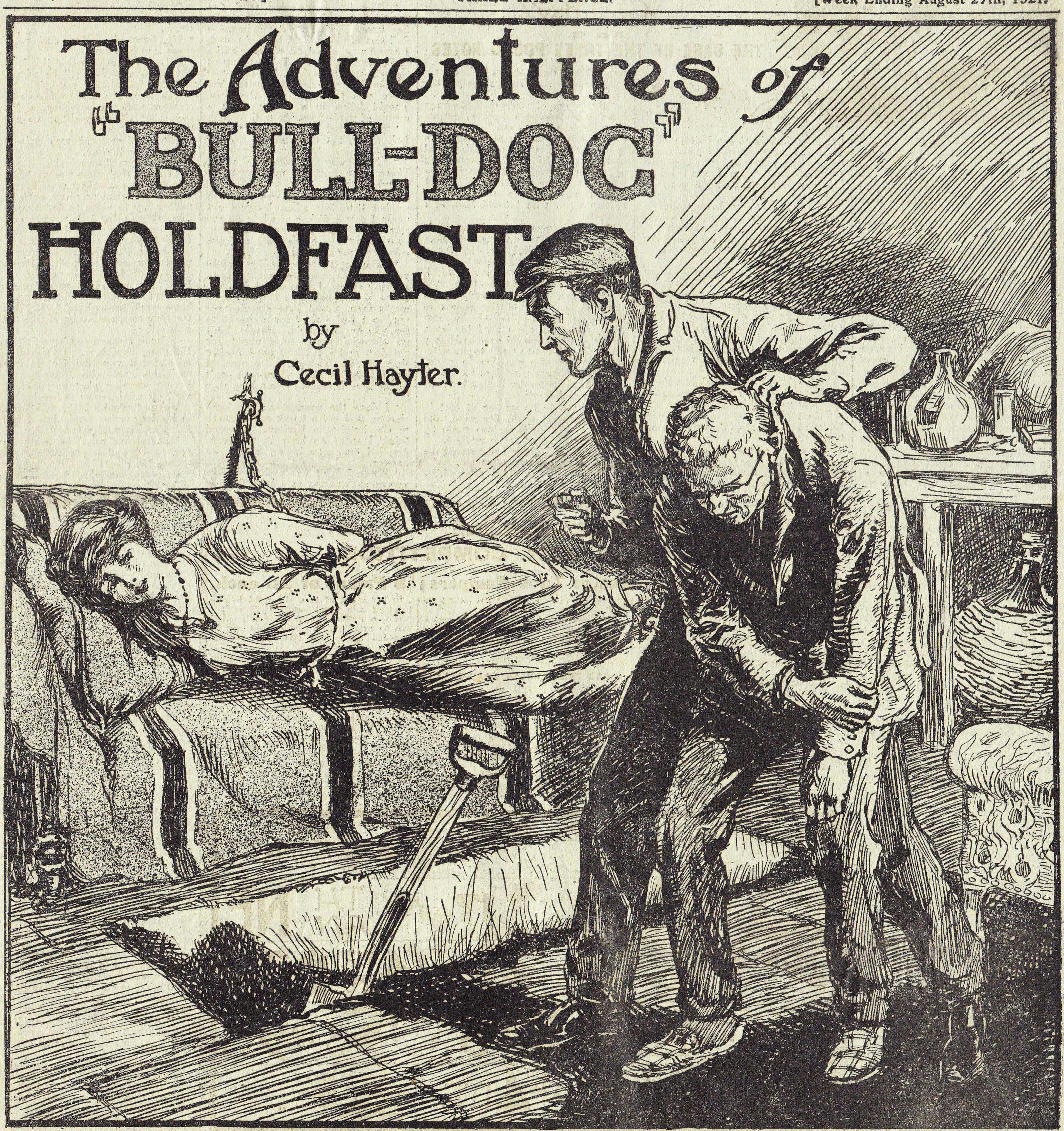
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THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending August 27th, 1921.



THE SECRET LABORATORY

"Bulldog" Holdfast followed the professor into the cellar. He noticed that the place was fitted up as a laboratory. This seemed to explain the incident of the vitriol, and as he glanced from the fair prisoner on the couch to the scoundrel in front of him, he had half a mind to shoot the latter there and then!

SPLENDID LONG COMPLETE SCHOOL YARN by OWEN CONQUEST!

