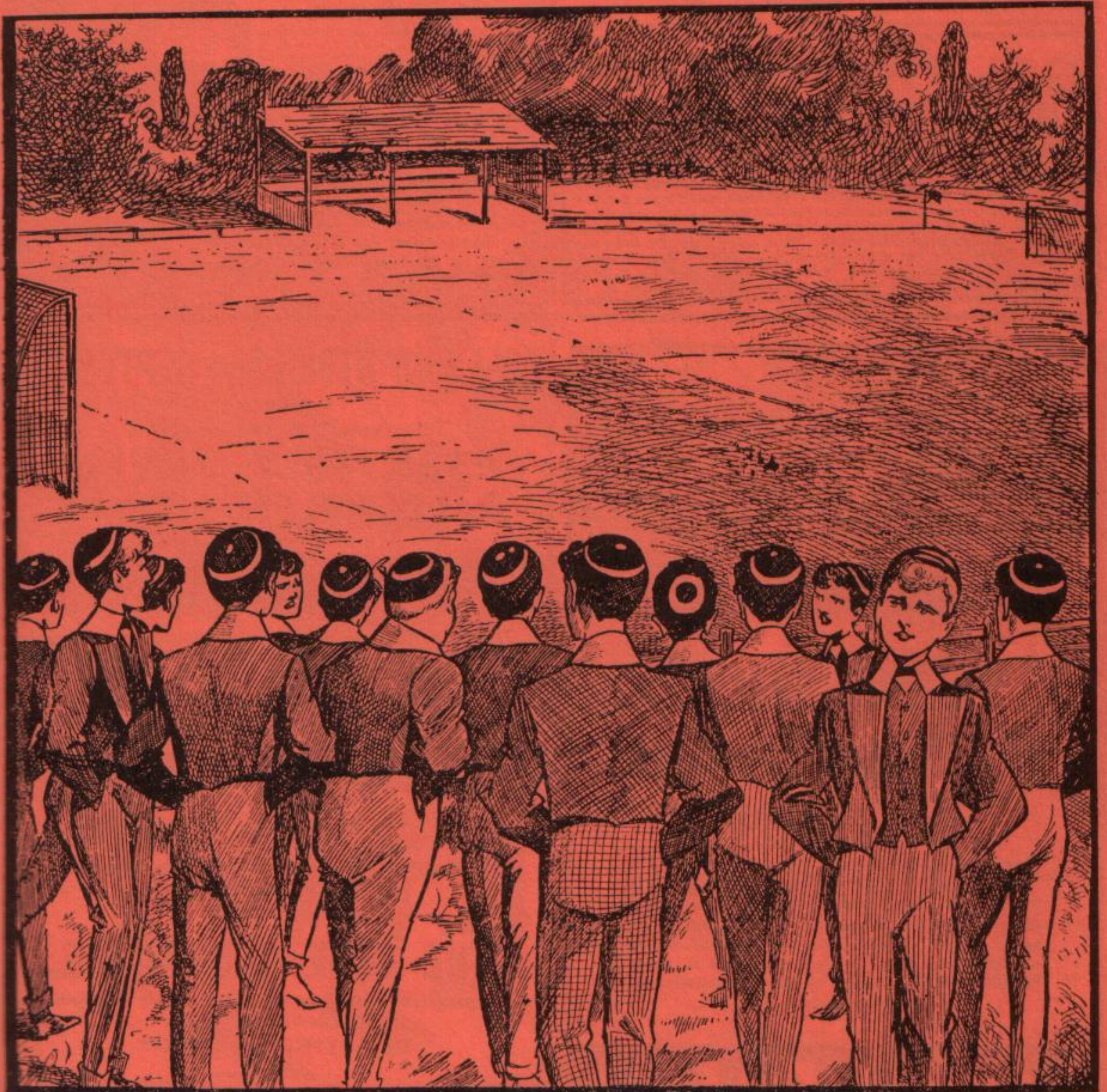


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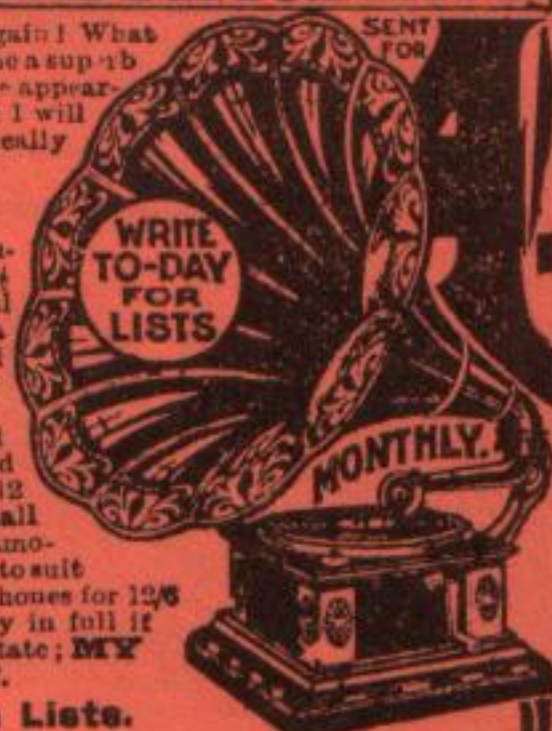
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THE FIRST CHAPTER.

No Tea for Bunter!

"FIRST" prize, a magnificent gold watch——"

"Eh!"

"Second prize, a superb diamond pin——"

"What!"

"And a sum of one thousand pounds, to be divided equally
among all who send in correct solutions——"

"Shut up!"

"Each solution must be accompanied by a postal order
for sixpence——"

"Rats!"

"Each competitor may send in as many solutions as he
pleases——"

"Br-r-r-r!"

"But each solution must be accompanied by a postal-
order for sixpence."

Harry Wharton & Co. rose to their feet. The Famous
Five of the Greyfriars Remove were having tea in Study
No. 1, when Billy Bunter came in with the paper in his
hand. But, for once, the fat junior had not asked himself



to tea. For once, he had neglected even tea-time, in his keen interest in a more important matter.

"I say, you fellows, this is simply ripping!" said Billy Bunter, blinking at the Chums of the Remove through his big spectacles. "Think of a magnificent gold watch—"

"We're thinking of tea at present," said Frank Nugent. "Would you mind closing the door after you?"

"And a superb diamond pin!" urged Bunter.

"Are you going?"

"And then the sum of one thousand pounds to be—"

"Door or window?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Oh, really, you fellows, this is a chance of a lifetime! I've come here specially to let you fellows in—"

"You've let us in often enough already!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"I don't mean that, fathead. I mean I've come to let you in—"

"Well, you're not going to let us in."

"To let you into this splendid competition," roared Bunter. "There's a thousand quid practically going begging. The competition is conducted in the fairest possible manner—"

"How do you know?"

"It says so in the paper. And every chap who gets the answers right gets a whack in a thousand quid. Think of that!"

"You'll get a whack in the chivvy if you don't buzz off."

Bunter snorted.

"I could have kept this to myself," he said. "I could have let only my pals into it. I've come to tell you fellows so that you can have a whack. Even if you miss the magnificent gold watch and the superb diamond pin, you may get a bit of the thousand quid. Of course, you fellows would hardly be able to get the solutions. But I should be willing to help you."

"Which would make it a dead cert," grinned Bob Cherry.

"Oh, certainly. A fellow of my brain power could tackle anything like this. You've got to fill in the names of twelve poets to these twelve pictures, you know—easy as falling off a form to a fellow like me. In fact, I've worked out most of them already. You fellows like to have a look at the paper?"

"No, thanks."

"But you simply must go into the competition," urged Bunter. "Thanks, Nugent, I'll have that tart to go on with while I'm talking—"

"Let my tart alone!" roared Nugent.

But the jam tart had already disappeared into the capacious mouth of Billy Bunter. The fat junior backed round the table as Nugent made a wrathful movement towards him.

"Now, don't play the giddy goat," he urged. "Just put your heads together, and help guess these twelve giddy poets. You don't get a chance of a whack in a thousand quid every day—to say nothing of a magnificent gold watch, and a superb diamond pin. If you get the prizes, I shall expect to stand a whack in them, as I put you on to it. Did you say I could have that cake, Wharton?"

"No, I didn't!"

"Oh, all right; I'll try these doughnuts, as you're so jolly mean about the cake. You might offer a fellow a cup of tea, when he's taken the trouble to come here and put you on to a good thing."

"If you don't take your paws out of those doughnuts—"

"All answers must be sent in by next Monday. I'll help you fellows, if you like. All I shall expect in return is a loan of a few tanners for postal-orders. I suppose you've got a sixpence about you, Wharton?"

"Yes."

"Will you lend it to me?"

"No."

"Ahem! Will you lend me a tanner, Bob Cherry?"

"I'll lend you a thick ear," growled Bob Cherry.

"May as well sit down, and eat in comfort," said Billy Bunter, taking the chair from which Nugent had risen.

"You don't mind, Franky?"

Frank Nugent almost spluttered in his wrath.

"You fat oyster! Gerrout of my chair! And if you call me Franky again, I'll scalp you and slaughter you."

"Joking apart—" said Bunter.

"You'll jolly soon find out that I'm not joking," said Nugent, breathing hard through his nose.

"I shall require a little capital to go into this thing properly," said Billy Bunter, helping himself to rolls and jam. The chums of the Remove, utterly flabbergasted by his nerve, stared at him blankly. "Inky's rolling in money. I suppose you can lend me something, Inky, old fellow?"

Hurree Janset Ram Singh, more familiarly known as Inky, in reference to his beautiful complexion, nodded.

"The lendfulness is terrific, my esteemed Bunter."

"Good egg! What can you lend me?"

"An esteemed black eye, my worthy fat Bunter, and a kick behindfully from my boot."

"Oh, really, Inky! Is that cup of tea for me?" asked Billy Bunter, taking possession of Johnny Bull's cup, which Wharton had lately refilled.

"That's Bull's cup!"

"Oh, never mind, I don't mind drinking after Johnny, if you're short of crocks," said Bunter, as he calmly raised the tea-cup to his lips.

It was at this precise moment that Frank Nugent, whose patience was exhausted, laid his grasp upon the back of the chair, and tilted it over backwards to roll Bunter off.

It was an unlucky moment for the Owl of the Remove.

The contents of the tea-cup shot over his face and neck, and he gave a terrific roar. The tea was hot! The chair crashed over, and Bunter rolled on the floor, drenched in tea, and yelling:

"Ow, ow, ow! Beast! Yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Grooh, I'm scalded! Yah, I'm hurt!"

"Get out!" roared Nugent.

"I can't move! Ow, my neck's broken—I mean my leg—ow!"

Nugent raised his foot.

"All together," he said; "when I kick, you all kick."

"Right-ho!"

The Famous Five crowded round Bunter, and all of them drew back their right boot ready. In spite of his broken leg, Billy Bunter managed to rise then. He rose quite quickly, and made a wild spring for the doorway. Five feet came after him, and, with five separate and distinct concussions upon his fat person, Billy Bunter shot through the study doorway.

Bump!

Nugent slammed the door after the fat junior, as he rolled in the passage. Then he sat down in the chair Billy Bunter had usurped, and grinned.

The study door re-opened in a moment, and Bunter's fat face and glistening spectacles appeared. Bob Cherry grasped a loaf, and raised it to hurl.

"Look here, you rotters—"

Whizz!

Bunter popped back just in time, and the loaf crashed on the door, and rolled on the study carpet.

"I want my paper!" roared Bunter through the keyhole.

"Yah, I won't let you into it now—yah!"

The juniors opened the door. They seized Bunter, and Nugent rammed the paper, crumpled, down the back of his neck. Then five feet dribbled Bunter along the passage, and left him gasping at the head of the stairs.

"I don't think he'll come back again," Harry Wharton remarked, with a chuckle, as the Famous Five sat down to tea again. And he was right. Bunter didn't!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Mr. Quelch Does Not Like It!

"Rotten!" growled Bob Cherry. "Rotten!"

And a dozen other fellows, looking out of the School House door into the old Close of Greyfriars, echoed his emphatic observation:

"Rotten!"

It was undoubtedly "rotten." King Cricket had abdicated after his long reign, and King Football once more held sway. The Greyfriars fellows were welcoming back their old favourite: and the Remove—the Lower Fourth of Greyfriars—had fixed the first Form practice for that particular morning. After lessons they were to "urge the flying ball" once more, getting into form for the first match of the season. But after breakfast the rain began.

"Beastly!" said Harry Wharton. "That knocks the practice on the head; unless—"

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M

292



"Hallo, what have you got there, Bunter?" asked Peter Todd. "Quids!" said Bunter, with a sniff. "I've got pals to stand by me, Peter Todd, though my own study refuses to back me up." And Bunter opened the envelope, and three coins rolled out into his fat palm. (See Chapter 7.)

"It won't dry up this afternoon!" said Nugent.

"Might get some practice indoors, to begin with," said Wharton thoughtfully. "What price football in the Remove passage?"

"What price prefects and masters and lickings?" said Vernon-Smith.

"I say, you fellows," said Billy Bunter. "Never mind footer. I've got something to keep you occupied on a rainy day. This competition I'm going in for—"

"Oh, rats!"

"The first-opened correct replies get a magnificent gold watch and a superb diamond pin," Bunter explained. "Then every other correct solution has a whack in a thousand quid. I've got an idea for making sure of the prize, and when I get it I intend to stand a stunning feed to all the Form—"

"Oh, dry up!" growled Bob Cherry. "You're like the giddy weather, Bunter—you never will dry up!"

"Or like the head of the esteemed sheep, all jawfulness," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Oh, really, you know, this competition in 'Home Hints' is simply—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's the bell!"

And the Remove fellows went into their Form-room.

During morning lessons, the rain splashed against the windows of the Remove-room, and the juniors growled about the weather. But Billy Bunter was not thinking of the weather, or of the great game of football. Billy Bunter was thinking of his splendid scheme for getting rich quick. Mag-

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nificent gold watches and superb diamond pins jostled with a thousand golden sovereigns in the mind of William George Bunter, much to the detriment of his lessons.

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, came down upon Bunter several times in the morning. But it was in vain; Bunter construed worse than ever, with his mind running upon the great competition in "Home Hints," and his knowledge of history and geography seemed vaguer than ever. When he was asked what Christopher Columbus discovered, and replied that it was a magnificent gold watch, Mr. Quelch lost patience, and the fat junior was called out and caned.

Then for a time Bunter strove to dismiss from his mind his dreams of sudden wealth. But in third lesson he was caught napping again. He was too short-sighted to see the Form-master's eye on him. He had a copy of "Home Hints" hidden under his desk, and whenever he considered it safe, he consulted the set of twelve pictures, each of which was supposed to represent the name of a celebrated poet. Mr. Quelch rapped out his name, and Bunter did not even hear.

"Bunter!" shouted Mr. Quelch.

Then the fat junior started up.

"Ye-es, sir," he stammered.

"What have you under your desk, Bunter?"

"Under my desk, sir?"

"Yes. What is it?"

"Mum-mum-my knees, sir," said Bunter.

"You have something else there, Bunter?"

"Ye-e-es, sir!"

NEXT
MONDAY:

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"What is it?"

"M-m-my feet, sir."

The Removites chuckled. Mr. Quelch did not chuckle. He frowned, and strode towards the Owl of the Remove.

"You have a paper of some kind, Bunter!" he thundered.

"Ye-e-es, sir," stammered Bunter. "I—I'm sincerely sorry, sir. I'm so interested in my lessons, sir, that I—I couldn't help looking into my Latin grammar, sir. I—I find the irregular verbs so interesting, sir."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Bunter, you are not telling the truth. It is not a Latin grammar you are reading. Hand it to me at once."

Billy Bunter handed out a Latin grammar.

"Is that the book you were reading, Bunter?"

"Yes, sir."

"You had no other book there?"

"Certainly not, sir!"

"Then what is this?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, seizing "Home Hints," and dragging it out from under the desk.

"Oh, that, sir!" stammered Bunter. "That—that isn't a book, sir!"

"What!"

"It's a paper, sir!" explained Bunter feebly.

"You are prevaricating, Bunter. You were reading this paper in class—this trash!" said Mr. Quelch indignantly.

"How can you be so stupid as to read such nonsense, Bunter?"

"I wasn't reading it, sir. It's the competition."

"The what?"

"There's a competition in 'Home Hints,' sir," said Bunter eagerly. "If you would care to go in for it, sir—"

"What!"

"I'd help you with the answers, sir. You have to find out the names of twelve celebrated poets. The first prize is a magnificent gold watch—"

"Bunter!"

"And then there's a superb diamond pin—"

"Silence!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Bunter, you are an idle and stupid boy. I shall throw this absurd paper into the waste-paper basket. You will take fifty lines!"

"Oh, sir!"

Mr. Quelch jammed "Home Hints" into the waste-paper basket, and after that he devoted special attention to Bunter, and the fat junior was kept too busy to think a single syllable about magnificent gold watches and superb diamond pins.

The fat junior wiped beads of perspiration from his brow when the Remove emerged from the Form-room after morning lessons.

"Awful beast, ain't he, Wharton?" said Bunter dolorously, as they came out of the Form-room; quite oblivious of the fact that Mr. Quelch was also coming out, and that he was within hearing.

"Shurrup, you ass!" whispered Wharton.

"Rats! He's a beast, and you know he's a beast—"

"Bunter!"

Billy Bunter jumped, and blinked round at the Form-master through his big spectacles. The expression upon Mr. Quelch's face was terrifying.

"Ye-es, sir. I—I didn't see you, sir," stammered Bunter.

"I imagine you did not, Bunter. I heard you, however. So that, sir, is the way you allude to your Form-master when his back is turned?"

"But your back wasn't turned, sir," said Bunter feebly.

"What! You knew I could hear you?"

"Of course I did, sir," said Bunter, gaining courage. "I didn't know you would mind my calling Bolsover major a beast, sir."

"Bolsover major! You were speaking of Bolsover major?"

"Oh, certainly, sir!"

"You are speaking untruthfully, Bunter. You were alluding to me."

"You, sir! Oh, no, sir! I shouldn't think of calling you a beast, sir, whatever I might think. I—"

"Bunter!"

"I know it would make you waxy, sir, if you knew that we thought you a beast," explained Bunter fatuously. "That is to say, we don't think so. I really meant to say, sir, that we respect you highly, and I have always stood up for you, sir, when the other chaps said you were a beast. I've always said that a Form-master can't help being more or less of a beast, sir, and—and I really mean—"

"You are the stupidest boy at Greyfriars, Bunter. Follow me to my study."

"Wh-a-a-a-what for?" gasped Bunter.

"Follow me!"

Billy Bunter rolled after the Form-master disconsolately, leaving the Removites grinning. He soon discovered "what for," as a howl of anguish from Mr. Quelch's study testified. The fat junior came out of the study rubbing his hands.

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"The beast!" he groaned. "The awful beast! After I offered to help him if he liked to go in for the competition, too! Ow, ow, ow!"

— — —

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Football Practice!

"**B**LOW the rain!"

It was still coming down.

That afternoon was a half-holiday at Greyfriars; so the fellows were fully entitled to say things about the weather. After dinner they gathered at the windows and watched the rain. Billy Bunter went to his study to work out the solutions in the competition in "Home Hints," which he had rescued from the waste-paper basket. But the other fellows did not seem very keen on the picture puzzles. They were thinking about footer; but it was evidently impossible to begin footer practice in a steady downpour of rain.

But Harry Wharton, football captain in the Form, was determined that the practice should not be put off. The first match of the season was to be played on Saturday afternoon, and it was evidently necessary to get in some practice. The football committee discussed the matter.

"It's not much good blowing the rain," Harry Wharton remarked. "The question is, where are we going to play?"

"Might try the Rag!" said Bulstrode.

"Too near the masters' quarters."

"What about the common-room?" asked Nugent.

"Lot of the Fourth in there; it would mean a row," said Wharton.

"Well, that would pass the time," said Bolsover major.

"It's a good idea to save up something for a rainy day—and a Form row would be as good as anything!"

"But we want to play footer. I think the Remove passage will be the place. It's a good size, and we can rig up a goal at one end."

"Linley's swotting in his study!" said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, rats! Never mind that!"

"Remove passage it is!" said Bob Cherry. "Lucky we don't have a prefect's study in the passage now!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lately a new rule had been enforced at Greyfriars, a prefect being quartered in the Remove passage, with the idea of keeping order there. The Remove had made matters so warm for the intruder that the idea had been dropped. But Wingate of the Sixth, the captain of Greyfriars, had warned the Remove that if they didn't keep order in their passage he would know the reason why; and Wingate was a fellow of his word. But it had to be risked now. As Wharton said, they were bound to get some practice. They couldn't practice in the gym., because a crowd of seniors were there—and the common-room had a lot of the Fourth and the Shell lounging about in it. It was the Remove passage or nothing, and so the keen footballers of the Lower Fourth decided upon the Remove passage.

Harry Wharton fetched an old practice ball out of his study. At the end of the passage, outside No. 14 Study—which belonged to Johnny Bull and Fisher T. Fish—a goal was erected—not quite lifelike, of course, but near enough to practise shooting. And the Remove gathered cheerfully for the practice.

They had just started when Mark Linley, the scholarship junior, put his head out of his study. The football had bumped on his door, and it was followed by a rush of feet, and probably the din was somewhat disturbing to a "swot" who was grinding Greek.

"I say, what's the row?" asked Mark. "I'm working, you know."

"Chuck it, then," said Nugent. "We're playing footer!"

"Playing footer here?"

"The playfulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "Chuck up the esteemed swotfulness, my worthy chum, and join us playfully!"

Mark Linley laughed. It was evidently no use attempting to "swot" while the rest of the Form were playing footer in the passage. So Mark Linley closed his books, and came out to join his Form-fellows "playfully," as the Nabob of Bhanipur suggested.

The practice waxed fast and furious. The space was too confined for two elevens, of course. But Peter Todd kept goal, with a single back, and a single half, and a single forward to help him. It was the business of the rest of the players to get the ball through, and the rushing, charging, bumping, and shouting were, as Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh would have said, terrific.

The door of No. 7 Study opened, and a fat, furious face looked out. Billy Bunter shook a fat fist at the noisy juniors.

"Stoppit!" he roared.

"Hallo—hallo—hallo! What's the matter with you?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Shut up that row!" roared Bunter. "I'm working out solutions of the pictures. I can't work with that row going on!"

"If work interferes with footer, give up work!" suggested Tom Brown.

"I've got to get these solutions finished. I'm not going to lose a gold watch, a diamond pin, and a thousand pounds because you silly asses want to make a row!"

"Pass! Pass!"

"I say, you fellows, I'm not having it!" roared Bunter, stepping out into the passage, and brandishing his fist. "I tell you— Yaroooooh!"

Bob Cherry was kicking for goal, and Bunter had stepped in the way.

The footer whizzed through the air, and caught William George Bunter fairly under his fat chin.

Bunter was lifted backwards, and he went down with a bump, roaring.

"Goal!" shrieked Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How's that?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaroooh! Oh! Ow! I'm killed! Yah!" roared Bunter.

"Grooh! Help! Murder! Fire!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cave!" yelled Hazeldene, who had been posted to watch on the stairs. "Here come the prefects!"

"Buzz off!" shouted Harry Wharton. "They've heard us, after all!"

"Must have been pretty deaf if they hadn't!" grinned Ogilvy.

There was a rush of the footballers to escape. Some dodged into the studies, and locked the doors. Some ran up into the box-rooms. In a twinkling the Remove passage was deserted, save by Billy Bunter, who was still lying on his back and roaring.

Wingate and Courtney and Loder and Walker were coming up the stairs two at a time, with canes in their hands, and grim expressions on their faces. Greyfriars was a footballing college, but apparently the Sixth Form did not approve of football indoors.

The prefects rushed into the passage, and found no one there but Billy Bunter. It was only natural that they should jump to the conclusion that Bunter had been knocked over in the rush to escape, and had not had time to follow the rest.

Loder jerked him to his feet, and Walker laid on the cane, and the dust rose in a cloud from Bunter's trousers, and from Bunter himself there rose a terrific yell.

"Ow!"

"Where are the others?" shouted Courtney.

"Ow! Ow!"

"Look in the studies, and thrash 'em!" said Loder.

"Ow! Ow! Ow! I wasn't playing!" roared Bunter.

"Lemme alone! I came out to stop the beasts making a row! Yow!"

But Billy Bunter's untruthfulness was too well known for the prefects to believe that he was speaking the truth then.

"Don't tell lies!" said Loder. "Take that—and that—and that!"

Bunter took them, and yelled.

Then the prefects rushed in search of the rest; but they were not to be found. Billy Bunter was the only fellow to receive punishment. The prefects, very hot and angry, gave up the pursuit, and returned downstairs, and when the coast was clear the Removites came trickling back.

"I guess it's all up with our game here," said Fisher T. Fish. "It's unfortunate. I was going to show you fellows some real football—like we play over there!"

"Ow! Ow! Ow!"

"Hallo! Hallo! Hallo! What's the matter with Bunter?"

Billy Bunter glared ferociously at the juniors through his spectacles. He was standing with both fat hands clasped behind him, where the cane had smitten.

"Ow! Ow! I've been licked! Yow!"

"What did they lick you for?" demanded Wharton. "You weren't playing footer."

"They thought I was. Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Why didn't you explain?"

"Ow! Ow! I did—ow—and they wouldn't—yow—believe me! Ow!"

"Ha, ha! You shouldn't be such a blessed Ananias, Bunt, and they'd have believed you. The way of the giddy transgressor is hard!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's nothing to cackle at, you rotters!" howled Bunter. "I'm hurt! Yow-ow-ow!"

But the Remove apparently thought that there was something to cackle at. They roared. There was simply no sympathy at all for the much-injured Bunter; and he went into his study and slammed the door, leaving the Removites still roaring.

