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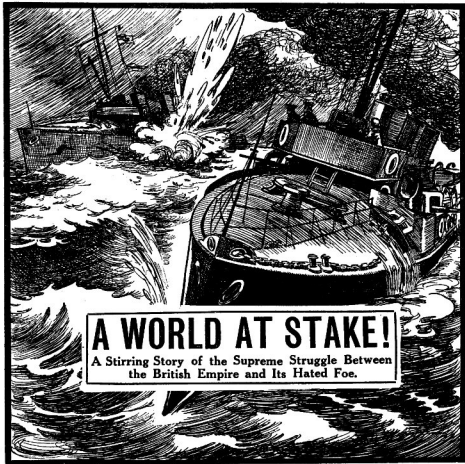
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### READ THIS FIRST.

Thorpe and Dick Thornhill, brothers, and inventors of the airship, Night Hawk, play a prominent part in the war with Germany on land and sea. The Germans invade Britain, and are in possession of the country round Edinburgh, but are unable to progress any farther. The Kaiser, whose headquarters are at Edinburgh Castle, intends to return to Germany secretly for the purpose of raising another army to reinforce his troops. Thorpe Thornhill decides to make an attempt to capture the Kaiser. His plot is discovered, and he is imprisoned in a dungeon beneath the castle. With the help of Tom Evans, a street arab whom Thorpe has befriended, he escapes, and, disguised as the Kaiser, goes aboard the boat which was to have conveyed the invading monarch back to Germany. The commander of a German airship discovers Thorpe's stratagem, and sinks the small boat. Dick Thornhill, however, comes to the rescue in his airship, and Thorpe arranges to hurry back to Edinburgh to prevent the Kaiser escaping.

"He'll be a smart man if he gets through the blockading fleet," said Thorpe to the flotilla commander, "and Dick and I will see that he does not escape by air."

(Now go on with the story.)

### How Edinburgh was Retaken.

The commander laughed.

"He's a slippery animal; be careful he does not burrow underneath the ground and dodge us that way," he said.

"It's his only back door now," returned Thorpe. And the next moment, assisted by his brother, he mounted to the Avenger's deck.

"Well, Dick, old boy, here are you and I and Tom together once more; but it won't be for long, for I must get on board the Night Hawk at once," said Thorpe, as the Avenger flew towards the land.

"Better stop where you are, Thorpe," returned Dick significantly. "The Night Hawk blundered against the Falcon, and I was only just in time to save her from capture. As it was, she received injury that will take several days to make good."

"Hang the luck! Then we must be careful with the Avenger. There will not be an airship launched from the Clepperton Works for another three weeks, and it would be serious if anything happened to us at the last moment."

"Serious! It would be terrible!" returned Dick. "But what is your programme? You are in command now."

"Not I, old boy; I am simply a fighting passenger. This

is your ship, and you must stick to her," returned Thorpe generously. "But I should advise that you make for the castle, and see his Imperial Highness doesn't hook it."

Night was well advanced, and dark clouds hid the stars from view.

Dick halted the Avenger over the lights which betoken Edinburgh Castle; then, as the horizon grew lighter, she ascended to higher regions, so as to have the upper hand of the Falcon if she appeared in sight; for, although Seigner had intended escorting his Emperor across the narrow seas on board his own ship, she had not escaped scathless from her conflict with the Night Hawk, although, unfortunately, she had only received such slight injuries that an hour or two's work soon put them right.

As all the world knows, it is always darkest just before day-break. It was at this time that Dick's second in command entered the cabin in which the former had thrown himself down on a sofa to snatch a few hours' much-needed sleep.

"There is a whirring of wings immediately beneath us, sir," he said.

Dick was up in a moment.

"How long have you heard them?" he asked.

"I am not quite sure, sir. I fancied I first detected their presence a quarter of an hour ago, but I did not care to awaken you for what might have proved a false alarm," replied the man.

"You should have done so. If it is the Falcon, she can do a lot of harm in a quarter of an hour," returned Dick sternly, hastening on deck.

Leaning over the side, the brothers gazed steadfastly at the lights of the castle, and the town of Edinburgh immediately beneath them.

"Lower her quietly a thousand feet," ordered Dick.

"And the Avenger sank until her gauge recorded the required descent.

Again they listened, but not a sound reached their ears—not a dark, momentary eclipse of the lights beneath them showed a moving body between themselves and the earth.

"Should I flash the searchlight over them and make sure?" queried Dick.

Thorpe shook his head.

"We must have heard or seen something of the Falcon if she is beneath us. I should advise that we keep where we are and wait for morning."

Then, telling the steward to awaken them with the first gleam of dawn, the two brothers hastened below to resume their interrupted slumbers.

An hour later, they were on deck again, just as the sun slowly rose above the Scottish mountains, flooding the heavens with light, and, as it ascended, revealed a stirring scene.

Immediately beneath them was the quiet, straggling old city of Edinburgh, commanded by, with the exception of Windsor, the most majestic castle in the world. Round the old town long lines of fortifications, manned by spike-helmeted German troops, had been thrown up, whilst further away, in the direction of the rising sun, flashed a cordon of moving bayonets above khaki masses, showing that the British Army were already on the alert.

Turning his eyes seawards, Thorpe allowed them to rest for a moment on the German flotilla; then passed on to the spot where floated the Mediterranean fleet, the dark clouds of smoke pouring from their funnels proclaiming the fact that they were preparing to take their part in that day's conflict.

Presently a rocket sprang up from Lord Roberts's headquarters.

It was answered by one from the British flagship. Then a single gun roared out its death-sentence from an adjacent hill.

Barely had its deep, sullen boom died away, echoing and re-echoing over land and sea, ere from the fleet, from the encircling works around the doomed city, burst forth such a stream of shot and shell as surely never before had any town been subjected to in the annals of military history.

Immediately from the German defences came an answering roar. Then for the next half-hour the air was torn by a continuous roar of cannon, whilst the open spaces of the old town—for the British guns availed as much as possible all towers and buildings—were torn up by shells until the streets looked as though they had been ploughed.

Suddenly Dick grasped Thorpe, who was scanning the horizon, wondering where Seigner and his Falcon had got to, by the arm, crying excitedly:

"Look, Thorpe! Hurrah! They surrender!"

It was true. From the flagstaff on Edinburgh Castle appeared a large white flag, evidently made from a big tablecloth.

As suddenly as they had awoke, the British guns became

silent. Looking in the direction of Lord Roberts's headquarters, Thorpe saw a number of tiny specks approach the city at a hard gallop.

"Full speed ahead, Dick! Let's be the first to congratulate the grand old veteran!" cried Thorpe, almost beside himself with joy.

The next moment the Avenger was cutting her way through the air at a tremendous rate. As they passed over the town of Edinburgh, wild, frantic cheers fell upon their ears, and, looking down, they saw crowds of civilians emerging from cellars, churches, and other big buildings, in which they had taken refuge from shot and shell, all cheering wildly, and capering about as though they had gone mad.

A few minutes later, the Avenger slowed down immediately over Lord Roberts's head, and, wildly waving their caps, the Thornhills and their crew shouted their congratulations. Lord Roberts, without slackening the speed at which he was approaching the foe's main lines, raised himself in his stirrups, and, taking off his cap in response to the airship's congratulations, cried:

"At last, Thornhill, the end has come! Get back to the castle and soothe the important prisoner of whom we have spoken does not escape."

Dick saluted, and a few minutes later Lord Roberts and his staff were left behind.

By the time they reached the castle, Dick saw that the German Army was already prepared for surrender. Every open space was crisscrossed with soldiers—the men leaning disconcertedly on their rifles, the officers standing with bowed heads in silent groups.

An hour later, Lord Roberts, at the head of the Black Watch, marched into Edinburgh at one gate, whilst the defeated German Army filed out of another, each regiment throwing its arms down as they reached the open country behind.

Gradually the Thornhills felt their triumph and exultation die away before a constantly increasing doubt which filled their hearts. In obedience to Lord Roberts's orders, they had not left the vicinity of the castle, but hovered as near as they dared to its grey walls, regarding searchingly the many groups of officers standing about, and peering through the windows of what Thorpe knew had been the emperor's quarters.

But they could see nothing of him—neither had they seen any sign of the Falcon—and by the time Lord Roberts and his staff entered the gates of the old castle to take possession, they realised that the German Emperor had once more escaped them.

"Hang it, Thorpe, why can't we do without sleep! If we had kept awake, he would have been in our power now!" cried Dick excitedly. "The noise Dickson thought he heard last night was the Falcon slipping away with our great prize."

"It is disappointing, Dick; but, after all, perhaps it is just as well. The poor beggar's well punished. What more do we want?" returned Thorpe.

And his words were almost echoed some half-hour later by Lord Roberts, when, the Avenger, coming to rest on the summit of the castle, Thorpe had followed the orderly who had been sent to summon him into the room where last he had met William of Germany.

"Perhaps you are right, sir," admitted Thorpe, "but somehow I have an idea that until the Kaiser is captured the war will never end."

"Let us hope you are wrong, Thornhill," said Lord Roberts, after a moment's thought. "But I'm '66 anxious for the war to end within the next twenty-four hours."

He went to the writing-table from which the German Emperor had the previous day issued his orders, and wrote hastily on a half-sheet of paper. This he folded, put into an envelope, sealed, and handed to Thorpe Thornhill, saying:

"There is one more task before you, my lad. I cannot tell when peace—or, at least, an armistice—will be declared, so go at once, steer for Germany. Do not enter into communication with any passing ship or vessel of any kind. When you reach the Continent, open this envelope, and obey what is written within to the letter."

Thorpe took the envelope and saluted. He was about to leave the room, when the old general stopped him with:

"By the by, how are you off for ammunition?"

"Well, our magazines must be getting pretty low," admitted Thorpe.

Again Lord Roberts bent over the table; then he handed the young aviator a sheet of paper on which was written:

"Supply Thorpe Thornhill with whatever he requires.—ROBERTS."

"You know where to deliver this? For Heaven's sake, do



not waste a moment. Probably you will need every cartridge before I see you again!"

Thorpe took the order, again saluted, and repaired to his airship.

### How Kiel Was Destroyed.

Whilst the Avenger was taking in her stores, Thorpe Thornhill fitted her with the Night Hawk's apparatus for rendering the airship invisible. Then, rechecked, and her magazines crammed with ammunition, she started on her eastward journey.

Soon the Scottish shores were left behind, and, ere long, the low-lying coast of Denmark appeared in sight.

Seated on deck chairs, Thorpe Thornhill and his brother were snatching an interval of rest. In his hand Thorpe held the envelope containing Lord Roberts's instructions.

He was ill at ease. Whatever the orders were, he determined to obey them to the letter, but he greatly feared that, remembering how merciless the Germans had been in their destruction of English towns and villages, Lord Roberts had ordered him to fly over the unprotected land of Germany, and give the attackers a taste of what war meant when brought to their own hearths and homes.

And yet he could scarcely think that one who throughout his long and useful life had been noted for humanity and kindness would under any circumstances stoop to so fearful a revenge.

Presently they hovered over the Continent, and, springing to his feet, Thorpe Thornhill tore open the envelope, and eagerly perused its contents.

As he did so, a sigh of relief escaped his lips. It ran as follows:

"As Thorpe Thornhill, commander of his Britannic Majesty's Aerial Forces, you will sail direct for Kiel, and there utterly destroy the harbour and building yards, taking special care not to leave an airship intact. Destroy, if possible, all papers and drawings. Do this with as little loss of life as possible.—ROBERTS."

Thorpe understood now why the old commander-in-chief had told him not to hold any communication with the earth whilst on this voyage. A peace which left the Germans with an almost completed fleet of airships at their command would be but a hollow mockery. Destroy them, and they would draw the dragon's teeth.

About midday the Avenger reached her destination.

As the building-yard in which the airships were being constructed came in sight, Thorpe saw that he had arrived on the scene in the nick of time, for, even as he hovered over the busy scene, an airship arose slowly from the stocks, and commenced her flight heavenwards.

There was not a moment to be lost. Two airships in the foreman's hand might do irreparable damage.

Leaving Dick to navigate the vessel, Thorpe prepared to fight her new foe.

A signal to the engine-room, and the Avenger dropped to within a thousand feet of the dockyard.

Then an aerial bomb, aimed by Thorpe Thornhill, dropped amongst the frightened crew of the newly launched airship. A terrific explosion shook the air, as the bomb did its deadly work, tearing off the swiftly revolving fans, and sending the German craft heavily back on to the wall of the shed from whence she had fled.

She struck the wall amidships, and her hull, unable to bear the strain, broke in halves, then fell on either side of the building, crushing a number of frightened soldiers and workmen who had not time to get away.

In a moment all was terror and alarm within the works. A few ill-aimed shots hurtled through the air at the attacker, but at these Thorpe could well afford to laugh.

"Keep her moving in a circle, Dick!" he cried. "Now, my lads, to work! Clear the building-yards, and we'll soon put it out of Germany's power to invade England again—at least, by air."

Remembering their slaughtered comrades, remembering the many peaceful towns they had seen laid in ashes, the hundreds of harmless civilians who had been butchered by the ruthless Germans, the crew of the Avenger lost no time in obeying their young commander's orders.

Shot, shell, and bomb hurtled swiftly through the air, whilst the gates of the works were packed by the frightened mob, seeking to escape from the death-dealing storm which had broken so suddenly above them. Dick smiled grimly to himself as he recognised, foremost amongst the fugitives, the well-known form of Karl Seigner.

Within ten minutes not a soul was to be seen near the building-yard. Then, the Avenger hovering overhead to prevent interception, Thorpe and half a dozen men laden with the glowing and combustible, descended to commence their work of destruction.

Thorpe was accompanied by Tom Evans, whose knowledge of the building-yard came in very useful.

Whilst his men were busy filling the hulls of the ten airships which, in different stages of completion, dotted the

yard, with explosives, and pouring oil on the various sheds and buildings, Thorpe Thornhill broke into an office, which, as he had hoped, he had full of plans and drawings, some lying on desks, some carefully locked up in safes. But strong though the safes were, they were as wood before the young inventor's scientific ingenuity, and he soon had several bundles ready to give the foreman—who approached with the intimation that the yard was ready for destruction—to carry on board the Avenger.

Thorpe was the last to leave the earth. Ere he did so, he connected a couple of wires on to the explosives in the hull of the nearest airship, which hung over the Avenger's stern, and were paid out as the British airship mounted heavenwards.

"All ready?" cried Thorpe.

"Ay, ay, sir!" came from the engineer's room.

"Then full speed ahead!" he added, touching an electric button near the rapidly uncoiling wire.

Swiftly the airship sped in a southward direction, but swift though she went, the electric current was swifter, and the first explosion from the building-yard told that the work of destruction had begun.

Then with the wires now disconnected from her terminal dragging behind her, the Avenger passed the zone of danger, and, raising a few hundred feet, came to a halt.

Two explosions had already occurred, then, in rapid succession, the other eight followed; and as the reverberating roar died away, flames burst from every part of the building-yard at once.

Throughout that afternoon and far into the night the flames worked their fell will. Passing from where they originally started to the naval yard, they reached the wharves and dockyards, until the whole of Kiel's mighty arsenal was a mass of charred and smoking ruins or lurid flame.

At first the German soldiers and firemen had rushed to beat down the fire which was doing such irreparable injury. A shot or two from the Avenger warned them that certain death would be their portion if they ventured to interfere, and throughout the whole night long the flames burned unchecked, until, when the sun rose once more, the Thornhills there, their eyes had never before beheld. Except for those who had perished in the first attack, scarcely a life had been lost; but the German Empire had received a crushing blow. Not only were the airships destroyed, their papers gone, but also several ships building for the German Navy had been enveloped in the flames.

Having assured himself that nothing the Germans could do would avail to save anything but a fire-blackened mass of iron, fit only for the scrap-heap, Thorpe Thornhill hesitated whether to return to England or destroy what German war-vessels he could find in the harbours, and eventually decided upon the latter course. Swiftly moving from place to place, Thornhill swept the Baltic and the North Sea of German vessels, as very difficult task, for, dooming, even if it were not destroyed, the British Fleet would have other work to do than attack ports, the Germans had, as before intimated, denuded the home seas of almost every fighting vessel, therefore the only ships that fell a prey to the Avenger were one or two old coast-guard vessels and a few depot ships.

Night fell once more upon the scene, and Thorpe, finding himself within a hundred miles of Berlin, determined to sail thither, and discover, if possible, the Emperor's intentions.

### In Berlin Once More.

Close to the place where the old Falcon had descended at the beginning of the campaign Thorpe alighted, and, accompanied only by Tom Evans, made his way into the capital of the German Empire.

