack and he could see a man moving about by the galley. Otherwise, there were no signs of life on board at all, and by that he guessed that Coles, Huck and Larsen were still lying bound and helpless in their bonds.

What was to be done? It wouldn't be long now before the Rosa weighed anchor and stood southwards down the coast to Camelot. Should he chuck the whole game up and go quietly aboard and surrender? Or should he go aboard and in one last glorious fight endeavour to win freedom for Coles and Huck?

"Guess I dunno what to do," Jim mused dejectedly. "I'se so plumb tired an' weary an' sick ob eberything."

He was silent awhile, then:

"Lordy, lordy but dis ain't like you, Jim. Be a man. Be white. Go an' git Coles an' Huck outa dat fo'c'sle!"

Yet somehow the idea of another scrap did not appeal to the negro.

"Dere's bin enuff of dat rough stuff," he muttered. "We're beat-licked holler—so we may's well admit it an' quit. But, somehow, it ain't fair to Coles an' Huck. They'll be relying on ol' Jim—"

Abruptly he broke off and rose to his feet. Coles and Huck would be relying on him. That was good enough. They were his mates and he wasn't going to let them down. He would do his best to get them out of the fo'c'sle, and if he failed—well, he'd go down fighting.

"It's the on'y thing a feller can do," he told himself, moving down the beach to where the tug's boat lay. "Ain't dey my pards?"

Pushing the boat into deeper water, he clambered aboard and, picking up an oar, turned the bows towards the tug. Then seating himself, he pro-

ceeded to scull leisurely in the direction of the Rosa.

Once he looked over his shoulder. The three seamen were gathered by the port rail of the Rosa watching him. But coolly he continued with his rowing, his powerful arms sending the boat cutting through the water.

It was when he was half-way between the beach and the tug that he suddenly rested on his oars, his head inclined in a listening attitude.

Yes, he had not been mistaken. For faint and from far away to the south was coming the drone of powerful aero engines. That the machine or machines were heading towards the Rosa was evident, for steadily the noise was growing in volume.

Shipping his oars, Jim turned in his seat and gazed into the southern sky. The three seamen on the tug had also heard the engines, for they were staring in the same direction.

Then flying low and coming up at a terrific speed, Jim saw a great black-winged and triple-engined monoplane.

At less than five hundred feet it roared over the Rosa, then, as it banked and came about, the thunder of its engines died away, and its nose went down for a landing.

With engines ticking over, it landed on the water to seaward of the tug, and came cruising in towards the vessel. Then its engines were switched off, and a voice hailed Jim from the cockpit.

"Boat ahoy! Put us aboard!"

For a moment Jim hesitated, then, unshipping his oars, he sculled steadily in the direction of the monoplane, bringing the boat alongside one of the giant floats.

Two leather-clad men had swung themselves down from the cockpit and were waiting for him.

Jim grinned at sight of one of them. "Why, if it ain't Mr. Akers!" he exclaimed. "How am you, boss?"

"I'm very well, Jim," replied Akers, following the other leather-clad man into the boat. "How are you?"

"None too great, Mr. Akers, an' dat's a fact," replied Jim, pushing off from the float. "You wanna go aboard de Rosa, I'se 'pect?"

"Yes, Jim," replied Akers, settling himself in the stern-sheets. "Have you

any idea how she happens to be here?"

"We bringed her, sah!" replied Jim simply.

"That's just what I thought," nodded Akers. "What on earth made you do such a stupid thing?"

"Well, you see, Mr. Akers," exclaimed Jim, sculling slowly towards the tug, "we wasn't aware dat she didn't have no coal in her bunkers. We was figgerin' on taking her to America."

"With the stuff which you took from the derelicts?"

"Yes, sah!"

"You're a fool, Jim."

"I knows dat, sah!"

"Who else is aboard with you?"

"Dere's Larsen an' Coles an' Huck an' de three hands what we captured along wid de ship," replied Jim. "Baines an' Crawley was aboard, but dey left kind of sudden in de early hours of dis mawnin', sah!"

"Why?"

"Well, it's a queer sort of story, Mr. Akers," said Jim, resting on his oars. "At de moment Larsen, Coles, an' Huck is lying aboard dere bound an' helpless, an' dem three fellers what you see standing by de rail is waiting to knock me over de haid as well. Afore I puts you an' dis other gen'elman aboard, p'raps I'd better tell you all about it an' put you wise as to how de land lays."