Published

Every Monday



A FINE TALE OF THE OF ROOKWOOD ON HOLIDAY!

The 1st Chapter. Bunter's Caravan!

"I know that chap!" Arthur Edward Lovell shaded his eyes with his straw hat, and stared across the green meadow.

Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome followed his glance lazily. The Fistical Four of the Rook-

wood Fourth were taking it easy. excursion in France, which they vore. agreed was topping. Now they were cycling in Surrey, which they agreed was topping, too.

not cycling. Four bicycles were about-" stacked against the hedge, and the four juniors sat in a row on a low grunted Bunter. wooden gate, resting, and admiring "Only too well!" grinned Lovell. the scenery. Thus they became I "But if you're on your own here, we aware that on the other side of the won't bother you, dear boy." field a caravan was camped, with a horse nibbling the grass near it. It caravan, painted green. They had glanced at it, and noted that it seemed deserted. But presently a fat figure emerge from the doorway | for he burst into a sudden chuckle. and descend the steps.

And something familiar in that fat figure struck Arthur Edward Lovell. asked Lovell. So he shaded his eyes and looked again.

"I've seen him before," he said. Jimmy Silver nodded.

"Yes, rather! Same here!" The fellow they were looking at did | me?" not glance towards them. He was busy. He sat on the lowest step of the van, and the Rookwood juniors | Bunter. "There's two bunks, and I saw him open a paper bag on his fat knees. From the bag he abstracted | tent, too-a tiptop tent. Blankets a large, juicy jam-tart. There was and ground-sheets, and things for the an expression of beatific enjoyment lot of you. The-the fact is, I was on his fat face as he transferred the tart to his capacious mouth. But it was brief. The tart was gone in a

Jimmy Silver chuckled. "I think I'd know that merchant anywhere!" he said. "It's Bunter-Billy Bunter, of Greyfriars."

twinkling.

he came over to see us at Rookwood--"

"And we didn't enjoy the visit!" grinned Raby.

Newcome. "I wonder what he's rather puzzled. doing here with a carayan all on his

Ionesome?" fellows around somewhere."

Lovell. "If Wharton or Bob Cherry | we go." is there, I'd like to meet 'em."

"May as well!" agreed Jimmy Silver.

The Fistical Four swung themselves over the gate and dropped into the meadow.

They crossed over towards the another. camped caravan. The fat junior sitting on the steps did not look up. tour which was to last for a week, they first spotted the van. He was already getting busy with his | putting up at inns or camping out as | fourth jam-tart.

"Cheerio, Bunter!" shouted Lovell suddenly, when they were change to "van it" for a few days.

with a sudden jump. •

"Anybody about, Bunter?" asked of the Rookwooders. No good wasting time." Jimmy Silver. The chums of Rookwood were The caravan rolled on towards the "There's me."

surely?" Bunter blinked at him.

came to see you at Rookwood, and They had seen little of him, it was patiently during that operation. you didn't give me enough to eat!" left," said Lovell.

"Oh, really, Lovell-" Bunter negotiated another tart. "I say, you fellows, what are you doing round here?"

"Cycling tour," said Jimmy. "Oh! Not so jolly as caravanning!" said Bunter loftily. "I suppose a fellow has to be satisfied with

what he can afford, though." The Fistical Four looked at Bunter They remembered his polished They were enjoying their mid- manners of old. Evidently his summer holiday. They had had an | manners were still as polished as of |

"Exactly," said Jimmy Silver, with a nod. "Well, we'll be getting along, you chaps. I thought there At the present moment they were might be some fellows we knew

"You know me, don't you?"

"Hold on a minute," said Bunter. The fat junior was eyeing the was a rather roomy, handsome Rookwooders through his big i spectacles in a very thoughtful way. Apparently some new and entertaining thought was working in Lovell, glancing at it again, observed | William George Bunter's fat brain, "He, he, he!"

"Hallo! Where's the joke?"

"Oh, nothing!" Bunter chuckled again. "I say, you fellows, biking isn't nearly as good as caravanning. You take my word for it. How'd you like to come caravanning with "What!"

"Lots of room in the van," said use only one, of course. There's a going to ask some fellows to come caravanning with me, but I changed my mind. I felt that after all, I couldn't stand Wharton, and that beast Bob Cherry is always kicking a chap---'

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Nugent's rather a beast, too, and "That's the kipper!" said Lovell. Johnny Bull is an awful beast," con-"I knew I knew him! I remember | tinued Bunter. "As for Hurree Singh, he's a dashed nigger. Upon the whole, I wouldn't have that crowd."