It true he wore a German uniform, brought with him for that purpose, whilst Tom was clad in the rags and tatters common to street Arabs all over the world. But for all that he did not conceal from himself the dangers of the task upon which he had ventured. Twice he had been in the Germans' power, and narrowly escaped with his life; he could not expect such luck a third time. If he was captured now, no earthly power could save him. But the reward was worth the risk. It was of vital importance that the British Government should learn at first hand what was taking place in the German capital, and with every sense on the alert, a revolver hidden away in his pocket, for he was determined that if discovered he would not be taken alive, Thorpe Thornhill plunged into the business part of Berlin.

From the first moment he entered the city he was struck by the sullen, half-fearful expression on every face, and also by the fact that it seemed to be a city of soldiers. Even the cabmen plying for hire in the street were clad in uniform. The reason of this he was soon to know, for at a street corner

he came upon an excited German denouncing in no measured terms the Jews on a mass of the whole German population which the German Emperor had ordered.

"And for what is the whole work of the nation brought to a standstill?" he was saying, as Thorpe edged his way through the crowd. "To pamper the insatiable ambition of the man who rules over us. Could he find no other foe against whom to test his strength than the British?—our cousins by blood, our best customers, of our greatest rivals, in the markets of the world. And what has been the result? We, a nation of slaves, groaning under the despotism of the military, have been hurled back, conquered and humbled, by a nation of freemen. Hundreds of thousands of our brothers have perished, or are in captivity, but this monster in human shape asks for more blood, for more—"

He got no further, for at that moment a commissaire of police thrust his way through the crowd, and, seizing the speaker, pulled him from his extemporised rostrum.

So sudden had been the officer's action that the crowd did not for the moment interfere; but the agitator, carried away by his own verbosity, had no mind to be hauled off to prison without resistance.

"Help, brothers, help! Do not let me be sacrificed without an attempt to save me!" he cried.

"Silence, dog!" thundered the policeman.

But the man only struggled the more, and either by accident or design, brought his fist down heavily upon the other's head.

Then the quick, sharp report of a revolver resounded above the clamour of the crowd, and the agitator dropped to the ground a corpse.

A roar of rage ascended from the mob, a score of hands seized the commissaire, and the next moment Thorpe turned away with a feeling of nausea, as he saw the rash man thrown to the ground, and trampled under foot by the infuriated mob.

Five minutes later a company of police came on the scene at the double, but the mob's blood was up, and the gendarmes were driven headlong through the streets to the barracks, whilst the mob, under the command of a dozen leaders, who had sprung up in as many places, commenced tearing up pavements, seizing what cabs and carriages they could lay their hands on, and forming barricades in the various streets, whilst others looted the gun-shops. Soon a miscellaneous armed "red" mob entered the rough barricades, waiting in grim silence the approach of the expected troops, for from every barrack, and from the large camp without the city, came the blare of bugles and the roll of drums, calling the men to arms.

But with lightning rapidity the revolt had spread from one end of the city to the other, and Thorpe knew that he was in for a very lively midnight adventure.

This was not at all what he wanted; but he had lingered too long. Whichever way he turned, a barricade obstructed his passage.

It is true he could have signalled the Avenger, but to have done so would have been to betray his presence in Berlin, so he hid his time, trusting to luck to escape from the terrible danger which he could see would shortly menace all behind the barricades.

Presently, from the direction of the Grinevald, came the sound of heavy firing, above which Thorpe could detect the roar of quick-firing field guns, and the rattling hiss of Maxims.

Nearer and nearer came the fearful sounds, then the square in which Thorpe found himself was filled with a tumultuous mob, many of whom were wounded; but the great majority were still armed, and wore on their faces a look of dogged determination, as of men who were determined to die rather than surrender.

Presently a shudder seemed to pass over the mob, then a voice cried from out the darkness.

"To the barricade, brothers! The soldiers are upon us!"

Carried away by the heat of battle, Thorpe abandoned his previous prudence, and, snatching a rifle from the weakening hands of a wounded man who had stretched himself in a doorway to die, he hastened to take his place with the defenders of the barricade, whilst Tom, armed with a small-bore sporting rifle, trotted by his side.

It was night, but the scene was illumined by burning houses, the work of incendiaries amongst the mob, for the seam which infest all large cities always rises to the surface in times of popular excitement, and now, whilst the more earnest opponents of the Kaiser's bloodthirsty war party were laying down their lives for their principles, the rogues and vagabonds of Berlin were looting the houses.

By the light of the flames, Thorpe caught a glimpse of a closely-packed mass of blue-coated infantry surging forward like some tremendous wave, only to fall back beaten

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before the rough barricade, manned by hundreds of the fellow countrymen.

But, like the wave, the soldiers only retreated to gather fresh strength. On they came again, and Thorpe found himself fighting hand-to-hand with a huge Bavarian sergeant, until suddenly there was a whip-like crack close to his ear, and his huge opponent fell to the ground in the very act of thrusting his bayonet through him.

Breathless after his fight, Thorpe looked round to see Tom in the act of slipping another cartridge into his little weapon.

The sight recalled him to his senses. This was not war. He had no business here. Let the Germans fight out their own quarrels.

But he found his wise resolutions had come too late. It was simply a question now of fighting or allowing himself to be killed in cold blood, and, taking advantage of the soldiers' retreat to stretch himself on the top of the barricade, he commenced firing as rapidly as though he was in the streets of London, defending the sacred soil of his Motherland.

Presently he became conscious that the soldiers were retreating, not in full flight, as they had done once before, but in obedience to their officer's commands.

The next moment the reason of the retrograde movement was made plain, as the blue-coated ranks opened to right and left, showing the flowing mazzole of an unnumbered field gun, the millerymen at their posts, and a gunner with the lanyard in his hand, awaiting the word to fire.

Quick as thought Thorpe grasped Tom by the collar, and rolled with him through some broken railings into a basement.

Barely had he done so ere there was a terrific roar, a tearing, rending sound above him, and, looking up, he saw the barricade, with its defenders, blown to the four points of the compass by one well-aimed shell from the Government gun.

Then he heard a loud, continued cry of "Hoch! Hoch!" from the soldiers, and the next moment the disciplined borders of the German Emperor swept over their dead and dying countrymen.

Hitherto Thorpe had regarded the insurrection only as an unpleasant interruption to his intended espionage; but now, as he closely followed by Tom, he entered the house in the basement of which he had taken refuge, and saw that the soldiers were searching house after house, bundling the inmates into the streets, he realised that the position was one, escape from which would tax his pluck and ingenuity to the utmost.

"We're in a tight hole, Tom," he said, turning to his little companion. "There isn't a place here large enough to hide me, but you can creep into this oven. When you get a chance, slip out, make your way to the airship, and tell Master Dick where I am."

Tom looked slyly into his master's face.

"Yee don't get over me like that, sir! I knows yer too well. You are sending me away so that I may have a chance of escaping; but I'd rader keep here and take pot luck with yer," he said.

"Don't be an idiot, Tom! Do as I tell you. Mind, no tricks this time! My life may depend upon your returning with the airship as quickly as possible," replied Thorpe severely.

Tom was still unconvinced. However, seeing Thorpe was beginning to get angry, he acquiesced, and crawled into the oven, whilst Thorpe mounted to the top of the house.

As he left the kitchen, he saw an axe lying on the floor. Thinking it a very serviceable weapon at close quarters, he took it with him, and when the top of the house was reached, he saw the frail steps that communicated with the attics, he was glad he had done so.

Rushing to a front window, he looked out.

The street was filled with soldiers, subjecting the houses to a vigorous search. In some there were smoke-blackened men. These were marched to the square, and the crack of rifles told that punishment had followed quickly upon their crime.

Presently a shout from the street warned him that he had been seen, and, looking down, he saw a German officer pointing him out with his sword.

As he withdrew his head, he caught an accidental glimpse of his reflection in a glass, and he no longer wondered that the officer's attention had been attracted to him, for he had received a slight wound in the head, the blood from which had flowed slowly over his smoke-blackened face, showing all too plainly that he was one of those who had taken part in the defence of the barricades.

Already he could hear the clatter of weapons in the hall beneath as he climbed swiftly up the creaking stairs to the attics.

(Another long instalment of this grand serial next Monday. Order your copy now.)

# SURPRISING THE SCHOOL!

A Magnificent, New, Long, Complete Tale dealing with the Adventures of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfria's School.

By FRANK RICHARDS.



"Good-morning!" Bunter jumped. It was a girlish voice which surprised him. Miss Cora Quelch, plump and rosy, was coming down the garden path. Bunter raised his cap with a trembling fat hand. "G-g-good morning!" he stammered. (See Chapter 5.)

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### Bunter's Dodge!

"H E, he, he!" That sudden exclamation proceeded from Billy Bunter.

The fat junice was leaning against the door of the Remove Form-room, his fat hands in the pockets of his tight trousers. His exceedingly plump face wore an oily smirk of satisfaction.

It was nearly time for afternoon lessons, and Harry Wharton & Co. were coming along the Form-room passage. They regarded the fat junice inquiringly. There was no visible cause for Bunter's merriment.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry. "Wherefore the cackle?"

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"He, he, he!"

"Somebody lent you a bob—somebody who doesn't know you?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Or has your postal order arrived?" asked Johnny Bull sarcastically. "The postal order you've been expecting for a term and a half!"

"He, he, he!" chuckled Bunter. "Let's see—what are you fellows doing this afternoon? Geography, maths, and French—ugh! Well, I'm going to cut it."

"Cut is it?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"He, he, he! Yes."

"How can you cut it, fathead? It isn't a half-holiday."

"I'm going to get an exeat."

"Bosh!" said Bob Cherry. "Why should Quelch let you off for the afternoon?"

NEXT  
MONDAY—

"THE SCHOOLBOY AUCTIONEER!"

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"He, he, he! That's telling!" said Billy Bunter. "I'm not going to let you fellows into the secret—you might pinch it. But I'm jolly well going to get the afternoon off, all the same—I've got a dodge."

"Bow-wow!" said Bob incredulously.  
"I tell you I've got a dodge," exclaimed Bunter warmly. "I'm going to get round old Quelch. Of course, he'll feel flattered."

"Flattered!" said Wharton, in perplexity.  
"Certainly. I don't know what his niece is like, but he's bound to feel flattered at a fellow offering to look after her."

"His niece!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Has Quelchy a niece?"  
"Of course he has, father, or how could she be coming to Greyfriars this afternoon?" snapped Bunter. "Ho, he, he! I happened to find it out—"

"What keyhole did you happen to be near?" snorted Bob.  
"Oh, really, Cherry! I found it out quite by chance; and as she's coming to Friarale by the three train, of course somebody ought to go and meet her. And Quelchy is bound to be pleased when I offer to go."

"Oh! So that's the dodge, is it?"  
"Yes—I mean, no, it isn't!" exclaimed Bunter, realising that he had said a little too much. "I say, you fellows, don't get me pinching my idea, you know. I found it out—I heard Quelchy telling Prout—"

"Cave, you ass!" said Harry Wharton, as the figure of Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, appeared at the end of the passage.

Billy Bunter shut up instantly. He detached himself from the door, and the juniors went into the Form-room.

"I say, you fellows," whispered Bunter, as they went to their places, "fair play, you know; it's my dodge—"

"You can keep it," growled Bob Cherry.  
"I think it's a jolly good dodge, too," said Bunter. "Of course, I don't care tuppence for old Quelch or his niece; but I'm going to pile it on thick—"

"You're rotter enough for anything," agreed Bob.  
"Oh, really, Cherry—"

Mr. Quelch entered the Form-room, and the juniors were silent. The Remove took their places, and Mr. Quelch went to his desk. Harry Wharton & Co. regarded the Form-master with some little curiosity. They had never thought of Mr. Quelch before as an uncle with a niece. To them, he was a cold and dry gentleman, whose apparent mission in life was to drive Latin into the hard heads of the Lower Fourth. It was quite new and interesting to consider him in the light of human relationships. They wondered what Mr. Quelch's niece was like—whether he was fond of her—how old she was—and whether she was like her uncle. In that case she could not be, as Bob Cherry remarked in a whisper, a "hute."

Mr. Quelch turned from his desk, and found William George Bunter upright in his place, his eyes gleaming behind his spectacles, and his fat hand lifted. Mr. Quelch gave him a glance of cold inquiry.

"Please, sir—"  
"Well, Bunter?" rapped out Mr. Quelch, in his dry, metallic voice.

"If you please, sir," said Bunter, "I should like to offer my services for this afternoon."

The Remove master stared.  
"I don't understand you, Bunter. To what are you alluding?"

"I should be very glad, sir, and very honoured, to go to the station and meet Miss Quelch, if agreeable to you, sir."

"What?"  
"Ahem!" Mr. Quelch's ejaculation was not encouraging, but Bunter thought of the French, the geography, and the mathematics, and he went on bravely. "It was worth an effort to get an extra half-holiday. 'Ahem! It—it would be nice for—for your niece, sir, to have someone to meet her at the station, sir, and—look after her—'"

"How did you know, Bunter, that my little niece was arriving at Greyfriars this afternoon?" asked Mr. Quelch, in a freezing voice.

Bunter started.  
"Ahem! I—I understand that—that it is the case, sir," he stammered.

"Probably. But as I have mentioned the matter only to the Head and Mrs. Locke, and to Mr. Prout, I do not see how it can have come to your knowledge, Bunter. Will you kindly explain to me that very peculiar circumstance?"

Mr. Quelch spoke in a tone of deadly politeness, and took a cue from his desk. Bob Cherry suppressed a chuckle. Bunter's "dodge" did not seem to be working.

"I—I—I—" stammered Bunter. "The—the fact is, sir—the fact—ahem!—the—the fact—"

"Well, what is the fact, Bunter?"

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"I—I happened to hear you mention it to Mr. Prout, sir—quite by accident—"

"Indeed! As I was in Mr. Prout's study, and the door was closed, what kind of an accident could have caused you to overhear my words, Bunter?"

"Ahem! I—I-I happened to—to to stop by the door, sir," murmured Bunter. "I—I was examining the—the patterns of the linoleum, sir, and—and so—"

"You must not examine the patterns of the linoleum outside a Form-master's door, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch. "I have had to speak to you before about your deplorable habit of eavesdropping. Come here!"

"Wh-wha-a-at for, sir?"  
"I am going to cane you for eavesdropping."

"Oh, crumbs!"  
"Don't utter ridiculous ejaculations, Bunter; but come here at once," rapped out Mr. Quelch. "You are wasting time."

Billy Bunter rolled out lugubriously before the class.  
"Hold out your hand—now the other!"

Swish! Swish!  
"Ow—ow—ow! Yowow!"

"Cease that ridiculous noise, Bunter, and go back to your place. Stay! What is that bulging out your pockets?"

"My—my pockets, sir."

"Yes. Turn out your pockets at once!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

Bunter groaned, and turned out his pockets. He turned three jam-tarts, wrapped in exceedingly sticky paper, out of one, and a packet of bullseyes, and a chunk of toffee out of the other. The juniors looked on grinning. Bunter's dodge was paying out worse than ever.

Mr. Quelch stared at the sticky mass with disgust.  
"Put that disgusting rubbish into the fire at once," he said.

"Oh!"  
"And take fifty lines for bringing such things into the Form-room."

"Ow!"  
Bunter rolled reluctantly towards the fire, and deposited therein his tarts, his toffee, and his bullseyes. Mr. Quelch watched him stovely.

"Now go to your place, Bunter."

"Yes, sir," growled Bunter; "but—but I say, sir—"

"That will do, Bunter."

"Yes, sir. But—but may I go to the station and meet Miss Q.?"

Mr. Quelch glared.  
"No!" he thundered, in a voice that made Billy Bunter jump almost clear of the floor.

And the Owl of the Remove crawled back to his place, amid chuckles from the rest of the Form. But an eye glance from Mr. Quelch caused the chuckles to die away. Then Mr. Quelch spoke.

"Wharton?"  
"Yes, sir," said Harry.

"My niece, Miss Quelch, arrives at Friarale by the three o'clock train. May I ask you to meet her there and conduct her to the school, as I do not wish to leave the Form myself."

"Certainly, sir," said Harry.  
"Thank you, Wharton. You may leave, then, at half-past two. Pray take my niece to the Head's house, where Mrs. Locke is expecting her. We will now commence."

And the Remove commenced. Billy Bunter rubbing his hands under his desk, and blinking alternately at Mr. Quelch and at Wharton, with almost homicidal looks.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Harry Wharton Enjoys Himself!