"Yes, perhaps you had better, Jim," assented Akers gravely. "This, by the way," he indicated his companion, "is Captain Lester, who has flown over from Canada in that machine you see there."

"Pleased to meet you, cap'n," acknowledged Jim, then turning to Akers, he proceeded to unfold in detail all the events which had happened since he, Coles, and Huck, had seized the Rosa with the aid of Larsen, Baines, and Crawley.

Akers listened in silence and without comment until Jim reached the point where he had fought with Larsen on the bridge.

"You slammed him properly, Jim?" he inquired.

"I sure did, sah!" responded Jim.

"I wish I'd seen it," said Akers regretfully. "Yes, go on!"

Jim proceeded, coming at length to the events of that particular morning, and telling how he had chased Baines and Crawley, then returned to the Rosa in two minds whether he should attempt to rescue Coles and Huck, or bow to the inevitable and quietly submit to sharing with them whatever punishment the future might have in store.

"But you could have cleared off on your own?" exclaimed Captain Lester, staring.

Jim looked at him.

"Sah," he said with dignity, "dem two fellers is shipmates ob mine!"

Rebuffed and confused, Captain Lester could only look helplessly at Akers, as, dipping his oars into the water, Jim resumed his sculling towards the Rosa.

Coming neatly alongside, Jim waited until Akers and Captain Lester had swung themselves up on to the low deck, then he followed, the mooring-rope in his hand.

"I don't know who you are or what the nigger's been telling you," began one of the seamen addressing Akers, "but he's the feller who grabbed this tug at Camelot—"

"I know all about it," cut in Akers, a trifle curtly. "Jim, go below. I'll send for you in a few minutes."

"Yes, sah," said Jim, and obediently he disappeared below.

Turning to the three seamen, Akers

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COMMENCES IN NEXT SATURDAY'S ISSUE of the MAGNET!

then explained who he and Captain Lester were.

"The object of our present flight was to locate you," he said. "We knew from your skipper that your bunkers were almost empty, and we were pretty certain we'd find you somewhere along the coast."

He thereupon questioned them as to what had happened since the night the *Rosa* had been seized by Jim and Larsen, and their four companions. It was not that Akers doubted what Jim had told him, or that he wanted corroboration of the negro's story. It was merely that he wanted to hear the seaman's version of the affair.

And they gave it without sparing Jim in the slightest. In fact, they could say nothing good about Jim at all, which, under the circumstances, is perhaps not to be wondered at. Anyway, Akers listened to them in silence, then sent for Jim.

"Now, look here," he said severely when Jim was standing in front of him, "you and your precious friends have been guilty of a most serious crime in seizing this ship. You realise that?"

"Yes, sah," said Jim humbly.

"You were the ringleader, of course?"

"Yes, sah."

"You will probably be sent to prison."

"Yes, sah!"

"Where are the money and valuables you took from the derelicts?"

"Most of dem are aboard heah, sah, an' de rest is in de boat alongside."

"You realise where this looting has landed you, don't you?"

"Yes, sah!"

"Have you any regrets?"

Raising his head, Jim looked Akers full in the eyes.

"I wish now," he said fervently, "dat I never stood in on it. I wish now dat I had never left de Boston. I wish dat I had gone wid you an' Mister Ferris, like what Sam did. I wish all dat now, but I ain't whining, Mister Akers. I'll take what's comin' to me!"

Akers' eyes softened as he looked at the big negro.

"Well, I'll tell you what's coming to you, Jim," he said. "You, Coles, Huck and Larsen are going to work your passage back to St. John's, down in the stokehole of this vessel. Captain McAllister, the master, is on his way here now, and, judging by the towering rage he's been in ever since you stole his ship, I don't envy you your trip across the Atlantic."

"Is Captain McAllister coming?" exclaimed one of the seamen in surprise.

"Yes," replied Akers. "There are about fifty ships anchored off Camelot at the moment, and on sighting you we wirelessed them your position. Captain McAllister replied that he was leaving for here at once, with the remainder of his crew."

"Oh, golly!" groaned Jim. "An' den it's de police when us gits across?"

"If you behave yourself, Jim," said Akers, "there won't be any police when you get across."