"So you're vanning it on your "Not the least little bit," remarked | lonely own?" asked Jimmy Silver,

"That's it. Still, I'd like some company, and if you fellows care to Jimmy Silver, with a shake of the glad. You're welcome, in fact. You along. Do!" head. "There must be some more can stick your bikes in the caravanand there's lots of grub. Of course, their minds. "Let's go and see!" suggested you'll have to pay your own exes as

> "We should want to." "Then we should agree on that," said Bunter. "I'd really be glad to have you. I say, have some of these

Jimmy Silver & Co. looked at one

They had started out on a cycling the spirit moved them.

Undoubtedly it would be a pleasant quite close at hand. The caravan was big, and clean, and The Owl of Greyfriars looked up | comfortable; the horse was evidently | a good one; and in the van there was Billy Bunter made a dive for his a good supply of all sorts of travelling come around." bag of tarts. He seemed to be fear- tackle. How Billy Bunter could ful that the Rookwood fellows might | have afforded such an outfit for his | mission to camp here?" exclaimed have predatory designs on those holiday was rather a mystery; but Jimmy Silver. that, of course, was not the business | "Ye-es; but-well, get a move on.

strongly tempted to accept Bunter's gate. Jimmy Silver threw the gate

Bunter himself. He was not a fellow | Rookwood chums stacked their | Raby. "Oh! You're Silver!" he said. | towards whom the Co. felt any yearn- | bicycles on board. "I remember you, Jimmy Silver! I lings of friendship or admiration. true; but the little they had seen had | "For goodness' sake, buck up!" he | trot will do you good. Gee-up!" "There was a famine after you not impressed them very favourably. exclaimed. "You Rookwood fellows Bunter gave the horse a flick with Might stick it for a few days."

Billy I that this invitation was decent of Bunter, and that it would be rather ungracious to decline it. Indeed, the offer was so kind and spontaneous that Jimmy felt that he had not really done Bunter justice.

Bunter handed out the tarts quite generously. The four Classical juniors of Rookwood helped themselves. Undoubtedly the tarts were

"Do come!" urged Bunter. "I'll be jolly glad to have you; in fact, I'm getting a bit 'fed' with my own company. We'll pull together first rate. I promise you a ripping time. Do come!"

"You're awfully good!" Jimmy, after a pause.

Bunter waved a fat hand. "Not at all! It will be a pleasure to me. I'm just going to break camp and move on. Only stopped here for -for a midday rest. I want to get as | can!" he gasped.

evidently a farmer, who was hurrying a distant farmhouse. Bunter turned his spectacles towards the man in gaiters. "Who-who-who is it?" he ejaculated.

"Looks like a farmer." "All you fellows' fault for not

hurrying!" snapped Bunter. "I shall

have to pay him now." "Pay him!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver.

"I was going to pay him five bob! the van, you lazy bounder!" for camping on his land," said Bunter. "I thought we could get off without being seen."

Edward Lovell hotly. He checked himself in time, as he remembered that he was Bunter's guest.

"Lend me five bob, one of you fellows," said Bunter hastily. happen to have run out of ready money-change, I mean. No good asking that man to change a fiver."

Jimmy Silver fished out five shillings from his pocket, and Bunter took the coins hastily, and hurried to meet the farmer. For reasons best known to himself, Bunter did not seem to want the rural gentleman to | Then, with a grip on the rein, he led come into speaking contact with the the horse. Bunter cracked the whip Rookwooders.

Jimmy Silver & Co. watched him in silence. They saw Bunter hand the five shillings to the farmer, who was frowning-evidently quite well aware that the fat junior had intended to "bilk" him. The farmer turned and walked away with a snort, and Bunter hurried to rejoin the Rookwooders.

"Now let's get on as fast as we

far as I possibly can to-night. You "Anybody else you owe money to?" "I-I say, you fellows, you can't

"Hallo! There's a johnny wants | a trot. The caravan rumbled on more to speak to us," said Lovell, with a rapidly. Jimmy Silver & Co. had to gesture towards a big man in gaiters, | break into a trot to keep pace.

The August sun was blazing down across the field from the direction of on the road, and certainly it was very hot. The four Rookwooders crimsoned

and perspired as they ran. "Look here, Bunter!" gasped Lovell. "This isn't caravanning. What the thump's the good of racing like this?"