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NEXT
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
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ONE
PENNY.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Mate in One!

TEMPLE of the Fourth was sitting in the junior common-room, playing chess with Dabney. Fry and Scott, of the same Form, were standing beside the table, giving advice. Nearly all the Fourth were in the room. The rain was still coming down steadily, and there was nothing to be done out of doors.

It was a couple of hours since the football practice had been stopped in the Remove passage. Up till now, the Fourth-Formers had had the common-room to themselves, save for a few of the Shell, who were lounging about, and making remarks on the weather. But the peacefulness of the scene was disturbed when the door opened, and a crowd of the Remove came streaming in. Bob Cherry had a footer under his arm.

Temple, the captain of the Upper Fourth, glanced up from the chess-table. Temple was by way of being a dandy; he was always elegantly dressed, and he assumed an air of elegant superiority over the Lower Fourth, which was extremely exasperating to those lively young gentlemen. It had been established to the satisfaction of everybody that the Remove did not fag, yet Temple, Dabney & Co. persisted in calling them fags.

They played matches with the Remove with an air of condescension. They were licked nearly every time, but that did not diminish their self-satisfaction or their condescending manners. Hence, there was often trouble between the two Forms.

As the Removites came streaming into the common-room, Temple raised an elegant hand in warning.

"None of your rowing here!" he said. "You kids can come in here, I suppose—though I really don't see why you can't keep to your Form-room, like the Third. But you'll have to be quiet. I'm playing chess!"

"You can go on playing chess," said Harry Wharton agreeably. "I suppose you don't mind if we play footer?"

"Footer in the common-room!" exclaimed Temple, aghast.

"We certainly sha'n't allow anything of the kind!"

"I don't quite see how you'll prevent it," remarked Bob Cherry. "But you're welcome to try. We won't send the footer at your chess-table if we can help it. But accidents will happen, you know!"

"Look here, we're jolly well not going to let you play footer here!" shouted Temple.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Run away and play somewhere else, like good little boys!" urged Fry.

"Fireplace is goal!" said Harry Wharton, unheeding.

"You chaps had better pile in and practise, too. You're playing us on Saturday afternoon, and where will you be if you don't practise—what?"

"Top of the score, whether we practise or not!" said Temple loftily.

"Oh, rather!" chimed in Dabney.

"More room here than in the passage upstairs," Bolsover major remarked. "We can't make up teams here. Shove the table to one side! May as well shove it against the door, in case anybody wants to come in!"

"Good egg!"

"You Fourth Form chaps might clear off into the corners, if you're going to slack about doing nothing. It's as easy to slack in the corner as out of it."

"Rats!" said the Fourth Form chaps, with one voice.

"Well, if you get in the way of a rush, somebody will get bumped over. We don't mind if you don't. Line up!"

"Look here, you stop it!" roared Temple. "How am I going to play chess with you fags punting a footer about the room."

"Is that a conundrum? If it is, I give it up!" said Bob Cherry. "I'm not good at 'em. Put it to Bunter; he's good at solutions. Kick-off, somebody!"

"If that ball comes this way——" breathed Temple sulphurously.

"It will be mate in one!" grinned Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Whiz!

The ball was kicked-off, and Peter Todd stopped it, and sent it back. Then there was a rush of rival players.

Hazeldene put the ball into touch—touch being round the chess-table. It was thrown in by Tom Brown, and there was a rush, and the chess-table went over, and the chessmen went over, and Temple and Dabney went over, and over them went three or four Removites.

"Yaroooh!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Help!"

"Where's the referee?" roared Bolsover. "Ha, ha, ha!"

NEXT
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"THE MOONLIGHT FOOTBALLERS!"

A Splendid Complete Tale of Harry
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"Sorry!" gasped Wharton, as he dragged himself off Temple's neck. "Accidents will happen. If you start playing chess on a football-field, you know—"

"Ow, ow! You villain! Ow!"

"Pass that ball out!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Play up, Remove!"

Temple staggered to his feet. The game had surged away to the other end of the room, and Temple tore his hair as he looked at the upset table and the scattered chessmen.

"The rotters!" he yelled. "I had you mate in two, Dabney!"

"What!"

"Mate in two!" gasped Temple. "Of course, it counts as a win—"

"Counts as your grandmother!" snorted Dabney. "If those chumps hadn't upset the table, I was going to pin you down with my rook—mate in one!"

"Blow your silly rook! If you mean to say—"

"Oh, rats! Why, you must have seen—"

"Fathead!" roared Temple.

"Chump!" yelled Dabney. "Silly ass!"

The argument was growing warm, but just then came a surge of the footballers again, and Temple and Dabney were swept headlong away. They ceased to think of the check-mate that had not come off, and turned upon the Removites. They grasped the nearest to them, and hammered them furiously. The Removites were not slow to retaliate.

"Back up, Fourth!" shouted Temple.

"Line up, Remove!"

"Kick them out!"

"Hurray!"

"The kickfulness is terrific!"

"Pile in!"

Football and chess were forgotten. It was a Form rag now, and once more the Upper and Lower Fourth were at it hammer and tongs. In the midst of the terrific din the door was tried, but the large and heavy table jammed against it kept it shut. A sharp voice sounded outside, but in the uproar it was unheeded.

Tramp, tramp! Bump, bump! Yell!

If the juniors had thought it out for a week they could not have discovered a more lively way of passing a rainy afternoon.

Chairs were knocked right and left, books were scattered on the floor, jackets were split, and collars torn out, noses grew richly red and eyes deeply black.

The door was being pushed furiously from the outside, and at last the heavy table was pushed away. Wingate and Loder were shoving at the door, and behind them appeared a more awesome figure in cap and gown. It was Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, and his face was like a thundercloud.

"Boys!"

Mr. Quelch's sharp voice rang through the din as the door was opened, and there was a sudden cessation of hostilities.

"Oh, crumbs! Quelchy!"

"My hat!"

"Cave!"

Dusty and torn and dishevelled, the dismayed juniors stood and blinked at the Form-master as he came striding into the room.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Detained!

MR. QUELCH eyed the gasping and dismayed juniors sternly.

"Now, what is the meaning of this?" he exclaimed.

"It was—was only a little fun, sir, to pass a rainy afternoon!" said Bob Cherry meekly.

"That is all, sir," said Harry Wharton. "I hope we haven't been making a noise, sir."

Some of the Removites grinned. If Wharton hoped that they had not been making a noise, he was blessed with a remarkably hopeful nature. The din could certainly have been heard from one end of Greyfriars to the other.

"You have been making a most disgraceful disturbance!" said Mr. Quelch, frowning. "I do not disapprove of a little harmless fun, especially on a rainy afternoon; but this is outrageous. I shall punish all the boys of my Form severely, and I shall ask Mr. Capper to deal with the Fourth!"

"Oh, leave them out, sir!" said Wharton at once. "They weren't to blame, sir; we started the rag!"

"They joined in it, however!"

"They hadn't any choice, sir. You see, it was bound to disturb them if we played football in the common-room, and I'm afraid we put them to some slight inconvenience."

"Football! In the common-room!"

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"We—we had to get some practice, sir; and—and it's raining hard!"

Mr. Quelch's jaw set grimly.

"You must learn to be a little more judicious in these matters, Wharton. Football is a very healthy game, and I approve of it; but there are times and places for all things. Football is not an indoor game. As you assure me that the Fourth Form boys here were not to blame, I shall leave them unquestioned; but my Form—"

"Oh, we were all in it, sir!" said Temple cheerfully. "I dare say it was six of one and half a dozen of the other, sir!"

"You need say nothing, Temple! Wharton, as you and your Form-fellows seem to require an outlet for superfluous energy, you may go into the Form-room."

"May we play footer there, sir?" asked Nugent demurely.

"Certainly not!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "You may write out the first book of the Gallic War until six o'clock!"

"Oh!"

"You will also be detained during the next two days for half an hour after morning lessons, and two hours after afternoon lessons!"

"Oh!"

"And if there is any further disturbance on your part, I shall order you to be detained on Saturday afternoon also!" said Mr. Quelch majestically.

"Oh, sir!"

"Now go into the Form-room!"

Mr. Quelch marched away.

The Removites exchanged dismayed glances. The chopper had come down this time, as Bob Cherry remarked, with a vengeance.

"Well, we've been and gone and done it now!" groaned Johnny Bull.

"I guess this gets us by the short hairs, some!" remarked Fisher T. Fish. "I kinder calculate that we come out of the little end of the horn, partners!"

"I calculate we do!" grunted Tom Brown. "I kinder calculate that we get it where the chicken got the chopper—in the neck. Detained to-morrow and Friday! When are we going to get in any practice for Saturday—what?"

"The Fourth will lick us on Saturday?" snorted Bulstrode.

"That's all right!" said Temple comfortingly. "We should have licked you, anyway, you know!"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

Those comforting remarks very nearly restarted the strife after the interval. But Wingate was shepherding the Removites out of the common-room, and they went dolefully enough. They marched into the Form-room, and sat down to their desks and Julius Cæsar. Wingate gave them a grim look as he left them there.

"You kids had better mind your P's and Q's!" he remarked. "I shall keep an ear open, and if there's any row here—well, look out!"

"We're going to be as nice and quiet as Mary's little lamb!" said Bob Cherry. "We wouldn't think of disturbing you, Wingate. Alonzo's Uncle Benjamin would be shocked if we showed any disrespect for the aged and infirm!"

Wingate strode out of the Form-room.

The Removites started on the Gallic War—in the intervals of dabbing streaming noses and caressing swollen ears and darkened eyes.

"Well, it was a cheery rag!" Peter Todd remarked.

"But what about Saturday?" said Bolsover major. "The Fourth will wipe up the ground with us in the first match of the season, if we don't get in any practice. And if they beat the Remove, there will be no end to their crowing!"

"This is what comes of Wharton's wonderful wheezes for practising indoors!" growled Vernon-Smith.

"Yes, of all the silly asses, I think Wharton takes the cake!" said Skinner.

"Champion idiot!" remarked Ogilvy.

"First-class burler!" said Morgan.

"Oh, cheese it!" growled Wharton. "It was a good idea, but it hasn't worked out well. Can't he helped, and it's no good grouching."

"What about footer practice?" hooted the Removites.

"We must manage it somehow."

"In the dorm. at night, perhaps?" suggested Vernon-Smith sarcastically. "And another row—and detention on Saturday as well as to-morrow and Friday. Rats!"

"Or at night in the Close—by moonlight!" sniffed Skinner.

"Well, that's not a bad idea, either—I was thinking of that!" said Harry Wharton coolly. "There will be a full moon, and if the rain stops—"

"Oh, rats!"

"Piffle!"

"Bosh!"

"Go home!"

Harry Wharton was captain of the Remove; but evidently

the juniors were not inclined to listen to any more of his ideas just then. They were fed-up. Detention on a rainy afternoon did not matter so much. But Mr. Quelch's sentence cut off all possibility of practice on the following two days—and the third day was Saturday. And on Saturday they had to meet the Upper Fourth in the first match of the season. They had always, or nearly always, beaten Temple Dabney & Co. And to start the season with a licking from their deadly rivals, would be too galling.

And, in spite of the lofty condescension assumed by Temple & Co., they knew the Upper Fourth would not let the opportunity pass. Their rivals would slog at practice to make sure of beating the unprepared Remove.

The juniors scribbled Cæsar with frowning brows, in very bad tempers. Even the fellows who were not playing in the Saturday's match were as exasperated as the others. They didn't want their Form to be crowed over by the Upper Fourth. Temple, Dabney & Co. did enough crowing already.

The Form-room door opened, and Billy Bunter blinked in. He seemed surprised to see the Remove all sitting in their places as if for lessons.

"I say, you fellows, I've been looking for you," he said. "What's the little game? Don't you know it's a half-holiday Wednesdays?"

"Ass! We're detained!" growled Peter Todd.

"He, he, he!" "Why, what are you cackling at, you image?" demanded Bob Cherry wrathfully. "Is there anything funny in being detained, fathead?"

"He, he, he!"

"My dear Bunter," said Alonzo Todd mildly, "your merriment is out of place, and, in fact, somewhat inconsiderate. My Uncle Benjamin would be shocked, Bunter, at your finding food for laughter in the misfortunes of your Form-fellows. I should recommend—"

"He, he, he!"

"Shut up!" roared Peter Todd, not at all mildly. Peter resembled his cousin in features, but in nothing else. "Do you want me to come and wipe up the floor with you, you fat freak?"

"He, he, he!"

Peter Todd made a rush across the Form-room at Billy Bunter. The latter promptly dodged out into the passage. There was a prefect seated on one of the benches in the passage, working with his book on his knees, and keeping an eye on the Form-room. So it was impossible for Bunter to be pursued outside the doorway. Peter shook his fist at the Owl of the Remove, and returned to his place.

Then Bunter blinked in again cheerfully. He knew that he was safe.

"I say, you fellows, you must have been a set of silly jays to get yourselves detained," he remarked. "He, he, he!"

Whiz! The "Gallic War" flew across the room and out the doorway. Bunter dodged it, and then looked in again.

"I say, you'll have Loder down on you if you shy books about," he remarked. "He's got an eye on this doorway."

"Clear out, you fat bounder!" snorted Bob Cherry.

"Rats!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"Rats!" said Bunter coolly.

Bob Cherry grew perfectly crimson with wrath. The donkey in the fable who lifted up his heel against the lion

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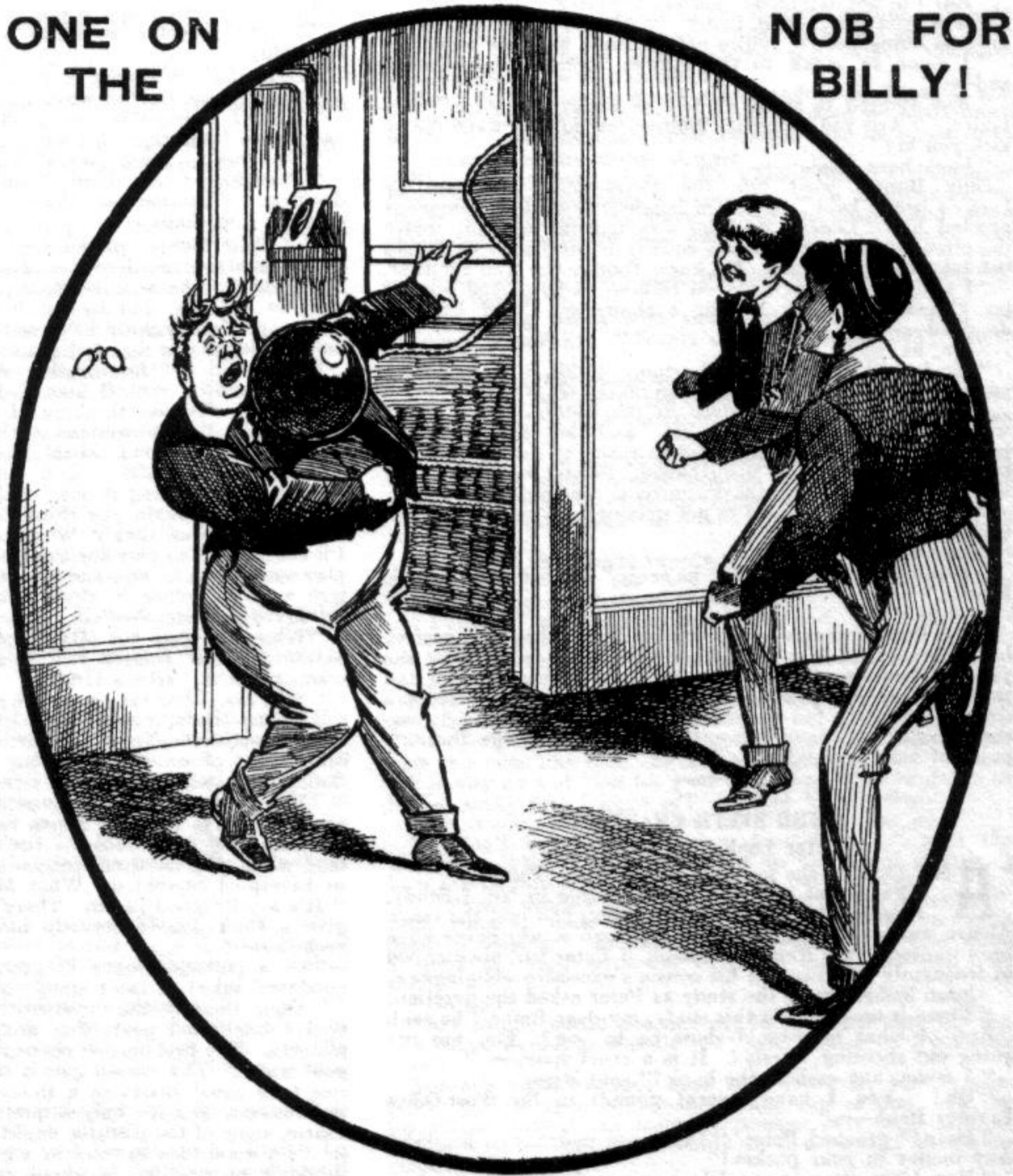
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7

ONE ON
THE



NOB FOR
BILLY!

"I say, you fellows, I'm not having it!" roared Bunter, stepping out into the passage, and brandishing his fist. "I tell you——" The footer whizzed through the air, and caught William George Bunter fairly under the chin. (See Chapter 3.)

"Shut up! Cheese it! You talk too much, Bob Cherry!" said Bunter, preparing to dodge.

Bob Cherry jumped up.

"If you had a million prefects in your waistcoat pocket, you fat idiot, I'd bump you for that!" he roared.

And he rushed across the Form-room at Billy Bunter. Bunter backed out into the passage. But Bob did not stop in the doorway. He dashed out after Bunter, and the fat junior yelled as Bob laid violent hands upon him. Loder, the prefect, jumped up, and came towards them with an angry brow.

"Stop that row!" he exclaimed. "Get back into the Form-room at once, both of you!"

"Ow! Ow! Leggo my ear!"



"Do you hear me, Cherry?" shouted Loder.

Bob Cherry snorted, and went back into the Form-room. Billy Bunter rubbed his ear furiously, and Loder pushed him towards the open doorway.

"Get in!" he ordered.

Bunter blinked at him furiously.

"I'm not detained!" he roared.

"Don't tell lies," said Loder politely; "the whole Form's detained—Mr. Quelch said so."

"I—excepting me!" howled Bunter. "I wasn't in the rag—I wasn't—I didn't—I — Ow! Don't kick me, you silly beast—"

"Go in!"

"But I'm not detained!" shrieked Bunter.

"Yes, you are!" said Loder. "All the Remove! What are you doing here if you're not detained with the rest?"

"I came to speak to the fellows about a competition, and—"

"Not allowed to speak to fellows under detention," said Loder. "Are you going in, Bunter, or do you want me to kick you in?"

"Look here, Loder— Ow!"

Billy Bunter went into the Form-room, propelled by Loder's heavy boot. A yell of laughter from the Removites greeted him. Loder's mistake was natural enough, under the circumstances, and it was equally natural that he should not take Bunter's word. He knew Bunter too well for that.

"I say, you fellows," gasped Bunter, as he picked himself up, "I—I say, speak up for a chap—tell Loder I'm not detained—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No fear!" said Harry Wharton. "This is a chance for your he-he-he-ing again—come and do the Gallic War!"

Loder returned to his place in the passage. Loder was working for once in his life, and he did not like being interrupted. He intended to make an example of the next junior who made a disturbance. Bunter was the junior. He put his head out of the Form-room, and yelled to Loder.

"I say, Loder—I say—I'm not detained. You can ask Mr. Quelch. I say—"

Loder rose to his feet.

"I won't ask Mr. Quelch," he said, "I'll lick you instead, Bunter."

And he did!

Billy Bunter simply crawled to a form when the prefect had finished with him. But his groans were drowned by the yells of laughter from the rest of the Remove. It had seemed very funny to Bunter to see the whole Remove detained—but the fun seemed to have vanished now. Apparently it was no longer funny, from William George Bunter's point of view!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Looks for the Poets!

"ANY shots in the locker?" asked Peter Todd.

Peter was surveying the tea-table in No. 7 Study. Alonzo, who was always obliging, had laid the table. Alonzo was so obliging that a charwoman would never have been wanted in the Remove passage, if Peter had not stepped in frequently and stopped his cousin's excessive obligingness.

Alonzo looked round the study as Peter asked the question.

"There is no locker in this study, my dear Peter," he said.

"And of what use would shots be to you? You are not going out shooting, surely? It is a cruel sport—"

"I mean, any cash in the bank?" said Peter.

"Oh! Yes, I have several pounds in the Post-Office Savings Bank—"

"Help!" groaned Peter. "Don't you understand English? Any money in your pocket?"

"No; I am sorry to say I have no ready-money, my dear Peter."

"Got any money, Dutton?" bawled Peter to Tom Dutton, the deaf junior who shared No. 7 Study with Bunter and the two Todds.

"Eh? Who's funny?" asked Dutton.

"You are, though that wasn't what I said," grunted Peter.

"I asked you if you'd got any money."

"I'll go and get some if you like," said Dutton. "I should like some. We can get it at Mrs. Mible's."

"What!"

"She has it in jars," said Dutton.

"What! She has what in jars?" roared Peter.

"Honey!"

"Oh, my hat! Who's talking about honey? Got any money?" yelled Peter Todd.

"You needn't shout," said Dutton; "I'm not deaf. No, I've not got any money, I lent my last tanner to Bunter to get a postal order for a competition or something."

"He's had a tanner from me for that," growled Peter.

"Well, as we're all stony, we shall have to be satisfied with the sardines. I hope somebody else will ask Bunter to tea."

Peter's hope was ill-founded. Billy Bunter entered the study as he finished speaking. The fat junior blinked at the tea-table disparagingly.

"That all you've got for tea?" he asked, with a sniff. "Bread and butter and a few mouldy old sardines? Huh!"

"You're welcome to make a contribution," said Peter agreeably.

Bunter did not appear to hear that remark. He could be as deaf as Tom Dutton when he liked.

"Well, I suppose it's no good grumbling," he said. "I had better feeds than this when I was in Snoops' study!"

"Why not go back there?" asked Peter affectionately.

"Pass the sardines, Lonzy," said Bunter, still afflicted with deafness. "Lemme see, there are seven—that will be one each for you chaps."

And Billy Bunter placed four on his own plate. Peter Todd calmly reached over and appropriated the plate.

"Todd, you beast, give me my sardines!" roared Bunter.

"One for you, and two each for us!" said Peter cheerfully. "Greedy kids have to be punished. If you say another word you sha'n't have any."

Bunter did not say another word. He wired into his solitary sardine, lest it should follow the others. Peter ruminated. He was thinking of the coming football season, and the fact that he was not in the Remove eleven.

"I say, you fellows, what are we going to do about it?" said Bunter.

"I'm just thinking it out," said Peter.

"Good. What do you think?"

"Well, I think that if Wharton will play Dutton as well, I'll condescend to play for the Remove. Can't expect him to play such mugs as you and Alonzo, when I come to think of it."

"My dear Peter—"

"Wharton—play— Rats! Who's talking about football?" growled Bunter. "I was speaking of the great competition in 'Home Hints.'"

"Silly ass! Blow the competition, and blow 'Home Hank.'"

"'Home Hints,' you silly ass. It's a jolly good paper besides the competition. There's an article on how to make a cosy corner out of an old workbox, and how to decorate the dining-table when you have company with Japanese fans."

"You never have company with Japanese fans in England, ass. You have to go to Japan to have company with fans."

"Fathead! You decorate the dining-table with Japanese fans when you have company. And there's a serial, 'Lost in Liverpool Street; or, What Mamie Did!'" said Bunter.

"It's a jolly good paper. There's a description of how you give a Pink Tea—everybody has a pink flower or a pink necktie—"

"Or a pinkeyed mouse!" growled Peter. "Shut up, for goodness' sake! I can't stand 'Home Piffle'! Shurrup!"

"Then there's the competition. You find out the twelve celebrated poets that are represented by the twelve pictures. The first-opened correct solution gets a magnificent gold watch. The second gets a superb diamond pin; all the rest take equal shares in a thousand quid. I've guessed all the answers, and it's only a question of sending 'em in. Of course, some of the pictures might have two or three answers, so it's a good idea to send in a good many solutions. I was thinking of sending in about twenty sets. That would require ten shillings. I shall expect this study to back me up. You see?"

"I think I had better speak to Wharton about it—"

"Good! If you can get the ten bob from him—"

"About the footer, idiot."

"Oh, blow the footer!" said Bunter crossly. "There's something more important than footer to think of. This is the chance of a life-time. Look at this picture—there's a kipper and another fish, which I suppose is a ling; a ling is a fish, ain't it? Then there are the two letters ER crossed out. That must be Shakespeare."

"Kipling, ass."

"Kipling," said Bunter thoughtfully. "I say, is Kipling a poet?"

"He writes stuff in rhyme, and they pay him for it," said Peter.

"Oh, that's all right, then. I didn't know Kipling was a poet. I thought he was the author of the 'Absent-Minded Beggar,'" said Bunter; "I'll make it Kipling. Now I

ANSWERS

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"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
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"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
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come to think of it Kipling suits it better than Shakespeare. Now look at this one—two women talking, and a ton weight. Think that's Byron?"

"Chatterton, fathead."

"Never heard of him. I'll put him in if you say he was a poet. Look at this one—a Scotchman in kilts and things—I suppose that's Burns?"

"Scott!" said Peter.

"Good—very likely it's Scott!" said Bunter thoughtfully. "I know Scott was a poet; I've heard of his poem: 'The Charge of the Light Brigade.'"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Peter. "That was Tennyson."