"But, Mister Akers," stammered Jim, "you—you don't mean—"

"I mean, if you behave yourself, as I say," said Akers, "you'll hear nothing further of this business. You're more of a fool than a rogue, Jim. You've gone to a lot of trouble collecting loot, and you've lost it all. You've gone to a lot more trouble collecting this ship, and you've lost that, as well. The only persons whom you've really inconvenienced are Captain McAllister and his crew, and I think we can safely leave them to deal with that little matter on the way across."



Mercilessly the negro flogged Baines and Crawley along the beach, bringing from them howls of pain!

"Mister Akers," stammered Jim hoarsely, "you—you're a white man! I—I dunno how to thank you—"

"You can thank me by not being such an ass in future, Jim."

"Mister Akers," said Jim fervently, "I won't never be an ass no more. No, sah, not never! An' if eber I sees a feller what's tempted to do wrong I'll give him such a bashin' dat he won't never feel tempted no more!"

Three days later, having flown across the Atlantic with Captain Lester, who had refuelled from one of the stranded tankers, Akers spent long hours closeted with the Canadian Prime Minister, at Ottawa.

Akers made a full report to him of all that had happened, and left with him the rough chart of the new land which had risen from out the depths of the sea. Then he returned to his hotel, where, during the ensuing week, he was joined by Ferris, who had crossed aboard the *Texan*.

Another summons came to Akers to attend at Parliament House, and there he received news which staggered him, and rendered him almost speechless with emotion.

"I have been in communication with all Prime Ministers and Governor Generals throughout the British Empire," the austere and white-haired Premier informed him, "and we have decided that on this land which has arisen from out the sea we will build a

new England. We will cultivate wherever possible, and build new harbours and great cities."

His voice trembled as he went on:

"England is gone, the world is saying, England is dead! Do they not know that England can never die, that England is immortal? Humbly asking God's blessing on our work, we, the sons of England, will transform that barren land into a new and glorious country which will be the envy of all peoples, and a fitting tribute to the greatest nation the world has ever known."

That night, with Ferris by his side, Akers stood on the balcony of his hotel. He was very quiet as he stood there gazing eastwards towards where, far across the sea, lay that dead and silent land of rock and sand.

To Akers it was no longer a vista of dreariness and desolation. Instead, he saw a land of towering skyscrapers and mighty cities, of vast harbours and great aerodromes, a land where all was new, and fine, and splendid—a golden land of infinite promise—the mighty hub around which the world revolved.

England!

THE END.

(In next Saturday's *MAGNET* you'll find the opening chapters of a smashing story of modern piracy that's going to grip you right from the commencement to the fall of the curtain. Don't miss this great treat, chums!)

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GUN PLAY AT GREYFRIARS!

(Continued from page 24.)

"Bunk!" hooted Bob Cherry. "This is Van Duck's cake, you fat cormorant—"

"Eh! Who's talking about a cake?" snorted Billy Bunter. "I say, that man Pike—"

"What about Pike?"

"I say, you fellows, you'd better go and stop him! He's flourishing that gun of his at Loder—"

"What?" roared the Famous Five.

"I say, you'd better go and stop him!" gasped Bunter. "Go and stop him before he shoots Coker's head off—"

"Coker's?" yelled Johnny Bull.

"I—I mean Loder's—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" howled Bunter. "I can jolly well tell you Wingate's life is in danger—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

That Billy Bunter was inventing this yarn out of the sly depths of his own fat brain nobody in the study doubted. It was a rather palpable dodge to get them out of the study while Bunter had a go at the cake.

But the laughter died away as a loud report rang suddenly from the quad, echoing in at the open window.

Bang!

"Great pip!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

For an instant the Famous Five stood as if spellbound. Then they rushed out of the study, shoving Bunter aside.

If Poker Pike was loosing off his six-gun in the quad evidently he had to be stopped—if possible. Greatly alarmed, the juniors rushed down the passage and tore down the stairs and pelted out into the quad.

"Oooooogh!" gasped Bunter.

The rush of the juniors from the study had left him sitting down. He heaved up his weight, gasping for breath.

Then he rolled to the table, his little round eyes gleaming behind his big, round spectacles. He grabbed up the cake, and stopping only to break off one chunk and cram it into his capacious mouth, he rolled to the door with it. Harry Wharton & Co. were already out of the House, and the coast was clear!

But was it? As Billy Bunter rolled out of the study, with that large and luscious cake in his fat hands, there was a footstep from the direction of the stairs. Bunter blinked round in alarm.