"Oh, don't slack!" said Bunter. "You Rookwood chaps seem to be awful slackers, if you don't mind my

saying so."
"You silly owl, who's slacking?" roared Lovell. "You're sitting on

"Well, you can't get into the van," said Bunter. "It would be a bit too much for the horse, carrying a load "Why, you--" began Arthur like that. Caravanners are supposed to walk. Stick to it!"

> "If we're going to keep up this speed, we'll get our bikes out."

> "We don't want to stop for that," argued Bunter. "What's the good of wasting time? Don't be soft!"

> "Soft!" gasped Lovell. "Yes, soft!" said Bunter loftily. "Stick it out! Be a man, you know! Like me!"

> "Oh!" Arthur Edward Lovell went to the horse's head, and slowed him down.

and yelled. "Leggo that horse, Lovel!" "Don't be an ass, Bunter!" said Jimmy Silver impatiently. "We're not going to race about in this sun!

We'll walk or bike it." "Let's get out the bikes and clear off!" growled Lovell. Apparently Arthur Edward was already satisfied with the sample he had received of William George Bunter's hospitality.

Billy Bunter looked alarmed.



From the darkness came a sudden rush. Five shadowy forms crashed into the Fistical Four of Rockwood. "Line up, you chaps!" gasped Jimmy Silver. "Oh---" Before he could finish a wild and whirling fight was in progress.

And Jimmy Silver & Co. made up

The 2nd Chapter. Caravanning!

"Gee-up!"

The horse was harnessed, and the green caravan jerked and moved. In followed a track across the field towards the gate upon which the Fistical Four had been sitting when

Billy Bunter glanced round rather anxiously as they started.

"Buck up as fast as you can, you fellows," he said. "Give the horse a lick, somebody. Get a move on!" "What's the hurry?" asked Raby.

"Well, that farmer chap might "My hat! Didn't you have per-

"You're not caravanning alone, generous invitation. open, and the van rolled through. The only objection, really, was Then there was a pause while the

Bunter blinked round very im- Bunter encouragingly. "We never

Still, they could not help feeling | are awful slow-coaches!"

castically.

hastily.

The caravan rolled on down the Jimmy was leading the horse. The

Rookwood chums had done caravan- like. But, I say, you fellows, really, ning themselves before this, and they you know, you shouldn't be such were much more experienced vanners | slackers!" than William George Bunter. From his seat, the Owl of Greyfriars blinked | made no rejoinder. Any reply they uneasily towards every corner of the | had made would certainly not have landscape. The chums of Rookwood been suitable from guests to host. could not help noticing his uneasi-

"I-I say, you fellows, do you see anybody after us?" asked Bunter, at last. The Owl of Greyfriars seemed to feel the handicap of short sight more severely than usual just then.

"No!" answered Jimmy Silver. "Not a chap on a bike?"

Billy Bunter picked up the whip. "I think we'll put a bit of speed on, at first," he said. "You fellows can trot. I suppose?" "Yes; but---"

"It's a bit warm for trotting," said

"Oh, don't be a slacker!" said slack at Greyfriars, I can tell you. A

I the whip, and the animal broke into I

"Can't be caravanning alone," said | come along for a few days, I'd be | fellows make up your minds to come | asked Arthur Edward Lovell sar- | desert me now!" he exclaimed. "I-I can't camp out alone to-night!"

> "Let's get on!" said Jimmy Silver | "You've been camping out alone, haven't you?" demanded Jimmy Silver.

sunny lane. Billy Bunter sat in the | "Eh? Oh-ah-yes! But-butdriver's seat, though he did not drive; | er-those tramps, you know!" Bunter stammered. "I'll slow down, if you

> To which the Rookwood juniors So they contained their feelings and were silent.

The 3rd Chapter. Bunter's Little Way!

Jimmy Silver & Co. settled down to a steady tramp with the caravan, and found that they quite liked it. It reminded them of old caravanning days. in an earlier vac. When they wanted a rest they took turns in the driver's seat, for William George Bunter abandoned that after a time. Bunter rolled into the caravan, and spread himself in a bunk to take a nap. He seemed to be relieved of his fears of pursuit when the van had covered a few miles by road and lane and woodland path.

"This isn't so bad," Lovell remarked. "It's a change from biking.

(Continued overleaf.)