HARRY WHARTON quitted the Remove Form-room at half-past two very cheerfully. Billy Bunter's spectacles glimmered after him mournfully. It was his dodge; but it was Wharton who had been chosen for the honour. Wharton had simply been chosen as head boy of the Form, and a fellow who could be relied upon to take proper care of the Form-master's niece. But Bunter felt that it wasn't fair. He rose in his place to make a last effort.

"If you please, Mr. Quelch—if—if you please, sir—"  
"Sit down!"

"I—I should like to go with Wharton, sir. He—he may need some assistance—"

"Another word and I will cane you, Bunter!"  
Bunter sat down.

Harry Wharton closed the Form-room door behind him, and strolled down the passage joyously. He was not a slacker like Bunter; but he was very pleased to exchange work in the Form-room for a brisk walk in the keen, winter air. He

put his cap on the back of his head, and started in the highest of spirits.

It did not take him long to reach the station. He was on the platform ten minutes before the train was due to arrive, and he walked up and down to keep himself warm while he waited. The train came in at last, and he watched the passengers alighting. He had never seen Mr. Quech's niece, and he wondered what she was like. If there were many girls in the train, he was a little at a loss how to distinguish her, unless she was like her uncle.

A couple of farmers, and a couple of Territorials, and a Boy Scout alighted, and then a lady of middle-age. That seemed to be all. The local train at Friesland was seldom crowded. But Wharton caught sight of a face at the window of a first-class carriage, and saw a plump hand wave—apparently for a porter to open the door. Wharton scudded up to the carriage and pulled the door open.

There was a young lady inside of about his own age. Wharton started a little. Mr. Quech was a slim gentleman, not to say thin and angular. Wharton had expected the niece to be something like the uncle.

But if this was the niece, she wasn't! Perpendicularly, she was not so big as the junior. But horizontally she was twice his.

Harry Wharton raised his cap.

"Miss Quech?" he asked politely.

The plump young lady looked at him. She had pretty blue eyes, but they almost disappeared in her plump cheeks.

"Yes," she said.

"Mr. Quech asked me to come and meet you here. Can I help you?"

"Thank you."

Wharton took the plump hand, and helped the young lady to alight.

"My parcels," said Miss Quech.

Wharton looked at the parcels in some dismay.

There were two bags on the racks, and five parcels of various sizes. There were also a coat, a muff, and an umbrella.

"Are—are all these things yours, Miss Quech?" stammered Wharton.

"Yes, they are all mine," said Miss Quech. "Will you carry them for me?"

"With—with pleasure."

Harry Wharton handed out the coat, and the umbrella, and the muff, and started on the parcels.

"Urry up, there!" came the porter's voice.

Wharton hurried up. He deposited bags and parcels on the platform, and the porter slammed the door, and the train moved out. Wharton was left with a plump young lady, two bags, and five parcels to take care of. It began to occur to him that it was rather unfortunate that Bunter's "dodge" had not been successful.

"How kind of you to come and meet me," said Miss Quech. "What is your name?"

"Harry Wharton."

"Miss is Cora. Can you carry all those parcels?"

"I'll try."

Wharton took a bag in either hand, and Cora handed him the parcels. One was placed under either arm, then two were placed in his hands in addition to the bags. Wharton holding them by the straps. There remained a fifth parcel to dispose of. It was not a heavy one, but it was large. Cora confided to him that it contained a bouquet for her dear uncle.

It was nice of Cora to bring a bouquet for her dear uncle. Wharton admitted that. But how on earth it was to be conveyed to Greyfriars was a deep mystery.

"We—we'd better take the cab from the station," murmured Wharton.

Miss Cora made a little grimace.

"Oh! You're not a walker, then?" she asked.

Wharton coloured a little. He rather prided himself upon his abilities as a walker.

"Oh, yes, I always walk myself!" he exclaimed at once.

"Then we'll walk," said Cora instantly. "I'm a good walker. Walking is a good exercise; it keeps you from getting thin."

"Thin!" murmured Harry.

"Yes. I'm dreadfully afraid of it."

"My hat!"

"What did you say?"

"I—I—I—I'd like to walk!" stammered Harry. Really it did not seem to him that Cora Quech need have been afraid of getting thin.

"That's right. Never be a slacker," said Miss Cora approvingly.

Rather than be supposed to be a slacker, Wharton would have walked to the end of the county. But he regarded the fifth parcel with dismay.

"You must be very careful with that," said Miss Quech. Somehow, it did not seem to occur to her to carry it.

"Will you—ahem!—hand it to me?" murmured Harry.

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"Yes; but be very careful."

Room was found for it under Wharton's right arm. He was glad there was not a sixth parcel, which he would certainly have had to hold in his teeth.

They left the station. The porter grinned as the junior passed with a bag and a parcel in each hand, and two parcels under one arm and one under the other. It was a little difficult for Wharton to move without dropping some of his burdens. And the bags were heavy. But he bore up manfully. Inwardly, he wished fervently that Billy Bunter had been successful in his dodge.

Miss Quech looked round the station.

"Is there a buffet here?" she asked.

"Nunno! There's a tuckshop in the High Street," said Harry.

"Then we will stop there. I am hungry."

They halted in Uncle Clegg's little tuckshop. Wharton gladly laid down his burden. The prospect of walking thus loaded to Greyfriars filled him with dismay, and he was glad of a rest to begin with.

Miss Quech sat down and gave her orders. It seemed to Wharton that he could hear Billy Bunter giving orders.

Miss Quech must have been very hungry after her journey—her appetite was good, not to say tremendous. Wharton watched her like a fellow in a dream, as cake after cake, and tart after tart, disappeared, and the cheerful young lady showed no sign whatever of slackening.

Uncle Clegg opened his eyes wider and wider. He had seen Billy Bunter feed, when the fat junior was in funds; but Billy Bunter would have been put quite in the shade by Miss Quech.

"Aren't you hungry?" asked Miss Quech, looking at Wharton.

"I—I'll have a tart or two," murmured Harry.

"Don't you have a good appetite?" asked Cora sympathetically.

"Pretty fair."

"How nice! I have a wretched appetite myself."

"Oh!"

"I eat hardly anything. But I try hard, for the sake of my health."

Wharton thought that Miss Quech, who was trying hard to eat, was succeeding admirably. He wondered whether she would be able to walk to the school afterwards. Finally, however, the young lady was finished. She paid the bill, which was a very considerable one, and Wharton settled for his turn, and took up his burden again.

"Alonso! Shall I call the cab, after all?" he ventured.

Miss Quech looked disdainful.

"Tired already?" she asked.

"Oh, no—not at all! But you—"

"I'm a good walker," said Miss Quech. "Be careful with that parcel, won't you?"

"Oh! Oh, yes!"

They started. The halt in the tuckshop had lasted quite a long time, and the early winter dusk was falling. The village boys were coming out of school, and they regarded Wharton and his load with great interest and admiration. Some of them followed him, calling out "Porter! Porter!" Wharton coloured, and hurried his steps.

"Not too fast, please," said Miss Quech. "There is no hurry."

Wharton slackened again. In the lane, fortunately, the village youths left them. They walked on to Greyfriars. Wharton began to breathe very hard. Never had the distance seemed so long. The bags were very heavy, and they seemed to grow heavier at every step, and the parcels were cumbersome. His arms ached, and the perspiration dowed his brow.

"Tired?" asked Miss Quech.

"Nunno!"

"You're not a good walker," said the young lady decidedly.

"You need exercise. You should take a good long walk every day and get used to it."

"Oh!"

"Mind you don't crush those flowers, won't you?"

"Ye-es, Oh, my hat!"

One of the parcels tumbled into the mud. Miss Quech uttered a cry of dismay.

"Oh, dear! That is my cake for uncle. Oh, dear!"

"I—I'm awfully sorry!" gasped Wharton.

"I made that cake myself," said Miss Quech. "For goodness' sake pick it up before it gets very muddy!"

Wharton stooped despairingly, and a couple more parcels rolled on the ground.

"Oh, dear, how low clumsy you are!"

"Oh!"

"Now they are all muddy," said Miss Quech crossly.

"Oh, dear, dear! Boys are so clumsy. Do pick them up!"

Wharton gasped.

"L—I say, could you pick them up, if you don't mind? I—I'm afraid I shall drop the others."  
Miss Quelch gave a little sniff, evidently regarding this as slacking. She picked up the parcels, and disposed them about the junior again. The lane was very muddy, and the parcels were wet and covered with it. Mud rubbed off upon Wharton's Eton jacket, and his sleeves were smothered. One of the parcels rubbed against his perspiring face as they were stacked on him, and a great daub of mud remained on his nose. Miss Quelch gave a little giggle as they started again.

"Wh-wh-what's the joke?" panted Wharton.  
"You do look so funny with that mud on your nose."  
"Oh, do I?" gasped Harry.  
"Yes. Ha, ha, ha!"  
Wharton staggered on. He was almost sinking under his burdens now, and he was deeply grateful to see the gates of Greyfriars ahead. They walked in, and Gooding, the porter, looked out of his lodge and chuckled, and Wharton gave him a glance that was positively murderous. He felt, with a sinking of the heart, that the fellows would be out of the Form-room by this time, and that a crowd would see him come in, loaded like a mule, and with mud on his nose.

He was right. Half-way to the Head's house there was a shout.  
"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"  
"Here's Wharton!"  
"My hat!"  
"Ha, ha, ha!"  
The juniors all "capped" Miss Quelch most politely, but they could not help laughing at the sight of her companion. Wharton glared at them furiously.

"Lend a hand, you cackling asses!" he gasped.  
"Yes, do help him," said Miss Quelch. "The poor boy is very weak, I'm afraid."  
"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"I ain't weak," howled Wharton; "but—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Bob Cherry and Nugent kindly took the bags, and Wharton fairly gasped with relief. His arms were aching with fatigue. Billy Bunter blinked at him, but did not offer to carry any of the parcels. He took off his cap to Miss Quelch.

"May I carry your umbrella, Miss Quelch?" asked Bunter politely.

"Thank you," said Miss Quelch.  
Bunter marched on with the umbrella. They reached the Head's house. The bags and the parcels were deposited in the hall, and Wharton was able at last to wipe the mud off his nose. Miss Quelch uttered a little exclamation of dismay as she examined her property.

"Oh, dear—oh, dear! You have crushed the flowers."  
"Sorry!" gasped Harry.  
"But it is no use being sorry after crushing my flowers," said Miss Quelch. "And I asked you to be careful, didn't I?"

"Ye-es; but—but—"  
"Yes; you are a clumsy ass, Wharton!" said Billy Bunter reprovingly.

"Why, you—"  
"Well, it cannot be helped now," said Miss Quelch resignedly. "But you are really, really very clumsy. Never mind."

The door closed at last. Harry Wharton, with a grin on his brow, walked to the School House, amid the grinning juniors. Wharton was not feeling inclined to grin.

"Had a good time?" murmured Bob Cherry.  
"The goodfellowness of the esteemed time must have been terrific!" purred Harrow Jamset Ram Singh.

"Oh, rats!" growled Wharton.  
"I say, you fellows—"  
"Ha, ha! Ain't you glad that your dodge was a frost, Bunter?" chuckled Bob.

Bunter blinked at him.  
"No; certainly not! I say, you fellows, what a ripping girl!"

"What a what?" gasped Wharton.  
"What a ripping girl!" said Bunter enthusiastically.  
"I've never seen anyone like her!"

"I haven't, either—and jolly well don't want to!" snapped Wharton.

"Simply ripping!" said Bunter. "Just ripping! Fancy old Quelch having a niece like that! I expected to see some skinny stick like Quelch himself, or some lanky horror like you."

"Cherry—"  
"What?"  
"But just look at her! What a ripping girl!"

"Oh, don't be funny!" growled Wharton.  
"I'm not being funny, you silly ass!"  
"Oh, rats!"

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And Harry Wharton went into the lobby to brush off the mud, and to swear a solemn swear that the next time he was wanted to meet a Form-master's niece at the station he would have a sudden illness which would render it impossible for him to go.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### Simply Amazing!

"A II-II-II-II-II!"  
It was a long-drawn sigh from Billy Bunter. The fat junior was seated in the armchair in No. 7 Study, which he shared with Peter and Alonzo Todd and Tom Dutton.

It was tea-time, on the day after that of Miss Quelch's arrival. At tea-time Bunter was generally very lively. But his liveliness had departed.

He sat in the armchair with a far-away look in his eyes, and even the smell of hot buttered toast failed to arouse him.  
"Lend a hand, you fat bouncer!" said Peter Todd indignantly. "You collar the lion's share of the tea, and you can help get it ready."

Bunter did not reply. He sighed.  
Peter stared at him.  
"Bunter!" he roared.

Another sigh.  
"What's the matter with the fat idiot?" exclaimed Peter Todd, in amazement. "I say, Bunter, we're going to have tea."

"Tea is ready, my dear Bunter," said the gentle Alonzo. Billy Bunter blinked round irritably.

"Tea! Well, have tea, then, and don't bother!" he snapped.

"Don't you want any, tully?"  
"No!"  
"Wha-a-a-at!"

"Don't worry!" said Bunter.  
"You—you don't want any tea?" said Peter Todd faintly.

"No, I don't!"  
"But but why not?"  
"I'm not hungry."

This reply was so astonishing that Peter Todd could only gasp. He stood looking at Bunter with his mouth open, like a newly-landed fish.

"N-n-not hungry?" he stammered. "Are you ill?"  
"No."

"But—but you're always hungry," gasped Peter. "You're always hungry after a meal, let alone before one. What's the matter?"

"Oh, dry up!"  
"My dear Bunter," said Alonzo Todd, in grave concern, "I fear that there is something the matter with you. You are generally so excessively greedy, you know. If your health is failing, I should be very pleased to write to my Uncle Benjamin for a bottle of his marvellous mixture—"

"He's pulling our leg," said Peter. "Even if he's ill, he would want to eat. He always wants to eat. Why, when he was laid up in sanatorium, he made a fearful fuss because they wouldn't let him eat. What's the little joke, Bunter?"

"'Tain't a joke!" snapped Bunter. "I'm not hungry."  
"Well, my hat!"

Peter sat down to tea. He was convinced that Bunter was pulling his leg, and he was certain that Bunter would not be able to keep the joke up long, and watch the eatables disappearing. But if it was a joke, Bunter kept it up. He looked at his three study-mates with lack-lustre eyes, and did not appear even to notice the rapid disappearance of the provisions.

There was a knock at the door, and Vernon Smith, the Bouncer of Greyfriars, looked in.

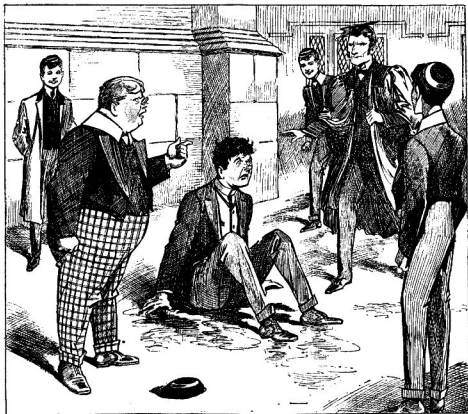
"Bunter here?" he asked. "Hallo! Bunter, I want you."  
"Can't come!" growled Bunter.

"It's a feed!" explained the Bouncer.  
At any other time that magic word would have made Bunter jump up like a shock from a very powerful electric battery. Now it did not produce the slightest effect upon him. He merely blinked at the Bouncer, and turned his head away without troubling to reply. Vernon Smith looked surprised, as well he might.

"I say, Bunter, it's a feed!" he said, doubting whether the Owl of the Remove had become suddenly deaf. "I want you to cook for me, as you're such a dab at cooking, and you can stay to the feed. Savvy?"

"Oh, gay away!"  
"What?"  
"Don't bother!" said Bunter.

"But—but—don't you catch on?" exclaimed the astonished Bouncer. "It's a feed—Wibley and Skinner and Desmond are coming, and I want you to do the cooking."



"Bunter!" rapped out Mr. Quelch. "How dare you strike a senior?" Mud and water dripped from Coker's trousers. His face was purple. "You leave him to me, sir!" he gasped. (See Chapter 7.)

"Oh, rot!"

"Won't you come?" demanded Vernon-Smith.

"No."

"Well, my hat!"

"There's something up with Bunter," said Peter Todd.

"He won't have any tea."

"Won't have any tea!" repeated the Bounder dazedly.

"Bunter won't!"

"He's not hungry."

"Not hungry—Bunter! What's the little game?"