"Rats!" said Bunter. "I'm sure it was Scott—I've read the poem. Anyway, I know Scott was a poet—the name sounds familiar, somehow. Now look at this one—a picture of a fire. I suppose that's Darwin?"

Peter shrieked.

"Darwin wasn't a poet, fathead. He wrote altogether a different kind of piffle."

"Sure he wasn't a poet?" said Bunter dubiously. "Didn't he write 'Paradise Lost'?"

"Ha, ha! No, he wrote the 'Origin of Species' and things."

"Well, I knew it was some rot," said Bunter. "What do you think this picture is, then, if it isn't Darwin?"

"Burns, of course."

Bunter shook his head.

"Burns would suit the picture, if there was a poet of that name," he said. "But there isn't; Burns is a politician or something—chap who makes speeches about five hundred a year being enough for anybody till he gets a rise."

"There was another Burns," murmured Peter; "a Scotchman. Bunter, old man, go and tell Ogilvy you've never heard of Burns, and be slaughtered."

"Well, I'll make it Burns," said Bunter. "Look at this one—"

"Fed up!" said Peter; "go and eat coke." And Peter Todd walked out of the study, his tea being finished, to talk football with Harry Wharton & Co. Billy Bunter grunted, and turned to Alonzo Todd.

"I say, Alonzo, look at this. It's a picture of a mill and a weight marked one ton. Do you think that's Gladstone?"

"Was Gladstone a poet?" asked Alonzo mildly.

"Oh, yes," said Bunter, with a smile of superior knowledge. "He wrote yards and yards of poems. That's why they made him Poet Laureate. Haven't you heard of his celebrated poem called 'The Lay of the Last Minstrel'?"

"Dear me! I thought that was Scott!" said Alonzo, in surprise.

Bunter laughed.

"Not much good your going in for a competition of this kind, 'Lonzy," he said pityingly, "you wouldn't have much chance. You see, I'm a well-read chap, and it comes in very handy in a matter of this sort. Dutton, old man, look at this—will you—it's a picture of a chap in some kind of fancy dress, with a boat-hook in his hand."

"It is a picture of the Pope," said Alonzo mildly.

"What would you take that for, Dutton? Do you think it's Shakespeare?"

"Eh?"

"Look at this johnny in the picture. Do you think—"

"Eh! I don't blink as much as you do, with your blessed goggles, anyway," said Tom Dutton indignantly. "Shut up! I'm going to do my prep."

"I want you to help me with these pictures!"

"I'll give you something to yelp for, if you don't shut up," said Dutton. "Blink, indeed? Where can you dig up a chap who blinks more than you do, I'd like to know. Huh!"

"I want to finish them to-night," roared Bunter; "I've got to fill the twelve pictures in, in full!"

Tom Dutton rose to his feet, took the astonished Bunter by the shoulders, and whirled him out of the study, and tossed 'Home Hints' after him.

"Now, you stay out there till you've learned better manners," he said. "If you weren't such a blinking, silly, blithering dummy, I'd lick you for calling me a fool. If you come in again, I'll lick you anyway."

And Dutton slammed the door.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Money Wanted!

IN a case like this I think a fellow has a right to expect some backing up from his pals!"

Thus William George Bunter.

Billy Bunter had started on a round as collector of cash. As he said, he had to have cash if he was going into the competition with any chance of handling the magnificent gold watch, the superb diamond pin, or the thousand pounds. And as he was in his usual state of impecuniosity, naturally that cash must be provided by somebody else. Bunter didn't

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mind where it came from, provided that it came. That was the only point he was at all particular about.

Twenty postal orders for sixpence each would require a capital sum of ten shillings. Bunter was not a brilliant arithmetician, but he had worked that out unaided. It was not so easy to work out whence the ten shillings were to come. But Billy Bunter was a borrower of long experience and dreaded skill. Bob Cherry said that he would have borrowed shekels from Shylock, if he had been acquainted with that gentleman, and could have raised a loan from a stone statue.

Bunter was determined, but he did not meet with much encouragement in his round of the Remove studies. Nobody seemed interested in "Home Hints" and the great competition. Magnificent gold watches and superb diamond pins seemed to be at a discount.

Bunter's promise to stand a tremendous feed out of the thousand quid—when he received it—evoked no enthusiasm whatever. Nobody but Bunter believed that he would have a "whack" in the thousand quid.

Billy Bunter dropped in to see Vernon-Smith and Skinner first. As Vernon-Smith was the son of a millionaire, he might be supposed to have money to spare, and some sympathy for a fellow who wanted to get rich quick. But he hadn't.

"I suppose you don't mind lending me ten bob, Smithy?" Bunter began.

"Something wrong with your supposer, then!" said the Bounder cheerfully. "Wants oiling, I should say! Quite offside!"

"Well, a tanner would do," said Bunter.

"From the sublime to the ridiculous—one jump!" grinned Skinner. "If a bad ha'penny would do, Bunter, I can oblige you?"

"You see, I've got to get twenty sixpenny postal-orders to send in a set of twenty answers to this competition. I suppose you've heard of it—in 'Home Hints'—"

"Heard too much of it!" yawned the Bounder. "Shurrup!"

"Then I shall want twenty pennies for twenty copies of the paper, to get the sets of pictures," said Bunter. "Perhaps you could stand them?"

"I could!" said the Bounder, with a nod.

"Good! Shell out, then!"

"But I'm not going to!" added Vernon-Smith.

"He, he, he!" cackled Skinner.

Billy Bunter blinked at them angrily through his spectacles.

"I think a fellow has a right to expect something of his pals at a time like this," he said reproachfully.

"Better go and look for your pals, then—you've got none in this study that I know of!" yawned Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, really, Smithy! After all I've done for you!"

"I don't know what you've done for me," said the Bounder. "But I know what I'll do for you if you don't buzz out of this study—I'll chuck you out! Savvy?"

"I should decline to take the loan now if you offered it!" said Bunter, with dignity. "I consider you a rank outsider, Smithy! It must be clearly understood that when I stand the feed with the thousand quid, you won't be invited!"

"Go hon!"

"My people would not like me to associate with the son of a Stock Exchange speculator!" said Bunter. "I consider—"

Bunter's considerations were lost, however, for Vernon-Smith picked up a cricket-stump and ran at him, and the fat junior dodged out into the passage only just in time. He arrived in Bulstrode's study in a somewhat breathless condition.

Bulstrode, Tom Brown, and Hazeldene, who shared Study No. 2, were at work on their prep. when the fat junior ran in and closed the door behind him quickly.

"Hallo!" said Tom Brown, the New Zealander. "What's biting you?"

"Oh, it's all right! Rather pressed for time, that's all," said Bunter. "I've got a lot to do this evening, you know, and I'm still short of a few sixpences for the competition. I suppose you fellows can stand me a couple of bob each? I shall return it to you from my whack in the thousand quid, of course!"

"Not good enough!" grinned Bulstrode.

"Or you could have it out of my postal-order to-morrow," said Bunter. "It's all the same to me."

"And all the same to us!" chuckled Tom Brown. "You'll get the postal-order about the same time that you get the thousand quidlets!"

"Hazel, old man, you are going to lend me a half-crown—"

"No fear!" said Hazeldene.

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"THE MOONLIGHT FOOTBALLERS!"

A Splendid Complete Tale of Harry
Wharton & Co. Order Early.

"I think you might, considering what an old pal I am——"

"First I've heard of it!" said Hazel.

"Oh, really! Your sister Marjorie would lend me the money like a shot——"

"She wouldn't see it again if she did! Shut up!"

"You won't lend me a half-crown?"

"No, I won't!"

"Then I decline to discuss the matter with you further! Bulstrode, I suppose I can rely on you for a couple of bob?"

"You can rely as long as you like, and as much as you like," said Bulstrode generously; "but you won't get any money out of me!"

"I say, Brown—Tom, old fellow——"

"Hallo! How long have I been 'Tom, old fellow'?" exclaimed the Colonial junior, in surprise.

"Tom, old chap, if you could make it a couple of bob——"

"A couple of rats!" said Tom Brown.

"I am inviting all my pals to the big feed when I get the prize," Bunter explained. "I want you specially, you know, because—because—ahem!—it binds closer the bonds of Empire, you know—hands across the sea, and things, you know! I have always approved of Colonial Preference, and—and frozen mutton, you know——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"A shilling would be better than nothing," said Bunter.

"If you make it a tanner, Brown, I shall still invite you to the feed. What do you say?"

"Don't trouble about inviting me to the feed!" grinned Tom Brown. "Here's the tanner, and clear out!"

And the New Zealand junior extracted a threepennypiece and three pennies from various pockets, and pushed them across the table to Bunter.

Billy Bunter gathered up his plunder eagerly.

"I suppose you don't feel inclined to hand out another tanner——"

"I'll hand out a thick ear if you don't leave off bothering me while I'm working!" said Tom Brown.

Bunter grunted and quitted the study. He dropped in to see Snoop and Stott and Trevor next. They were all there, working on their preparation, and they all grinned at the sight of Billy Bunter. Apparently they had already heard that the Owl of the Remove was on a borrowing expedition.

"I say, you fellows, if you would care to lend me a few bob towards the expenses of the 'Home Hints' competition——"

"We've got something for you," said Snoop; "we've collected it amongst us, and got it ready for you in an envelope. No, don't thank us! We're doin' this because you're going to ask us to a feed when you get the thousand quid!"

Bunter's eyes danced behind his spectacles.

"I say, that's jolly decent of you!" he said. "I really want ten shillings, you know, to send in twenty replies——"

"But the more you send in the better?" asked Stott.

"Oh, yes; rather!"

"Three quid would make it surer, wouldn't it?" said Trevor.

"Oh, certainly!" said Bunter, rubbing his fat hands, while visions of the tuckshop danced before his eyes.

If Bunter once fastened his hands upon three golden sovereigns, they were not likely to be invested in the "Home Hints" competition, in spite of the attractions of the magnificent gold watch, the superb diamond pin, and the thousand pounds. There was an investment nearer home for them.

"Well," said Snoop, "considering that you're an old pal, Bunter, we've done this. Here it is! Don't open it till you're out of the study! We don't want you to thank us; it's really embarrassing to modest chaps like us! No; not a word, Bunter, old pal! Just you take it and go!"

And Snoop put the envelope into Bunter's hands, and gently but firmly pushed him out of the study, and closed the door after him. Bunter's fat fingers clutched the envelope, and felt the three discs within—three golden sovereigns, of course. Peter Todd came along the passage as he was tearing open the envelope.

"Hallo! What have you got there?" asked Peter.

"Quids!" said Bunter, with a sniff. "I've got pals to stand by me, Peter, though my own study refuses to back me up! I must say that Snoop and Stott and Trevor have acted very decently in this matter, and I shall ask them to the feed. What are you sniggering at?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Let's see the quidlets!"

Bunter tore the envelope open, and the three coins inside rolled into his fat palm. Peter Todd shrieked. He had had great doubts about three sovereigns coming from Snoop's study, and he was not surprised to see three farthings. Billy Bunter wrinkled his brows over his spectacles, and blinked at the three coins.

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"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY,
Every Monday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

"M-m-my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Peter.

"The rotters——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The beasts!"

Peter Todd staggered away, almost in hysterics. Bunter rushed back to the door of Sidney Snoop's study, intending to throw it open, and hurl in the three farthings at the donors. But he paused in time. Three farthings were, in fact, three farthings, and with another farthing added would purchase a jam-tart. So Billy Bunter put them into his waistcoat-pocket instead. All was grist that came to Billy Bunter's mill!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

In Funds and Out!

HARRY WHARTON and Frank Nugent were doing their preparation in No. 1 Study when Bunter came in. The fat junior had a copy of "Home Hints" in his hand, and they knew what he had come for. They jumped up, and each of them held out a sixpence.

"There you are! Take it and go!" said Nugent.

"Say a single word, and we won't give you anything!" added Wharton.

Billy Bunter blinked at them, and grinned. He did not say a single word. He took the two sixpences, and rolled out of the study again.

No. 1 Study was next on the list. Bob Cherry and Mark Linley, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, and little Wun Lung, the Chinese, were all at home. Billy Bunter rolled in without ceremony, quite careless of the fact that he was interrupting preparation. He was leaving his own preparation, and he didn't see why other fellows couldn't leave theirs.

"I suppose you know I'm going into a splendid competition," he began. "I require ten shillings to send in twenty replies to make sure of the thousand quid——"

"You won't get it here!" growled Bob Cherry, looking up from his work. "I'm stony, for one. So buzz off, and leave us in peace, you fat bounder!"

"Haven't you got any tin?" asked Bunter.

"No; stony, I tell you!"

"Then you needn't waste my time," said Bunter. "I didn't come here to see you, Bob Cherry. I came here to see my old pal Linley. I say, Marky, old man, can you lend me a couple of bob?"

"No," said Mark Linley, without raising his head.

"Well, I could make a tanner do——"

"Sorry, nothing doing!"

"I might have known it was no use asking a blessed scholarship bounder!" growled Billy Bunter. "Of course, you haven't a blessed sixpence in the world! Yaroooh! Leggo my ear, Bob Cherry, you beast! Yah!"

"I'll let go your ear when you've begged Marky's pardon!" said Bob Cherry, still squeezing the fat appendage between his finger and thumb.

"Ow! Ow! I beg your pardon, Linley! I was only j-j-joking!" wailed Bunter.

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Mark.

Billy Bunter rubbed his ear furiously when Bob released it. "I'd jolly well give you a licking for that, Bob Cherry, only—only I'm pressed for time!" he said. "I say, Inky, old man, how much are you going to stand?"

"I fear that I cannot stand you at all, my esteemed Bunter."

"I mean, how much can you lend me?"

"I decline to lendfully give anything to the esteemed and fat rotter who has spoken insultfully to my honoured and ludicrous friend Linley."

"Oh, really, Inky! Make it a tanner."

"The ratfulness is terrific."

"You blessed nigger——"

"Kick him out, Inky!" said Bob Cherry.

"The kickfulness will be terrific," said the nabob, rising to his feet. Billy Bunter backed away round the table.

"I—I say, Inky, it's all right. I take that back," he said. "It was only a joke, you know. I don't want to lick you, so keep your distance. I say, Wun Lung, old man, you are rolling in money, ain't you?"

"No savvy," said the little Chinese, blinking at him.

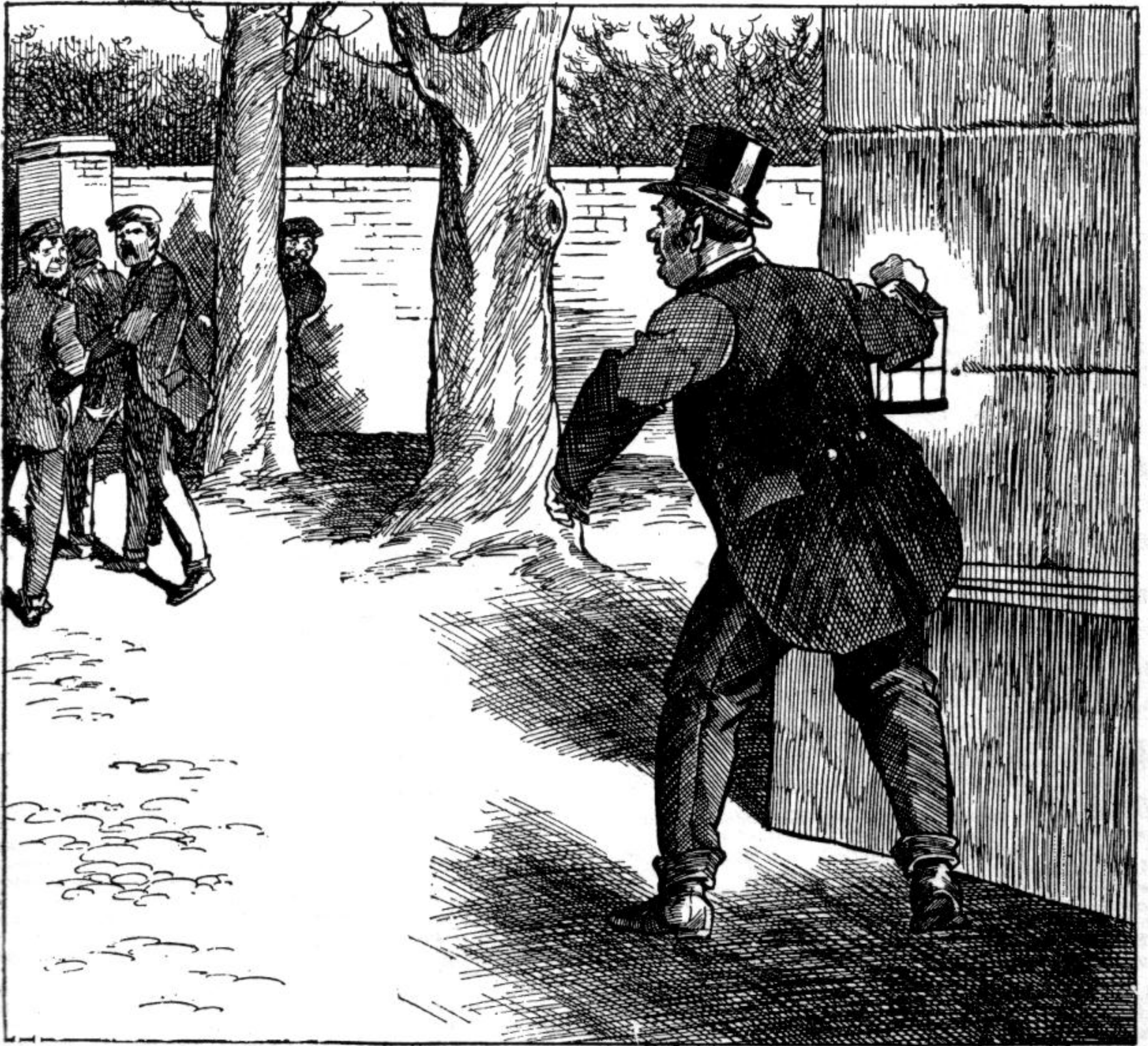
"Can you lend me half-a-sovereign?"

"No savvy."

"Well, say five bob," said Bunter. "I know you've got lots of oof, Wun Lung, and you can lend an old pal five bob. Think of how I've stuck to you all the time you've been at Greyfriars, though you're only a beastly heathen!"

"No savvy."

"Well, I suppose I shall have to make sixpence do," growled Bunter. "Hand me a tanner, and I'll clear. My time's valuable."



A light gleamed out from under the elms, and Gosling, the school porter, loomed up. "Hallo! What's that?" he gasped. "Burglars! My heye! 'Elp!" (See Chapter 11.)

"No savvy."

"Look here!" roared Bunter. "You savvy well enough, you heathen beast! Are you going to lend me a tanner, or are you not?"

"No savvy," said Wun Lung imperturbably. Wun Lung understood English when he liked, but there were occasions when he lost entirely his powers of comprehension. This was evidently one of the occasions.

Billy Bunter shook a fat fist at the calm and smiling countenance of the Oriental.

"Look here, you heathen rotter, you—you un-Christian, yellow beast, you pig-tailed cannibal, you—you—"

"No savvy."

"I'll jolly well make you savvy!" yelled Bunter, and he jumped at the little Chinese. Wun Lung was small enough to be tackled with safety, or Bunter thought he was. But the fat junior found himself suddenly locked in an embrace of steel. He was twisted over, and his face looked at his fat legs from an unexpected angle. He felt as if he were being tied into a sailor's knot. Wun Lung was a pastmaster in the art of jiu-jitsu, and Billy Bunter was a helpless lump of fat in his wiry hands.

"Feelee allee light?" asked Wun Lung gently.

"Ow, ow! Bow-wow! Yow!" roared Bunter. "Lemme

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go! You've broken my backbone already! Grooh! My neck's dislocated, too! Yo-yow!"

"Buntee had nuffee?"

"I think he's had more than enough," grinned Bob Cherry. "Chuck him out!"

"Me chuckee."

Billy Bunter was suddenly released from that embrace of steel, and he rolled on the linoleum outside the study. Wun Lung chuckled softly, and closed the door. Billy Bunter sat up, and gasped. It was some ten minutes before he recovered sufficient breath to rise, and when he did he shook a fat fist at the closed door of No. 13 Study, but he did not open the door. He snorted and passed on to No. 14, where he blinked in at Johnny Bull and Rake and Fisher T. Fish.

"I guess he's arrove!" said Fisher T. Fish, clutching at a ruler. "Now then, all together, and see how long it takes the silly jay to vamoose the ranch."

Fisher T. Fish with the ruler, Rake with a cricket-stump, and Johnny Bull with a poker rushed at Billy Bunter, and the fat junior fled into the passage in wild alarm. The door of No. 14 slammed after him, amid yells of laughter.

"Beasts!" yelled Bunter. But he did not return. It was evident that the Removites were growing fed-up with his borrowing expedition, in spite of the share they were to have in the great feed when he won the thousand quid.

Billy Bunter felt that there was one more chance—Lord Mauleverer. And he rolled into the study of the dandy of the Remove, and found him toying with his preparation.

"Hard at work?" asked Bunter.

"Begad!" groaned Lord Mauleverer. "Very hard, but not much work."

"Take a bit of a rest," suggested Bunter. "I'll tell you all about this competition in 'Home Hints.' You won't mind?"

"Yaas."

"It's a simply ripping competition, and with a little capital I shall be able to rake in a thousand quid," said Bunter. "That's a lot of money, isn't it?"

"Yaas, begad!"

"Not much for me, really. I've got titled relations simply rolling in money. Still, it will set me up in ready cash for some time."

"Yaas; I think it would," said Lord Mauleverer, looking at him.

"I require only a pound," went on Bunter, encouraged. "If you cared to hand me a pound, Mauly, I should be quite certain of raking in the prize. I might get a magnificent gold watch or a superb diamond pin, too. Could you spare a pound?"

"Yaas."

"Then you won't object to lending it to me?"

"Yaas."

"Look here, Mauly, will you lend me a pound?" demanded Bunter.

"Yaas."

"Hand it over, then!"

Lord Mauleverer slipped his hand into his trousers pocket, and drew out a sovereign.

Bunter's eyes glistened. It was a real sovereign at last.

"If you win the prize you'll have lots of money?" said Lord Mauleverer thoughtfully.

"Yes, rather; heaps!"

"Sure to win it with a quid—what?"

"Oh, quite certain! With my brain power, all I need is a little capital."

"Then you won't want to be always borrowing of all the fellows—hey?"

"I shall settle up any little accounts I owe as soon as I get the prize," said Bunter, with dignity. "I think I owe you some small sums—"

"Yaas; I think you do. If I give you this quid will you let me alone?"

"Oh, really, Mauly! I shall certainly refuse to take the sovereign if you put it like that!" said Bunter.

"Good!" The sovereign slipped back into the pocket of Lord Mauleverer's elegant trousers, and he bent over his work again. Billy Bunter watched the disappearance of the sovereign with eyes growing wide with dismay.

"Ahem! I—I was only joking, Mauly. Hand it out, and I'll agree to anything you like. I'd do anything to oblige an old pal like you."

"Yaas. You won't borrow any more this term—what?"

"Honour bright!" said Bunter.

The sovereign changed hands, and Bunter, hardly stopping to thank the donor, hurried out of the study. It was too late to go to the post-office for the postal-orders. But it was not too late to go to the tuckshop. And that was Billy Bunter's destination.

Two minutes later William George Bunter was seated upon a high stool at Mrs. Mimble's counter, eating! The sovereign was in Mrs. Mimble's till, and a huge array of good things were spread out before Bunter. There were few juniors at Greyfriars who could have travelled through a sovereign's-worth of tuck at one sitting. But it was quite easy to Billy Bunter. In feats of that kind he was facile princeps. In a quarter of an hour Billy Bunter was breathing with some difficulty, and his fat face had assumed a very shiny appearance, and the tuck had vanished.

"I could do with a few more tarts," Bunter murmured. "I—I wonder if I could raise the wind again if—if—if—"

He did not finish wondering. Wharton's and Nugent's sixpences followed the sovereign, and Tom Brown's sixpence followed them. Then for some minutes Billy Bunter was arguing with Mrs. Mimble, pointing out that, to such an excellent customer as he was, she could afford to stretch a point and accept three farthings as the equivalent of a penny in payment for a tart. Mrs. Mimble saw reason, and the tart became Billy Bunter's property, and was immediately disposed of internally.

"I say, Mrs. Mimble, I'm expecting a postal-order tomorrow," Bunter remarked. "I—I suppose you could let me have a few more tarts on tick till then!"

"You will make yourself ill, Master Bunter," said the good dame, who had been watching his gastronomic performances in some alarm. "I am sure you can hardly walk as it is. And I never give credit."

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"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

"Oh, really, Mrs. Mimble—"

"I am waiting to close my shop, Master Bunter."

Billy Bunter grunted, and rolled out of the tuckshop. Mrs. Mimble was quite right. He found some difficulty in walking back to the School House. He went to bed feeling slightly uncomfortable inside, and with a knotty problem in his mind—how to raise the capital in order to have a chance for the magnificent gold watch, the superb diamond pin, and the thousand pounds, so generously offered to the public by the proprietors of "Home Hints."

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Something Like a Scheme!

THE next morning, after lessons, the Remove had the pleasure of sitting in their Form-room till nearly dinner-time. The rain of the previous day had vanished, and a blaze of sunshine had dried the ground. The Upper Fourth streamed away to the footer-ground immediately they were released from classes.

Temple, Dabney & Co. were not losing any chances. They meant to be in the best form possible for the match with the Remove on Saturday. If the Remove chose to get themselves detained by uproarious conduct, that was their own look out, as Temple remarked. And Dabney responded, as usual, "Oh, rather!"

As the detained Lower Form sat grinding out Virgil in the Form-room they could hear the shouts of their rivals, through the open windows, from the footer-ground.