Silver, fanning himself with his they managed with bread-and-cheese hat. "It's rather luck to drop on a las they walked. Bunter did not walk. caravan outfit like this. Blessed if I He sat in the van, stating his intenhold of it!"

"I say, you fellows!" Bunter blinked out of the van. "I say, stop a bit in the next village, and do some shopping, will you?"

"Certainly," said Jimmy. "It's

about time for tea."

"Oh, we don't want to stop for tea!" said Bunter, with a blink back along the road. "Let's cover some ground before nightfall. You can eat a snack as you march, you know." "Oh, all right!"

"You can do the shopping, Silver-I'll make up a list of things to get," said Bunter.

"Right you are!"

Refreshed by his nap, the fat junior became busy in the van with a paper and a stump of pencil. He helped himself occasionally from the van larder as he pondered and scribbled. The van rolled on into a village, and drew to a halt outside the village

"Here you are, Silver!"

Bunter tossed out the list. Jimmy Silver glanced at it. There were about thirty items on the list, and, at a rough estitmate, it came to about twelve pounds. The captain of the Rookwood Fourth stared at Bunter. "Where's the tin for this?" he

"Oh, ask 'em if they'll change a fiver!" said Bunter carelessly.

"A fiver won't cover this." "I mean, a tenner."

"It comes to over ten quid." "Then I'll get out my fifty-pound

note." said Bunter. "Your what?"

"Fifty-pound note. Ask them if they'll change it."

Jimmy gazed at him.

'I don't suppose they've got change for a fifty-pound note in a village shop," he said. "And I'm pretty certain they wouldn't change one for strangers if they had."

"Then I'll tell you what," said Bunter. "You pay for that little lot, Silver, and I'll square when I get the fifty-pound note changed."

"You've got to get the fifty-pound note first!" grunted Lovell.

"Oh, really, Lovell-" "I'll do the shopping," said Jimmy

Silver. "But it won't run to anything like this, Bunter." "If you're going to be mean,

Silver-"

Jimmy decided not to hear that remark. He went into the village shop, and expended the sum of one pound there. He came out with a variety of packages and parcels.

"Lots here for tea and supper and brekker to-morning," he remarked. Bunter eyed the consignment with

disfavour. . "Not much there!" he said.

"What did it cost?" "A quid."

"Well, I owe you a quid, then," said Bunter. "I'm going to stand the grub, as you're my guests."

"Not at all," said Jimmy Silver. "We'll pay our own exes, Bunter." Bunter shook his head decidedly.

"I can't allow that!" he said. "But, really-"

"I must insist. Silver!" said Bunter firmly. "You're my guests, and I can't allow you to pay for your grub. I shall hand you the pound. I insist upon it!"

"Oh, all right!" said Jimmy. "I'd rather pay, but I don't mind." And he held out his hand for the pound. Bunter blinked at it.

"Not just at this minute," he said. "I'm expecting a postal-order at the post-office, when we get to Canterburv---'

"We're not going towards Canter-

"I-I mean, Reading!"

"Not much difference!" remarked Raby sarcastically.

"We shall want some more stuff! than this," said Bunter. "One jar spectacles. Jimmy Silver had opened of jam isn't much good. I can manage that by myself at tea, and I shall want some more at brekker. Get another quid's worth, Silver, and I'll settle both quids at the same

Jimmy Silver eved him. He remembered some of Billy Bunter's little ways, and he comprehended.

"We'll make this lot do," he said

curtly.

"Oh, really, Silver-" "Now to camp somewhere for tea," said Lovell, leading the horse on through the village street.

"I decline to halt for tea," said Bunter. "This is my caravan, ain't it? I'm not stopping till sundown. Have a snack as you go."

"Just as you like!" breathed

Lovell.

"We might!" agreed Jimmy Jimmy Silver & Co. were hungry, but | hand in making the camp. He sat on can figure it out how Bunter got tion of packing the goods in the larder. It was not the larder, however, that he packed most of them into, as the chums of Rookwood were destined to discover later.

Mile after mile glided under the rolling wheels, while the sun sank | be for supper. Of his late purchases lower over the Surrey downs. The glorious summer's day was drawing to a close.

a camp as he walked with the horse. He found a suitable spot at last-a field sloping down to a little glistening brook. The van halted at a gate, and Bunter put his head out.

"What are you stopping for?" he

"Time to camp." "You fellows tired out already?" asked Bunter. "My hat! Don't the chaps ever do any walking at Rookwood?"