"Oh, shut up!" said Bunter. "Do you think a fellow

wants to be always eating?"

"Well, you always do, don't you?" said the Bounder, in

astonishment.

"Oh, rats!"

"It can't be a joke," said Vernon-Smith. "Bunter

wouldn't miss a meal for a joke. He must have gone dotty.

Have you gone off your rocker, Bunter?"

"B-r-r-r!"

Vernon-Smith left the study with a dazed look. For

Bunter to refuse to come to a feed was a phenomenon,

especially such a feed as the Bounder stood. The Bounder's

study was a land of plenty, a land flowing with milk and

honey, as it were, and at any other time the difficulty would

have been to keep Bunter away, not to get him to come.

Peter Todd looked very oddly at his fat study-mate. It

was not easy to surprise the cheerful Peter; but he was

surprised now. Bunter did not look at him. He sat and

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blinked at the fire with a troubled frown in his fat brow, and a far-away look behind his big spectacles.

Tea finished in No. 7 Study. The two Todds and Tom

Dutton made a clean sweep. If Bunter did not choose to

join in at tea-time, that was Bunter's look-out. But that

the fat fellow who generally annexed the lion's share should

sit idle and allow the meal to vanish under his eyes, was

extraordinary. Tom Dutton tapped Bunter on the shoulder.

Tom Dutton was deaf, and he had not heard the talk in the

study, but he could not help observing Bunter's astounding

conduct.

"You haven't had any tea, Bunter, what?" he remarked.

"Lemme alone!"

"Sorry, I can't!" said Tom Dutton, shaking his head.

"I've always made it a rule not to make you a loan, Bunter.

You never settle up!"

"Oh, rats!"

"Who's a flat?"

"Shut up, for goodness' sake, and leave a fellow in

peace!" growled Bunter.

"You should have had your tea at tea-time," said Dutton.

"You can't expect anything to be left for you. Can't have

tea about all the evening. I say, are you ill?"

"No!" roared Bunter. "I want to be left in peace."

"Do you? What flooze?" asked Dutton.

Bunter did not reply to that question. It was a labour

of love to explain things to Dutton, and Bunter did not feel

equal to it.

"Sulky beast!" snarled Dutton. "I don't know anything about any fleece, and I don't know what you want it for, anyway. Do you know, Toddy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?" demanded Dutton.

"Oh, crumbs! Bunter didn't say fleece."

"Grease? He wants grease, does he?" said Dutton.

"Well, I haven't any grease. What does he want grease for?"

Steeple Todd gave it up, and walked out of the study, his tea being finished, leaving Tom Dutton to puzzle out for himself what Bunter might want grease for. Peter looked into No. 1 Study on his way down. The Famous Five were at tea there, with Squiff, the Australian junior.

"You chaps seen Bunter lately?" asked Peter.

"No," said Harry Wharton.

"There's something wrong with him."

"Disappointed about a postal-order?" asked Bob Cherry, grinning.

"He says he's not hungry."

"What?"

"He won't have any tea."

"My hat!"

"And he's refused to go to a feed with Smithy!"

"Gummon!"

"Honest Injun!" said Peter. "Something's up! He's a fat beast, I know, but I really feel alarmed about him. Must be ill!"

"Fatty degeneration of the head, or something," suggested Squiff.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let's go and have a look at him," said Bob Cherry.

"If Bunter's not hungry, and doesn't want a feed, he's worth looking at. I'll take some tarts and tempt him."

"Good bye!"

Bob Cherry picked up a plate of jam-tarts that remained over from tea, and the grinning Co. made their way to No. 7.

Billy Bunter was still sprawling in the armchair, his hands in his pockets, and his little round eyes blinking at the fire.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob cheerily. "I've brought you some tarts, Bunter."

Bunter did not reply, and he did not look round.

"Do you hear, Bunter!"

"Oh, go away!"

"Tarts!" said the astonished Bob. "Jam-tarts! Tuppenny ones! Look!"

Bob held the plate fairly under Billy Bunter's little fat nose. Bunter blinked at the tarts and turned his head away.

Bob Cherry almost dropped the plate in his amazement.

"I—I—I say, Bunter, what's the matter?" he said faintly.

"Go away!"

"Garry me away, somebody!" said Bob feebly. "A sleek like that knocks me right over. Bunter has declined to eat! What silly ass said that the age of miracles was just!"

"Bunter, ain't you hungry?" exclaimed Nugent.

"No."

"Have you been feeding?"

"No?" roared Bunter.

"Then what's the matter?"

"Find out!"

"That's what we're trying to do," said Wharton, laughing.

"Look here, Bunter—jam-tarts—fat and juicy—"

"Take 'em away!" Bunter blinked angrily at the Co.

"Do you think a fellow always wants to be stuffing, like you chaps?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"You disgust me!"

"Disgust you! Oh, great Christopher Columbus!"

The chums of the Remove almost hisped away. In a short time the amazing news spread. Fellows came along to No. 7 Study and looked in at Bunter, as if No. 7 Study were a special cage in the Zoo containing an unique specimen. Bunter took no notice of them. He sat and blinked at the fire. Peter Todd reminded him presently that it was time to do his preparation. Bunter only granted. His study-mates did their prep; Bunter made no movement. Todd clapped him on the shoulder.

"Aren't you going to do your prep, Bunter?"

"No."

"You'll have trouble with Quelchly in the morning."

"Blow Quelchly!"

"But you'll get a licking."

"I don't care."

"Have you done the lines Quelchly gave you to-day?"

"No, I haven't."

"You'll get them doubled."

"Oh, rats!"

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"But Quelchly—"

"Hing Quelchly!"

Peter Todd gave it up.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

### Bunter on the Warpath.

**B**ILLY BUNTER was the cynosure of all eyes in the Remove dormitory that night. The whole Form was interested.

What was the matter with Bunter? That was the question that interested all the Remove fellows. What on earth was the matter with Bunter? When Billy Bunter, the fattest junior at Greyfriars, the great trencherman whose appetite knew no limit—when he lost his appetite, and declined a feed, it was time for the skies to fall.

Bunter did not appear to notice the eyes that were upon him. As a rule, Bunter was fond of the limelight, and to find himself the centre of attention would have given him great satisfaction. Now he did not notice it. He was gloomy and preoccupied. As a rule, too, he talked incessantly, whether he could find listeners or not—and now he did not utter a word. It was amazing. Peter Todd was really a little alarmed. The other fellows were puzzled and amused, and very curious.

"Feel better now, Bunter?" Todd asked, as Billy Bunter began to take off his boots.

Bunter granted.

"I guess there's some jape on," said Fisher T. Fish, the American junior. "Bunter's been feeding on the quiet, you bet your sweet life."

Bunter did not take any notice of the suggestion.

"It's philanthropy, that's what it is," said Skinner, the humorist. "Now that Quelchly's fat niece is here, there wouldn't be enough grub to go round if Bunter kept on as usual."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"She is a griddy specimen," went on Skinner. "I saw her in Mrs. Mumble's shop. She was ordering things just like Bunter—and just after tea, too. Talk about a wolf! The wildest wolf wouldn't be in it with Miss Cora. She could give Bunter fifty in a hundred and beat him hollow."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter jumped up from the side of his bed, where he was sitting to take his boots off. He rolled towards Skinner, his eyes glittering behind his spectacles.

Smack!

Skinner gave a yell of astonishment as Bunter's fat hand smacked across his face. He staggered back, glaring wide-eyed at the fat junior.

"Who-wha-whirrer you at?" he roared.

"That'll teach you to speak respectfully of a young lady," said Billy Bunter.

"What!"

"My hat!"

"Bogged!"

"Holy mother av Moses!"

"Bunter's gone mad!"

It was a roar of astonishment from the Removites.

"Billy Bunter as the champion of the ladies!" gasped Peter Todd. "What next?"

"Mad!" said Vernon-Smith. "Stark, staring, raving dotty! What's wanted now is a strait-waistcoat."

"Oh, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter blinked round furiously at the yelling juniors. Skinner sat on a bed and gasped. Bunter as the defender of the fair sex took the Remove's breath away. The number of times he had been kicked for impertinence to the girl chums of Cliff House could not be counted. Bunter's usual attitude towards the gentle sex was either one of impertinent familiarity or complete indifference. To see him standing up in defence of anything but a feed was miraculous.

"Keep him off!" gasped Skinner. "He's mad as a hatter! He'll tell us he's the Tsar of Russia next. Are you the Tsar of Russia, Bunter? Or do you think you are made of glass? They often do in lunatic asylums."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's nothing to cackle at!" roared Bunter. "I'm not going to hear Skinner, or anybody else, speak disrespectfully of Miss Quelchly. I'll jolly well thrash any fellow who does, so there."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Bunter!" gasped Bob Cherry. "He means to surprise us to death! Pile in, old chap!"

"Bravo, Bunter!"

"He's spoofing!" gasped Harry Wharton. "Who ever heard Bunter say anything decent before? Who ever saw



him do anything decent? It must be an awfully deep joke."

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Joke or not, he's not going to smack my face!" howled Skinner. "Why, I'll wipe up the dorm with the cheeky fat beast!"

"Hold on, Skinner!"  
"Cheese it! Bunter's quite right," said Harry Wharton. "He must be spoofing, but he's quite right, all the same. You had no business to speak of Miss Quelch like that."

"Rot!" shouted Skinner. "Why, I'll smash him! I'll squash him! I'll bust him!"

"Hands off, Skinner!"  
"Let him come on!" shouted Bunter. "Here, you hold my glasses, Bob Cherry! You hold my jacket, Nugent! Now let him come on! I'll settle him!"

"Bunter on the warpath! Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Go it, Bunter!"

Skinner made a rush at Bunter. The fat junior was blinking dizzily. He did not see very well even with his big glasses, and without them he was quite at a loss. But an unexpected and astonishing spirit manifested itself in Bunter. He stood up to Skinner like a Trojan warrior.

Skinner, expecting to knock the clumsy Owl of the Remove flying with one blow, came on recklessly. Bunter got in a drive, which, as it had all Bunter's tremendous weight behind it, was a "oner"—a "regular sockdologer," as Fisher T. Fish called it in the American language.

Skinner went down on his back with a shock that almost seemed to shake the floor of the dormitory. There was a shout of surprise and applause.

"Bravo, Bunter! Houray!"  
"What's all this thumping row here?" demanded Wingate of the Sixth, coming into the dormitory to see lights on.

"Not in bed yet? What? Fighting, eh?"  
"Come on!" roared Bunter, dancing round the fallen Skinner like an infuriated elephant. "Get up, you rotter, and come on!"

"Groo!" gasped Skinner.  
"I'll give you some more! I'll— You! Leggo!"

Wingate grasped the warlike Owl by the shoulder and shook him.

"What's the matter with you, Bunter? Are you doing it? Chuck it!"  
Bunter blinked round.

"Oh, all right, Wingate! But I'm not going to stand it, all the same."

"I didn't know you were a warrior, Bunter," stammered the fat ass. "What is the matter with the fat ass?"

"Ha, ha, ha! The champion of the ladies!" chirped Snoop. "Bunter standing up for beauty in distress! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do you want some, Snoop?" roared Bunter.  
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Keep quiet, you ferocious oyster!" exclaimed Wingate, in astonishment. "Now, what is this row about? Sharp!"

"Groo!" said Skinner, sitting up dazedly, and patting his hand to his nose. His fingers came away streaming red.

"Bunter's gone mad! He ought to be put in an asylum. Groo! Oh, my hat! My nose! By dose! Ow!"

"What did you hit Skinner for, Bunter?"  
"Skinner knows," said Bunter loftily. "I'll hit him again, too, if he repeats what he said, the rotten cad!"

"Good old Bunter!"  
"What is the meaning of all this, Wharton?" demanded Wingate.

"Absent!" said Harry. "Bunter's in the right, for once. That's all."

"He's mad!" sniffed Skinner. "I didn't do anything to the silly fat idiot. He's gone suddenly mad."

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Look at my nose!" howled Skinner, dabbing it with his handkerchief. "Look at it! It will be double size to-morrow. I'll afflict him! Ow!"

"Blessed if I understand this," said Wingate. "You must have provoked Bunter. He isn't usually a fighting man."

"I tell you I didn't!" howled Skinner. "I suppose I can say that a fat girl is a fat girl, can't I, without that fat idiot going for me?"

Wingate's brow grew stern. He had observed Miss Quelch and her unusual proportions, of course, during the day and a half that the young lady had stayed in the Head's house at Grosvenor.

Do you mean to say, Skinner, that you have had the cheek and rotten bad taste to be making remarks about Miss Quelch here?"

Skinner snorted.  
"But why did you go for him, Bunter?" asked the amazed prefect.

"I'll pulverise him!" mumbled Skinner, dabbing at his nose.

"You won't!" said Wingate grimly. "If there's any more row in this dormitory, I shall come back with a cane."

"Do you think I'm going to let him smash my nose?" yelled Skinner.

"Serve you right!" said Wingate coolly. "I'm surprised at Bunter doing it, but he has acted like a decent fellow. I'm surprised that it was left to Bunter to shut you up, Skinner. Mind, if there's any more trouble here, I'll come back, and I'll give you a little myself, Skinner."

Skinner grunted and turned in. Wingate put out the light and left the dormitory, still amazed, and he told the amazing story in the Sixth Form studies to equally astonished seniors. In the Remove dormitory there was a buzz of talk and laughter for quite a long time. Bunter's action had been so utterly unexpected, and it was so amazing that he should act like a decent fellow that the Renovites simply couldn't get over it. Peter Todd had long ago declared that he was going to make a man of Bunter, if he had to break a cricket-stump on him in the attempt. It really seemed as if Peter had succeeded.

Billy Bunter took no part in the talk in the dorm. Not a word could be drawn from him by the other fellows. But he was not asleep; they knew that, because his deep and unusual snore was not resounding through the dormitory. And it was quite late that night before Bunter began to snore. Certainly the Owl of the Remove was not

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"Because I won't hear Miss Quelch insulted," said Bunter loftily. "I'll jolly well lick any fellow in the dormitory who does it, too."

"You—what do you mean! You!" gasped Wingate. "Is he taking me in, you kids? He didn't hit Skinner for that, did he?"

"But he did!" chorled Bob Cherry. "Bunter's starting in business as the defender of the weaker sex. It's a new line for Bunter, but he does it a treat."

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Well, I—I'm dashed!" said Wingate, releasing Bunter's collar. "Skinner, you have acted like a cad, as you generally do. Bunter was quite right. Bunter, I'm sorry I've always regarded you as a fat worm with no idea in your head above a feed. Blessed if I can understand it, all the same. Get to bed, you kids!"

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his usual self by a very long way.

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**THE FIFTH CHAPTER.**

**Bunter Makes Himself Agreeable!**

**C**LANG, clang, clang!  
Bob Cherry sat up and yawned. The rising-bell clanged out dully through the grey winter morning.

Bob Cherry was generally the first to be out of bed in the Remove dormitory. But as he sat up that morning, he was surprised to see that there was another fellow already up, and that that fellow was William George Bunter.

Bob Cherry blinked at the fat junior.  
"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" he exclaimed.

"Hallo!" growled Bunter.  
"What are you doing out of bed?"

"Washing!"  
"My hat! Up early—and washing, too!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, in surprise. "Starting both on the same morning?"

"Oh, rats!"  
Bob Cherry turned out, as the rising-bell ceased to clang, and the others followed suit. They all looked in surprise at Bunter. As a rule, the Owl of the Remove remained in bed till the latest possible moment; and then his abominable snore told what some of the fellows called a "cat-lark."

Bunter was full of surprises now. He was ready to go down before any of the others were finished.

"Awfully hungry, I suppose," said Peter Todd, as Bunter left the dormitory. "He missed his tea yesterday."

"He won't get anything till brekker," said Bolsover major.  
"Trust Bunter to get something when he's hungry," chuckled Peter. "How's your nose this morning, Skiny?"

"Blow my nose!" growled Skinner.  
"Rats! You can do that yourself."

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"I'll jolly well make that fat beast wriggle, when I get

him without a beastly prefect hanging about!" snorted Skinner.

Harold Skinner was not in a good temper that morning. His nose looked a much larger size than usual, and it was very red, and very sore. It looked very queer, too; and the advice Skinner received from the juniors did not please him. Wibley suggested that he should wear it in a sling, and Micky Desmond advised him to boil it. And it was specially irritating to Skinner to find that Bunter's unaccustomed warlike action had won general approval. It was, as Bob Cherry observed, the first sign Bunter had ever shown of being superior to the four-footed variety of porker.