The Fourth Form were at practice, and the Remove were at detention exercises. And the Remove were in fearfully bad tempers. They said many things, consisting chiefly of adjectives, to Harry Wharton, for his stunning idea of practising football indoors the previous day.

But it was of little use ragging Wharton. They were detained, and Mr. Quelch was keeping an eye on the Form-room in case any of them should take French leave—and that was the end of it.

Peter Todd was observed to be jabbing his pen thoughtfully into the adventures of the pious Æneas, as if an idea was working in his brain. It was up to somebody to find a way out of the difficulty, and Harry Wharton & Co. had to confess that they couldn't find one.

It was useless making an appeal to Mr. Quelch. He looked at the matter from a Form-master's point of view, and was persuaded that school discipline was a more important matter than football. Which was, of course, rot, as Bob Cherry said emphatically. But there it was.

Billy Bunter, the only fellow in the Lower Fourth who was not detained, was in the Close, working out the problem of the "Home Hints" competition. It was not the answers to the picture puzzles that worried him. They were all easy, and even Bunter could hardly miss them, especially as Peter Todd had helped him. Bunter's problem was to raise the money for the sixpenny postal-orders that had to go in with the solutions.

That tremendous feed at the school shop had left Bunter quite "stony," and even Bunter had not cheek enough to go round on another borrowing expedition. While Bunter grappled with that knotty problem, and the Fourth Form passed and kicked on the footer-ground, the Removites growled and grumbled in the Form-room.

When they were released at last, they had only time to punt about a footer in the Close for a few minutes before dinner.

"Rotten state of affairs!" growled Bob Cherry. "The Fourth are simply slogging at it, and they're getting into form. They'll lick us on Saturday!"

"The lickfulness will be terrific!"

"Must think of some way out," said Harry Wharton. "Dash it all, can't some of you fellows think of something?"

"I've been thinking," said Peter Todd. "It's up to the top study in the Remove to find a way out! I've been thinking!"

"What with?" growled Johnny Bull.

"I've got an idea—if it will work!" said Peter Todd. "I'll tell you after dinner. It will want working out."

After dinner Peter Todd was surrounded by the Co., inquiring. Peter often had brilliant ideas, as his rivals in the Remove admitted. And if Peter could think of some way of getting off detention, he was welcome to call No. 7 top of the Remove, or top of the college, or top of the giddy universe, as Bob Cherry told him.

"It depends on Quelchy," said Peter, as the juniors gathered in the window-recess in the passage.

"I imagine we know that already!" growled Wharton. "If you can't tell us something we don't know, Toddy—"

"I could tell you lots of things you don't know," said Peter imperturbably. "I could tell you you're an ass—"

"Look here—"

"But this isn't a time for discussing commonplace

knowledge, or pointing out the obvious!" went on Peter. "As I said, it depends on Quelch. Now, Quelch isn't really a bad sort of a chap, is he?"

"Oh, he's all right!" grunted Nugent. "Good enough as Form-masters go! He doesn't understand anything about footer. That's all."

"Hard as nails!" said Bob Cherry.

"But he must have some milk of human kindness in him somewhere," said Todd. "He gives Linley extra toot for nothing, and he coaches the fellows sometimes for exams, when we know he'd rather be at work on his blessed literary piffle. Straws show which way the wind blows. I believe that Quelch is a hard nut, but with a soft kernel!"

"Shouldn't wonder!" yawned Nugent. "But it's no good asking him to let us off detention—he won't!"

"My idea is to appeal to his gratitude," explained Pete.

"His what?" demanded all the fellows together.

"Gratitude!"

"You ass!" bawled Bob Cherry. "What has he got to be grateful to us for? For kicking up a row in the common-room?"

"No. Suppose Wharton saved his life?"

The juniors stared at Peter Todd as if fearing that he had taken leave of his senses. Bob Cherry tapped his forehead significantly.

"Quite potty!" he said. "If I were in funds, I'd stand you a strait-waistcoat, Toddy! Does this kind of thing run in your family?"

"You haven't answered my question!" said Peter calmly. "Suppose Wharton saved Quelch's life, wouldn't he let us off detention?"

"I dare say he would," said Wharton. "But what on earth are you driving at, you champion ass? He's not in any danger, is he?"

"Not at present, but if he were in danger, I suppose you'd save his life, wouldn't you?"

"I suppose I would. Are you going to ask him to jump into the river, so that I can pull him out?" asked Wharton.

"He wouldn't do it if I did," said Peter calmly. "But that's how it is. If you saved his life, he'd have to be grateful. You'd ask him to let the Form off detention, and he would do it like a shot. The scheme is simply perfect. The one and only drawback is that Quelch doesn't happen to be in any danger!" said Peter Todd thoughtfully.

"Oh, we could alter that!" said Bob Cherry. "We might inveigle him near the cricket-pitch when your Cousin Alonzo is bowling, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You see the idea?" asked Peter, unheeding.

"Blessed if I do!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Seems to me plain enough. Quelch has got to get into danger, and Wharton is going to save his life. No. 1 Study will save his life—No. 7 Study will provide the danger. See? That will be a fair division of labour."

"What idiotic idea have you got in your idiotic head?" Bulstrode wanted to know.

"That's the idea. I'm going to provide the danger. There are lots of ways. I could borrow one of old Prout's guns, and point it at Quelch. I don't know it's loaded, you see. Wharton rushes up in the nick of time, and knocks it up. Bang! Quelch's life saved, and——"

"And a flogging for you, to begin with, you silly ass!" snorted Bob.

"As if Quelch wouldn't see that it was a put-up job, too, you crass idiot!" said Nugent.

Peter nodded.

"He would!" he agreed. "That was only a rough idea. There are better ones. We could shove him off the raft by accident, and Wharton could fish him out of deep water——"

"And suppose I failed?"

"Ahem!" Peter rubbed his nose thoughtfully. "Then he would be drowned, and, as Shakespeare says, I fear there might be worse come in his place. We don't want to risk changing Quelch for a new Form-master—might make matters worse. And I dare say his people would be cut up, too, if he were drowned in the bloom of youth. No; that would be too risky. It's against the law, too, to drown a Form-master, excepting in cases of strict necessity——"

"Oh, ring off! If you've got any idea——"

"I've got dozens. They're my special line. We shall have to fall back on footpads. Do you remember there was a poaching ruffian hanging about Friardale some while ago—a rotter named Chadd, or Gadd, or something——"

"Jem Gadd?" said Wharton. "I remember. He was arrested for highway robbery, and he's in prison now."

"He might escape, and attack Quelch with a gang of ruffians. You rush up in the nick of time, scatter the scoundrels with terrific onslaught, and rescue Quelch——"

"You unspeakable chump! Do you think they're going to let Gadd escape from prison to please us? And how could I scatter a gang of footpads?"

"Lucky for you kids you've got your Uncle Peter to look after you," said the chief of No. 7 Study pityingly. "There wouldn't be a single idea in the Remove if I weren't here. Why, Coker, of the Fifth, has more ideas in his head than

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NEXT
MONDAY,

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ONE
PENNY.

you have. Don't you see the idea? Have you ever heard of an institution called the Remove Dramatic Club?"

"You frabjous ass——"

"Four members of the Remove Dramatic Club rig themselves up in beards and whiskers and corduroy trousers and things, and waylay Quelch this evening," said Peter Todd. "You are aware he goes down to play chess with the vicar every Thursday evening. He walks back by the lane—jolly dark, that lane. There have been real footpad outrages there before now. Why shouldn't there be another? Four desperate ruffians—you four——"

"Why, you ass——"

"—Rush upon him in the dark, with horrid oaths——"

"Don't know any!"

"—And attack him, breathing fire and slaughter. Wharton happens to be going down to Uncle Clegg's in the village for jam-tarts—arrives in the nick of time—rushes to the rescue like the heroic youth he is—slays the Jabberwock—I mean scatters the ruffianly assaulters—rescues Quelch. Last scene—Quelch rescued, thanks Wharton, with tears in his eyes—tears, manly tears. Wharton modestly says that any fellow would have done it—reminds Quelch that, if he feels overpowered with gratitude, he can show it by letting the Remove off their detention. Quelch jumps at the idea—we're let off—pile into footer practice, and whop the Upper Fourth on Saturday afternoon! How does that strike you?"

The juniors gazed at Peter Todd. They had heard all sorts of wheezes from that cheerful youth. But for sheer hare-brained recklessness, his present scheme certainly took the cake.

"Have you ever visited Colney Hatch, Toddy?" asked Bulstrode.

"No. Why?"

"Well, don't. They'd keep you there."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't you think the scheme would be bound to lead to something?" demanded Peter.

"Yes, rather! Floggings all round, and perhaps the sack," said Nugent. "I don't know what else it would lead to, unless they could put us in prison too."

"Then you won't back me up?"

"You champion ass! No!"

"All serene. I shall work it on my own," said Peter.

"I'm going to try it."

"Look here——"

"Can you fellows think of any other way of getting off detention?" demanded Todd.

"Well, no."

"Then take a hand in this. If we're bowled out, we shall get it in the neck, of course, but we can be careful. Quelch is bound to have some gratitude in his composition somewhere, it stands to reason. And when Wharton has saved his life, at the risk of his own, he will do the handsome thing."

"Oh, you're potty!"

"Think it over," said Peter airily. "If you can think of a better scheme, I'm ready to back you up. If you can't, it's the only way, and I call upon you to back me up. My dear infants, it will work like a charm! Think it over."

And Peter Todd put his hands in his pockets and strolled away, whistling. The chums of the Remove exchanged glances.

"Of all the hare-brained, fat-headed schemes——" said Bulstrode.

"Oh, he's potty!"

"Right off his silly rocker!"

"Only," said Wharton, whose brow was wrinkled in deep thought—"only it's the only way. And if Study No. 7 is ready to take the risk, Study No. 1 won't back out."

"You're not thinking of doing it!" yelled the juniors.

Harry Wharton nodded.

"Yes; I am."

"You're as potty as Todd!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"It's the only way."

"But—but—but——" stuttered Nugent.

Harry Wharton did not listen. He followed Peter Todd. And after that the rivals of the Remove might have been seen in whispered consultation for quite a long time. They were arranging the details of the wild adventure.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Sixpence for Bunter!

"SOME fellows do have rotten luck!" sighed Billy Bunter.

Bunter made that remark to nobody in particular in the junior common-room that evening. He blinked at the Famous Five as he spoke, those cheerful

NEXT
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"THE MOONLIGHT FOOTBALLERS!"

A Splendid Complete Tale of Harry
Wharton & Co. Order Early.

juniors being in a group near him, talking football. They did not seem to hear.

"I say, you fellows, it's rotten, isn't it?" said Bunter.

"Horrible!" said Bob Cherry. "I don't know what you're talking about, but I'll take your word for it. And now shut up, like a good fellow."

"It comes of a chap being really too honourable!" said Bunter. "It's my fault, I suppose, that I've got such a strict sense of honour."

The juniors left off talking football at that, and stared at Billy Bunter. He had succeeded in surprising them.

"A sense of honour!" said Nugent, in amazement. "My only hat! Where did you get it? It's quite a recent acquisition, isn't it?"

"Someone died and left it to you?" asked Bob Cherry. "I should decline it, Bunter. You'll find it a deuced awkward thing, considering your manners and customs."

"Oh, don't be funny!" said Bunter. "I'm dished, all through paying up a debt in a honourable way! And I've lost a thousand pounds by it, and perhaps a magnificent gold watch and a superb diamond pin!"

"You've been paying a debt? What ass was it said that the age of miracles was past?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"And now I'm dished!" groaned Bunter. "I had a quid to send in with the solutions of the picture-puzzles, and I had all the answers right. But I couldn't refuse to pay Mrs. Mimble her account, could I?"

"You've paid Mrs. Mimble with the money you raised for the competition?" asked Harry Wharton incredulously.

"If you can't take my word you can ask Mrs. Mimble," said Billy Bunter, with a great deal of dignity. "I paid her last evening. I couldn't refuse. After all, she's a poor woman, and I owed the money. So I paid up."

"Gammon!"

"Rats!"

"Draw it mild!"

"And now I'm stoney. And if I don't get some money to-night I can't enter the competition at all!" groaned Bunter. "It's the last night. Must be posted to-night, or

it will be too late. Perhaps one of you fellows would stand another tanner?"

"Rats!"

"I really want ten shillings—"

"Make it ten pounds," suggested Bob Cherry kindly. "You'd be just as likely to get it."

"But upon the whole, as I know I've got all the answers right, I should be pretty sure of the prize if I sent in a single set of pictures," said Bunter; "and it's too late, now, to get the extra copies, too. I suppose you've got a sixpence you don't want, Wharton?"

"Not this evening."

"I say, Cherry, there's still time to go down to the post-office and get a postal-order, on a bike, if you lent me sixpence."

"You haven't got a bike!"

"Oh, that's all right. I could take Wharton's."

"Could you?" said Wharton grimly.

"Did you say you were going to lend me sixpence, Nugent?"

"Not at all!" said Nugent pleasantly. "I didn't speak."

"Well, I'm dished! All through being too honourable, too!"

"If you've been honourable, and paid a debt without having it screwed out of you, Bunter, it's worth sixpence," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "I'd pay sixpence any day to see you do it. But draw it mild, old man. We can swallow lots of things, but there's a limit, you know."

"This is an age of credulity," said Peter Todd solemnly. "People believe in vaccination, and the origin of species, and the marvellous discoveries of modern science. But there's a limit. Nobody could get your yarn down, Bunter."

"It's true!" said Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Make it easier for us," implored Bob Cherry. "Tell us you owe Mrs. Mimble anything—up to any amount—but don't tell us you've paid her!"

"You can ask Mrs. Mimble," said Bunter loftily. "Look here, I'll make a trade with you, as Fishy says. Alonzo can go to the tuckshop and ask Mrs. Mimble if I paid her exactly twenty-one shillings and sixpence yesterday evening. I can rely upon Alonzo."

"Thank you very much, my dear Bunter," said Alonzo amiably. "I should have the greatest of pleasure in obliging you."

"If Alonzo comes back and says that Mrs. Mimble says I did pay her, you hand me sixpence, Wharton!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is it a go?" demanded Bunter.

"My dear ass, if Mrs. Mimble says you did pay her twenty-one shillings and sixpence, without her having to complain to the Head first, I'll not only lend you sixpence, but I'll bike down to Friardale and get the postal-order for you," said Wharton, laughing.

"Done!" exclaimed Bunter promptly.

"Oh, rats! You know very well you didn't do anything of the sort!" exclaimed Wharton. "If it's a joke, I don't quite see where it comes in."

"Alonzo, you go to Mrs. Mimble and ask her if I paid twenty-one shillings and sixpence last evening, and also whether she had to complain to the Head to make me pay her!" said Billy Bunter, with dignity.

"Oh, certainly, my dear Bunter!"

And the obliging Alonzo walked out. Peter Todd shouted after him:

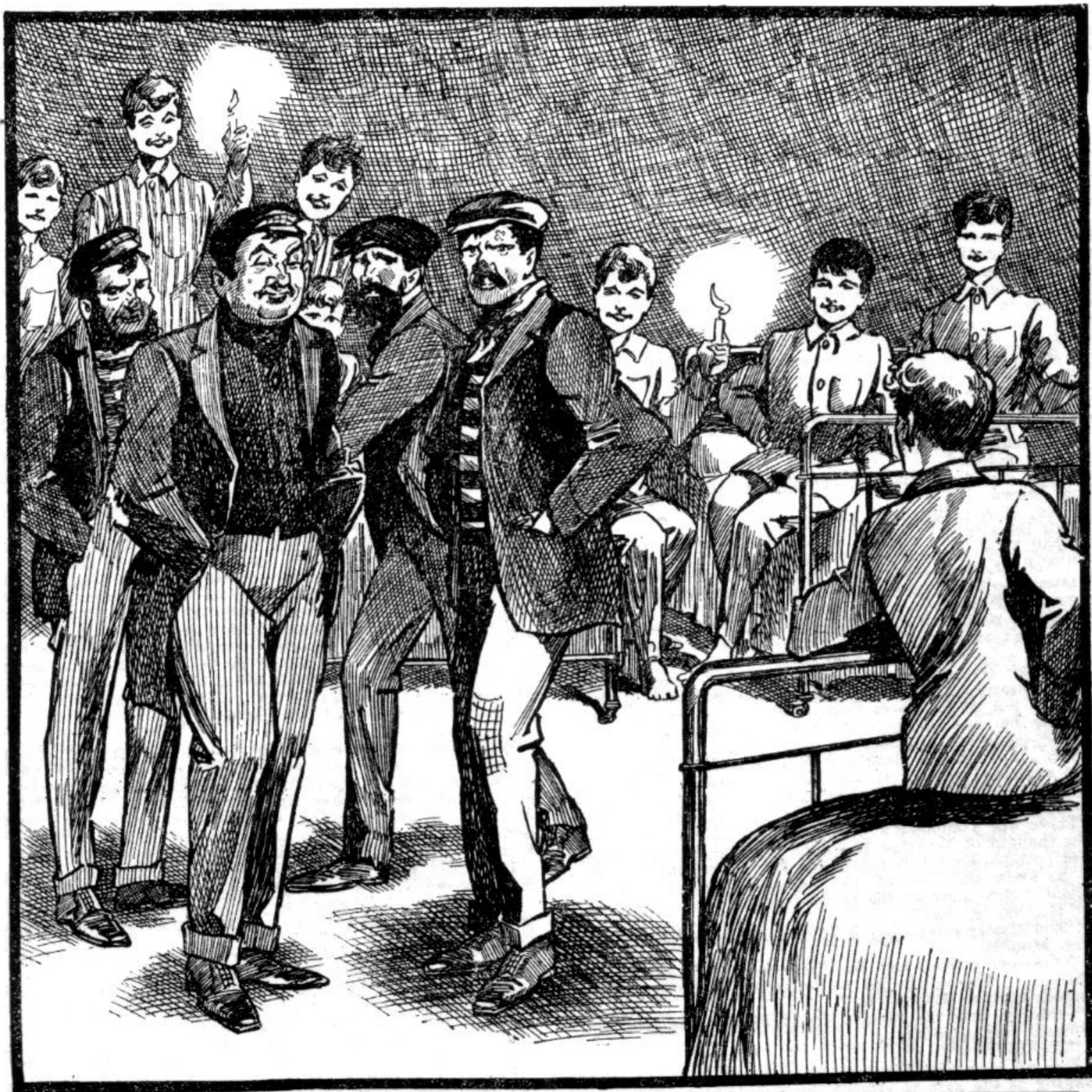
"Alonzo, you silly ass!"

"Yes, my dear Peter?" said Cousin Alonzo, turning his head in at the doorway.

GOOD TURNS—No. 9.



A couple of Magnetites, finding the water-tub empty, proceed to fill it from the nearest well, thus doing a good turn both to the farmers and to the thirsty cattle!
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When they had finished dressing, the juniors seemed undoubtedly four of the most unpleasant persons it would be possible to meet on a dark road at night. "My hat! You look a set of pretty pictures!" said Bolsover major. "Blessed if I should like to run into you on a dark night!" (See Chapter 11.)

"Don't go, you chump! Bunter's pulling your leg! He wants you to go down to the tuckshop for nothing, you jay!"

"I am sure Bunter would not play such a reprehensible trick, my dear Peter. I trust that I shall find that his statement is correct," said Alonzo.

"Br-r-r-r!" growled Peter. "You'll have your walk for nothing, you fathead!"

"I trust not, my dear Peter."

And the kind Alonzo walked out. The juniors laughed. Every fellow in the room fully believed that Bunter was pulling the leg of the esteemed Alonzo. But Bunter sat with an expression of lofty dignity on his fat face, while the juniors chuckled. He looked, as Bob Cherry remarked, just as if he had been telling the truth; and at the idea of Billy Bunter telling the truth the Removites roared again.

Five minutes later Alonzo Todd came back into the common-room, with a pleased smile upon his kind and gentle face.

"Well?" shouted the juniors.

"Bunter's statement is quite correct," said Alonzo, with a beaming smile.

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"Wha-a-a-at!"

"Mrs. Mimble states that Bunter paid her twenty-one shillings and sixpence yesterday evening, for tuck, and she had not complained to the Head."

"My only hat!"

"Great pip!"

"Howly Mother av Moses!"

"Begad!"

"Well, that takes the cake!"

The Remove were simply astounded. Alonzo's word, of course, was not to be doubted. He could easily be deceived, certainly; but Mrs. Mimble would not have deceived him. It was evident that, amazing as it was, Bunter's statement was correct. Billy Bunter, the champion Ananias of Greyfriars, had told the truth! Billy Bunter, the fellow who was never known to "square up," had squared up at a time when he particularly wanted the money for another purpose! It was incredible—but it was true! The fellows could only ejaculate and gasp.

"Well, you've earned the sixpence, Bunter," said Bob

Cherry, when he recovered his breath. "If this means that you're turning over a new leaf, it's worth the tanner!"

"It's up to Wharton now to keep his word!" grinned Vernon-Smith.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I'll trouble you to bike down to Friardale and get me a sixpenny postal-order, Wharton," said Billy Bunter, in an extremely dignified manner.

"Oh, I'll do it!" said Harry. "But—but—but I'm blessed if I can understand it! Were you ill when you paid Mrs. Mimble?"

"Ill? No!"
 "Not wandering in your mind?"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"
 "Well, I'm off," said Wharton. "It's all right, Toddy—I shall be back in lots of time for what we've arranged. You shall have your postal-order, Billy!"

And Wharton went out. Billy Bunter grinned a fat grin of satisfaction. The thousand quid were safe, after all—and perhaps the magnificent gold watch and the superb diamond pin. But the Removites did not easily recover from their astonishment. A little later, some of them, having business in the tuck-shop—in the shape of consuming jam-tarts and ginger-beer—saw Mrs. Mimble, and questioned her.

"Bunter really paid you twenty-one and six yesterday, Mrs. Mimble?" Bob Cherry asked. "You didn't dream it?"

Mrs. Mimble smiled.
 "No. You are the second who has asked me," she said.

"Master Todd came in and asked me."
 "He really paid you?" said Nugent.

"Yes, indeed!"
 "And you didn't have to complain to the Head?" asked Tom Brown.

"No, Master Brown."
 "Or threaten to?"
 "Not at all!"

"Well, it beats me!" said Johnny Bull. "To think of Master Bunter deliberately walking in and paying up an account! Well—"

"But it wasn't an account," said Mrs. Mimble, in surprise.
 "Wasn't an account!" exclaimed Bob. "What was it, then?"

"Master Bunter paid for the things he had," said the good dame, puzzled. "He ate the things here, and paid for them. I would not let him have them until I had seen the money, because he does not pay his debts. I never give Master Bunter credit now; he does not pay."

The juniors stared blankly at Mrs. Mimble. The mystery was explained now. It was not a debt that Bunter had paid; he had simply taken the money he had raised for the competition into the tuck-shop, and "blued" it on a feed.

There was a moment's silence, and then there was a roar. The thought of Wharton pedalling down to Friardale to get that postal-order for Bunter made the juniors shriek. Well as he knew the Owl of the Remove, Wharton had been "done" once more by the astute Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!"
 "Did Master Bunter say it was an account he paid?" asked Mrs. Mimble.

"Yes—or, rather, no; he didn't say so!" gasped Bob Cherry. "The villain led us to believe so, but he didn't actually say so. Ha, ha, ha!"

"And he gets the tanner, and Wharton gets the ride!" grinned Vernon-Smith.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 Half an hour later Wharton came in, and he found Bunter waiting at the gate to receive the postal-order. He put up his bike, and went into the School House, and was surprised by the burst of merriment his appearance evoked as soon as he entered the common-room.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "What's the joke?" asked Harry, looking round.

"Ha, ha! You are!" yelled Bob Cherry. "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "But what's happened? What the—"

Bob Cherry explained, between gusts of laughter. When he understood, Wharton went to look for Bunter. But Billy Bunter was not to be seen then. He was locked up in his study, finishing his picture-puzzles for the competition in "Home Hints," and he declined all invitations to unlock the door.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.
 Out of Bounds!

MR. QUELCH put on his coat and hat, and came towards the door of the School House. Half a dozen Remove fellows, who were hanging about the passage, said good-night respectfully to their Form-master. Mr. Quelch, as usual, was going down

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to the vicarage to play his game of chess with the vicar, and he would not be back before the bedtime of the Lower Fourth.

Mr. Quelch returned the salutations of his boys very cordially. He had detained them for two hours after lessons that day, and he intended to do the same on the morrow, according to his promise; but that was no reason why he should not be kind and cordial to them. They watched the Form-master disappear into the dusk of the Close, and then looked at one another.

"Well, he's gone!" said Harry Wharton.
 "Still thinking of that dotty scheme?" asked Bob Cherry.

"I've settled it with Todd!"
 "Quelchy will soon settle it with you—later!" said Bob.

"It's a risk to be run," said Peter Todd. "My dear chap, it's the only way. When duty calls to brazen walls—"

"Oh, rats!" said Bob. "I think it's a duffy idea."
 "If you want to stay at home—"

"Want a thick ear?" asked Bob pleasantly. "I'm going to help, of course, if Wharton's made up his mind. But I think it's a duffy idea, all the same."

"Don't you start thinking," said Peter cheerily. "It's not really in your line at all, you know."
 "I'll start punching a silly duffer's head soon—that's in my line!" said Bob Cherry darkly. "How many of us are going to play the giddy goat, Harry?"

"Five—four bearded ruffians, and one heroic rescuer," said Wharton, grinning. "I'm the heroic rescuer. You and Nugent and Bull and Todd are the fearful ruffians!"

"Must take the beards and things up to the dorm," said Peter Todd. "We can hide them under the beds. We go out in costume."

"How's Wharton going to explain being out of bounds when he rescues Quelchy?" asked Frank Nugent.