"You've been slacking in the van all the time," said Lovell, breathing hard. "We've done a good ten

"What's that?" sniffed Bunter. "I'm good for twenty! But never mind. If you're fagged out, you're fagged out, I suppose. Cut off to the farmhouse, one of you, and get permission to camp. Pay 'em anything they want; no good haggling about money when we're on a holiday."

Bunter's lofty view was evidently founded upon the fact that the money concerned was not his own. But the chums of Rookwood made no rejoinder to his remark.

"Get some milk and eggs at the farm, if you can, and cheese," said Bunter. "Anything you can, in fact." "We've got the grub for supper and brekker," Jimmy.

"Eh? Where?"

"It's in the van, isn't it?" said "The lot I Jimmy, with a stare. bought in the village."

"Oh, really, Silver! I've had my tea since then. There's some bread left." said Bunter-"nearly a whole

"Wha-a-at!" "It's rather a pity you didn't get

another pot of jam," said Bunter, blinking at him. "It was nice!"

"You may be able to get some home-made jam at the farm," added Bunter. "Pay what they ask for it, and I'll settle up later. Keep a strict account, of course."

Jimmy Silver seemed to swallow something hard. He started off towards the farmhouse. When he returned he brought permission to camp and a jug of milk.

"Other things coming?" asked Bunter. "There's no other things," said

Jimmy Silver. "We're not millionaires, Bunter!"

"Then what are we going to have for supper?" demanded Bunter.

"You can cut off to the farm, and get a supply of eggs and cheese and home-made jam," suggested Newcome.

Bunter grunted. That suggestion did not seem to appeal to him, some-

"Blessed if I like this!" the fat junior growled. "Wharton and his crowd would be better than this. We'd better keep on, I think, till we come to a village again, and get some more grub."

"They wouldn't be able to change your fifty-pound note," said Lovell sardonically; "and we're camping

here, anyhow." "Look here, Lovell, whose is this caravan?" roared Bunter. "I'm jolly well not going to camp here!"

"Well, we are," said Lovell. "Please yourself, Bunter. Drive on your giddy caravan till you come to the Severn, for all I care. I'm fed up with walking!"

Bunter glowered through his big the gate, and Raby led the horse into the meadow.

"I-I say, you fellows, I'll camp here, if you like," said Bunter. "I-I don't want to camp by myself. But I think---"

"Oh, never mind what you think!" grunted Lovell. "Give us a rest, old scout."

"If that's your thanks to a chap who takes you out caravanning, Lovell--"

"Br-r-r-r !" said Arthur Edward. And the caravan rolled rolled into the meadow, and William George Bunter rolled after it, grunting discontentedly.

The 4th Chapter. A Sudden Surprise!

Jimmy Silver & Co. halted the The caravan rolled on out of the caravan near a brook, and took out village, down a leafy Surrey lane. | the horse. Bunter did not lend a

a knoll and gave directions. But as his directions were not heeded by the Rookwood fellows, that did not matter.

While Lovell was looking after the horse, and Raby gathering firewood, and Newcome going upstream for water, Jimmy Silver looked into the van, to see what supplies there might in the village very little remained. The Owl of Greyfriars had accounted for most of them already. Jimmy Jimmy Silver was looking out for Silver & Co. were hungry after their march, and they wanted supper, and wanted it badly. There was the best part of a loaf, and there were some rashers of bacon in the larder, and a tin of sardines, and plenty of tea, coffee, and cocoa. Jimmy decided that there was enough to make up a supper, of sorts, and breakfast was a problem that could be left till the morning.

Jimmy, while he was in the van, gave his attention only to the food supplies, but he could not help noticing one or two little circumstances that rather perplexed him. There were several travelling bags in the van, and one of them had the initials "H. W." and another "R. C." He wondered whether Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry had lent those bags to Bunter for his trip. It was rather

Raby soon had a camp-fire going, and a kettle was swung over it to boil. Provisions were rather short, but cocoa was very filling, and there was going to be plenty of cocoa. Billy Bunter extracted a frying-pan from somewhere to cook the bacon. The scent of frying bacon was very grateful and comforting to the hungry Rookwood juniors. And there were five stout rashers, very pleasing for hungry eyes to look

"I say, you fellows, I'm sorry you'll get rather short commons," said Bunter, as he turned the rashers into a plate. "Still, I warned you, didn't I? If you'd only done that shopping, Silver-"

"Oh, we'll make shift," said Jimmy, slicing the loaf. "There's enough to go round."