"Oh lor!" he gasped.

His eyes almost popped through his spectacles at the sight of Putnam van Duck.

The American junior had arrived at a rather unfortunate moment for the grub-raider of the Remove.

"By the great horned toad!" ejaculated Putnam; and he accelerated.

"Say, big boy, what you figure you're doing with that cake?"

"I—I—I wasn't going to scoff it!" gasped Bunter. "I—I—I wasn't going to get it away to the box-room, Van Duck! I—I—I was—was—was—I was going to— Whoop! Yooop! Stop pulling my nose, you beast! Wooogh!"

"I guess that cake sort of belongs to this study!" remarked Van Duck; and he led Bunter back into Study No. 1 by his little fat nose.

"Urrrrrgh!" gurgled the Owl of the Remove.

The cake was landed on the table again.

"Where are the guys gone?" asked Putnam. "I guessed they was here waiting for me."

"I—I say, you'd better get after them, Van Duck!" gasped Bunter. "They've gone to stop that man, Pike, shooting old Quelch—"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Honest Injun!" gasped Bunter. "He was flourishing his gun at Quelch in the quad, and—"

"And I've just left Quelch in his study, too!" grimed Van Duck. "Try again!"

"I—I mean Loder—that is, Coker—"

"That's what you mean, is it?" asked the junior from Chicago. "Now I guess I'll put you wise as to what I mean. I mean to rub your head in the coal-locker for cinching my cake—"

"Ow! Leggo!"

There was a tramp of feet in the passage. Harry Wharton & Co. came in, rather breathlessly.

"Ow! I say, you fellows, make him leggo!" howled Bunter. "I say, I wasn't going to snaffle that cake! I say, if you don't go and stop that man, Pike, he will be shooting old Prout. He was flourishing his gun right in Prout's face and—and you heard it go off—"

"It wasn't Pike's gun, you fat ass!" said Bob Cherry. "It was that fat-headed minor of yours, Sammy Bunter, letting off a cracker under the study windows."

"And we jolly well know why!" roared Johnny Bull. "You put him up to it, you fat spoofer, to get us out of the study while you snaffled the cake."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "I—I say, you fellows, I—I haven't spoken to Sammy to-day. I never went to look for him, after I saw this cake here, and I never knew that Toddy had a cracker in his desk, and I certainly never took it out—I—I wouldn't, you know."

"Oh crikey!"

"I hope you can take a fellow's word!" said Bunter warmly. "I never asked Sammy to let that cracker off under the study windows, and never promised him half the cake if I got it! Nothing of the kind! I—I haven't seen

my minor to-day, at all. He wasn't in the Rag when I spoke to him there and—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I say, you fellows, hadn't you better go at once—with that man, Pike, flourishing his gun at the Head—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You needn't worry about that cake," said Bunter. "I'll look after the cake while you're gone. I will, really!"

The juniors gazed at Billy Bunter. His deep-laid scheme for snaffling that cake had alarmed them—till they discovered that the alarming bang only came from a cracker, and not from Poker Pike's six-gun! They gazed at him—and then they collared him.

There was a heavy bump in the Remove passage as Billy Bunter departed from Study No. 1. It was followed by a loud roar.

Then the juniors gathered round the cake, which was cut. As large slices were handed round, a fat face and a large pair of spectacles blinked in at the door.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Do you want some more?" roared Bob.

"I—I say, it—it was only a lark, you know," gasped Bunter. "I—I thought it would—would amuse you, you know. He, he, he! I—I say, old chaps, I'd like a chunk of that cake! I would, really!"

Hope springs eternal in the human breast. Apparently, Bunter was still hoping for a whack in the cake!

As it happened, that hope was fulfilled! Bob Cherry picked up a chunk of cake and stepped to the door. Bunter rolled in, with outstretched fat paw. But it was not in that fat paw that he received the chunk. Bob Cherry grabbed him with his left hand, and with the right, crammed the chunk of cake down the back of the fat Owl's neck.

"Ow!" howled Bunter, wriggling frantically. "Ow! Stop it! Beast! Ooogh!"

"Have some more?" asked Bob.


"Ow! No! Beast! No!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter wriggled out of the study. He did not want any more cake. Taken internally, it was nice. Taken externally, it was horrid. Very much indeed, Bunter did not want any more! The cake was finished without further assistance from Billy Bunter!

THE END.

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