"He's been to Uncle Clegg's to get some tarts. He had better do it, too—it's strictly necessary to stick to the truth," said Todd. "He'll have lots of time to go to Clegg's, and then come back and keep an eye on the vicarage gate for Mr. Quelch. Quelchy never leaves before half-past ten at the earliest when he's there—sometimes eleven, I believe. The lane will be quite deserted—excepting for four desperate ruffians. Wharton will follow in his father's footsteps—I mean, he'll follow Quelchy along the lane, at a safe distance, and chip in at the right moment. It's as easy as—as—"

"As getting the sack!" said Bob.
 "Oh, rats!"

When the Removites went up to bed, the "props" of the dramatic club that were required for the expedition were already concealed in the dormitory. Wingate saw lights out, and nothing could have exceeded the nice and orderly manners of the Remove. It occurred to Wingate that detention was having a good effect on the unruly Lower Fourth, as he left the dormitory after putting out the light. He would have changed his opinion if he had seen the heroes of the Remove about ten minutes later.

Candle-ends were lighted in the Remove dormitory, a rug being laid along the door to keep the light from leaking out into the passage.

In the glimmering light of the candles, the famous Co. made their preparations for the expedition.

All the Remove knew of the intended jape, and they all wished it well; but, as Ogilvy remarked, they "had their doots." But Peter Todd did not allow himself to have any doubts; and Harry Wharton was determined that, wherever No. 7 Study led, No. 1 Study would not be afraid to follow.

Bob Cherry and Nugent and Bull had their misgivings, but they were quite ready to back up their leader. And, wild as the idea was, there was a thrill of excitement in it that made it worth while, from the young rascals' own point of view.

The "props" of the dramatic club were dragged out, and the four ruffians helped one another to assume a decidedly ruffianly aspect.

With their faces daubed with grease-paint, and beards and moustaches fastened on, they certainly looked like anything but Greyfriars fellows.

They put on rough clothes outside their own clothes, in order to increase their bulk. When they had finished, Harry Wharton's companions seemed undoubtedly four of the most unpleasant persons it would be possible to meet on a dark road at night.

"My hat! You do look a set of pretty pictures!" grinned Bolsover major, as he surveyed them, sitting up in bed. "Blessed if I should care to run into you in a dark lane! I suppose you're going to take bludgeons or life-preservers or something?"

"Well, we don't want to hurt Quelchy," said Johnny Bull. "Suppose he resists?" grinned Vernon-Smith.

"He wouldn't be ass enough to resist four footpads!"
 "He might. He's an obstinate beast, you know!"

"Well, we shall rush him over," said Todd. "He won't have any chance. Then Wharton will rush to the rescue, and it will be all over in a tick."

"Look out for Quelch's stick!" said Tom Brown. "He carries a jolly big stick!"

"Oh, blow his big stick!" growled Peter.

"Well, if you got a sockdolager on the cabeza with it, I guess it would make you yaup!" said Fisher T. Fish. "Just a few, I reckon!"

"Put that into English and I'll answer you!" snorted Todd. "What a blessed set of croakers you fellows are! This is the biggest wheeze of the whole term—it's the catch of the season."

"It will be the catch of the season when Quelch catches you," chuckled Skinner; "and what you will catch afterwards will take the cake!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bow-wow!" said Peter Todd.

And he contented himself with that classic response.

"I say, you fellows," chimed in Bunter, "if you're seen going out you'll be taken for tramps or burglars or something! Gosling will set his dog on you—"

"We sha'n't be seen, ass!" said Harry Wharton. "You fellows ready?"

"Yes; ready, O King!" said Bob.

"Get the rope out, then, Inky!"

Hurree Singh and Tom Brown took charge of the rope. It was a thick and knotted rope, easy enough for active juniors to descend into the Close. Harry Wharton climbed out of the window first, and lowered himself down. One end of the rope was tied to a bed-leg in case of accidents. Peter Todd and Nugent and Bull and Bob Cherry followed their leader down the rope. Wharton helped the last of them to land, getting a hold on his hair—as he supposed. There was a growl:

"Don't pull my whiskers off, you blessed idiot!"

Wharton chuckled.

"Sorry, Bob; I forgot you had a beard! All right up there!"

Wharton shook the rope as a signal to the juniors above, and Tom Brown and the nabob hauled it in. The light in the Remove dormitory was already out.

From a good many windows in the School House lights were gleaming out over the Close. Avoiding the light, the juniors stole away in the direction of the school wall. Once over that, and in the road, they were safe. They were within a dozen feet of the wall, when their luck gave out. A light gleamed out from under the elms, and Gosling, the school porter, loomed up.

"Hallo! Who's that?" gasped Gosling. "Burglars! My heye! 'Elp!"

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Peter Todd. "What rotten luck!"

Gosling turned to run. He had sighted a gang of dangerous-looking ruffians in the Close, and naturally he was alarmed. The juniors ran for the wall. They clambered over it in hot haste, and dropped into the road.

In the Close there was a buzz of voices. Gosling had given the alarm, and at his wild and whirling tale Wingate and half a dozen of the Sixth came rushing out.

"Hawful-looking ruffians—regler tramps—in the blessed Close!" gasped Gosling. "Wot I says is this 'ere—you'd better telephone for the perlice—"

"We'll find the tramps first," said Wingate. "I dare say we can handle them—if they exist outside your gin-bottle!" he added, under his breath.

Gosling and the Sixth-Formers looked for the tramps. But there was no trace of them to be discovered in the Close.

"They're gone!" said Gosling. "Frightened orf, I suppose. They must 'ave come in p'r'aps to sleep in the Cloisters. I found a tramp there once. They was awful-looking ruffians—murderers, I should say! One of 'em had a revolver!"

"Well, they're gone!" said Loder. "Let me give you a tip, Gosling—"

"Thank you kindly, Master Loder—"

"Leave the gin alone for a bit!" said Loder.

And he walked away laughing, leaving the school-porter open-mouthed. Gosling had not expected that kind of tip, and the insinuation made him almost speechless.

Meanwhile, the four ruffians who had alarmed Gosling so much were well on their way to the village. In the shady lane the disguises were quite good enough, though in the daylight they would scarcely have passed muster. Harry Wharton separated from the others, hurrying on to the village, in order to go to Uncle Clegg's.

If he saved the Form-master's life, Mr. Quelch could hardly fail to excuse him for being out of bounds, and it was necessary that he should be able to say where he had been. So he went to Uncle Clegg's, and expended a shilling in tarts.

Peter Todd & Co. stopped in the darkest part of the lane, and took cover among the thickets that grew beside the road at this point.

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MONDAY:

"THE MOONLIGHT FOOTBALLERS!"

A Splendid Complete Tale of Harry
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NEXT
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ONE
PENNY.

Sooner or later the Remove-master would come striding along, and then—

Perhaps the others had some doubts about the judiciousness of what they were going to do. But Peter Todd hadn't any doubts. He never had!

Harry Wharton left Uncle Clegg's with the bag of tarts in his hand, and came down the lane. He paused at the spot where a path led up to the vicarage. Mr. Quelch would come down that path, and turn into the lane, and it was easy enough to follow him, and chip in at the right moment.

Indeed, the whole arrangement seemed likely to go like clockwork. Every detail had been arranged, and it had worked like a charm so far, excepting for the encounter with Gosling in the school Close.

Wharton waited patiently under the shadows of the trees. Eleven o'clock chimed out from the village church.

Then there was a footstep on the path. Harry Wharton drew back further into the shadows. The well-known form of the Remove-master—easily recognisable in spite of the gloom of night—swung out of the path into the lane, and set off at a brisk walk for Greyfriars.

"Now for it!" murmured Wharton.

And he followed the Form-master down the lane, keeping in the shadow of the trees, with eyes and ears on the alert.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Not According to Programme!

"LOOK out!" whispered Peter Todd.

"Here he comes!"

"Ready!"

The four dreadful-looking ruffians were crouching in the shadows of the bushes. They were watching the lane eagerly. Through the deep dusk under the hanging trees the form of the Remove-master appeared in sight.

Mr. Quelch came on without a suspicion.

It was true that there had been a footpad outrage in that very lane not so long ago; but Mr. Quelch was not troubled with nerves, and he had a stout walking-stick in his hand, which he would have used without hesitation in case of need.

The quartette in the shadows did not quite like the look of that stick. They could not help feeling that a rap on the head from it would be no joke. And if Mr. Quelch believed himself to be attacked by footpads, certainly he would hit out.

"Get hold of the stick first!" murmured Peter.

The Form-master came striding on.

He was almost abreast of the ambush now, and the juniors' hearts almost failed them. The seriousness of the undertaking seemed to be more impressed upon their minds at that moment than at any time previously. They were going to lay hands on their Form-master, and a more serious proceeding could hardly be imagined. They came very near to letting the Form-master pass on his way. But Peter Todd gave the signal, and leaped suddenly forward.

"Halt!"

"Your money or your life!"

Mr. Quelch started back as the four ruffians rushed out of the shadows. Peter Todd, taking advantage of the sudden surprise, grasped the walking-stick. But Mr. Quelch's hand closed on it like a vice, and Peter could not jerk it away.

"What—what—" stuttered Mr. Quelch.

They were all round him now.

"Hands up!" gasped Nugent.

"Oh, you idiot!" breathed Peter Todd.

"What—what—what does this mean?" Mr. Quelch stuttered.

An attack by footpads in the lane would not have been surprising. But Mr. Quelch knew that real footpads do not say "Hands up!" or "Halt!" Those expressions belong to the delightful literary productions imported from New York for the delectation of the youth of England.

Mr. Quelch dragged at the stick, and Peter dragged the other way. He was very uneasy as to what might happen if Mr. Quelch started hitting out with that stick.

"'Ave 'im down!" yelled Peter, skilfully disguising his voice. "'Ave 'im down and out 'im if he don't shell hout, my covies!"

"You rascals!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"'And hover your rhino, and we won't 'urt yer!" said Peter.

"I refuse to do anything of the kind!"

"Then we'll out yer! Give 'im a welt over the kisser with yer jemmy, Jem Gadd!"

"Down 'im!" roared Johnny Bull.

There was a sound of rapid footsteps on the road.

"Hallo! What's the row?"

It was Harry Wharton's voice.

He played his part well.

"Mr. Quelch! Footpads! All right, sir; I'll help you!"

And he rushed to the rescue.

Biff, biff, biff!

Yells of pain rose from the ruffians—real yells of real pain. It was no good doing things by halves, Wharton thought. Mr. Quelch was very keen, and if he handled the footpads gently, the Form-master would "spot" the trick at once. So Wharton hit out right and left, and the ruffians simply rolled round him.

Bump, bump, bump, bump!

All four of them were down.

"Run fur it, covies!" yelled Peter Todd.

And the ruffians made a scrambling rush to escape.

But that was where Mr. Quelch chipped in. He had his stick free now. He made a rush at the nearest of the ruffians as he fled, and aimed a swipe at him. Harry Wharton had just time to stumble in the way, and divert the Form-master's stroke, or Johnny Bull would have felt the weight of the walking-stick.

Johnny Bull was safe in the bushes the next moment. Mr. Quelch uttered an impatient exclamation, and dashed after Peter Todd. Todd had stumbled against a trailing bough and tripped, and as he leaped up to run, Mr. Quelch's left hand was fastened on his collar, and with his right he flourished the stick over Todd's head.

"Don't resist, you scoundrel, or I will stun you!" he exclaimed. "Struggle, and I shall strike you, I warn you!"

Mr. Quelch evidently meant business. Peter Todd, in utter dismay, ceased to struggle. The stick was over his head, and he did not want to have his head cracked.

"Lemme go!" he murmured. "I'll out yer!"

"Hold your tongue, you blackguard!"

Mr. Quelch dragged his prisoner back into the road in triumph.

"I have caught one of the rascals, Wharton," he exclaimed.

"I am afraid the others have got away."

Wharton's feelings on beholding the prisoner may be imagined. He did not share the triumphant satisfaction of the Form-master.

But his wits did not desert him.

"Shall I hold him, sir?" he said eagerly.

"I am afraid you are hardly strong enough, my boy. I will take care of him. We will take him immediately to the police-station in Friardale," said Mr. Quelch. "Keep still, you ruffian, or I shall stun you with this stick. I should not have the slightest scruple about doing so, I assure you."

Peter Todd groaned. He knew that. And the Remove-master's grip on his collar was like the grip of a vice—there was no chance of getting away.

"I am much obliged to you for coming to my help in this manner, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch. "The rascals would have robbed me. But how came you out of the school at this hour? You should have been in bed."

"I—I—I hope you'll excuse me, sir, as—as it's turned out. I've been down to Uncle Clegg's. I—I've got some jam tarts. I've dropped them now, though. I'm afraid they won't be much good to eat—"

"You had broken bounds, Wharton!" said Mr. Quelch sternly.

"Ye-es, sir!"

"That was very wrong."

"Yes, sir. I've been to Uncle Clegg's—"

"Could you not wait till to-morrow morning for your tarts, Wharton, and buy them at the school shop?"

"You—you see, sir—"

"I see that you have acted very foolishly and recklessly, Wharton, in breaking bounds at night. You might have fallen into the hands of these footpads yourself."

"I—I didn't think there was any risk, sir."

"But there was risk, as you see. However, as you so bravely came to my rescue, I suppose I must not say anything more about your conduct. It was certainly fortunate for me that you were here," said Mr. Quelch. "It was remarkable how you succeeded in felling those ruffians. It was really remarkable. If you had not got in my way I should have felled one with my stick as he was escaping. However, we have captured one. Since you are out of your bed, Wharton, you may as well stay out a little longer, and help me take this scoundrel to the police-station."

"Ye-e-es, sir."

"We had better get along quickly, too, in case his associates should return—there are three of them. Take out your handkerchief and tie this man's hands!"

The prisoner wriggled.

"Don't resist, my man," said the Remove-master sternly.

"I should have no hesitation in striking you senseless."

"Oh, blimey!" murmured the prisoner. The game seemed

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"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

up but Peter Todd was not a fellow to despair, and he played his part to the end.

"Tie his hands securely with your handkerchief, while I hold him, Wharton."

"Ye-es, sir."

"I shall be glad to see this man more plainly at the police-station," went on Mr. Quelch. "I do not believe he is an ordinary footpad, nor were the others. They used some expressions of speech that were quite out of keeping with the character. It looks to me as if they are desperate rascals who have taken to robbery, and have assumed the character of tramps for the purpose. Indeed, one of the voices seemed quite familiar to me, as if I had heard it before."

"Is it possible, sir?"

"Indeed, yes! But this rascal may be made to give the names of his accomplices, and probably they may be arrested before morning."

"I—I—I hope not—I mean, I hope so, sir."

"Have you tied his hands?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Then come along."

Mr. Quelch, slipping his stick under his arm, and not letting go the prisoner's collar for a second, felt the bound wrists, and uttered an exclamation.

"Wharton—his hands are quite loose—you have tied this handkerchief very carelessly. His hands are not really fastened at all!"

"Oh!" gasped Wharton.

"Tie it again, more securely, please. Come into the light of the lamp, and I can watch and see that you make no mistake again."

The prisoner was marched into the light of the road-lamp at the cross-roads, and there, under Mr. Quelch's keen inspection, the hands were tied again. There was no help for it—the knot had to be made secure, and Peter Todd was a helpless prisoner.

"That is better!" said Mr. Quelch. "Now come on! What a ruffianly-looking scoundrel!" he added, scanning the prisoner in the dim light of the lamp. "But I fancy that this is not his natural appearance at all—that beard is undoubtedly false. There! I thought so!"

Mr. Quelch jerked at the thick, shaggy beard, and it came off in his hand.

The Form-master uttered a sharp exclamation.

The chin was so smooth as the beard was removed, and the mouth so youthful in appearance, that the Form-master could hardly fail to see that it was a boy, and not a short man as he had supposed, who stood before him.

"What—what! It is a boy! This is worse than I thought! Some young rascal in the village taking to highway robbery in disguise—whole gang of them, in fact. The police will look very sharply into this. I should not wonder if I know this boy by sight. The moustache is certainly false also, and the eyebrows, in all probability."

Mr. Quelch grabbed at the moustache, and the eyebrows, and the hair in turn. They all came off. Then the Form-master stuttered with amazement. In spite of the grease-paint on his face, the features of Peter Todd of the Remove were quite recognisable in the light, now that his hirsute adornments were gone.

"Todd!" gasped Mr. Quelch blankly. And then he roared. "Todd!"

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Quelch is Not Grateful!

"TODD! Todd! Todd!"

Mr. Quelch gasped out the name over and over again, as if his tongue refused to utter any other sound, or as if it were some weird incantation he was bound to go through.

"Todd! Todd! Todd!"

Peter Todd stood grimly silent. The game was up now, with a vengeance. Harry Wharton had turned quite pale. The great scheme for rousing Mr. Quelch's gratitude, and basing an appeal upon it, had gone very wrong. It was highly improbable that Mr. Quelch would be grateful now. What he felt upon the subject was certainly not likely to be gratitude.

"So it is you, Todd!" gasped Mr. Quelch at last.

"Yes, sir!" groaned Peter.

"Are you Peter Todd, or Alonzo Todd?"

"Peter, sir."

"I might have known it. Peter Todd, you have disguised yourself as a ruffianly tramp, and attempted highway robbery! Good heavens! I can scarcely believe in such iniquity."

Todd groaned again. This was worse than ever. It occurred to him that the footpad business might be taken

seriously, and not as a jape at all. The chief of Study No. 7 wished fervently that he had not been quite so brilliantly clever, and that that marvellous scheme had never entered his fertile brain.

"Highway robbery!" said Mr. Quelch. "This is terrible! What a fearful disgrace for the school—for you will be sent to a reformatory, Todd."

Peter Todd almost grinned at the idea.

"If you please, sir—"

"You may untie his hands, Wharton. I shall not take him to the police-station now—but back to the school. This matter must be dealt with by the Head, and with as little public scandal as possible. Who were your companions, Todd? Did they belong to Greyfriars, or have you become connected with some gang of young ruffians in the vicinity?"

"They were Greyfriars chaps, sir."

"Their names?"

Todd was silent.

"Very well! I shall soon discover. Come with me!"

"If you please, sir, if you'll let me explain—"

"You can explain at Greyfriars. Have you any other clothes on under those things?"

"Yes, sir; my Etons."

"Then take off those clothes and throw them away."

Peter Todd obeyed. The valuable properties of the Remove Dramatic Club were left lying in a ditch. Mr. Quelch made Peter dip his handkerchief in the ditch and wipe off the grease-paint as much as possible. He did not want to create a sensation when he marched the prisoner into the school.

The two juniors walked home with Mr. Quelch in a state of utter disconsolate dismay.

The fat was in the fire now—with a vengeance. They could clear themselves of the imputation of starting in life as amateur Dick Turpins and Jack Sheppards, certainly, by confessing the whole truth. But how was Mr. Quelch likely to receive such a confession? There was trouble ahead for the heroes of the Remove; upon that point, at least, there was not the slightest doubt.

But it was impossible to say a word to Mr. Quelch now. He declined to listen to any explanation. They reached the gates of Greyfriars, and Gosling let them in. Gosling blinked curiously at the two juniors.

"Do you know if any other Remove boys are out of bounds, Gosling?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"No, sir," said Gosling. "But there 'ave been goings-hon 'ere, sir. I found four 'orrible-lookin' ruffians in the Close, sir, some time ago, and I was near murdered. We 'unted for them 'igh and low arterwards, sir, but they was gone."

"Ah!" said Mr. Quelch. "I think I shall not have to look far for them."

And he walked on to the School House, followed by Wharton and Peter Todd. They entered the House, and the Form-master opened his study door.

"Todd, go into my study! Wharton, you may return to your dormitory! I am equally obliged to you for rendering me help, Wharton, although it turns out that my assailants were your own Form-fellows."

Wharton coloured. Before he could reply, Mr. Quelch turned away, and went to the door of Wingate's study and tapped. The captain of Greyfriars was not yet in bed, and he opened the door to Mr. Quelch.

"Will you go to the Remove dormitory, Wingate, and ascertain whether any juniors are absent, or have just come in?" said Mr. Quelch.

"Certainly, sir!" said Wingate, in surprise.

"Bring any such juniors to me."

"Yes, sir."

Wingate went up to the Remove dormitory. He opened the dormitory door, and found that the room was lighted. Candle-ends were burning on several washstands, and three juniors were scraping and scrubbing grease-paint from their faces. The rest of the Form were sitting up in bed, all asking questions at once.

Wingate stared in at the scene, too amazed to speak for a moment.

"Where on earth's Toddy?" Johnny Bull was saying, as he scraped at his ruddy face. "Why doesn't he come in?"

"Perhaps Quelchy has caught him!" chuckled Snoop.

"Oh, rats! Peter wouldn't let himself be caught," said Nugent.

"Didn't you see what became of him?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"Of course not. We scattered when we ran. We didn't get together till we were at the school again," said Bob Cherry. "I suppose Todd's taken another way round."

"If he's caught—"

"Oh, he's not caught!"

"He is caught!" said Wingate grimly.

The juniors jumped.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" gasped Bob Cherry. "What are you doing up at this time of night, Wingate? Why haven't you gone to bed?"

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"You three are to follow me to Mr. Quelch's study," said Wingate.

"Oh, lummy!" groaned Johnny Bull.

"Peter Todd is there already," said Wingate; "and so is Wharton."

"Did Quelchy catch Todd?" gasped Nugent.

"Apparently; Todd came in with him and Wharton. What have you young rascals been up to?"

"Playing the giddy ox!" said Bob Cherry. "Playing the howling ass, Wingate! I knew it was a potty idea, and I said so all along. This is where we get it in the neck."

"Well, that's right enough, anyway," said Wingate, with a grin. "Towel your faces, and come along, you young asses!"

Bob Cherry and Nugent and Bull followed Wingate downstairs, leaving the Remove dormitory in a buzz of excited voices.

Mr. Quelch was in his study, waiting grimly for their arrival. Harry Wharton was still there. He had not taken advantage of Mr. Quelch's kind permission to return to his dormitory. It was sink or swim together for the chums of the Remove, and Harry Wharton had no intention of keeping out of whatever punishment fell upon his comrades.

Mr. Quelch looked up with glinting eyes as Wingate shepherded the three Removites into the study.

"Thank you very much, Wingate," said Mr. Quelch. "Please remain. I wish you to hear, as well as myself, what these boys have to say."

"Very well, sir!"

"Now!" said Mr. Quelch, in a terrific voice, fixing his eyes upon the four amateur footpads. "You four boys attacked me in the lane, disguised as tramps."

"My hat!" murmured Wingate.

"Yes, sir!" groaned the four Removites together.

"You intended to rob me?"

The juniors could not help grinning at that suggestion, in spite of the seriousness of their position.

"Not at all, sir!" said Frank Nugent.

"Oh, no, sir!" said Peter Todd.

"It was only spoof, sir," said Bob Cherry. "Merely a joke, sir."

Mr. Quelch frowned darkly.

"A joke!" he exclaimed. "A joke to disguise yourselves as tramps, and to attack your Form-master and demand his money?"

"The young rascals!" ejaculated Wingate.

"I am not surprised that you are astonished, Wingate. I am astounded myself—simply astounded! It is almost incredible. If I had not actually caught Todd in the act, I could never have believed it."

"But—but they couldn't have intended to rob you, sir," said Wingate. "It was surely some idiotic joke. Peter Todd is always playing some mad prank."

"I should certainly prefer to believe that it was some mad prank," said Mr. Quelch, "but I fear that is impossible. They rushed upon me in the darkness, and demanded my money. Indeed, I should have been very roughly handled if Wharton had not come to my rescue. He acted very bravely, being as much deceived as to their real identity as I myself was. Todd, this is no laughing matter."

"Sorry, sir!" murmured Peter.

"I—I have something to confess, sir," stammered Wharton. "I—I—I think it is best to make a clean breast of it, sir."

"You, Wharton! Do you mean to say that you knew anything about this matter? Ah! I remember now that you prevented me, by accident as I believed, from knocking down one of my assailants with my stick—and you did not tie Todd's hands." Mr. Quelch began to see light. "Did you know it was Todd all the time?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then what does it all mean?"

"It—it was all spoof, sir," stammered Harry. "It was only a got-up attack, sir. The chaps wouldn't have hurt you for anything, and—and they weren't going to rob you, sir. They did it so that I—I could rush to the rescue, sir!"

"What?" Mr. Quelch almost shouted. "Do you mean to say, Wharton, that this whole disgraceful affair was planned, in order that you might obtain a little cheap glory?"

Wharton turned crimson.

"Oh, no, sir! Not that. I—I wanted to please you, sir."

"To—to please me!" stuttered Mr. Quelch.

"That was the idea, sir," said Peter Todd.

"Please me! You thought it would please me to be attacked by four supposed footpads?" said the Remove master, hardly able to believe his ears.

"Not that, sir. We thought it would please you if Wharton saved your life, sir," said Todd meekly.

"Saved m-m-my life!"

"Yes, sir."

"That was how it was, sir," said Harry. "I know we acted like silly asses, sir. I wanted to rescue you, sir, so that you would be grateful."

"Grateful!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"That's it, sir."

"And why did you wish me to be grateful?"

"Then I was going to ask you to let us off detention, so that we could get in some footer practice for our match on Saturday, sir," said Wharton.

Mr. Quelch was silent for a full minute. He was utterly dumbfounded. Wingate turned away his head, so that the Form-master should not see him grinning. He was accustomed to wild japes among the Removites. But this one, as he said afterwards to a crowd of hilarious seniors when he told them the story, fairly put the lid on.

"Wharton!" gasped Mr. Quelch at last. "You—you amaze me!"