"Glad you think so," said Bunter. "Plenty of sugar in my cocoa,

"I don't seem to see any sugar," said Jimmy. "I bought a pound in the village." "Dear me! I must have finished

it," said Bunter. "When I start on lump sugar it goes, you know." "I see it does."

"Well, I can manage cocoa without sugar," said Bunter heroically. "I'm the fellow to rough it, you know. Put in plenty of milk, and make it thick. You fellows can have all the sardines," he added generously. " Eh?"

"I'll make the bacon do," said Bunter.

The Rookwood juniors watched him with fascinated eyes, as he took the plate of rashers on his knees, and

started with knife and fork. As there were five rashers, Jimmy Silver & Co. had supposed that there would be one each all round. dently Bunter hadn't supposed so. He blinked up at the surprised juniors with his mouth full.

"Don't spare the sardines," he said

liberally. "Pile in!" There was one tin of sardines, and it was not a large one. Arthur Edward Lovell gazed at the fat junior, and gazed and gazed, as if he were mesmerised.

"My hat!" he said at last, as if "M-m-my waking out of a dream.

He made no further remark.



Jimmy Silver & Co. supped lightly on bread and sardines-not too much bread and very few sardines. They washed down that frugal repast with cocoa and milk. Fortunately, there was plenty of both. Conversation was sparse round the caravanners' camp-fire. Bunter's jaws were too jusy for talking, and silence seemed to have fallen upon the Rookwood juniors. When Billy Bunter had finished the bacon, he blinked affably at his guests.

Price

Three Halfpence

"I feel better now," he remarked. "I'm awfully glad to hear that!"

said Lovell.

course," said Bunter. "If you'd got a potato?" that cake I put on my list, Silver, and another pot or two of jam! Still, I'm | it was ours or not!" roared Johnny not the fellow to grumble. But, I Bull. "And I'd like to know what say, you fellows, what about brekker?"

"What indeed?" said Jimmy. "That farmer yonder looked a pretty prosperous johnny; he may be able to change your fifty-pound note for you."

Bunter coughed. He did not pursue the subject, but he blinked several times, in a suspicious sort of way, at Jimmy Silver & Co. The shadows deepened over the fields and meadows; the murmur of the brook came through the darkness. Against the night the camp-fire leaped and blazed cheerily. Billy Bunter rose and yawned.

"I think I'll turn in," he remarked. "I'm going to sleep in the van. You fellows can put up the tent. Wake me up about ten. I dare say you can get something at the farmhouse for brekker, Silver."

"I dare say," assented Jimmy. Bunter rolled into the caravan. In the ruddy glimmer of the camp-fire the chums of Rookwood looked at one another.

"Serves us right!" said Lovell. "We knew Bunter, or ought to have known him. Ought we to wait till he's up in the morning, before we take our bikes and clear?"

Jimmy Silver laughed.

"We'll say good-bye," he said. "My hat! No wonder he's caravanning on his own! A chap who went vanning with him would have to be prepared to be a member of the noble army of martyrs, I think."

There was a sound in the distance towards the lane. Jimmy Silver glanced carelessly round. Then there came a rustle in the willows near the camp. And then a powerful voice suddenly shouted:

"That's the van! Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here they are!" "What the thump-" began Jimmy Silver, jumping up.

From the darkness came a sudden rush. Five shadowy forms crashed into the Fistical Four of Rookwood.

"Collar 'em!" "Smash 'em up!"

"Pile in, you fellows!" "My only hat!" gasped Jimmy.

"Line up, you chaps! Oh crikey!" Before he had fairly uttered the words, a wild and whirling fight was in progress!

The 5th Chapter. Light at Last!

Crash! Bump!

"Yoooop!" "Oh crumbs!" "Give 'em jip!"

Jimmy Silver rolled in the grass in a powerful grasp. Somebody was sitting on Lovell, who was on his back, roaring. Raby and Newcome were engaged in desperate conflict. From the doorway of the caravan the startled face of Billy Bunter stared out, the firelight glimmering on his big spectacles. Jimmy rolled his adversary over, and bumped his head on the ground, and there was a yell.

"Rescue, my esteemed chums!" "Hurree Singh!" yelled Jimmy Silver, in amazement.

"Bob Cherry!" roared Lovell, recognising the fellow who was sitting on his chest at the same moment.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" "Jimmy Silver!" "Harry Wharton!" "Great Scott!"