Careless of the talk on his account in the Remove dormitory, Bunter rolled down the stairs and out of the School House.

If the juniors had been watching him, they would have thought his actions very peculiar just then.

He waddled away to the Head's house, and stood for quite a long time looking at the building, blinking at it through his big glasses.

Then he drew a deep, heavy sigh, and walked away, rambling round the Close aimlessly, with a wrinkle of deep thought in his fat brow.

He rested at last by the gate of the Head's garden, leaning on the gate, and blinking into the garden, which was forbidden ground for juniors.

He sighed again, heavily and deeply.

"Good-morning!"

Bunter jumped. It was a girlish voice from the other side of the gate. Miss Cora Quelch, plump and rosy, was coming down the garden path.

Bunter blinked at her.

His fat face became scarlet, and then purple. He looked for a moment as if he would scuttle away across the Close. Then he raised his cap with a trembling fat hand.

"G-g-g-good-morning!" he stammered.

Miss Cora gave him a cheery smile. Bunter blinked at her in great admiration. To the eyes of the fat junior, the ample lines of Miss Cora's form represented the last word in grace.

"Nice morning," said Miss Cora.

"Y-y-yes."

"It's going to be fine—what!"

"I h-h-h-hope so!"

"Dear me! Do you stutter?" said Miss Cora, looking at him sympathetically. "You must find it very troublesome."

"I—I—d-d-d-d—"

"You should speak very slowly," advised Mr. Quelch's niece kindly. "Singing is good for it, too!"

"I—I—d-d-d-d—don't stutter!" gasped Bunter.

"But you are stuttering now!" said Miss Cora, in surprise.

"I—I—I—"

"What is your name?" asked the young lady, who was apparently not bothered by shyness in any way.

"B-b-bub-bub—"

"Bubb?" said Miss Cora, laughing. "What a funny name."

"M-m-m-my name isn't B-b-bub—"

"But you just told me it was," said Miss Quelch, staring at him.

"I—I—I—m-m-m-meant B-b-bub-bub-Bunter!"

"Oh, Bunter!" said Miss Cora, with a nod. "I see. There's a tuckshop in this school, isn't there, Bunter?"

"Yes," said Bunter, his face brightening up. The mere mention of the tuckshop was sufficient to make him brighten up.

"Oh, good!" said Miss Cora briskly.

"Is it open yet?"

"Not yet!" said Bunter sadly.

"Oh, rotten! Breakfast isn't for more than half an hour, and I'm hungry."

"So am I!" said Bunter sorrowfully. "I—I didn't have any tea yesterday, and—and no supper."

"Good gracious! You must be perishing!" said Miss Cora. "Why didn't you?"

"I—I didn't want any."

"You haven't any appetite?" said Miss Quelch sympathetically. "That's just the same as I am—I hardly eat anything. I try to, you know, but I never eat much. Have some of my toffee?"

Bunter accepted some toffee. He bolted it, and Miss Cora proceeded to bolt a large chunk. For a young lady who had no appetite she had a very rapid way of dealing with toffee. The toffee broke the ice, as it were, and Bunter grew more courageous.

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"I was coming to the station to meet you yesterday," he said. "Old Quelch—I—I mean Mr. Quelch, wouldn't let me, and he sent that duffer Wharton instead."

"He crushed my flowers," said Miss Cora, frowning.

"It's a clumsy ass!" agreed Bunter. "I wish I had come. I—I say—I—I say, you know, the—the tuckshop's open after morning lessons. Would you—would you like me to—to—to show you round then?"

"Certainly!"

"I—I—I'll come here and fetch you," said Bunter, his face beaming.

"Yes."

"Oh, good! We'll have a snack in the tuckshop. Mrs. Mimble has rather good tarts, and—and things. It's a half-holiday this afternoon," said Bunter.

"I suppose you'll be playing football?" said Miss Cora. "I like to watch football. Are you captain?"

Bunter coughed.

"Well, I ought to be," he explained. "But these things go by favour here. A fellow doesn't get in on his form. You'd hardly believe it, but that clumsy duffer Wharton is captain of the Remove. Of course, I ought to have the place."

"I'm sure you ought," said Miss Cora, opening a fresh packet of toffee. "But you will be playing, of course?"

Miss Cora seemed to take it for granted that her new friend would be playing, and Bunter dared not confess that he had no more chance of getting into the Remove eleven than into Manchester United.

"Ye-es, of course!" he stammered.

"Good! I'll come and watch you!"

"I—I'll tell you what," said Bunter, "I'll give it up for this afternoon, and—and take you to see the match."

Miss Cora shook her head.

"No; I'll watch you play. Now I must run away. Mrs. Locke is calling me."

And Miss Cora waved her hand and smiled sweetly to Bunter, and tripped away up the garden. Bunter blinked after her till she was out of sight, and then slowly made his way back to the School House.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### Kindred Spirits!

"LOOK at him!"

"Spot him!"

"Watch him!"

The Remove fellows uttered those remarks almost with bated breath. They were watching Billy Bunter come across the Close. Bunter was quite unaware of it. He seemed to be walking on air. He glanced up at the sky, and smiled—he looked down on the ground, and smiled again. There was nothing in the air, and nothing on the ground that was apparent cause for smiling. But the Owl of the Remove smiled away, as if he were doing it for a wager.

So preoccupied was the fat junior, that he ran into Harry Wharton & Co. without even seeing them. Bob Cherry caught hold of his ear to steady him.

"Oh!" said Bunter. "Ow! Leggo, ass!"

"What's up?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Up?" repeated Bunter vaguely.

"Yes. What are you grinning at?"

"Grinning?"

"Blessed if he isn't turning into a giddy poll-parrot!" exclaimed Bob. "Have you come into a fortune, Bunter?"

"Fortune?"

"If not, what are you looking so jolly cheery about?"

"Cheery?"

"My hat! Can't you do anything but repeat what I say to you, you fat duffer?" roared Bob, exasperated.

"Eh?" said Bunter, appearing to wake up suddenly. "Did you—were you speaking to me?"

"Was I speaking to him?" snorted Bob Cherry. "What's up with you, you fat prize lunatic? Are you gone off your rocker, or have you been hypnotised, or what?"

"Oh, don't bother!" said Bunter.

And he walked into the house without satisfying Bob Cherry's curiosity. Bob looked at his chums in astonishment.

"There's something up with him," he said. "Must be insanity—can't be anything else. A chap doesn't walk about

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The juniors all "capped" Miss Quelch most politely. But they could not help laughing at the sight of her companion. Wharton glared at them furiously. "Lend a hand, you cackling asses!" he gasped. "Yes, do help him," said Miss Quelch. "The poor boy is very weak, I'm afraid." "Ha, ha, ha!" (See Chapter 2.)

smiling, and without seeing where he's going, unless he's touched in the upper crust. But what's the cause of it?"

That was a mystery, and the chums of the Remove had to give it up. At breakfast they regarded Bunter curiously. Bunter had apparently recovered his appetite. He ate a good breakfast. But he was very absent-minded. When Skinner put salt in his tea, and sugar on his bacon, he went on eating in evident unconsciousness of it.

After breakfast Bunter joined the Famous Five as they came out.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Woke up at last?" said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry! I say, you're playing the Third this afternoon?" said Bunter.

"Yes," said Wharton.

The Remove having no fixture for that afternoon, they had graciously condescended to play Tubb & Co. of the Third Form.

"I want to play," said Bunter.

"Play what?"

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"Football, of course, ass!"

"My dear chap, 'tain't hop-scotch or marbles we're going to play," protested Wharton. "If it were, you should get into the team. But at footer—"

"Look here, Wharton, I want to play badly!"

"Oh, you'd do that, whether you wanted to or not."

"Fathead!" roared Bunter. "You know what I mean. I want to play particularly. I—I've got a reason. 'Tain't a very tough match. We can beat the Third. I want you to put me in the eleven."

Harry Wharton laughed. This sudden desire of the fat sneaker of the Remove to distinguish himself on the footer-field struck him as comical.

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at!" growled Bunter. "I'm a member of the Fern football club, and I ought to have a chance sometimes. You jolly well bag my subs!"

"Why, you haven't paid any sub this term, you fat spooner!" exclaimed Frank Nugent.

"Ahem! I'm going to pay up when my postal-order

comes. I suppose this isn't a question of rotten money?" said Bunter loftily. "I should expect you fellows to have ideas above that kind of nonsense. If you're going to keep me out of the game because I haven't paid my sub yet—"

"You fat ass!" exclaimed Wharton angrily. "It's not that, and you know it. You can play in the practice, if you're not too heavily lazy, but you can't expect to play in a match—even a fag match—when you hardly know the difference between a footer and a foul-house! Don't be an ass!"

"Look here—"

"Oh, how-wow!"

The Famous Five walked off, leaving Billy Bunter frowning. As Bunter never appeared at footer practice unless he was taken there by the scruff of the neck, his demand to play in the Form eleven was certainly rather cool. But Bunter, as he had declared, had a reason. "Somehow or another he had to get into the eleven for that afternoon.

Bunter was very thoughtful when he went into the Form-room with the Remove that morning. Mr. Quelch soon provided him with further food for thought. Bunter was called upon to construe, and the fact soon came to light that he had done no preparation the previous evening. The result was painful for Bunter. He was busy rubbing his fat hands under his desk for the rest of the morning.

But he had not forgotten the new ambition that had awakened in his plump breast. He caught hold of Wharton's sleeve as the Remove came out of the Form-room.

"I say, Wharton, about that match—"

"Oh, don't be funny!" said Harry. And he shook off the Owl of the Remove and sneered off.

Bunter rolled out into the Close disconsolately. He made his way to the gate of the Head's garden, and after he had waited there about ten minutes, Miss Cora appeared. Bunter opened the gate. He stood with the gate open and his cap in his hand as Miss Cora came striding into the Close.

"Kept you waiting?" said Miss Cora. "I just stopped for a fart. The cook gave it to me. I've made friends with the cook. I always try to make friends with cook when I'm staying anywhere."

"Jolly good idea!" said Bunter admiringly. "I always do myself. Would you like to see the old tower?"

"Hum!"

"Or the ruined chapel?"

"Hum!"

"Or the gym?"

"Hum!"

"Or the School shop?"

Miss Cora brightened up.

"Good!" she said at once.

Billy Bunter led the way to Mrs. Mimble's little establishment in the corner of the old Close. There were several juniors in the tuckshop, and they took off their caps very politely to Miss Quelch. Then they watched her eat. Billy Bunter watched her too, with great admiration. An unfortunate lack of funds—a common complaint with William George Bunter—prevented him from following her example. But there was pleasure in watching her. Miss Quelch glanced at him after she had been busy for about ten minutes.

"Still lost your appetite?" she asked.

"Nunno."

"Then why don't you eat anything?"

Billy Bunter blinked at Mrs. Mimble. But that good lady declined to catch his eye. She knew William George Bunter, and her system with Bunter was, cash on the nail. But Miss Cora evidently knew boys, and schoolboys, for her next question was:

"Stony?"

Bunter blushed.

"I—I—I've been disappointed about a postal-order," he stammered.

"Never mind. It's my treat," said Miss Cora. "My uncle gave me a sovereign yesterday. Pile in!"

"Oh, I—I say! You are a brick!" gasped Bunter.

Miss Cora waved a fat hand towards the good things on the counter, and Bunter lost no time in piling in. Never had he so thoroughly enjoyed a feed. Miss Cora was evidently in a state of great enjoyment also. Fellows came and looked into the tuckshop, and other fellows came. It was quite an entertainment. But Cora and Billy Bunter went on, regardless. They chatted over the feed—a really interesting talk on the subject of cookery. Bunter was quite at home on the subject—it was, in fact, his hobby—and he found in his Form-master's niece a kindred spirit. The bell was ringing for dinner before they left the tuckshop.

"I—I say," said Bunter, as he escorted Miss Quelch back to the Head's garden, "will—will you come to tea in the study some time? You must, you know. We have awfully good feeds in our study."

"Yes, rather!" said Miss Cora. "I like you! You are THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 364.

awfully sensible for a boy! Don't forget I'm going to see you play this afternoon."

"Nunno!" gasped Bunter.

"Now I must run away to dinner. I'm awfully hungry."

"So am I," agreed Bunter.

Miss Cora ran away, and Bunter hurried off to the School House to dinner. His face was irradiated. Evidently in Miss Quelch he had found his other self—his alter ego. It was a case of "Two souls with but a single thought; two hearts that beat as one."

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Bunter the Hero!

"FOUND your twin—what?"

Coker of the Fifth asked that question, and he addressed Billy Bunter when the juniors came out after dinner. Coker and Potter and Greene of the Fifth had watched the marvellous performance in the tuckshop, and chuckled; but politeness to Mr. Quelch's niece had prevented them from making any remarks at the time. But there was no reason why the great Coker should not be humorous with Bunter.

Billy Bunter blinked at him.

"Eh? I haven't a twin," he said. "My minor isn't a twin, fathhead!"

"I mean your twin we saw in the tuckshop," grinned Coker. My hat, I never saw such a resemblance! Not in features, you know. I mean sideways!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" chortled Potter and Greene. Potter and Greene always chuckled at Coker's funny remarks.

Billy Bunter did not chortle, however. He glared at Horace Coker through his spectacles.

"You thumping ass!" he exclaimed.

"What!"

"You long-legged idiot!"

"Here, none of your cheek!" said Coker. "I don't take sauce from fags!"

"You'll take a thick ear if you're not jolly careful!" said Bunter.

"Eh?"

Coker stared blankly at the Owl of the Remove. It would have been a little difficult, as a matter of fact, for Bunter to reach Coker's ear unless he used a step-ladder. But he had clutched his fat fists, and he was frowning in a most wudike manner. His little round eyes fairly gleamed behind his spectacles.

"You howling ass!" went on Bunter. "Can't you speak respectfully of a lady? You're not fit to clean her boots! Yah!"

"You—you young ass!" gasped Coker. "Why, I'll wipe up the ground with you if you talk to me! Naturally, I thought she must be your twin, you're as like as a barrel and a cask."

"Ha, ha, ha!" from Potter and Greene.

"Yarsooh!" roared Coker, as a fat fist smote him on the necktie—the highest point that Bunter could reach.

Coker was so astounded by that attack that he staggered back, and sat down. It was sheer ill luck that a puddle happened to be just behind him. There was a mighty splash as the heavy weight of Coker of the Fifth was deposited suddenly in the puddle. Potter and Greene did not chortle this time—they howled, as splashes of muddy water splattered over their clothes.

There was a yell of astonishment from all the fellows in the Close, who beheld that astounding occurrence. Coker—the great Coker—Horace Coker of the Fifth—the mighty man of war who "cheeked" Sixth-Formers because he was so big—had been knocked down by the Owl of the Remove. Bolsover major, the biggest fellow in the Remove, would have hesitated very long before hitting Coker. Fifth-Formers were remarkably civil to him. Even the prefects showed Coker a great deal of consideration. And Coker—the great Coker—was sitting in a muddy puddle, planted there by Billy Bunter!

"M-m-m-m-my hat!" stuttered Coker.

He was so astounded that he sat in the puddle, like a fellow in a dream. There was a crowd round them in a second. Fellows shrieked almost hysterically to Bunter to "go it." And Bunter didn't seem in the least afraid of what he had done. He pranced round Coker brandishing his fat fists.

"Oh, my only aunt!" gurgled Bob Cherry. "I know her's mad! He must be mad! Bunter knocking down Coker! He'll be challenging Carpentier next! Oh, my hat!"

"Cave—here's Quekchy!" whispered Hobson of the Shell.

Mr. Quelch came out of the School House with a stern brow. He had seen it all from his study window, though he had not heard.

"Bunter" he rapped out.

"Y-yes, sir," stammered Bunter.

"How dare you strike a senior!"

"I—I—I—"

Coker staggered to his feet. Mud and water dripped from his trousers. The tail of his coat was thick with mud. His face was purple.

"You leave him to me, sir!" he gasped.

"Nonsense, Coker! Bunter, explain your conduct instantly."

"I—I hit him, sir," said Bunter. "I—I'd do the same again."

"What!"

"So I would, sir," said Bunter, sturdily. "I don't care how big he is."

"Bravo, Bunter."

"Silence!" said Mr. Quelch. "Bunter, this is extraordinary. Keep back, Coker. I shall not allow you to touch Bunter. I shall punish him myself for this amazing outbreak."

"Oh, dash it all!" exclaimed Bob Cherry involuntarily.

"Own up, Coker—Bunter wasn't to blame."

"The cheeky fat beast!" howled Coker.