Mr. Quelch was amazed—and he was very angry. But he was relieved, too, at finding that his worst suspicions were unfounded. It was decidedly a relief to learn that the chums of the Remove had not really started in the footpad business, and that it would not be necessary after all for four Greyfriars fellows to be packed off to a reformatory.

"We're sorry, sir," said Peter Todd—"awfully sorry."

"I have no doubt that you are sorry now," said Mr. Quelch grimly. "If your absurd and hare-brained scheme had succeeded, you would not have been sorry, I presume?"

"Well, no, sir," Peter admitted.

"No, I presume not. I hardly know what to say to you. This is unheard of—astounding!"

"It was my idea, sir," said Peter. "I started it—the other fellows only backed me up. They didn't really think it was a good idea, either."

"Oh, bosh!" said Wharton. "We were all in it together, sir."

"Yes, rather, sir."

"You are all equally to blame," said Mr. Quelch. "I am glad that the matter is not so serious as I feared. But you will realise yourselves that you have acted outrageously, and that only an extremely severe punishment will meet the case."

The juniors rubbed their hands in painful anticipation.

"This mad, foolish scheme must have been known to the whole Form," said Mr. Quelch.

"Well, it wasn't exactly a secret, sir."

"Pray be frank, Wharton. The whole Remove knew of it, and were prepared to benefit by it in the impossible event of success?"

"Well, yes, sir."

"I thought so. And the whole scheme was planned for the purpose of playing football."

"You see, sir, it's the first match of the season on Saturday," Wharton explained. "We took on the Upper Fourth for the first match, really more as a practice match than anything else, because we knew we could lick them. If we don't get any practice, though, they may lick us, and we shall start the season with a defeat."

"I approve of a manly devotion to healthy games," said Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir; I—I thought you'd understand."

"But I do not approve of sacrificing every other consideration to football," went on Mr. Quelch grimly. "I think it is necessary to impress upon your minds that football cannot be the first and only consideration. I shall therefore punish you, and the whole Remove, in a way that will fully impress upon your minds the fact that it is necessary to preserve some balance of mind upon that subject. I shall not report this matter to the Head or ask him to flog you."

"Thank you, sir!"

"I shall not cane you—"

"Oh, sir, you are very kind!"

"I shall punish you in a way that, under the circumstances, will probably prove more effective. The football ground will be placed out of bounds for the Remove for the next month."

"Oh!"

It was a gasp of dismay from the juniors. Mr. Quelch had hit them very hard! Canings, gatings, even floggings, did not come anywhere near that as a punishment. All matches scratched for a month, all practice tabooed for the same time. It meant the wreck and ruin of the football season for the Remove. The juniors gazed at Mr. Quelch as the Gorgon's unfortunate victims might have gazed at the Gorgon. They seemed to be turned to stone. Mr. Quelch's grim voice went grinding on:

"Football will be forbidden to the Remove for that period. The ground will be out of bounds, and matches away will not

be allowed. This, I think, will fully impress upon your minds the necessity of acting with more discretion in regard to football. I trust you realise that."

"Oh, sir!"

"Now you may go to bed!"

The juniors went without another word. They were crushed.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Great Expectations!

THE next day all Greyfriars knew the story.

The whole school roared over the adventures—or, rather, misadventures—of the amateur footpads.

The punishment that had fallen on the Remove was severe; but it was generally agreed that the young rascals deserved it.

Excepting, of course, in the Remove. They were furious.

That day Peter Todd's life was scarcely safe in the Remove.

Peter Todd had originated that splendid scheme. Peter Todd, with his brilliant idea, had succeeded in getting the Remove debarred from playing the great winter game for a period of four weeks! The Remove told Peter Todd what they thought of him and his ideas. They told him in the plainest possible English. Indeed, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, for once excited out of his Oriental urbanity, told him in Hindustanee—finding English too feeble to express his feelings. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's remarks in his native tongue were incomprehensible to the rest of the Remove, but they sounded fearful. Even little Wun Lung, usually the meekest of "kids," raised his heel against the unfortunate thinker-out of great schemes, and slanged him in Chinese.

And the exasperated juniors did not content themselves with slanging. They bumped Peter Todd in the passage, they wrecked his study, they chased him in the Close. With all his nerve, Peter Todd did not venture into the common-room that evening; and he took his life in his hands, so to speak, when he went to the Remove dormitory at night. Peter Todd had been looked upon as a leader, and a dangerous rival for Wharton. Now, even Snoop and Bunter jeered at him. Like Lucifer, Son of the Morning, he had fallen from his high estate, and great was the fall thereof.

On Saturday, with that dread sentence in full force, the Remove could not play their match with the Upper Fourth. Temple & Co. played the Third Form, and beat them. Temple assured the Removites, in an airy way, that the result would have been just the same if they had played the Remove—a remark that led to a free fight in the junior common-room. As Bob Cherry said, they had to put up with Quelch, but there was no reason why they should stand any swank from the Fourth. And they didn't. Temple, Dabney & Co. were bumped round the common-room, and ejected on their necks, which was some satisfaction to the Removites.

The next day being Sunday, football was off, anyway. But on Monday the Removites groaned in anguish of spirit.

After lessons, they saw the fellows of the other Forms trooping off to the playing-fields, and watched them with envious eyes.

"You kids have got it in the neck this time," Coker of the Fifth remarked. "But if kids will play the giddy goat, what can you expect?"

They bumped Coker, Fifth-Former as he was, and Coker's observations on the subject came to a sudden termination.

But at this juncture the British climate helped to console the Removites. Rain came on, and the footballers were driven indoors. At any other time, the juniors would have said things about the rain equal to the things they were saying about Peter Todd. But now it was a pleasure to see it.

"Well, if we can't play, nobody else can, that's one comfort!" said Nugent, with gloomy misanthropy.

"But what are we going to do?" said Bob Cherry in despair.

"Dunno; unless we kill Todd!"

Fortunately, perhaps, there were rainy days for a long time—weather in which only ducks could have played football.

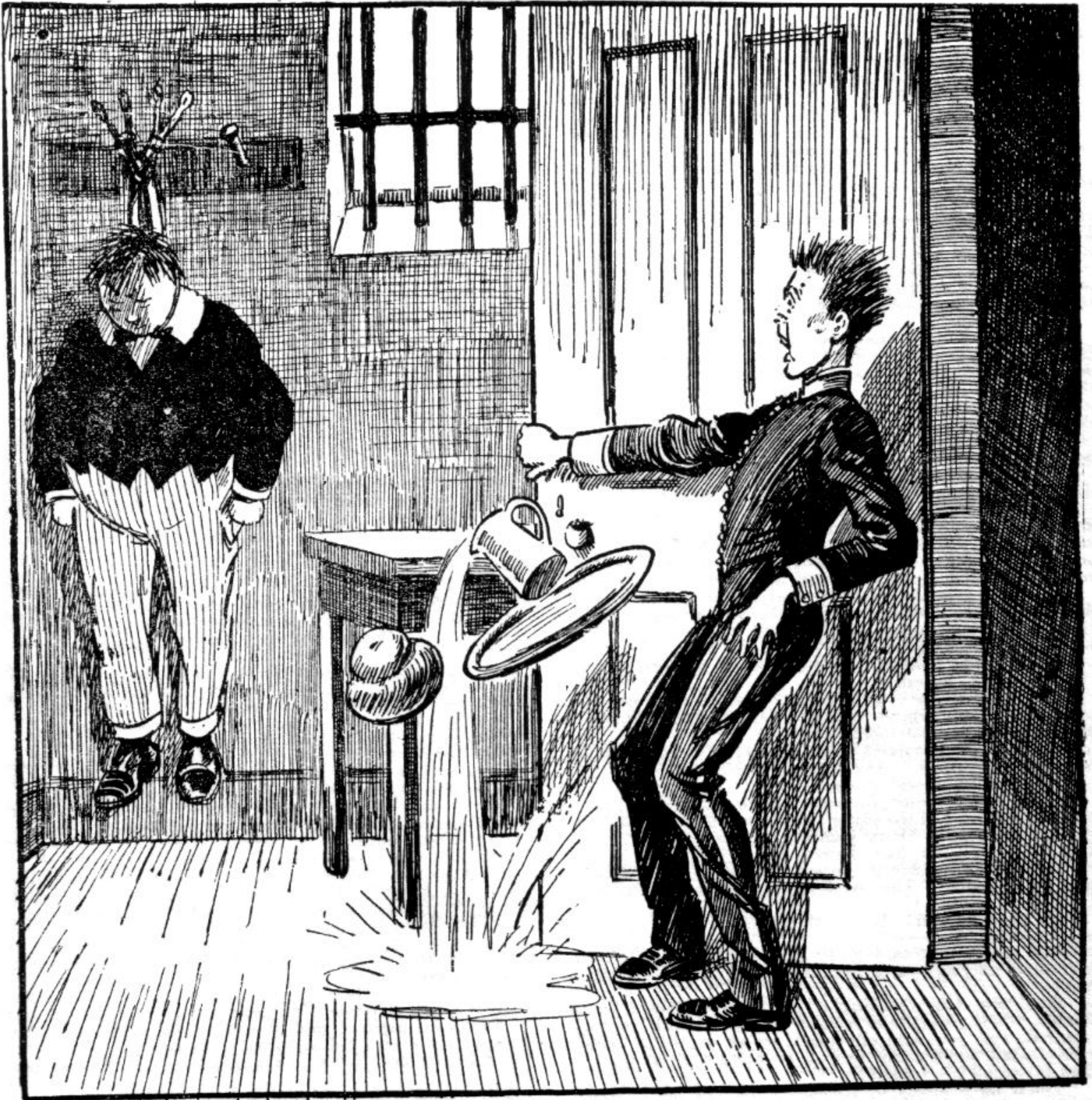
But the rain was not likely to last for four weeks; and when it was over, what was to be done?

That was the problem the Remove had to solve, and it was a harder problem than any they could have "dug up" in Euclid.

In these gloomy days there was only one fellow in the Remove who seemed unaffected by the misfortunes that had fallen so thickly on the form.

That one was Billy Bunter.

Billy Bunter was not much of a football player, anyway; and, as he frequently stated to all who would listen, he was



The tray slipped from Joskin's nerveless fingers and crashed to the floor at his feet as he caught sight of the dummy figure hanging in the corner. Frightened out of his wits he tore out of the door. "Help! Master Wynn 'ave hanged himself! He's dead! Help!" (A startling incident contained in "FATTY WYNN'S HUNGER-STRIKE," the splendid complete school story of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's, by Martin Clifford, which is contained in this week's issue of our grand companion paper, "THE GEM" LIBRARY. Ask your newsagent to-day to reserve "The Gem" for you. Out on Wednesday. Price One Penny.)

kept out of the Form eleven by personal jealousy on the part of the inferior players.

Bunter was not thinking about football. He was thinking about the competition in "Home Hints." While the other fellows were grumbling, or ragging Peter Todd, and Wharton was scratching matches, Billy Bunter was counting his chickens before they were hatched—a little way he had.

After all his efforts to raise funds for that competition, he had finished by sending in only one set of solutions; but as he was quite sure that he had them all right, that really did not matter.

From Bunter's manner, it might have been supposed that the thousand quid were already in his trousers pocket, the magnificent gold watch in his waistcoat, and the superb diamond pin in his necktie. The Owl of the Remove spent

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the money over and over again—in imagination. He tried to induce Mrs. Mimbble to run a long account, to be paid in full when his prize arrived; but Mrs. Mimbble did not see it, somehow.

Neither did the fellows of whom Bunter sought to raise little loans, to be repaid with interest when the thousand quid arrived.

Nobody but Bunter believed that the fat junior would receive anything of the generous sum offered to a confiding public by the proprietors of "Home Hints."

It was in vain that the Owl of the Remove pointed out that the competition was conducted on the fairest possible lines—and pointed out a statement to that effect in the paper itself. Than which, of course, there could be no more complete proof.

NEXT
MONDAY:

"THE MOONLIGHT FOOTBALLERS!"

A Splendid Complete Tale of Harry
Wharton & Co. Order Early.

"Well, you wait and see!" snorted Bunter to the doubting Thomases. "You'll jolly well come round when I get the thousand quid!"

Whereupon a crowd of Removites sang in chorus the old comic song:

When I get some money—
I'll get in the Upper Ten.
When I get some money,
When, when, when, when, when!"

And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh contributed the observation that the whenfulness was terrific.

"Best thing about the 'Home Hints' Competition is that they don't keep you waiting a dog's age," said Bunter, later in the week. "I shall know in a few days whether I'm among the winners—and a bit later how much the prize is. I expect I shall get the whole thousand quid. I don't suppose anybody else has got 'em all right. In that case, of course, I shall be entitled to the gold watch and the diamond pin too. And I'll tell you fellows what I'll do to make old Quelchy come round, and let us get back to the footer."

"Oh, ring off!"

"I'll make him a presentation of the gold watch," said Bunter impressively. "We'll all go to him in a giddy deputation, and present the gold watch to him as a mark of the esteem of the Form. After that, he will have to go easy. Then, of course, it must be understood that I captain the Form team in the next match—and in fact for the rest of the season. Chap can't be expected to give away magnificent gold watches for nothing."

"I shall be giving away magnificent thick ears for nothing, if you don't shut up," said Harry Wharton irritably.

"I'm accustomed to jealousy from inferior players," said Bunter. "But in the interests of the whole Form, I think that kind of thing ought to be put aside for once."

At this point Bob Cherry introduced a boot into the discussion, and Billy Bunter departed in a hurry.

But a few evenings later the Owl of the Remove came dashing into the common-room, his fat face ablaze with excitement, waving a paper over his head.

"I say, you fellows—hurrah!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the row?" growled Bob.

"Good news—hurrah!"

"You don't mean to say Quelchy's let us off about the footer?" exclaimed Harry Wharton, with a gleam of hope.

Bunter snorted contemptuously.

"Footer! Who's talking about footer? I've had a letter from 'Home Hints.' I've won—hip, hip, hurrah!"

"Rats!" said several voices.

"It's a fact!" yelled Bunter. "Here's the letter in the editor's own fist, and the editor's decision is final. You know that; it said so in 'Him Hunts'—I mean 'Home Hints.' I've got it! Ha, ha, ha! Hurray!"

"I shouldn't wonder if the ass got the answers right!" said Peter Todd. "They were all as easy as winking, and I did them for him!"

"Oh, really, Todd! If you think you're going to claim my thousand pound—"

"You silly owl!" said Peter Todd. "I wouldn't touch your prize or you with a forty-foot pole! I was stating a fact!"

"Well, I'm not whacking it out with anybody!" said Bunter. "All you fellows refused to help me with the cash required, and you naturally can't expect anything. However, I shall stand a big feed to all the Form—at least, I shall invite all my friends!"

"You'll have plenty of friends if you get the thousand quid," grinned Vernon-Smith. "Have they sent you a cheque in the letter?"

"Ahem! No. This is the letter, according to programme, sent to all the winners to put 'em out of their suspense," explained Bunter. "There are more winners than one, so I sha'n't get the whole thousand quid."

"I thought not."

"I shall get a good whack in it. It seems that my answer wasn't first or second opened, either, so I'm afraid I've missed the gold watch and the diamond pin. I'm sorry, for the sake of you fellows. I should have presented that watch to old Quelchy, and—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There may be four or five other winners sharing in the thousand quid," said Billy Bunter thoughtfully. "Still, that would leave my whack a couple of hundred pounds. That's a lot of money!"

"More than you'll ever get, I guess!" remarked Fisher T. Fish.

"Oh, really, Fishy—"

"Let's see the letter," said Snoop.

"I don't mind, Snoopey! Here you are! Read it out, if you like!"

Sidney Snoop took the letter, and read it aloud to an

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interested crowd of fellows. The letter was in short and businesslike phrases. It ran:

"W. G. Bunter,—All solutions correct. Amount of share in the £1,000 prize stated in next number of 'Home Hints.' Price one penny."

Billy Bunter stuffed the official letter into his waistcoat-pocket, and grinned with satisfaction. Skinner felt in his pockets.

"Like a ginger-beer, Bunter?" he said pleasantly.

"What-ho!" said Bunter.

"Trot along, then!"

Bunter trotted along, and Skinner stood the ginger-beer generously. Snoop dropped into the tuckshop by chance, and stood jam-tarts. Fisher T. Fish dropped in, too, and guessed that he'd got a half-a-dollar to spare if his friend Bunter cared to sample the pastry. His friend Bunter did!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Rise and Fall of Billy Bunter!

BILLY BUNTER was very interesting to watch during the next few days.

He was one of the winners!

He was sure that there could not have been more than three or four, and he estimated his share of the thousand quid at from two hundred to two hundred and fifty pounds.

Even at the lowest computation, say a hundred, it would be a big sum of money, Bunter declared. And his friends agreed with him.

Nobody had ever noticed before that Bunter was popular. Nobody had noticed anything in his character to make him popular.

But as the flowers open to the sunshine, so Bunter's good qualities came to light in the genial glow of coming wealth.

A good many fellows said openly that Bunter had been misjudged, and that he was really, at bottom, a very decent fellow indeed.

Snoop recalled affectionately the time when Bunter had been his study-mate, and said how sorry he was to part with old Bunter when old Bunter decided to go back to No. 7. Billy Bunter heard that statement with some surprise.

"Why, you told me I could go and eat coke!" he said.

"That was only my little joke," explained Snoop, smiling.

"You said it was a jolly good thing you weren't going to have me in your study any more!" persisted Bunter.

"I was hurt at your wanting to go, when I always felt such a sincere friendship for you," said Snoop solemnly. "I felt it was unkind."

"Oh, that was it, was it?" said Bunter.

"That was it, Bunter, old man! I'm a very sensitive chap, and I don't often get very friendly; but when I thoroughly admire a fellow's character, I take to him. That's how it was," explained Snoop.

"That's all right, then," said Bunter. "I shall certainly put you on the list for the feed, Snoopey. Have you got a bob about you now?"

Snoop smiled feebly.

"I—I've got a tanner!" he said.

"That's all right!" said Bunter. "I'll make that do. I'll return it when I get my prize. Thanks!"

And Bunter bore down on the tuckshop with Snoop's last sixpence.

Billy Bunter was raising little loans on all sides on his expectations. A good many fellows thought it a good investment to lend a shilling or a half-crown to a fellow who would shortly be rolling in money.

Fisher T. Fish, who was always a great business man, lent Bunter a pound, upon a written undertaking that he was to receive thirty shillings for it when Bunter's prize arrived. Fisher T. Fish regarded that as a good stroke of business, worthy of the best traditions of the Fish family, of New York. Bunter would have accepted any number of loans on the same conditions, but Fisher T. Fish was the only amateur financier in the Remove.

Bunter was considerably exasperated by the fact that Harry Wharton & Co. did not pay court on the strength of his great expectations. As a matter of fact, the famous Co. would not have paid court to Bunter if he had been rolling in real, instead of imaginary, gold. And they smiled to themselves as they listened to Bunter spending his money in advance. They saw Bunter go up like a rocket, and they were fully prepared to see him come down like the stick.

Bunter spent his little loans as fast as he raised them. He complained, with reason, that it was hard to be short of money when he was receiving a spanking big cheque the following week. He had heard that heirs to fortunes go to the Jews when they want money, to raise it to their

expectations, so Bunter went to Newland, of the Remove, who belonged to that ancient and honoured race.

Newland, of the Remove, did not seem to see it, however. He had plenty of money, but he declined to lend it to Bunter.

Bunter explained and expostulated in vain, and was bundled neck and crop out of the study. He rolled along the passage into No. 1 Study, looking very dusty and rumpled and wrathful.

The Famous Five were at tea there, and they grinned at the sight of the dusty and rumpled prize-winner.

"I say, you fellows," said Billy Bunter, "I suppose you know I'm standing a thumping big feed when my prize comes?"

"I think I've heard something about it," agreed Wharton. "Haven't you mentioned it before once or twice?"

"Ahem! Well, I'm going to ask you chaps."

"You are too good, Bunty!"

"Not at all! I'm the kind of chap to stand by fellows who stand by me!" said the fat junior. "I've been thinking out a good idea. I shall be standing a series of extensive feeds out of my prize. I shall ask you fellows to all of them. Until my prize comes, I'll come to your feeds. That's a good idea, isn't it?"

"First-rate!" said Nugent.

"Good! Then I'll have tea now!"

"No, you won't!"

"Eh?"

"Can't be did!" said Nugent. "We've only got enough for ten, and there's five of us, so there wouldn't be enough for you, anyway, Bunter. And we're not going to let you say that we're sucking up for your rotten prize, which is what you would say if we let you come to tea. And we don't want you! So buzz off!"

"Look here, Nugent—"

"Travel!"

"You'll jolly well come sucking up to me fast enough when I get my money!" roared Bunter.

"When, when, when, when, when!" sang Bob Cherry softly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"See the door?" asked Wharton. "Get the other side of it, please!"

"Yah! Rotters! I shall scratch your names off my list at once! I don't care to associate with such rotters, anyway!"

Bob Cherry picked up a ruler, and Bunter whipped out of the study. He put in his head to hurl a final Parthian shaft at his enemies.

"Yah! Beasts! When you come sneaking round for my money, I shall turn up my nose at you! Yah!"

"It won't turn up much further than it is turned up at present, will it?" asked Nugent, in surprise.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah! Beasts!"

Billy Bunter slammed the door, and rolled away. He found comfort in Snoop's study, however. Sidney James Snoop had had a remittance, and he was quite willing to entertain his chum Bunter. Snoop was casting his bread upon the waters, in the full expectation that it would return, after many days, buttered. Indeed, if Billy Bunter did receive two or three hundred pounds, there was no doubt that he would make the money fly, and it would be a good thing for all the fellows who were pally with Bunter.

The fame of the prize-winner had spread outside the Remove—fellows in the Fourth and the Shell were very civil to Bunter. Potter, of the Fifth, asked him to tea—the first time Bunter had had the great honour of having tea with the Fifth. Coker looked rather grimly at him, but Potter and Greene were hospitality itself, and they accepted Bunter's generous invitation to a series of extensive feeds. Hobson, of the Shell, lent Bunter his camera, and did not grumble when Bunter returned it broken. Fry, of the Fourth, was seen walking arm-in-arm with Bunter, and standing him ginger-beer and doughnuts at the tuckshop.

Expectation was at a great height by the time that long-expected number of "Home Hints" was published.

Billy Bunter had ordered a copy to be sent to him immediately it was received at the bookseller's, and when it arrived at Greyfriars Bunter was surrounded by a crowd of interested friends as he opened it.

Half the Remove, and a great many other fellows, gathered round Bunter then, and the Owl of the Remove enjoyed the limelight he was getting into thoroughly. He had always been an important personage in his own eyes, and now he was growing equally important in the eyes of the Lower School. It was a case of the king coming into his own, as it were.

"Let's see it, Bunter!" said Snoop.

"Let's see the amount, old man!"

"Read it out, old fellow, will you?"

"Don't press on old Bunter, you chaps! Give him room!"

Billy Bunter opened the magazine, and blinked over the

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pages in search of the lists of prize-winners and the amounts of the prizes.

"Lemme see! 'Hints on the Home—How to Make a Dainty Dish out of Potato Parings.' That's not it. Our Grand Serial—'Lost in Liverpool Street.' Ahem! The Children's Page—'Little Minnie and the Mollygogs.' Ahem!"

"Let me help you, Bunter!"

"Shall I find it for you, old fellow?"

"Keep back a bit!" said Bunter, with dignity. "Don't shove a chap!"

"Keep back!" said Skinner. "Don't shove Bunter!"

"Ah, here it is!" said Bunter. "Great Picture Puzzle Competition! The magnificent gold watch awarded to the first-opened correct solution has been forwarded to—'Hem! The superb diamond pin has been awarded to—'Hem—hem! My hat! What is this tremendous list of names and addresses for?"

Bunter could not help staring. Two whole pages of "Home Hints" were taken up with names and addresses of prize-winners. Billy Bunter felt a slight faintness come over him. He blinked over the page, and read:

"Correct solutions were sent in by 61,248 readers. This extraordinary result is a signal proof of the popularity of our competition. Unfortunately, it has the result of reducing each individual share of the prize to somewhat small dimensions. Each of the 61,248 winner takes an equal share in the thousand pounds, each share, therefore, amounting approximately to 4d. (fourpence). The actual amount of the share is slightly under 4d., but a sufficient sum has been added to make up each share to this amount, and fourpence in stamps will, therefore, be posted to each of the winners."

The paper fluttered from Bunter's hands.

His fat face was a study.

The amount of his prize, variously estimated from one hundred to two hundred and fifty pounds, had shrunk to—fourpence!

It had cost 7½d. to enter the competition.

The net result was, therefore, a loss of 3½d.

Bunter's face was enough to show the crowd of fellows what the result was like. But Skinner picked up the paper and read it out. There was a yell:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Fourpence!"

"Four D! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Rolling in quids!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Rolling in fourpence! Ha, ha, ha!"

"You owe me a quid, I guess, Bunter!" shouted Fisher T. Fish.

"You owe me ninepence!"

"You owe me a bob!"

"You owe me three bob!"

Creditors crowded round Billy Bunter. But the Famous Five bore down on him, and rescued him from the excited juniors. They bore him away to No. 1 Study, leaving the crowd yelling with laughter or with wrath, according to whether they had or had not lent Bunter money on his expectations.

Fisher T. Fish followed them, loudly demanding a quid; and they turned on him in the passage and smote him, and the voice of Fisher T. Fish was heard no more.

"Oh, crumbs! I—I say, you fellows, what a sell!" groaned Bunter, as they plumped him into the study arm-chair. "Did you ever hear of such a rotten sell? Oh dear!"

The unfortunate prize-winner was almost weeping. His house of cards was knocked over; his castles in the air had crumbled to pieces. That series of extensive feeds, so fondly planned, would never, never come off.