The combatants separated, breathlessly, and glared and stared at one another. The surprise was mutual. Jimmy Silver threw a fresh armful the caravan a few days, after all, and of brushwood on the fire, and it enjoyed themselves with the Greyblazed up, and threw a radius of light | friars juniors, though Billy Bunter upon the scene.

Harry Wharton & Co. of the Grey- But nobody minded Bunter, and when friars Remove, stared blankly at the | the time came to part, Jimmy Silver Rookwood juniors. They were astounded. And so were Jimmy Silver & Co.

"You!" stuttered Wharton. "Silver-Lovell-you! When did you take to stealing caravans?" "Stealing caravans!" yelled Jimmy

Silver. "Well, you've bagged our van-" "Your van!" gasped Jimmy. | "Popular" each Friday!)

"Our van," said Bob Cherry warmly. "We came back to camp and found it missing, and Bunter missing, too; and we've tracked you a good ten miles. What do you mean by it, I'd like to know?"

"Just explain that!" Johnny Bull.

"And tell us what you've done with Bunter," added Frank Nugent.

Junmy Silver gasped. "You--you-you mean to say that's your van?" he babbled.

"Whose thumping van did you think it was?" demanded Harry Wharton. "Did you come on it and "I could do with some more, of fancy it was growing in the field like

> "You bagged it, whether you knew you mean by bagging our caravan, and giving us a ten-mile tramp to find you. And where's Bunter?"

> "Oh dear! I-I say, you fellows, what--" "Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's

> Bunter-" "What does this mean. Silver?"

demanded Harry Wharton. Jimmy Silver panted for breath. The true inwardness of the situation, as it were, was dawning upon him at

"Bunter-that fat villain Bunter

---" he stuttered.

"Bunter-" "He told us he was caravanning alone, and invited us to join him!" roared Lovell. "Now do you under-

stand, you silly owls?" Wharton jumped. "T-t-told you he was c-c-caravanning alone!" he stuttered. "Why, the fat villain-we'd only gone into town with the bikes to get a tyre mended. We left him in charge of

the camp——' "Oh, my hat!" said Raby. "He told us it was his van!" shrieked Newcome. "And we---"

"We believed him," gasped Jimmy Silver. "Certainly, we ought to have known Bunter better than to believe

"Oh, really, Silver-" Harry Wharton burst into a laugh. "All serene!" he exclaimed. "The fat villain took you in, of course. Sorry we rushed you like that; you see, we found our van missing, and we've had a terrific tramp tracking it here; and-and we didn't recognise you; we supposed you'd bagged our

van, and-and-" "All right; no harm done," said Jimmy Silver, rubbing his nose. "We were clearing off in the morning, any-

how; we're fed-up with your precious Bunter." "Bunter!" roared Bob Cherry.

"You fat Hun--" "I-I say, you fellows, 'tain't true; The Greyfriars juniors rushed towards the caravan. Bunter, in the powerful grasp of Bob Cherry, was jerked out, and he landed in the

"Yarooooooh!" "Now what do you mean by it?"

grass, with a terrific roar.

roared Bob. "I-I say, you fellows, t'ain't true; I-I've been kidnapped. Those Rookwood bounders kidnapped me-yah! Leggo my ear, you beasts! I mean, I-I wandered away in my sleepyoop! If you don't leave off kicking me, Wharton-yow-ow! The-the

"Well, what's the fact, before we

slaughter you?" "The-the fact is, you fellows haven't treated me properly, andand I felt quite justified in dropping you off," said Bunter. "As for paying for the van, that's a trifling matter -I'm expecting several postal-orders

"Bump him!" The next few minutes were like a nightmare to William George Bunter. The Greyfriars caravanners were wrathy-which was not to be wondered at, in the peculiar circumstances. And Billy Bunter was put through a ragging that was certainly not more than he deserved, but much more than he wanted. When the indignant juniors had finished with him, the Owl of Greyfriars lay in the grass, and gasped, and gasped, like a newlylanded fish.

Jimmy Silver & Co. remained with eyed them very morosely all the time. & Co. mounted their bicycles and rode away, very well pleased with their caravanning—though not with Bunter!

("The Fistical Four's Foe!" is the title of the long, complete Rookwood School tale in next Monday's Boys' FRIEND. Remember that Jimmy Silver & Co. appear also in the