"Rot! Bunter was quite right," said Bob. Mr. Quelch fixed his keen eye on Bob Cherry.

"What do you know about this matter, Cherry?"

"Ahem!" said Bob. He could not very well repeat Coker's remark to Mr. Quelch, under the circumstances. "Ahem, sir! Coker made a remark that he oughtn't to have made, and Bunter hit out."

"And what was the remark?"

"Ahem!"

"This will not do," said Mr. Quelch. "I find that Bunter attacked Skinner in the Remove dormitory last night. Now he has attacked a senior boy, for no apparent cause."

"I can look after myself, sir," growled Coker.

"I do not ask a question of that, Coker. Brawling cannot be allowed in the Close under the very windows," said Mr. Quelch severely. "If you made an offensive remark to Bunter, you ought to have known better, as a senior."

"It was only a j-j-joke, sir," stammered Coker.

"And what was it?"

Silence.

"I decline to allow this absurd mystery," said Mr. Quelch angrily. "Cherry, as you appear to be acquainted with the matter, I order you to tell me exactly what it was."

Bob Cherry reddened with extreme discomfort. Certainly Coker had only been joking; but it could not be pleasant to Mr. Quelch to hear that the humorous Fifth-Former had compared his niece to a cask or a barrel. And Bob did not want to get Coker into hot water. In the painful silence that ensued, the gentle voice of Alonzo Todd was heard. Alonzo Todd could always be relied upon to put his foot in it.

"Bunter was a little hasty, sir," he said; "but under the circumstances, sir, Bunter's attitude can only be commended. I am sure that my Uncle Benjamin would approve of Bunter's attitude in the matter. It cannot be considered respectful to allude to a young lady as resembling, in form, a cask or a barrel. I am sure that upon reflection Coker will realise this for himself—ow—ow—ow! Somebody has trodden very heavily on my foot. My dear Peter—"

Mr. Quelch's brow became like a thundercloud. Alonzo's innocent remarks had quite cleared the matter up. Horace Coker turned very red.

"I—I—I—" he began—"I—I was just—ahem!—joking, sir—"

"Jokes of that kind are in very bad taste, Coker," said Mr. Quelch icily. "But—but am I to understand, Bunter, that you struck Coker because he had alluded to my niece in a disrespectful manner?"

"Certainly, sir," said Bunter. "As a decent chap, sir, I felt bound to shut him up. Chaps oughtn't to be funny on such subjects."

Mr. Quelch looked at Bunter, with the astonishment he might have shown in looking at a mastodon or a dodo, if such a creature had walked into the Close of Greyfriars. Bunter's sentiments did him honour, undoubtedly; but from Bunter they were astounding—or rather, staggering.

"Bunter!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "You—you struck a senior boy, so much bigger than yourself, in—in defence of an about young lady? Bunter, I am surprised—I—I mean, this is more than I should have expected of you, Coker!" He rapped out that name like a pistol-shot, and Coker jumped.

"Y-ee-es, sir?" he stammered.

"You may take a lesson, Coker, in good taste and right feeling from this junior. Bunter has acted like a gentleman."

I am sorry to say that you have not. Bunter, I congratulate you."

And Mr. Quelch swept into the house, leaving Coker wishing that the earth would open and swallow him up, and Bunter swelling with pride and satisfaction, till he seemed in danger of sharing the fate of the frog in the fable.

### THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

#### Bunter's Secret!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. gathered round Bunter, and walked him away. But Coker was not thinking of vengeance. Coker was a good fellow in the main; and he came after Bunter and tapped him on the shoulder. Bunter blinked round truculently.

"All serene," said Coker. "You were quite right, Bunter. You acted like a decent kid. Blessed if I know how and why—it beats me; but you were right, and I'm sorry."

And Coker, having thus made the amende honorable, walked off.

"Oh, Bunt!" murmured Bob Cherry, almost overcome. "You'll kill me—I know you will. Old Coker knocked down by a junior, and that junior the fattest, laziest, funkiest bouncer in the school! My hat!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Begad, Bunter's played up like a Briton," said Lord Maulverver. "Blessed if I'd have expected it of Bunter."

"You never know a fellow till you find him out," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Bunter, old man, you're a giddy jewel. What are you going to do next to surprise us?"

"Well, if you'll do the decent thing, I'll play in the match this afternoon," said Bunter.

Harry Wharton hesitated, and looked at his chums. After that really noble and courageous action on Bunter's part, it really did seem "up" to his Form-fellows to recognise it in some way. It was no light matter to knock down Coker. But for the appearance of Mr. Quelch on the scene, Bunter would have been "whopped" in the most terrific manner.

"After all, we can beat the Third, playing a man short, you chaps," said Wharton hesitatingly. "Tain't a serious match, really. Count Bunter as a man short, and we can't be beaten, all the same. What do you say?"

"Oh, play him!" chorused Bob Cherry. "After knocking down Coker, Bunter may turn out a footballer—nothing he does would surprise me now."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"All right, Bunter, you'll go in," said Harry. "Kick-off at half-past two."

"Right-ho," said Bunter. "Rely on me."

The news that Billy Bunter was to play in the Form team aroused much interest and much merriment. In footer practice, Bunter was so slow, so clumsy, and so lazy, that the juniors knew what kind of play to expect from him. But the Owl of the Remove looked unusually keen when he turned out with the Remove footballers. His footer rig was as tight as a drum on his fat person. His cap was set on the back of his head in quite a knowing way. Penfold good-humouredly stood out of the team to let Bunter take his place. Tubb & Co. of the Third arrived on the ground, and they grinned at the sight of Billy Bunter.

"All the more chance for us, Paget, my boy," said Tubb, with a chuckle.

"What-ho!" said Paget.

"What the dooce are they doing it for?" said Bolsover minor. "Bunter can't play for toffice. Hallo, here comes Miss Fatima."

By that humorous name Miss Quelch was already known among the juniors. As soon as the plump figure of Cora appeared in the distance, Bunter left the group of footballers, and shot away like an arrow to meet her, and conduct her to the ground. Harry Wharton & Co. gazed after him in surprise.

"Fatty's getting awfully polite all of a sudden," remarked Squiff. "Blessed if I ever thought Bunter would turn out a squire of dames."

Bob Cherry burst into a sudden chuckle. A new and illuminating idea had flashed into his mind.

"Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's the matter?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob, staggering against a goal-post. "Oh, hold me, somebody! Ha, ha, ha! I've spotted it!"

"Spotted what, you carking duffer!" demanded Wharton. "The giddy mystery!" sobbed Bob Cherry, wiping his eyes. "Ha, ha, ha! Bunter—ha, ha—Billy Bunter—ha, ha, ha—that fat duffer—ha, ha, ha—" Bob went off into a fresh paroxysm, and nearly doubled up. "Don't you see, Bunter—ha, ha, ha!"

# ANSWERS

"Blessed if I see!" said Harry, mystified. "What's the joke? What about Bunter?"

"He's—he's—Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's what?" roared Squiff, taking Bob by the neck, and knocking his head emphatically against the goal-post.

"Erp'n, you see!"

"Ow! He's—he's—mashed!" gurgled Bob Cherry.

"What?"

"Mashed!" shrieked Bob. "Ha, ha, ha! Bunter's in love! Ho, ho, ho!"

"Wha-a-a-at!"

"My hat!"

"Bunter!"

"Yes, Bunter!" screamed Bob, almost in hysterics. "Don't you see? He lost his appetite the first day. They always do!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And then he went for Skinner!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And then Coker!"

The juniors yelled.

"And now he wants her to see him distinguish himself as a footballer!"

"Oh, don't!" moaned Squiff, holding his sides. "You're giving me a pain! Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removees simply shrieked. They could see it all now. It was the obvious explanation. As Nugent remarked, such a thing might happen to anybody; but they had never expected it to happen to Bunter. They had supposed that Bunter's first and last love would be—William George Bunter. That Bunter could have tender feelings for anything that was not stable appeared incredible. But it is always the unexpected that happens. And it had happened now!

The juniors stifled their merriment with difficulty as Bunter piloted Miss Cora to the pavilion. Bunter blinked at them inquiringly.

"What's the rattle about?" he asked.

"N-n-nothing," stammered Bob. "Good-afternoon, Miss Cora! So good of you to come and see the match."

"I've come to see Bunter play, really," said Miss Cora calmly. "Is this chair for me? Thank you. Where's my packet, Bunter?"

"Here you are, Miss Cora," said Bunter, handing the young lady a packet he had been carrying for her. "Will that be enough?"

"Well, there's only a dozen sandwiches in it; but I never really got hungry," said Miss Cora, as she sat down. "I shall be ready for tea after the match, though."

"We're waiting for you Remove chaps!" granted Tubb of the Third.

"Come on, Bunter!"

"Where am I playing, Wharton?"

"Left back," said Harry. "You'll do least damage there."

"Oh, really, Wharton? I think you might give me a chance as centre-forward."

"Something wrong with your thinker, then," said the captain of the Remove cheerfully. "Now, then, your kick-off, Tubb."

Tubb of the Third kicked off, and the match started. To the mighty men of the Remove—fellows who had beaten the Shell—a match with the Third was quite a simple matter—in fact, they regarded it simply as a walk-over. But Tubb & Co. put their best into it. It was Tubb's great ambition to beat the Remove. And the lads played up wonderfully well. There were shouts from the fellows round the field to Bunter to play up. The crowd was much larger than was generally the case for a junior match. They had come to see Bunter play. Skinner said it would be funnier and cheaper than a cinematograph, and the fellows agreed with Skinner. They expected to see Bunter spend most of the time leaning against a goal-post, and the rest in getting in the way of the other players. But Bunter was on his mettle this afternoon.

"Play up, Bunter!" roared Bolsover major. "On the ball, Fatty!"

"We've all come to see you play, Bunter!" howled Ogilvy.

"Play up!"

"Go on, Bunter!"

"Let Bunter have the ball!"

"Give Bunter a chance!"

Miss Cora gave Bunter approving glances. She did not know that the shouts of the juniors were ironical, naturally; and it appeared to her that her fat champion was the most redoubtable player on the field, from the times his name was shouted. And Bunter really was looking up. Although his business as a back ought to have been chiefly defence, he was found all over the field. He charged with the forwards, and brilliantly robbed his own halves of the ball, and very nearly scored a goal through his own goal-posts. It was in vain that Wharton shouted to him to keep in his place, and the other

fellows breathed threats of vengeance if he didn't keep out of the way. Bunter was there to play, and he played.

His play was marvellous. It delighted the crowd; and it delighted the heroes of the Third, who saw that their chances of a win were looking up.

Billy Bunter felt that two bright eyes were watching him, and he was nerved to the most impetuous efforts.

Bunter's system was simple. When he got near the ball, he captured it and charged up the field. His weight was a great advantage. He floored his own halves like munitins, knocked the Remove forwards right and left when he was fairly going. Once or twice he disappeared under a heap of them, and there were wild yells of applause:

"Bravo, Bunter!"

"Go it, Bunter!"

Tubb scored the first goal, the only goal taken in the first half. When Hobson of the Shell, who was referee, blew the whistle for the interval, the Remove players pushed round Bunter to talk to him. Bunter was puffing and blowing like a very old bellows. He heard all the Removees had to say, and shook his head.

"You leave it to me!" gasped Bunter. "You watch me. I've always told you fellows I was a topping footballer. Hark how they're cheering me!"

"Oh, my hat!"

The players lined up for the second half. Billy Bunter was another with mud, he was gasping for breath, and his nose was streaming red. But he was as full of spirit, and determination as ever. In spite of Bunter's active assistance, Wharton succeeded in scoring a goal, making the score equal. He would have taken another a few minutes later had not Bunter charged him off the ball from behind. The Third were so doubled up with laughter that they could hardly capture the ball and send it down the field. Wharton seized Bunter by the neck and shook him.

"You thumping ass! Keep in your place!" he shouted.

"A good player's place is where he's wanted!" retorted Bunter.

"You're not wanted to charge your own forwards from behind!" shrieked Wharton.

"Well, some silly asses are always getting in the way of a really good player."

"Oh, you—you—there ain't a word!" panted Wharton. Johnny Bull, the other back, was told off to play Bunter. Johnny Bull did his work well and thoroughly. Whenever Bunter made a movement to mix in the game, Johnny charged him over, and wild yells and cheers from the spectators. Bunter being thus kept from lending his valuable aid, Peter Todd landed it sure a little later. Then the whistle blew, leaving the Remove victors by three goals to one.

When Bunter came off the field, Miss Cora gave a little shriek. He was almost unrecognisable from mud and dirt. He was dabbing his nose with his handkerchief, and the handkerchief was crimson where it was not muddy.

"You are hurt!" exclaimed Miss Cora.

Bunter pumped in breath.

"Oh, that's nothing!" he gasped. "All in the game, you know! A really good player, well up to his work, gets a bit knocked about. The other side make a mark of him, you know. We've beaten them; that's the great thing."

"How splendid of you!" said Miss Cora admiringly.

"Well, I can play footer," said Bunter modestly. "I don't brag of it. Still, I think it's generally admitted that I can play a good game of footer."

And Bunter went off to clean himself, extremely tired and breathless, but highly satisfied. He told Wharton in the dressing-room that he would go over with the team to St. Jim's for the next match there, there being no possible objection now that he had shown his quality. To which the captain of the Remove replied laconically.

"I don't think!"

## THE NINTH CHAPTER.

### Poetic!

"STARS!" said Billy Bunter.

"Eh?"

"Stars—bars—cars—hum!"

Peter Todd regarded his fat sturd-mate in astonishment and alarm. Bunter was seated at the table in No. 7, with a pen in his hand, and a sheet of inset paper before him. He was not doing lines, however—at all events, not the usual kind of lines. Sheets of paper lay around him, scattered in his sprawling and scarcely decipherable hand. But they were not from Virgil.

"Jars!" said Bunter thoughtfully. "Mars' Pa's! Spars! Tars!"



"Run for the stlle!" panted Bunter. The girl obeyed. Bunter stood on the footpath, the red coat in his hands, the bull rushing at him with lowered head. (See Chapter 12.)

"There's a scientific word to describe that sort of mania," Peter Todd remarked in a thoughtful sort of way. "They call it scholalia. Chaps are very far gone when they get into that state."

"Bars—cars—jars!" said Bunter.

"Dotty—potty!" murmured Peter Todd.

"Oh, really, Todd! I want a rhyme for stars."

"You want a which?"

"A rhyme for stars, fathred," said Bunter, chewing the end of his pen.

"Oh! You're not mad, then?" said Todd in relief. "You're making up poetry, is that it?"

"Yes, a-s!"

"Oh! Something for the 'Greyfriars Herald!'"

"No, a-s!"

"Let's have a look at it," said the perplexed Peter.

Bunter grabbed his valuable manuscripts at once.

"Let it alone!" he exclaimed. "Buzz off, and don't bother! Gimme my manuscript, you silly chump!"

But Peter Todd had captured a sheet, and he held it up out of the reach of the fat junior, and proceeded to read:

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"Her smile is like the sun at noon!

Her step is light as stars or moon:

Her eyes are like the evening stars—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Peter.

"Gimme my poem, you beast!"

"Her eyes are like the evening stars," chanted Peter.

"Oh, my hat! Whose?"

"You rotter! Never mind whose—"

"Is this for the cook?" demanded Peter.

"The cook! No, you silly chump! Give it to me."

"The housemaid then?"

"You—you rotter! Gimme my poem!" shrieked Bunter.

"All serene," said Peter. "I'm going to help you with a rhyme for stars. Her eyes are like the evening stars—Her feet come down like iron bars—"

"You rotter!"

"Or you can work it like this: 'Her eyes are like the evening stars—She's sweet as jam you buy in jars.'"

"You silly idiot!"

"There's lots of ways to work it," said Peter, dodging

Bunter round the table. "Her eyes are like the evening stars. She weighs as much as railway cars!"

Bunter made a wild rush at Todd, and the bilious Peter dodged out of the study and fled for his life.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Bunter along the passage.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the little joke?" asked Bob Cherry, meeting Peter at the end of the passage. Peter gurgled.

"Her smile is like the sun at noon," he chanted.

"What!"

"Her eyes are like the evening moon——"

"Eh!"

"Apply at No. 7 Study for the rest," gasped Peter. "Ha, ha, ha!" Bunter's taken to poetry. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Skinner, coming along in time to hear that information. "Bunter a poet! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Her eyes are like the sun at noon,

Her voice is like an old bassoon!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You rotter, you've got it wrong!" yelled Bunter, along the passage. "You know you've got it wrong, you beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter rolled back into his study and closed the door with a bang. Skinner chuckled and went into his study, too. He was very busy there for a little while, with a brush and a sheet of cardboard and a fishhook. When he came out of his study he had the card hidden under his jacket, and a smile on his face. He waited in the passage for Bunter to come out.