But the chums of the Remove were kinder than all the new friends who had been so affectionate towards Bunter of late. They were really sorry for his disappointment, and they tried to cheer him up.

"Never mind, old man," said Harry Wharton; "I've had a remittance to-day—"

Bunter pricked up his ears.

"We're just going to have a jolly good feed—"

Bunter ceased to frown.

"A really ripping spread—ham and tongue and cold chicken and cake and tarts—"

Bunter smiled.

"And you're going to be our guest!"

Bunter grinned.

And Bunter spread himself at the feed in No. 1 Study, and distinguished himself greatly; and as the good things vanished under his mighty onslaughts the cheerfulness returned to the fat face of Bunter the Prize-winner.

THE END.

Our Grand New Serial Story!

MYSTERIA

By **SIDNEY DREW**, Prince of Adventure Story-tellers.

READ THIS FIRST.

Ferrers Lord, the famous multi-millionaire, is surrounded in his magnificent London residence by his friends Ching-Lung, Barry O'Rooney, Gan-Waga the Eskimo, and Prout & Co.—the stalwarts of the millionaire's famous submarine, the Lord of the Deep. After a period of inaction there is a rumour afloat that Ferrers Lord is about to start upon one of his great expeditions again. Meantime, the millionaire himself is devoting all his attention to a curiously carved narwhal's tusk which he has picked up in an East-End curio-dealer's shop. The tusk proved to be hollow, and to contain some gold coins, and a small wad of parchment, which bears a strange message from the sea. This tells of a mysterious floating island inhabited by strange monsters, which Ferrers Lord determines to go in search of. Thurston immediately christens the phantom island "Mysteria" in advance. All hands board the Lord of the Deep, which slips out of its secret cave on its mysterious new quest. Ferrers Lord makes for an uncharted island, which he intends to use as his headquarters, and, arrived there, he lands with a party to make the acquaintance of the inhabitants, leaving Prout in charge of the launch. Prout captures a wonderful talking cockatoo, which has evidently escaped from some vessel, but which is now enrolled as one of the crew of the Lord of the Deep as James Jimson, A.B. Back on the submarine, the adventurers at last catch sight of "Mysteria." The mysterious island—bare and ghostly-looking—appears to be floating in the sky. It is a mirage, but, as Ferrers Lord points out, there can never be a mirage without a substance. The millionaire determines to start in pursuit of the floating island at once, but a terrific volcanic eruption occurs, in the course of which a blazing fire-ball falls on the Lord of the Deep, passing clean through her from deck to keel. The millionaire runs the submarine aground in the bay of the nearest island, and sends Ching-Lung and Thurston with a party of men in the launch to cut some logs. On landing the party are confronted by a curious figure in a red tam-o'shanter, who warns them that the island belongs to Germany. They ignore the warning, and Redcap—by name Julius Faber—returns with a party of ragged-looking ruffians, and forces them to leave the island by swimming, under cover of the fog. Ching-Lung, remaining behind, is captured and imprisoned in a cave, but, escaping, runs further into the cave, with his enemies in pursuit. Suddenly there is a dull splash in the darkness as the prince plunges headlong into some black pit of poisonous water.

(Now go on with the story.)

Gan-Waga Brings Back the News—Where is Ching-Lung?

Gan-Waga, monarch of swimmers, was the first to reach the vessel. The fog still lingered round the disabled submarine, but the Eskimo found the ladder and climbed on board. People were calling to each other, and the rain was lashing down. Clawing his way up the slope by means of the rail, Gan saw the wheel-house dimly, and floundered towards it.

"Dat's yo', Tommy?" he cried loudly. "Where yo' goes to, Tommy hunk? Comes quicks, old hamfaces!"

Gan, fully imagining that Ching-Lung, Joe, Barry O'Rooney, and Rupert Thurston were close behind him, was not at all excited. Prout's bald head gleamed under the electric light.

"By honey!" said the steersman. "Why don't you make a noise? Why don't you yell louder, so's I can 'ear you? What's the good of whisperin' like that? 'Ave you got a sore throat, blubberbiter?"

"I dids shouts," retorted Gan-Waga. "We've hadses to swims fo' our lives, Tommy. De dirty bad 'nough whitemans on de islands shoot at us."

Prout tapped the ashes out of his pipe against the heel of his boot.

"Till another like that," he growled, "and I'll knock you flat. White men, by honey! Shootin' at you, by honey! Who did it, and what did he do it wi'? Was it a pea-shooter that Mr. Rupert used? Oh, go hon!"

"Ahoy, ahoy! Throw a line!" came a cry from the sea.

The steersman narrowly avoided being shot violently down the slope. Although, with the swift fall of the out-going tide, the submarine was beginning to settle, the incline was very treacherous.

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"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

"Hallo, hallo! Go easy, sir!" roared Prout. "Don't bump into us!"

He imagined that the launch had returned, until Barry's voice grumbled upwards through the fog.

"Don't bump into us! Bedad, d'yez think Oi've got a full-soized, threble-harrdened ram fixed to the ind of my nose loike a first-class cruiser? Phwat's the man bleatin' about? Where's the laddher? Ochone! Oi can't howld on in this blissid current. Hilp! Be jabbers, Oi'm bound for the open say."

"This way, Barry!" cried Thurston's voice. "Where are you, man?"

"Pickin' wathercress, sor," replied the Irishman. "All roight. Oi've got howld of something that sames nailed down fast. Ahoy! Are yez there?"

The fog melted away before the breeze, and the amazed steersman saw Thurston, Joe, and Barry O'Rooney clinging to the anchor-chain. The current was rapidly becoming stronger. Prout spun a rope through the air.

"Where Ching-Lung? Where my Chingy?"

Gan-Waga was the first to miss the prince. He set up a whimpering wail. The men who were dragging ropes over the cliffs stopped in their work to look down. As the swimmers came up the ladder, a dinghy, pulled by Ferrers Lord, shot across the bay.

"What's the matter, Thurston?" called the millionaire.

"Have you sunk the launch?"

"No, but it's as good as sunk," said Rupert. "Come aboard, Lord. I've got some unpleasant news for you."

"Where my Chingy? Oh, bad 'nough, bad 'nough awfuls! Where my Chingy?" wailed Gan-Waga.

Swiftly making fast the little boat, the millionaire sprang up the swaying rope-ladder. His handsome face darkened as Thurston spoke.

"Monstrous!" said Ferrers Lord. "But what have you done with the prince?"

"We thought he was with us. He had got some idea in his brain to bring the man he captured here. You know what he is. Hold Gan, boys," he added warningly.

Prout wrapped his strong arms round the Eskimo, who was about to leap over the rail. Anxious eyes were strained towards the channel between the Columns in hopes of seeing the prince, and an angry murmur ran from lip to lip.

"You say they are more than twenty strong, and well armed?"

"Be jabbers, Oi counted nineteen of the ugly spalpeens wid my own oies, sor," broke in Barry, "and there was more of 'em ahint us. They had rifles and revolvers by the luk of ut, iv'ry unwashed blackguard of them!"

"Sound the recall," said Ferrers Lord.

It was a matter of time to ferry the men back to the vessel in the little dinghy. Many journeys to and fro had been made before they were all back in their quarters. Still there was no sign of Ching-Lung, and Gan-Waga, in an agony of despair, had to be constantly shadowed and forbidden the deck.

"Well, Honour," said Ferrers Lord, "what do you advise?"

The laconic engineer replied with another question:

"Are we safe here?"

"By Jove, that was what I was wondering myself!" exclaimed Rupert. "They mean mischief, I'm certain, and they could rake us from three sides without showing themselves. Look at this?" He hastily sketched a rough diagram on the back of a chart. "This is the direction the river takes. Here are the rocks where the brutes are ambushed, and here is where we landed. The dinghy will hold five at a pinch, but if they have scented us out, they hold the whip hand. They'd shoot every man in her before we got to the bend here. It's a real death-trap."

Ferrers Lord's face betrayed nothing. Undoubtedly the vessel was in a dangerous position, and thoroughly exposed to any attack from the shore. Worse than that, they could not retaliate. Worse than all, if the desperadoes who claimed the island of the Twin Pillars as their own elected only to keep up a steady sniping fire, one man alone could render any attempt to repair the ship utterly impossible.

The loss of the launch was the heaviest blow. With it they could have run a dozen or more men round the island and made a rear attack; with nothing better than the little dinghy their hands seemed tied.

The tide had sunk so low that the Lord of the Deep lay practically on an even keel. Honour turned on his heel.

"Where are you going, Hal?"

"To work. We may manage to do something from inside. A diver can squeeze through the rent. Water stops bullets."

"Staunch old fighter!" said Ferrers Lord, smiling. "He'll never give in. If he can only partially stop the leak, our friend the enemy will fall on troublous times. I rather like the adventure. There is a freshness about it, a little touch of romance." He picked up a red crayon, and rubbed it over the map of the island. "That looks much prettier, Thurston," he laughed. "Much more homelike. It will be dark in twenty minutes. I shall want you then, Thurston."

Looking for Ching-Lung.

Ferrers Lord had tinted the map of the island red, the colour that denotes a British possession. The moment the millionaire's tall figure had vanished down the ladder, Prout entered the wheel-house.

"By honey, these is cheerful games, sir!" he grunted, touching his cap to Thurston.

"Do you think so?"

"I does—over the left, sir!" said Prout. "I'd like to go ashore and do some man-eatin'. They've nailed Ching for sartin, but it ain't that as worrits me. He's grease, and they can't hold him if they tied him up wi' fish-ooks! Did you see 'em smash my beautiful launch, sir?"

"I did, Tom."

"Then, by honey, I'll smash some ribs and 'eads, too, for that!" growled the steersman, clenching a mighty fist.

In the gathering darkness something grey swept past on the current. For a long second Thurston experienced a thrill of dread.

"It's only a beastly dead goat, sir," said Prout, leaning over the side. "There she goes. Drat the smelly thing! If it ain't gone and 'ooked its 'orns on our cable. Pough! It didn't kick the bucket yesterday, either. S'pose I shall 'ave to shift it."

Stepping into the dinghy, he poked the loathsome carcase clear with a boathook, and let it float out to sea. The two men on watch were as silent and motionless as carved figures.

"By honey, I wish a few of them beasts was goin' wi' you to keep you from bein' lonely," said the steersman viciously. "They're only good for sharks' food. Wonder what the chief means to do?"

The red blaze in the sky died out. There was a fresh breeze, very welcome after the stewing heat of the day.

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"Catch, Tommy," called the carpenter from above, "and fix 'em!"

He handed down the little mast and sail and a couple of spare rowlocks. Prout's eyes sparkled. This looked like business.

"Who's goin'?" he asked eagerly. "Do you know?"

"You and Irish and the blubber-biter and Maddock," answered the carpenter, with a bitter sigh. "Don't I wish I was! I've got to get into a dirty diving-suit and grind away in ten foot o' water. Rotten, I calls it!"

"Well, you can't expect to 'ave the earth, by honey!" grinned the delighted steersman. "Don't get makin' love to no mermaids down there. This is game. 'Ere, 'eave-to," he added, a dreadful doubt crossing his mind. "If you're bluffin' me, Joe, I'll rub your own plane over you."

"I only wish I was," said Joe gruffly, "but there's no such luck. Hitch on to these peashooters and peas."

Prout, as merry as a lamb with three tails, seized the bundle of rifles and cartridge-belts. An extra pair of oars followed these.

"Any grub, mate?"

"Twenty-four hours' rations for five," said Joe. "'Ere they are, and don't eat 'em all at once. I reckon your huppette is a long sight bigger than the boat. What-ho! That's rude. Who's blowed the candle out?"

It was almost dark, for the tropical sun gives only a brief space of twilight. Ferrers Lord spoke to Thurston in an undertone, and then climbed down the ladder. He could have very well dispensed with Gan-Waga, but he had not the heart to leave the Eskimo behind. Besides, without Ching-Lung there, only force would have kept Gan-Waga on the ship. Maddock seized the oars.

"Good luck, old man!" cried Rupert.

"Good luck! Tell Honour exactly what I have said, and knock a canvas boat together at once. Keep a careful watch. I only hope they will try to board you."

He laughed softly, and struck a match.

"Pull, Maddock!"

The boat extended his long arms, and the boat dropped away into the gloom of the tropical night. Rupert stared after it. The moaning boom of the surf on the bar rolled up to his ears. It sounded like a dirge to Thurston.

"Something ghastly is going to happen," he muttered, with an involuntary shudder. "My liver must be out of order. I've got the creeps. Pah! I can still smell the carcase of that goat."

With a presentiment of coming disaster heavy upon him, Thurston began to pace up and down uneasily. The five brave men were imperilling their lives the instant the boat reached open water. The weather was treacherous, the little boat was overloaded, and a voyage in the night round an unknown and rocky coast bristling with sunken reefs and dangerous currents was something that few would care to face.

He saw a sudden silvery sparkle in the water, and paused. Far down a dull ball of fire was moving to and fro. It was the lamp of a diver—probably Hal Honour himself—but it looked utterly ghastly. Rupert could do no good on deck. None of the lights were burning above, and the portholes were masked.

"Keep wide awake and alive, boys," he said to the sentries.

"Ay, ay! We'll do that, sir!" came the prompt and reassuring answer.

Hammers were at work under water, each blow muffled and dim. Thurston started as he passed the galley.

"Jimson's dead, ain't he?" wailed a sepulchral voice. "Poor old Jimson! He's a stiff 'un, ain't he? Poor Jimson's gone to Davy Jones!"

Thurston laughed the next moment. It was only Prout's cockatoo, who, perched on the top of his cage in the warm galley, was making these gruesome remarks to the ship's cat.

"Hang Jimson!" said Rupert. "You ought to be asleep, Jimmy."

"Jimson's knifed," croaked the bird, with an unearthly chuckle. "Poor Jimson's a stiff 'un, ain't he?"

A step sounded behind him.

"Who's there?" he called.

"Mason, sir! I rang the telephone up, but couldn't get an answer. Will you come up, sir?"

Rupert dashed after the sentry. The sky was as black as ink, and utterly starless.

"What is it?"

"We thought we saw a light, sir," said Mason, holding out his rifle at arm's-length. "Look forward, sir—right above my elbow, as I stand. Ah-h!"

Shedding a trail of fiery sparks, a rocket soared up into the ebony sky and burst, shedding a cluster of blazing stars.

NEXT
MONDAY:

"THE MOONLIGHT FOOTBALLERS!"

A Splendid Complete Tale of Harry
Wharton & Co. Order Early.

In which Ching-Lung, although in a Nastier Position than ever, finds a Needle and Thread, and Stitches Himself Out of It.

Three facts impressed themselves forcibly on Ching-Lung's active mind as he swam gently forward until his hands came in contact with something solid. In the first place, that the island was nastily volcanic; secondly, that the warm-water hole into which he had tumbled was one of the vilest spots unkind Fortune had ever made him acquainted with; and, thirdly, that the men behind him meant black mischief.

On hands and knees he crawled out of the slimy pit, and began to think. Then, shuddering, he slipped back into the water, and, with one arm upraised, swam to and fro.

He was trying to find a plank, or some other method of crossing. Either there was no bridge at all, or else it was placed so high as to be out of his reach. Again he landed.

"They're mighty quiet," he muttered to himself. "Can I have blundered into some side gallery? I'm in a pretty bad mess, at any rate. Ugh! I must face it again."

A beam of light flitted across the darkness, and was gone. Ching-Lung had lowered himself into the reeking hole.

Holding on by a knob of rock, he raised himself to listen. The noise of heavy boots could be distinctly heard, and the queer, stumping patter of the wooden legs.

A stronger light and a redder one flared out, momentarily dimmed by the steam that rose from the pit.

Ching-Lung smelled petroleum. He ducked down. Three flaring, hissing torches were moving towards him.

"There 'e is! I seed 'im. 'E's dived into the 'ole. Blow 'is brains out!" yelled Stumpy.

Ching-Lung took a long, despairing breath, and sank. Stumpy's bullet splashed up the water.

"Stow it, you old fool!" said one of the others angrily.

"What do you want to kill the bloke for, when we can make him work? Darned if there ain't more brains in your legs than in your silly 'ead!"

"Didn't you shoot at 'im, hey? Didn't you blaze at the brimstone Chow?" snarled the cripple.

"'Course I did, but you'd excited me. We want blokes to work, and they're worth too much to kill. Keep that shooter of yourn quiet. Ain't I right, Bullock?"

"Stumpy's an ass!" said the third man, with the addition of an unflattering oath. "If he'd look after his business, 'stead o' chasin' rotten parrots, he'd— Stand steady; he's comin' up! Cover him!"

The prince's head appeared amid the scum and steam. The smoking torches revealed the harsh, malicious faces of his pursuers, and tinged the barrels of two levelled revolvers with crimson.

"Out you come, you ugly Chow, or stop 'ere and stew for good!" hissed Stumpy. "You'd make better broth nor them irons you left in the pot. He, he, he! Crawl out! Oh, we'll be kind to you, won't we? We'll pension you for life, and build you a mansion in the middle of a park. Do come out—do! Consider your precious 'ealth, you brimstone Chow! Think what a cold you're ketchin'. Come, dear—come!"

Somehow, his Highness of Kwai-Hal was more than pleased to obey. He had very good reason for doing so.

Every pore in his skin was tingling, and his eyes smarted as if a mixture of salt and pepper had been rubbed into them.

"Had enough?" asked Bullock, the least repulsive-looking of the three.

"Thank you, I have!" answered Ching-Lung. A fit of coughing followed, and then he added: "I wouldn't like my worst enemy to stew in there for five minutes. It's worse than vile. Oh, I'll go quietly! I promise not to bolt."

"Do you, hey? We'll jolly well watch that!" grinned Stumpy. "Push along, yaller-fever—push along!"

Ching-Lung walked between two of them to the outer cave.

"Will any of you be kind enough to give me a drink of water?" he asked quietly.

Bullock filled a tin mug from a stone jar, and handed the mug to the prince.

"You're very kind," said Ching-Lung. "I'm very much obliged to you."

"Like a dash o' rum in it?"

"No, thanks, though I'm more obliged still. If you have a bucketful to spare, I'd be grateful if you'd sluice it over me. That brutal stuff is burning my hide away!"

Stumpy, muttering volubly to himself, was disentangling a knotted mass of rope. The other man had gone out.

Lifting the bottle, Bullock poured the refreshing water over the prisoner, and for this act of kindness Ching-Lung gave him a grateful nod. He was not a pleasant-looking fellow by any means, but compared with Stumpy, Larkin, and the other rascal, he was almost handsome.


(Another long instalment of this grand adventure tale next Monday.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 292.

"THE GEM" LIBRARY, Every Wednesday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR," Every Friday.



**Greyfriars
Lypics.**

BY
The "MAGNET"
Library's Own
Rhymester.

No. 7.—VERNON SMITH.

How nice to be a millionaire—
To lead a life luxurious!
Fine food to eat, smart clothes to wear,
To make your neighbours furious!
To patronise the best hotel,
And tip the humble waiter:
The Bounder's breast with pride doth swell,
For such is Smithy's pater.

The cads like Snoop and Stott must needs
Show every admiration;
For Smithy's sumptuous study feeds
Are quite a revelation.
The Bounder also drinks and bets
In manner most provoking:
His cronies smoke his cigarettes,
And try to keep from choking.

Although the black sheep of the Form,
His objects are ambitious;
For Wharton he has "made it warm"
In manner mean and vicious.
From time to time his cunning brain
Has teemed with bold devices;
Till Harry's power began to wane,
And matters reached a crisis.

The Famous Five of Greyfriars School
Breaks up—for Smithy wrecks it;
And Wharton, Frank, and Johnny Bull
Are forced to make an exit.
The friends met such a fearful fate,
That were it not for Cherry
The Bounder now might sit in state—
A victor making merry!

Within the old, historic tower,
Together with the Nabob,
Brave Cherry stayed for many a hour—
Said Singh: "We won't give way, Bob!"
With grim resolve, they held their own,
The place was barricaded,
And Smithy's plans were overthrown,
His dreams of glory faded.

At dead of night the boys expelled
Returned to Bob and Hurrec;
The Famous Five the fortress held,
And made the masters worry.
The comrades battled for their right,
Till everything was settled;
And when Smith's schemes were brought to light
He felt extremely nettled.

The wretched cad was soundly whacked,
And promptly overpowered;
Yet Smith has one redeeming tract—
He can't be called a coward.
Though, crafty cur, we all are glad
The doctor strove to hurt you,
'Tis good to know the vilest cad
Can yet possess one virtue!

The Subject of next Monday's Lyric will be
FRANK NUGENT.



My Readers' Page

WHOM TO WRITE TO:
EDITOR,
"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY,
 THE FLEETWAY HOUSE,
 FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

OUR TWO COMPANION PAPERS
"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
 EVERY WEDNESDAY
 AND
"THE PENNY POPULAR"
 EVERY FRIDAY.

The Editor
 is always
 pleased to
 hear from
 his Chums,
 at home or
 abroad.

FOR NEXT MONDAY:

"THE MOONLIGHT FOOTBALLERS!"

By Frank Richards.

In this splendid, long, complete school tale of Harry Wharton & Co., the unfortunate Removites are visited with what is perhaps the heaviest punishment that can befall keen footballing schoolboys. They are forbidden the use of the football-ground; football for them is "off" altogether!

Needless to say, the Removites do not sit down quietly under this "injustice," but make up their minds to adopt strong measures in order to indulge in their favourite game.

"THE MOONLIGHT FOOTBALLERS!"

is a grand tale of schoolboy life, told in Frank Richards' best style.

THE EDITOR TO HIS CHUMS.

A Personal Note.

In order to clear up a question which seems to be troubling a good few of my readers, judging from the number of letters I receive making inquiries on the subject, I should like to explain to my chums that

THE ONLY THREE PAPERS.

that are under my personal and direct control are the three companion papers, which, by reason of their wholesome brightness and outstanding superiority of tone, have, I am proud to say, earned for themselves the popular title of

"THE INVINCIBLE TRIO."

It is the work of my life to make these three grand companion papers—"The Gem," THE MAGNET, and "The Penny Popular"—indissolubly bound together as they are, the very best story papers of their class; and, judging from my satisfied readers' letters, and by my steadily increasing circulation figures, I have not altogether failed. In these times, however, when competition is so keen on every side, it will be well for my loyal chums to remember always that, come what may, THE MAGNET, "The Gem," and "The Penny Popular" are their Editor's papers—and the papers for them!

FROM AN EX-CINEMA ACTOR.

I publish below a letter from a South African chum, which is particularly interesting in view of the articles recently published in our companion paper, "The Gem" Library, on "How to Become a Photo-Play Actor."

My correspondent is himself a cinema actor, and in his letter he makes a generous offer of assistance to any fellow-readers of his favourite papers who may wish to adopt this profession themselves.

"91, Hope Street, Cape Town, South Africa.

"Dear Mr. Editor,—Just a few lines to show my appreciation of your three splendid papers—namely, 'Gem,' MAGNET, and 'Penny Popular.' I have been a reader of the three papers ever since they were published, and although I have read other school stories, I have never come across one to equal any one of those in your three papers.

"I am an ex-cinema actor, and during my stay in America I never once forgot to read my papers, although many a time I have found it hard to find time to do so. At the time of writing this letter, I have only just returned from an eight months' trip round the world for my health.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 292.

NEXT
MONDAY:

"THE MOONLIGHT FOOTBALLERS!"

A Splendid Complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. Order Early.

"Constantly I have seen letters from your numerous readers asking how they can become cinema actors. Well, I would be very pleased to assist anybody in obtaining a position, if they would just write and let me know. If it would not be asking too much of you, would you please insert a little notice to that effect?"

"I am going to start a MAGNET, 'Gem,' and 'Penny Popular' Lending Library in our district, and I would be very much obliged to you if you would also insert the following notice:

"Will any readers of "The Gem," MAGNET, and "Penny Popular" in Cape Town or the suburbs, who wish to join a Lending Library of the above-mentioned papers please correspond with Jack Ross, 91, Hope Street, Cape Town Govt. Office?"

"Trusting that you will find a small space in your valuable papers to insert my request, from an ex-cinema actor,

"JACK ROSS.

"P.S.—Wishing your three papers every success in the near future."

I must thank my South African chum for his letter. The best way of complying with his request as to the notices seemed to be to publish his letter in full.

"HOW TO RUN A SCHOOL MAGAZINE."—No. 5.

Making the Magazine Pay—The Technical and Business Side.

As I told you in Article 2, there is no harm in trying to run the magazine on a commercial basis—viz., so that the circulation and advertisements pay the cost of production—which includes not only printing, but minor expenses, such as stamps, paper, etc.

As I suggested earlier, you must get some idea of the number of pages you want—to which end you should decide what features you intend to use. The following is a list embracing most of the features which you could use: Sports Page, with division into the different branches—cricket, swimming, tennis, etc. This could be given two pages if desired. School Work.—This, as I suggested, will contain news of the work of the school, or Form, results of examinations, scholarships won, and other interesting notes, which you will obtain from the staff.

OLD BOYS' PAGE.

On this page I suggest giving publicity to the doings of old boys in the world outside school life, together with announcements of marriages, deaths, and other news. If the old boys are not running a mag. of their own, obtain a list of their addresses, and send them copies of yours, asking them if they will kindly send you any notes of interest. In time, this should lead to securing a nominal subscription from each of them for securing copies of your mag. regularly.

School Amateur Societies—dramatic, literary, natural history, etc. Stamp Page.—If the collecting of foreign stamps is being boomed in the school, try a page dealing with philately; but mind you get an expert collector in the school to write it for you.

SCOUTS' DOINGS.

Only if a patrol is being run by the school. Short Story. Serial Story. You will often be able to insert paragraphs of news on these pages, when a story is a few lines short of the size of the page. Editorial Page.—This will be a sort of review of the whole paper. In it you will discuss things of present interest—new features you are to include, So-and-so's chances for such-and-such a scholarship or race—in short, chatty matter which everybody is talking about. General Interest Article. Jokes.

(Another article of this interesting series will appear in the Chat page next Monday.)



THE GIRAFFE HAD FEET ON HIS NECK.



1. "Dear, dear!" spluttered the explorer. "I wonder if the river is too deep to walk across? How can I ascertain? Ha! An idea!"

2. "This freckled freak, commonly called a giraffe, will come in handy. Just let me paint a few measurements on it."

3. "There we are! What a splendid animated rule, to be sure! Just seven feet deep!"

A TRE-MENDOUS DROP.

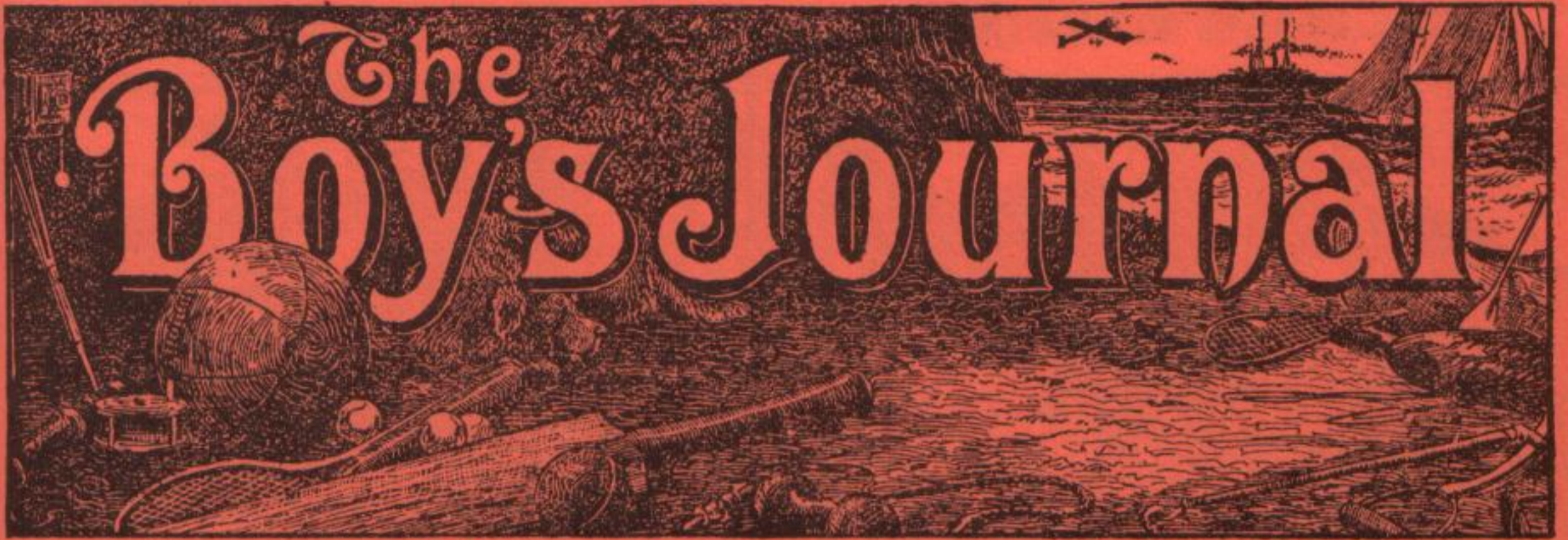


"Odbodikins!" quoth the bold bad footpad. "Methinks yon merry knight will be severely surprised when my right trusty club hits his headgear."

2. But, unfortunately, his high-planned schemes met with an untoward rebuff, for ye toothpick of ye baron caused the bough to bow somewhat.

3. "Gadzooks! Forsooth! Tut, tut! Pip, pip!" gasped the bad bold robber, as the laughter of Sir Bluebagge smote his left ear. "In future my ambitions shall not be so highly perched."

THERE IS ANOTHER PAGE OF COMIC PICTURES ON PAGE IV. OF COVER.



The Boys' Journal

No. 1 Out on
TUESDAY NEXT.

36 Pages—Price 1d.

Below are a few of the numerous splendid attractions to be found in the First Numbers of this magnificent new paper—the finest magazine of fiction and articles that has ever been produced for ONE PENNY.

"MIGHTY LONDON."

Geoffrey Murray's Powerful New Home-Life Serial, full of the mystery, romance, and drama of the Great City.

"CAST OUT BY THE SCHOOL!"

Horace Phillips's Fascinating New School Serial. A feast of fun, excitement, and mystery, by this popular author.

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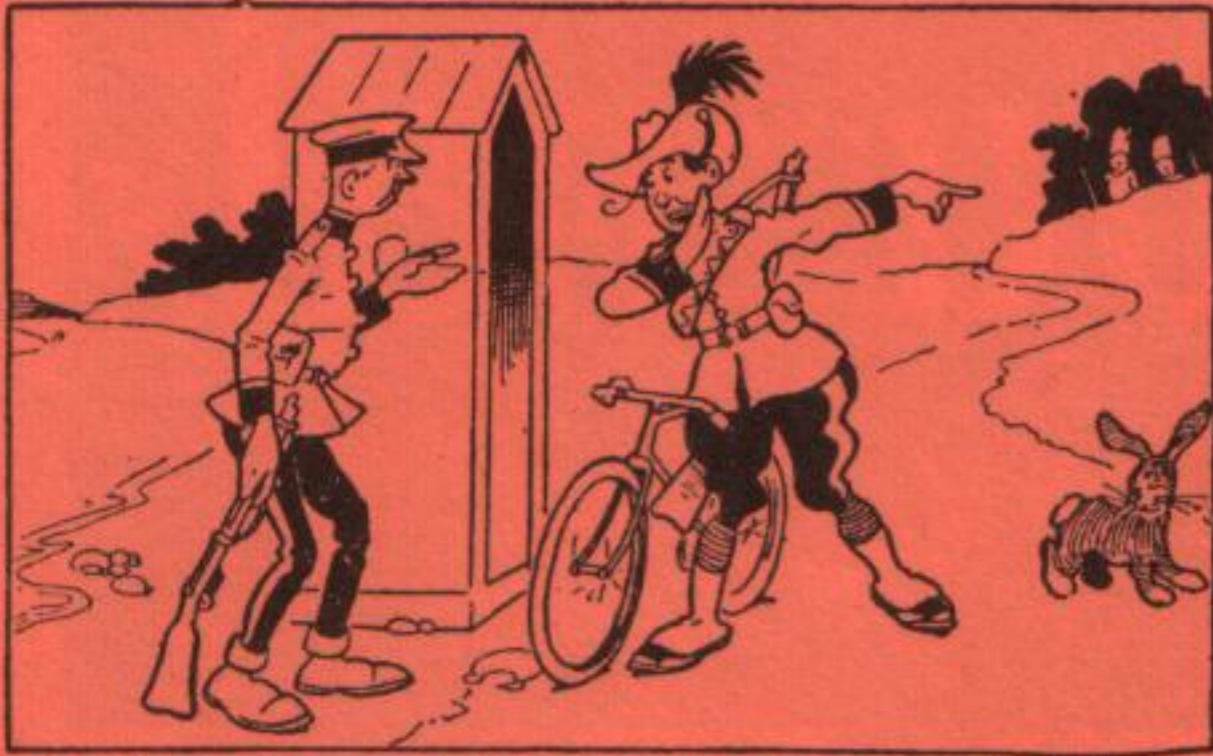


Look Out for No. 1 on

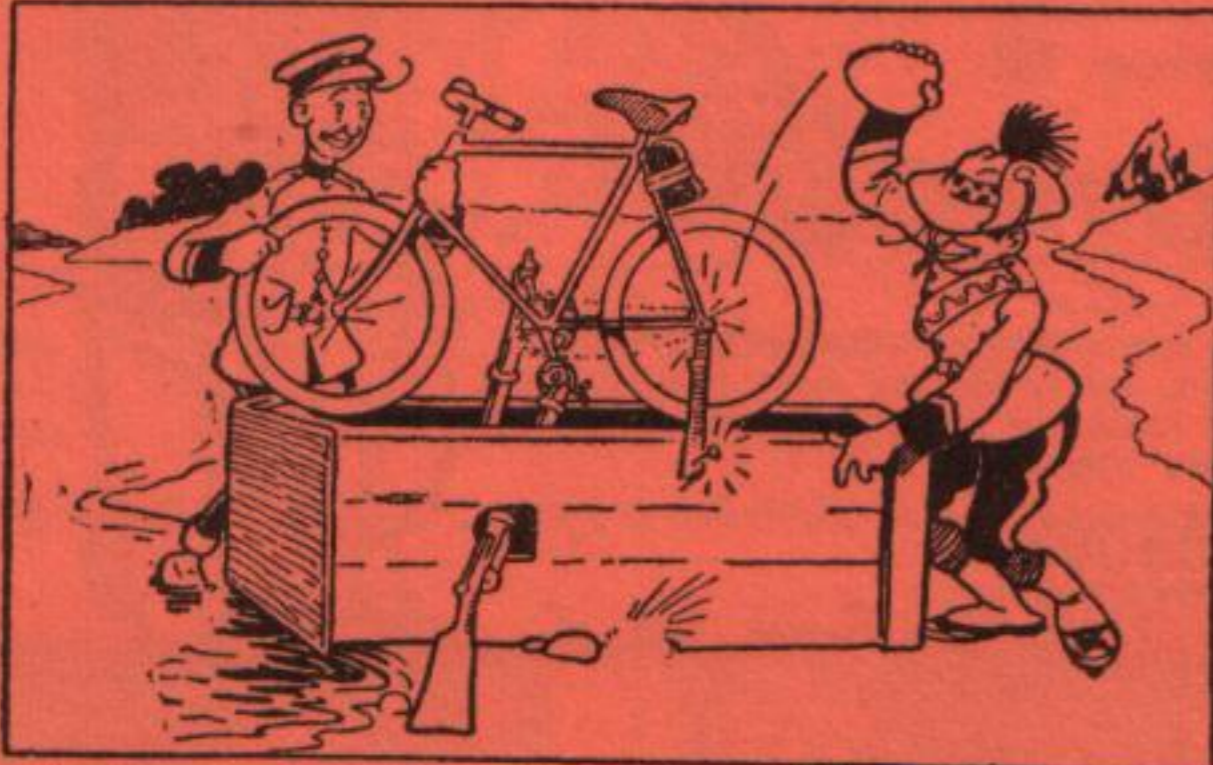
TUESDAY NEXT.

ORDER NOW!

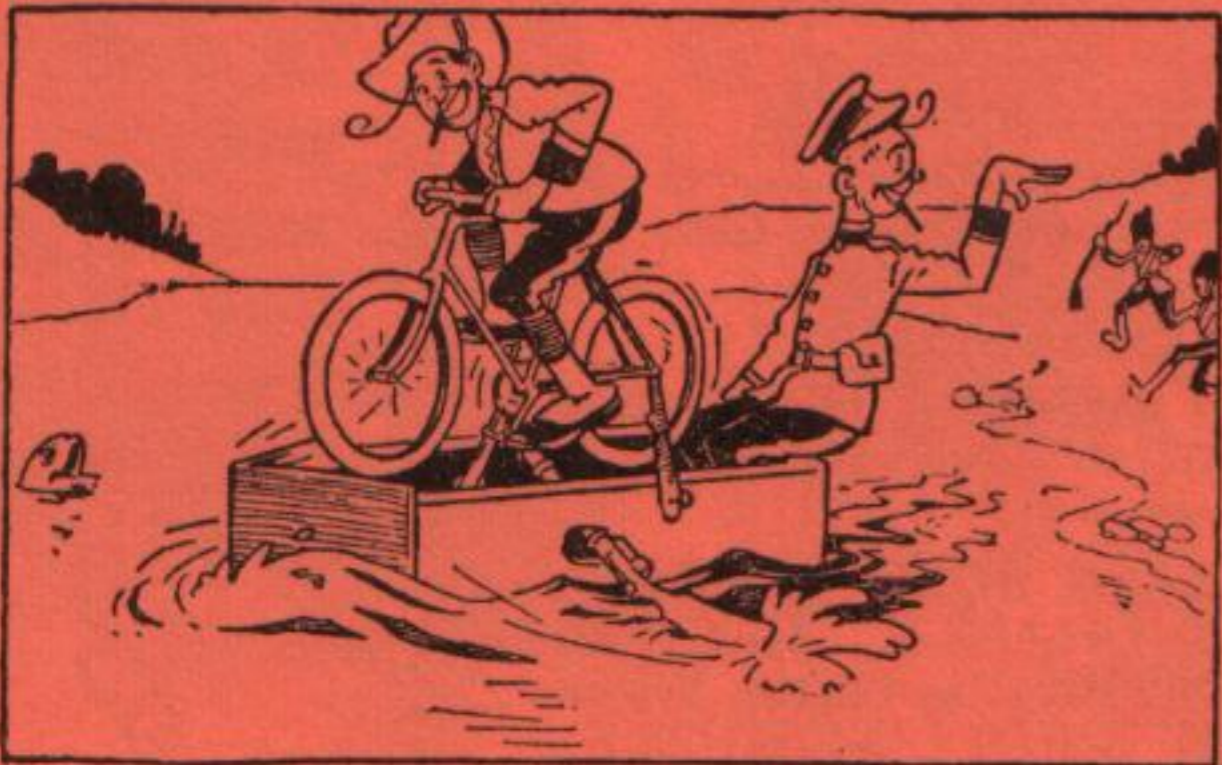
SCHOOL CADETS PLEASE NOTE.



1. The sentry was just dozing off, when up rushed Tim the Territorial. "I am chased by the enemy, what's to be did? Ah! I have it!"

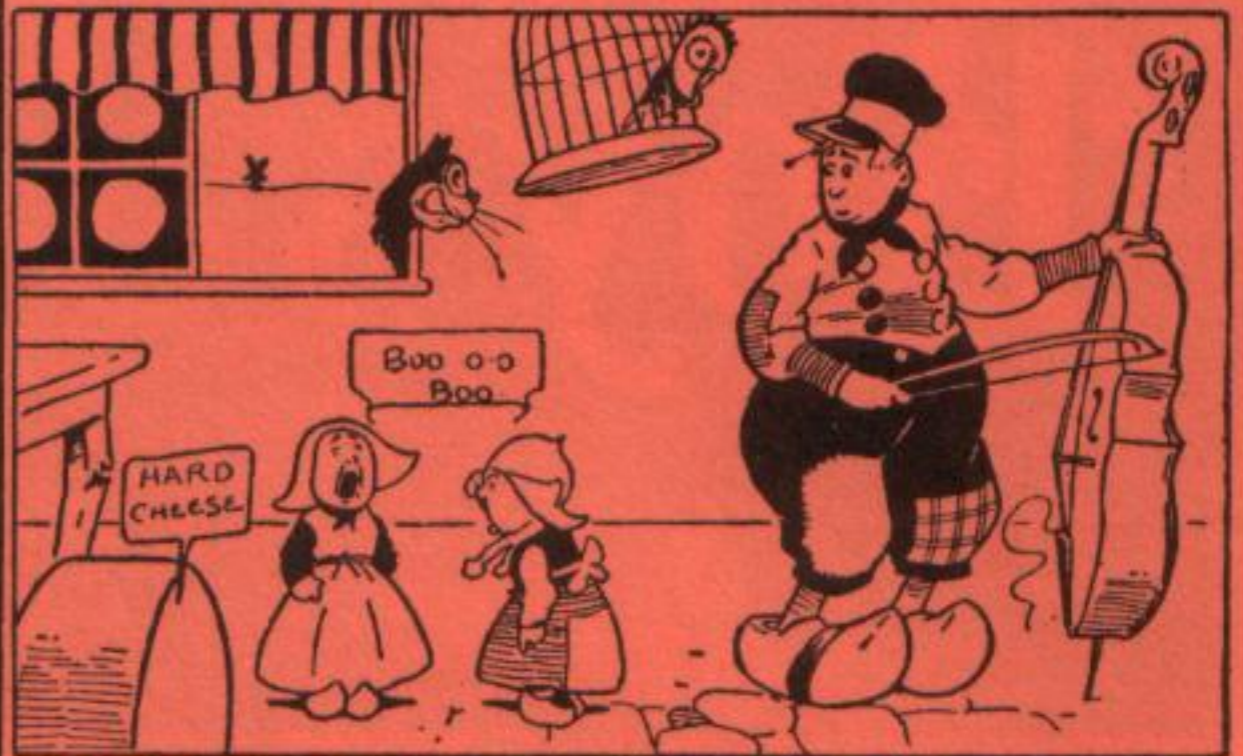


2. In a couple of ticks they fixed the bike in the sentry-box, and, tying their guns to the pedals as per above, pushed the arrangement into the water.

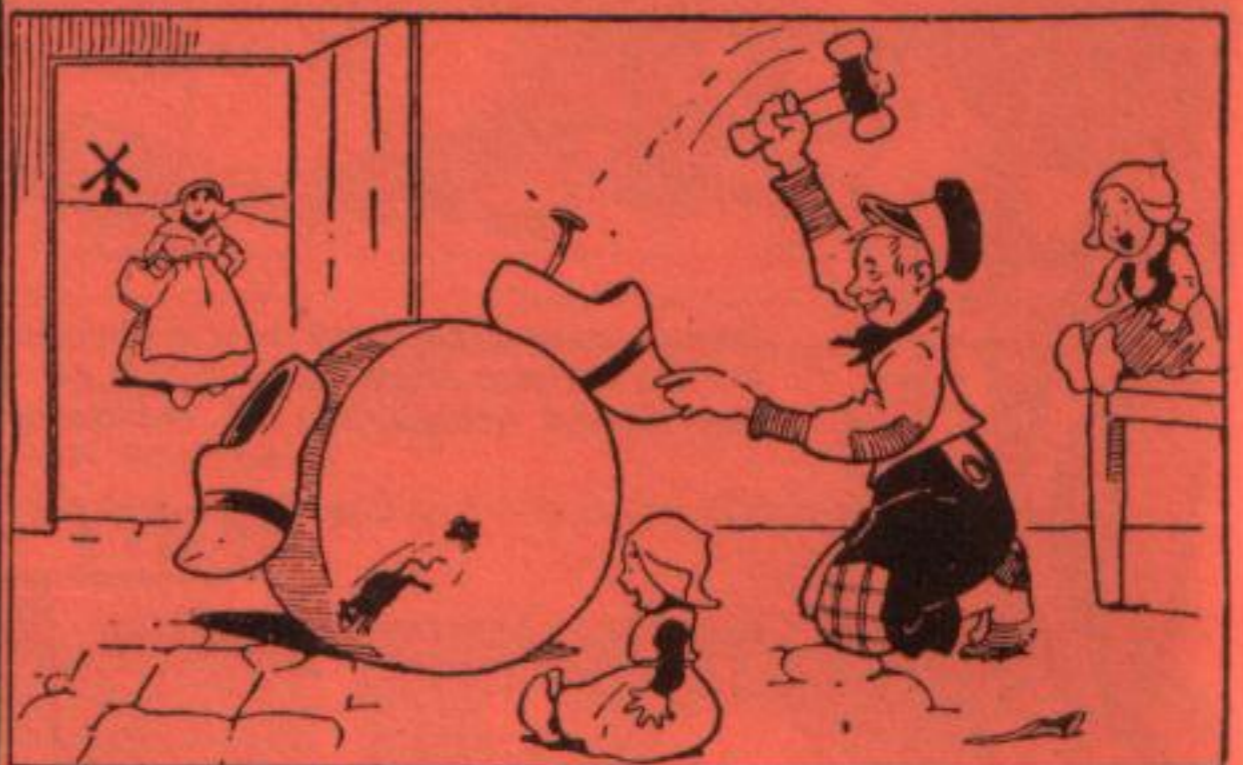


3. And away it went like winking, when the cyclist got to work on those pedals. "Toodle-oo!" they cried. "Sorry we can't stop!" Were the enemy wild? Well!

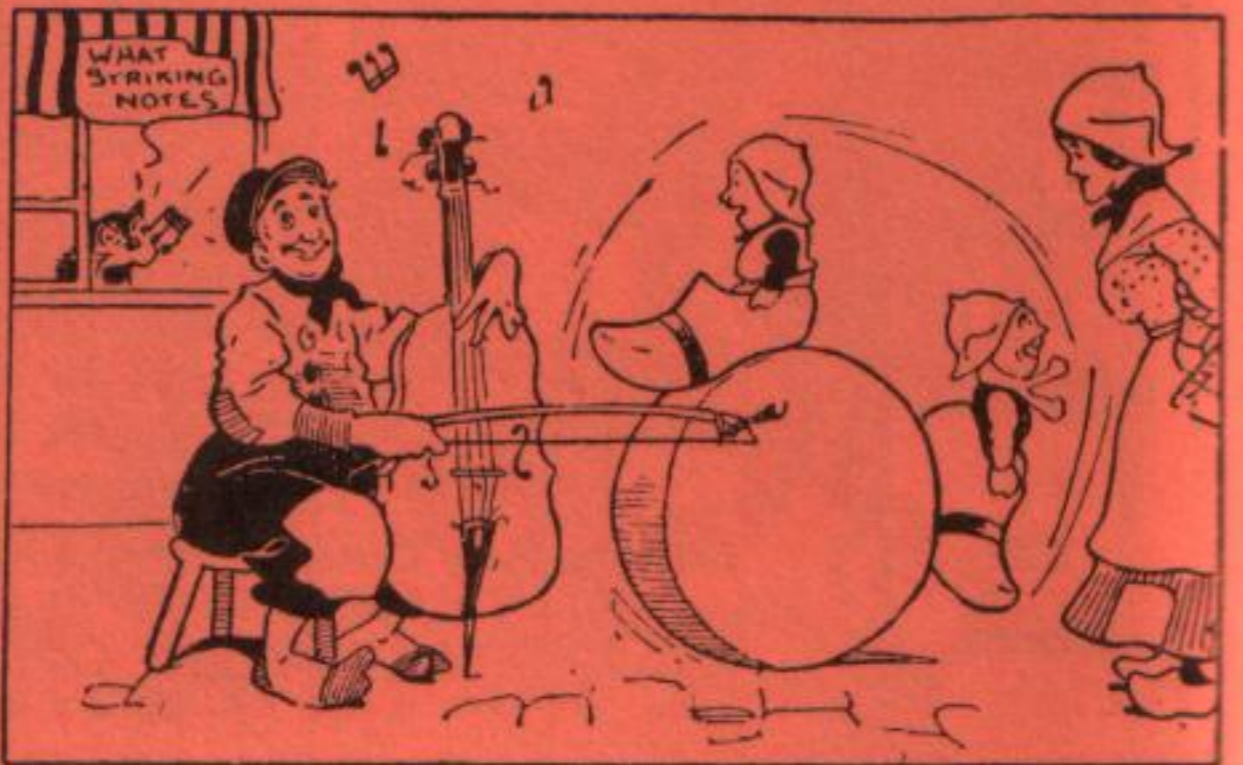
HE BOW-ED TO THE INEVITABLE.



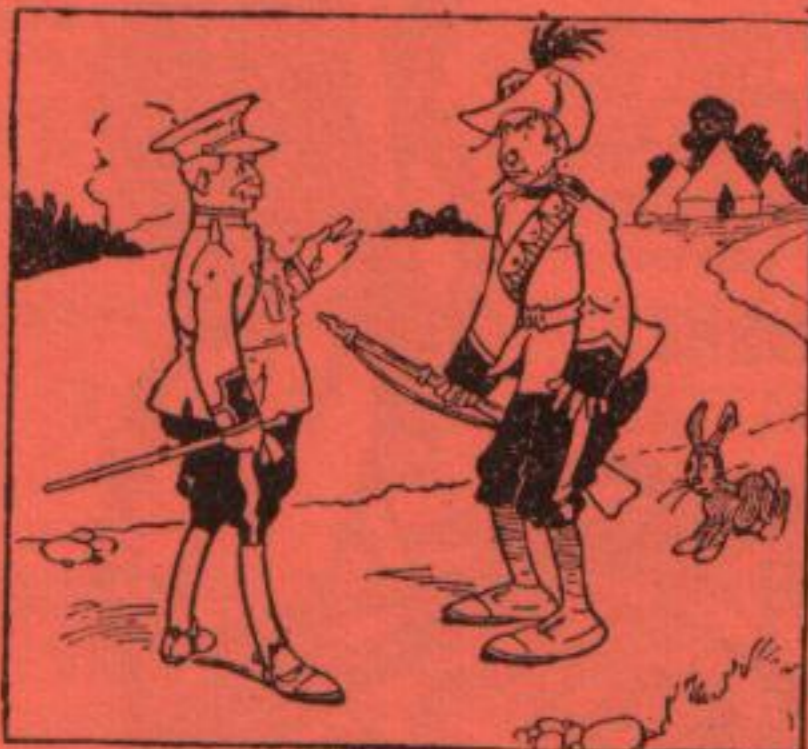
1. "Oh dear! How can I practise that new piece by Waggertincky while the twins make that row?" said Hans Jacobs.



2. "Well, I must do something to keep 'em quiet until the missus comes home, so I'll just nail these clogs on the cheese thusly——"



3. "And, with the help of the bow, I can play that piece and keep the twins quiet into the bargain. Brainy, ain't I?"



LOST, STOLEN, OR STRAYED!

Major Hotten: "Hallo, my man, what are you doing here?"

Recruit: "Please, sir, I'm one of the enemy, and they've been and lorst me!"

A BIG FEAT.

Foreman: "No, my man, we want no more hands."

Applicant for work: "Well, could you do anything with me feet, now your steam-roller's broke down?"