The Owl of the Remove came out of his study at last. There was a smudge of ink on his nose, and a discontented frown on his face. Apparently he had not succeeded in discovering the requisite rhyme for "stars," having declined to adopt any of Peter Todd's suggestions on the subject.

Skinner came quickly along the passage as he sighted Bunter, and ran into him, and caught Bunter round the body as if to steady himself.

"Look out, fatted!" howled Bunter.

"Sorry," gasped Skinner, waltzing Bunter round in the passage, "you shouldn't take up all the way, you know. You're too wide, Bunter. Sorry!"

He released Bunter, and the fat junior grunted and went on his way; but Skinner had accomplished his object. There was a card hooked on the back of Bunter's tight Eton jacket now. As he went down the passage to the door several fellows caught sight of it, and there was a howl of laughter. For painted on the card, in large capital letters, was the following poetic effort:

"Her eyes are like the stars at night,

And oh! her face is like a kite!

Her smile is like the noonday sun!

Her weight is more than half a ton!"

Billy Bunter blinked round at the sound of laughter. That brought his card into view of other fellows, and there was a fresh howl.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Her eyes are like the stars at night," gasped Bolsover major. "Her face is like a kite! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Her smile is like the noonday sun!" yelled Ogilvy.

"Her weight is nearly half a ton!" sobbed Wibley.

"Look here, you silly asses——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter swung angrily away, and went into the Close. There fresh howls of laughter greeted him, as the sight of the card on his back. Whoever the fat junior moved, loud sounds of merriment followed him.

"Blessed if I see what the silly idiots are chucking at," growled Billy Bunter. "I say, Temple, what's the silly joke?"

"Her eyes are like the stars at night," gasped Temple.

"You silly ass——"

"Her smile is like the noonday sun——"

"Oh, shut up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter stalked away angrily. But fresh merriment greeted him wherever he went. He came upon the Famous Five in the Close.

"What's all this silly chuckling about?" he demanded.

"Blessed if I know," said Harry Wharton—he had not seen behind Bunter yet. "You seem to be the centre of attraction, Billy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter turned round to shake a fat fist at the laughing THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 364.

juniors behind him, and then the Famous Five had a view of the placard on his back, and there was a yell. Bunter swung round on them again, blinking angrily through his spectacles, too.

"You silly asses!" he roared. "Now you're chucking, too!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Her eyes are like the stars at night," sobbed Bob Cherry. "I dare say they are—I haven't noticed—but you don't want to tell all Greenfriars an."

Bob unhooked the card. Billy Bunter blinked at it, and understood, and he gasped with rage.

"That beast Skinner——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I—I'll pulverise him!" roared Bunter.

He made a rush for the School House, and bounded up the stairs.

"After him!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Bunter on the war-path again—poor old Skinner! Let's be in at the death."

Bunter dashed for Skinner's study. He grabbed his glasses off, so as to be ready for combat, and burst into the study blinking. A junior was there, and Bunter rushed upon him, collared him, and in a second had his head in chancery, and was pounding away at his features.

"You rotter! Take that! Take that! And that! Rotter! Yah! Take that!"

"Ow, ow, ow, ow!"

"And that, you end! I'll teach you, you worm! And that, and that——"

"Groooh!" howled Vernon-Smith. "Drag him off! Is he mad? Hold him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Bob Cherry. "Let go, Bunter—ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll teach him—take that—and that—I'll pulverise him——"

"Tain't Skinner!" yelled Bob.

"What!"

"It's Smyth!"

Billy Bunter released his victim. Vernon-Smith dabbed at his nose and glared at him furiously. He had been taken by surprise and severely punished. Skinner was not in the study at all. Bunter jammed his glasses on his fat little nose, and blinked through them, and then he recognized the Bounder.

"Oh, I say, Smyth. I—I took you for Skinner!" he gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I—I'll make rage of you!" roared the Bounder, rushing on the Owl of the Remove. Bob Cherry collared him in time.

"Cheese it, Smyth—ha, ha—it was a mistake—ha, ha, ha!—only a case of mistaken identity—ha, ha——"

"Leggo! I'll—I'll——"

"Hook it, Bunter!" howled Wharton.

And Bunter promptly hooked it, leaving the Co. to pacify the infuriated Bounder as best they could.

## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### Quite a New Tack!

MASHED:

There was no doubt about it. The Remove fellows chuckled over the discovery, and grinned over it, and howled over it. Bunter was "mashed"—the tender passion had penetrated that heart protected as it was by layers of fat, as Bob Cherry remarked.

It was funny, and it was surprising. For Bunter to bestow two thoughts upon anybody but himself was extraordinary. Now all his thoughts, excepting at meal times, were for another.

Even at meal-times, indeed, he did not wholly forget Miss Cora, to judge by the far-away expression in his eyes.

But, much as the juniors chuckled, it made them think all the better of Bunter. Nugent quoted Shakespeare on the subject:

"There is some soul of goodness in things evil,

Would men observingly distil it out."

Bunter showed a general improvement. He was generally slovenly in his dress; now he became exceedingly careful, not to say dandified. He borrowed Lord Mauleverer's beautiful neckties, sometimes forgetting to ask permission. He turned out in the morning at the first clang of the rising-bell, and his early footsteps always took him in the direction of the Head's garden.

Meanwhile, he was looked upon with much favour by his Form-master. Mr. Quelch's opinion of Bunter had been the lowest possible. But since the row with Horace Coker, Mr. Quelch had looked upon Bunter with a kindly eye. There was evidently some good in a fat, unwieldy, unathletic fellow who would tackle so bravely a fellow twice his size, without regard to the consequences, to avenge a disrespectful allusion to a young lady. Mr. Quelch was not aware of Bunter's absurd motive; but he had seen the action, and he approved



it. He was very much easier with Bunter on the following days.

Bunter, like all the victims of the mischievous little god Cupid, alternated between high and low spirits in a most remarkable manner. Sometimes he would seem to be walking on air. Sometimes he was plunged into the depths of the blues.

Peter Todd found him in the study, in the latter state, on Saturday afternoon. Bunter was seated in the armchair, blinking at the fire, and he did not turn his head when Peter came in. His face was dark and gloomy. Todd clapped him kindly on the shoulder, repressing a grin.

"Down in the dumps, Bunt?!" he asked.

Bunter sighed.

"Indigestion?" asked Peter sympathetically.

"No!" growled Bunter.

"Anything the matter?"

Bunter gave another deep sigh.

"Confide in your Uncle Peter," said Todd encouragingly.

"Talk to me as you would to your grandfather, William. It's all right."

"I-I say, Toddy—"

"Yes?" said Peter.

"I-I say—"

"Well?"

"I-I-I-I say—"

At this point Bunter stopped. Further confidences seemed to be difficult.

Peter Todd assumed an expression of owl-like gravity.

"Go it, Billy, old man," he said. "You can treat me as a father-confessor?"

"I-I-I feel I want to confide in somebody," murmured Bunter.

"Well, I'm your man!"

"I-I say, Toddy, isn't she a stunning girl?"

"Who? Marjorie?"

"Marjorie!" said Bunter. "Who's talking about Marjorie? I mean Cora."

"Stunning!" said Peter solemnly. "I should say so. A stunner, if you like—not to say a twenty stunner."

"You silly beast!" yelled Bunter, jumping up. "I'll—"

"Shush!" said Peter, with a soothing wave of the hand.

"I mean who I say, Bunt. I never saw such a stunning girl, honest to jinx!"

"She is, you know," said Bunter, colouring down. "I-I say, you know—I-a fellow could do anything for a girl like that. She's got such a lot of sense, too—you should hear her talk about rabbit pies."

"R-r-rabbit-pies?" gasped Peter.

"Yes, she can make 'em," said Bunter, his fat face beaming.

"We had a long talk about it this morning. Cora's got an idea of making them with onions."

"Onions?"

"Yes. She's fond of onions," said Bunter. "Awfully sensible girl. Lots of girls talk such silly rot; Cora talks sense all the time. I-I wish I were grown up."

"Grown up?" said Peter. "So that you could be a sort of father to her, what?"

"No!" said Bunter irritably. "I mean, if she were grown up too, of course."

"Why?"

Bunter did not explain why.

"Makes a chap feel ashamed of anything rotten he's done when he meets a really ripping girl like that," Bunter went on.

"Not do you think so?"

"I-I dare say it might have that effect," admitted Peter, trying to keep solemn.

"You know, I haven't been quite so particular as I might have been," said Bunter. "I-I-I haven't always told the truth, Toddy."

"I've noticed that," said Peter.

"I-I haven't always really been expecting a postal-order when I said I was," went on Bunter, who was evidently in a confidential and repentant mood.

"Not always?" asked Peter.

"I-I-I've borrowed a lot of money from fellows, and I haven't always settled up," said Bunter. "I can see that it was mean now."

"C-c-can you?" stammered Peter.

"Yes. I-I-I wish I hadn't," said Bunter.

"Some other fellows wish you hadn't, too," agreed Peter.

"I'm going to do a bit better after this," said Bunter.

"I'm not going to do anything I should be ashamed of Cora knowing."

Peter Todd gazed at him almost in bewilderment. It was difficult to realise that this was William George Bunter who was talking to him. Mr. Quelch's niece had worked a miracle, apparently.

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Peter.

Billy Bunter looked at his watch.

"My hat! Four o'clock!" he exclaimed. "I must be off. Can you lend me five bob, Toddy?"

"Who's at?"

"I'm stony," explained Bunter. "I want five bob par-

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ticularly this afternoon, and I've been disappointed about a postal-order—"

"A-a-a postal-order!"

"Yes, I-I-I mean—" stammered Bunter, apparently recollecting what he had just been saying in his repentant mood. "Dash it all! I'm not expecting a postal-order, Toddy!"

"Oh, you're not?"

"No, I'm not," said Bunter desperately. "And if you lend me five bob, goodness knows how long it will be before I can pay you! But I do want it badly."

Peter Todd's hand went into his pocket, and he brought out five shillings, and deposited them in Bunter's fat palm.

"Take them, my son," he said. "It's worth it, to hear you tell the blessed truth for once. Where are you off to?"

"Ahem! I—I-I'm just going to see somebody."

Bunter scooted out of the study. Peter Todd looked from the study window, and a moment later saw the fat junior making for the Head's garden. Peter Todd gave a prolonged whistle.

"Well, my hat!" he murmured. "Wonders will never cease! That fat duffer—that lazy slacker—that greedy bouncer—and now—My hat!"

And Peter whistled again in his great astonishment.

### THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

#### Cut Out!

COMING out, Skinny?"

Vernon Smith looked into his study, and found his study-mate carefully arranging his tie before the glass.

Harold Skinner was dressed with unusual care. He had his best Eton jacket on, a flower in the lapel, and a clean collar. His boots were beautifully polished. He was expending a very great amount of trouble on the set of his necktie. His Sunday topper lay on the table ready.

"Eh?" said Skinner, without looking round. "No, not just now, Smithy. I've got an engagement for this afternoon."

"What the deuce are you putting on your best bib and tucker for?" asked the Bounder, in surprise.

Skinner chuckled.

"It's a little joke on Bunter," he explained.

"On Bunter! Blessed if I see—"

"Haven't you noticed that the fat oyster is smitten?"

chuckled Skinner. "Haven't you observed that he hangs about the Head's garden like a fly round a jam-pot?"

The Bounder laughed.

"Yes, the fat chump! But what—"

"Well, I'm going to cut him out," said Skinner, with a complacent glance at his reflection in the glass. "My nose has got, well, thank goodness, and I'm going to make that fat bouncer sit up for punching it! I'm going to walk his fat charmer off under his fat nose! Ha, ha, ha!"

Vernon-Smith frowned a little.

"How do you know she'll be willing?" he asked.

"Oh, she doesn't belong to Bunter!" said Skinner. "I've made her acquaintance, and we get on all right. I've talked cookery and things to her, and she's awfully pleased. I've told her there's a farm Redcliffe way where you get a ripping feed now-laid eggs and honey and so on—and she's going to let me walk her there. I believe she would walk a hundred miles for a feed! I'm going to walk her off under Bunter's nose, and leave him staring. It will be funny—what?"

"Rather a caddish trick, if you ask me!" said the Bounder coldly. "That silly ass is playing the gibby goat, but—"

"Oh, rats!" said Skinner. "You come and watch his face when I walk her off, and you'll see whether it's funny. It makes him wild if a fellow merely looks at her. Just you come and watch his fat chivvy."

"I've something better to do!" growled the Bounder.

"And I think you'd be more decent if you didn't do anything of the sort."

"Bow-wow!" said Skinner.

And having settled his necktie to his satisfaction, Harold Skinner put on his silk hat, and sallied forth to conquest.

He had only a few minutes to wait at the gate of the Head's garden. A plump figure came down the path, and Skinner opened the gate and raised his topper gracefully. Miss Cora gave him a kind smile.

"All ready," said Skinner.

"All ready," said Miss Cora cheerily. "How far is it to the farmhouse?"

"About half a mile, across the fields," said Skinner. "Lots of time to get back for tea. Let's have a look at the footer for a few minutes before we start, shall we? The Remove are playing, you know."

Bunter was not in sight yet, and Skinner did not want to start until Bunter was on the scene. But Miss Cora shook her head.

"Oh, no; let's go!" she said.

"Right-ho! Wait a minute till I've tied my bootlace."

Skinner tied his bootlace, and then tied the other, and was quite a long time about it. But as he rose he had the satisfaction of seeing Billy Bunter bearing down upon them from the direction of the School House.

Bunter dragged off his cap to Miss Cora, and gave Skinner a blink of green disfavor. He thought it was like Skinner's cheek to be talking to Cora.

"Coming to see the footer, Miss Cora?" he asked.

"Not this afternoon," said the young lady.

"Miss Quelch is coming for a little walk with me, Bunter," said Skinner loftily.

Bunter gasped.

"Good-bye, Bunter!" said Miss Quelch brightly.

"I—I say, I—I'll come, too!" gasped Bunter.

"No, you won't," said Skinner coolly. "You can't walk. Besides, we're going to tea. You buzz off, and don't be cheeky. Come on, Miss Cora!"

Billy Bunter blinked after them, as they started, as if his eyes would bulge through his spectacles.

"Oh, the rotter!" he gasped. "The meanly end! Oh, dear!"

As if drawn by a power he could not resist, Bunter rolled down to the gates after Miss Cora and her new cavalier. The girl was chatting cheerily, and Skinner was smiling with satisfaction. Probably it did not occur to Miss Cora that Billy Bunter was suffering from the demon jealousy; but Skinner knew it very well, and he was enjoying it. The green-eyed monster had found a lodgment in Bunter's fat bosom, and was tormenting him sorely.

Skinner looked back in the road. Bunter's fat figure came out at the school gates.

"Hallo! What do you want, Bunter?" asked Skinner.

Bunter blinked at him dejectedly.

"I—I suppose I can walk down to Friar-dale if I like, Skinner."

"Oh, you're going to Friar-dale, are you?"

"Yes, I am," snapped Bunter, who judged from the direction of Skinner's start that he was going there.

"No, you won't," said Skinner cheerfully. "We get over this stile, Miss Cora."

They crossed the stile, leaving Billy Bunter blinking in the road in dismay. After having said that he was going to Friar-dale, in Cora's hearing, he could not very well change his direction and follow on Skinner's track. He leaned on the stile, and stared after the two with an expression of woe-begone depression.

"Oh, the rotter!" grumbled Bunter. "Oh, the beast! I wish old Snooks's bull was loose in the field now. Oh, dear!"

Skinner glanced back half-way across the field, and grinned. The sight of Billy Bunter leaning on the stile and blinking after him struck him as comical.

"Queer beggar, that fellow Bunter, isn't he?" Skinner remarked, by way of making pleasant conversation.

"I think he is very nice," said Miss Cora calmly.

"Oh!" said Skinner. "Blessed if I ever heard anybody else say that! He owes me two bob."

"Does he?" said Miss Cora. "It isn't very nice of you to tell me, then."

Skinner felt that he was not getting on.

"This is old Snooks's field," he said, to change the subject.

"He used to keep a bull in here, and fellows who came across the field had to dodge him. Bunter was nearly caught once. He, he, he! He's as blind as an owl, you know, and he jolly nearly walked into the bull, and had to bolt for it."

Miss Cora looked alarmed.

"Oh, dear! I'm afraid of bulls!" she exclaimed. "We should have gone another way."

"Oh, it's all right now!" Skinner hastened to assure her. "The beast is kept in the next field now, and the gate's always kept fastened. There was a row about it, because there's a footpath across this field, and old Snooks had to take his bull out."

"Why, I can hear it now!" exclaimed Miss Cora, as a rumbling sound came from the distance.

"Yes; he's in the next field."

"Are you sure the gate's fastened?" said the girl, in apprehension. "I—I can't run very fast, you know."

"Yes, there's the gate," said Skinner, pointing. "Thop his expression changed. "My only summer-hat! Some silly idiot has left it open!"

Miss Cora gave a shriek.

"Oh, dear! What shall we do?"

"Better get along," said Skinner nervously. "If the beast THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 364.

sees that red coat you're wearing— Buck up, for goodness' sake!"

Bellow!

From the shadow of a high hedge across the field a fearsome form emerged. It was the bull, and he was on the near side of the hedge. The carelessly-left gate had allowed him to enter his old quarters. Skinner and Miss Cora were in the middle of the field, a hundred yards from the stile in the lane, and a greater distance from the opposite fence. Skinner stared in the direction of the bull, and his heart almost ceased to beat as he saw that the big, powerful animal was careering towards them already. He caught Miss Cora by the arm.

"Run for it!" he panted.

"Oh, dear! Help! Help!"

Skinner dragged Miss Cora back the way they had come. Skinner's slim legs could have covered the ground fast enough, but it was a different matter with Miss Quelch. She was a heavy-weight, and her movements were slow.

"For merry's sake buck up!" shrieked Skinner. "He's after us! Hurry! Hurry!"

"I—I can't," panted Miss Cora.

"You must! He'll have you!"

"Stop him—stop him somehow!"

Bellow! Bellow!

"Don't leave me behind!" shrieked the girl, as Skinner ran on desperately. The bull was close behind now, and fear lent Skinner wings.

"I—I can't help you, if he catches us," panted Skinner. "Hurry up!"

"Don't leave me! Help!"

Skinner bounded over the stile. He cleared the top bar, and rolled in the lane, for over the step a fat and clumsy form was clambering. Billy Bunter had just seen the peril.

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

### Bunter to the Rescue!

"HELP!" Billy Bunter's fat face was white as chalk.

The sight of the excited bull, careering across the field, made him almost sick with apprehension. Bunter was not of the stuff that heroes are made of. Yet it was only for a single moment that he hesitated.

Then he clambered over the stile. Skinner picked himself up in the road, in safety, and stared after him. He could only stare.

Bunter dropped into the field, and started running towards Miss Cora.

"This way!" he shouted.

"Help!"

Bellow! Bellow!

At that dreadful sound from the bull Bunter's heart almost failed him. His fat legs almost raced away with him of their own accord. But he set his teeth hard, and kept on. He ran with a speed he had never dreamed himself capable of towards Miss Cora—towards the bull that was rushing on after her.

"I'm here!" panted Bunter.

"Save me!"

"I'll save you! I'm here."

Bunter had never been noted for quick wit or resource, unless it was a question of raising funds. Then, indeed, his resource was limitless. But in an emergency like the present, no one who knew Bunter would have expected him to show anything like presence of mind—anything but blue funk.

Perhaps his danger sharpened his faculties. At all events, he acted, for once in his life, with cool and quick precision.

"Your coat, quick!"

He almost dragged the red woollen coat from Miss Cora. It was that that had enraged the bull—never a good-tempered animal. Miss Cora, who was half fainting with terror, clung to him as he dragged the coat away.

"Run for the stile!" panted Bunter.

The girl obeyed.

Bunter stood on the footpath, the red coat in his hands, the bull rushing at him, and his very teeth chattering with fear. Yet he knew what was the only thing to be done, and he did it. The bull came on with lowered head, and Bunter flung the red coat down on the ground before him and leaped aside.

In a few seconds, the bull's horns were in the red coat, tearing it to tatters, and he thundered on past Bunter with the tattered coat hanging on his horns.

Bunter turned and raced after the girl.

Miss Cora reached the stile, and clambered breathlessly over. Bunter came jumbling after her, gasping and gasping, his wind completely expended.

On the safe side of the stile, Miss Cora looked back, with

terrified eyes. The bull had dropped the tattered coat, and was rushing after Bunter.

"Quick—quick!" screamed the girl. "Quicker!"

"Back up!" shouted Skinner. "He's after you!"

Fear lent Bunter wings. He tore on desperately, reached the stile, and rolled over it, with the bull a dozen feet behind him. The enraged animal came careering up to the stile, bellowing, but he could come no further.

Billy Bunter sat by the roadside and panted. The bull, after bellowing for some minutes, careered off again, to spend his rage on the fragments of the coat, till a farm-hand came to drive him back into his own quarters.

Billy Bunter was still panting. He felt as if he would never be able to get his breath again.

Skinner coughed, and regarded Miss Cora rather doubtfully. Skinner could not but admit that he had not shown up in a heroic light himself.

"Ahem! We had better go round another way to get to the farm, Miss Cora," he remarked.

Miss Cora gave him a glance like cold steel.

"I am not going to the farm," she said.

"But—the tea!" said Skinner. "They have——"

"I don't care what they have. I am not going."

"I—I'm sorry that beastly bull was there," said Skinner.

"I—I never thought of that dodge with your coat. Of course, it was your coat did it. Blessed if I know how Bunter thought of it. He's such a silly ass, as a rule."

"Better to be a silly ass than a coward," said Miss Cora caustically.

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"Will you really?" gasped Bunter, his eyes dancing behind his spectacles.

"Yes, Billy," said Miss Cora softly. At that moment Billy Bunter would have faced whole battalions of mad bulls for Miss Cora. He felt a wild desire to see a troop of Prussian Uhlans marching down the lane, so that he could defend Miss Cora with his life. But Miss Cora's next remark brought him back to earth again.

"I was going to have tea at the farm," she said. "Now I must go home to tea. I shall ask Mrs. Locke to ask you to tea, Bunter—I mean, Billy. Now, let us hurry, because I am dreadfully hungry."

"So am I," confessed Bunter. Billy Bunter walked back to Greyfriars as if he were treading on air. There was quite a strut in his walk as they entered the school gates. Vernon-Smith spotted them coming in, and he looked surprised. Miss Cora had gone out with Skinner, but apparently the Owl of the Remove had recaptured the fair one. Miss Cora waved her hand to Bunter and ran into the Head's house, and Bunter went into the School House with a beatific smile on his face.

He was in the seventh heaven. He had been a hero, and in the presence of Miss Cora. The remembrance of the danger he had run made him shiver a little now; but he had run it,

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## NOW ON SALE.

Skinner coloured.

"Oh, draw it mild, you know!" he murmured. "I—I should have come back, of course——"

"Rubbish!"

"Wha-a-n-at!"

"I should have been gored by Bunter," said Miss Cora, shivering. "I would not trust myself anywhere with you again."

"There—there's no danger here, you know," stammered Skinner.

"There might be a runaway horse," said Miss Cora sarcastically. "Please go away."

"G-g-go away!"

"Yes, Bunter will take me back to Greyfriars, won't you, Bunter?"

"Yes, rather, Miss Cora."

Skinner gave Billy Bunter an exceedingly unpleasant look, and tramped away. Bunter rose, still gasping.

"You are very brave," said Miss Cora admiringly. "What would have happened to me if you hadn't been here, Bunter?"

"I—I don't know," stammered Bunter. "I—I ain't really brave, Miss Cora," he added, with desperate frankness.

"Tip—the fellows don't think so, anyway."

"Then they are silly duffers," said Miss Cora. "Lots of men wouldn't have faced that awful bull, let alone boys. Skinner ran away and left me to be gored."

"I—I know I ran jolly fast when I was near him once before," said Bunter, "and—and—but I'm jolly glad I was here, Miss Cora."

"You are a very brave boy, and I shall always remember this," said the girl. "You can call me Cora, if you like. I shall call you Billy."

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when Skinner had fanked. He had saved Miss Cora, and she admired him. He admired himself, too; indeed, his serious opinion was that, in Greyfriars or out of Greyfriars, it would be very difficult to find a finer fellow than William George Bunter of the Remove.

To add to his satisfaction, he was going to have an invitation to tea in the Head's house. That was not only an honour, but it meant a first-class feed. Mrs. Locke always looked very well after the fellows who were lucky enough to be asked to tea with the Head.

Bunter's cup of satisfaction was full. He strolled into the common-rooms. There were a good many fellows there, and most of them were gathered round Skinner. Skinner was talking, and the juniors were laughing.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

### THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

#### Doubting Thomases!

BILLY BUNTER blinked at the Removites in surprise. He did not see anything to laugh at. Skinner had apparently been relating to them the incident of the bull, though it was pretty certain that he had not related his own part of the affair exactly as it had occurred.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" said Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Got your second wind yet?"

"You should have seen him scooting," said Skinner coolly. "This is the second time he's nearly walked into old Snooks's"

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bull. If Miss Quelch hadn't dropped her coat, and the bull hadn't gone after it, we might all have been gored."

"What!" ejaculated Bunter.  
"As it was, we got clear," said Skinner cheerfully. "But I tell you, it wasn't easy helping Fatima over the stile."  
"Ha, ha, ha!" It couldn't have been.

"You wanted a steam-derrick, I should think," chuckled Snop.

"Why, you—you rotter!" stuttered Bunter.  
"I guess Bunter will give us a yarn on the subject," grinned Fisher T. Fish. "Now, pile it on, Bunter."

"Go it, Bunter!"  
"Come on with the heroic yarn!" urged Skinner. "I've told the fellows what to expect. They know you, too. Go it!"

Bunter blinked speechlessly at the end of the Remove. Skinner's little game dawned upon his comprehension. Skinner was extremely averse to letting the fellows know that he had bolted and left Miss Cora in danger. He would have received contempt from all the fellows, and he would never have heard the end of it. So, with his usual cunning and unscrupulousness, he had slyly discounted Bunter's story in advance, by representing the whole matter in a comical light and making nothing of the danger that had been run. And the Removites knew Bunter so well—his disregard of the truth, his brag, and his bounce—and there was not the slightest doubt that they would take Skinner's story as gospel.

"What—what," gasped Bunter at last—"what has that rotter been telling you chaps?"

"I've told them how we scooted from the bull," said Skinner calmly. "Now let us hear your yarn, and we'll put it in the comic column of the 'Herald' next number. I could see in your eyes that you were going to pile it on. Go it!"

"Yes, go it!" urged Bob Cherry. "Tell us that you saw Skinner in danger, and rushed to the rescue."

"Tell us that Miss Cora shrieked for help and you bounded on the scene, regardless of danger," chuckled Nugent.

"That's up to your usual style."  
"So I did!" howled Bunter furiously.

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Didn't I tell you?" chuckled Skinner.

"Let's have Bunter's yarn," grinned Squiff. "Now, then, Bunter! Hearing a cry for help, you rushed at the bull—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Seized him by the horns and his tail, and, with a single movement, tossed him over the nearest hedge," continued Squiff.

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"I didn't do that—" began Bunter.

"You didn't—really? Think again!"  
"I was looking over the stile," howled Bunter. "I heard the bull bellowing—"

"Now, let's have this clear," said Vernon-Smith, holding up his hand. "You heard the bull bellowing, or Skinner bellowing, or Miss Quelch bellowing? Which was it?"

"The bull, you silly idiot! I heard him bellowing, but I thought he was in the next field, because he's kept there since there was a row about his being after people using the foot-path. Then I saw Miss Cora and Skinner running back across the field. You know, I can't see very far, but I saw them—"

"Ahd what were you doing?"  
"I was looking over the stile. Well, Skinner came bounding over the stile into the lane, leaving Miss Cora alone with the bull—"

"Oh, draw it mild!"  
Skinner shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, let him run on!" he said. "We are coming to the heroic bitney now. I can see it in Bunter's eye."

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Go it, Bunter!" said Harry Wharton. "Seeing the lady in danger, you whipped over the stile, rushed on the bull, cowed him with the terror of your eye—"

"I—I didn't think of that. I don't believe it would have worked, anyway."

"Then you seized him by his tail, swung him round your head, and hurled him—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"No, I didn't, you silly ass! I jumped over the stile and ran as fast as I could to help Miss Cora. The bull was close behind her, you see."

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Don't you believe me?" howled Bunter.

Bob Cherry wiped his eyes.  
"Of course we don't, old chap!" he replied. "But go on all the same. Let's have the rest of it. Of course, we shan't believe a word."

"The shan't believe it is terrific, my esteemed Bunter," said Harriet Jansett Ram Singh. "But go on fully."

"I'm telling you the truth!" said Bunter fiercely. "Skinner ran away like a rotten funk. He simply bolted

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and left Miss Cora to be gored. Then I ran to help her, and it came into my head to throw her coat to the bull. It was a red coat, you know, and it was that that made the least waxy. So I pulled it off and checked it at him, and told her to run."

"Hoovey!"  
"Hoovey!"  
"Oh! You believe me now, you silly asses!" started Bunter.

"No, we don't believe you," said Bob. "You can't quite expect that. But it's a jolly good yarn—quite in your best style."

"First rate! Go on!" said Squiff. "After that you lifted the lady in your arms and rushed off at top speed—"

"No, I didn't! As soon as the beastly bull had the coat, I bolted after Miss Cora. She was over the stile then. I got over it, after her, just in time."

"And you didn't stay the bull with a blow of your fist?" demanded Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Of course I didn't, you silly ass! I couldn't, could I?"  
"Of course you couldn't; but that's no reason why you shouldn't say that you did," chuckled Bob. "You see, we know you, Bunter."

The juniors gave a roar of laughter. Skinner had told them what to expect, and their expectations had been fulfilled. As Bob said, they knew Bunter. Not a fellow in the common-room believed a word he had uttered. Billy Bunter's reputation for unvarnished truth was standing him in ill stead now, and his disposition to boast without grounds was a little too well known. Like the youth in the fable who cried "Wolf" so often when there was no wolf, that nobody believed him when the wolf really came, so with Billy Bunter. He was telling the truth at last, and the fellows received it with mocking incredulity.

Bunter blinked helplessly at the laughing juniors.  
"You—you rotters!" he spluttered. "I tell you Skinner's been telling you lies!"

"Well, it's a lying match, isn't it?" said Bolsover major. "No, it isn't, you fatted! I've told you the exact facts."

"Facts! Ha, ha, ha!"  
"I don't want to boast of it. Any fellow would have done it."

"Any fellow excepting you, Bunter," grinned the Bounder. "The exactness is terrific!"

"I—I—I—" Billy Bunter stuttered with wrath and indignation. "I—I—I tell you it's just as I say! I tell you—"

rotters—"  
Billy Bunter broke off as the figure of Mr. Quelch appeared in the doorway. The Remove-master came into the common-room, and the laughter died away. The juniors wondered what their Form-master wanted. He walked up to Bunter and shook hands with him, much to the astonishment of the Removites.

"I have to thank you, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch, with quite unusual warmth. "My niece has told me of what happened."

A pin might have been heard to fall in the common-room. The fellows looked at one another blankly. Skinner changed colour a little, and moved away stealthily towards the door. Skinner had not foreseen this. Like many cunning and calculating persons, he sometimes found his calculations a little out.

"M-m-my word!" murmured Bob Cherry. "It—it must be true after all!"

Mr. Quelch looked round at the amazed juniors.  
"My boys," he said, "it is only right that you should know what Bunter has done. He has acted in a remarkably brave and generous manner."

"Oh!"  
"My niece was in danger from the savage bull in Mr. Snook's field, and Bunter very bravely entered the field, and was the means of saving her," said Mr. Quelch. "But for Bunter's courage, and the resource he showed in the moment of danger, I tremble to think what would have happened to my niece. As she ran more slowly than her companion, she was quite at the mercy of the bull, and had not Bunter come to her help she would undoubtedly have been overtaken by the animal."

"Great Scott!"  
"M-M-Miss Quelch told you that, sir?" stammered Bob Cherry.

"Yes."  
"Then—then it must be true?"

"Certainly it is true!" said Mr. Quelch. "I see you are surprised, and, indeed, I should hardly have expected this of Bunter myself. That shows, my boys, that we should be on our guard against forming hasty judgments of anyone. Bunter has acted nobly—very nobly. The conduct of the boy who was with my niece at the time may be excused, as he was

doubtless excessively frightened. But his conduct shows up that of Bunter in a particularly favourable light. Bunter, I am proud to have you in my Form!"

"Oh, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"The Head wishes to speak to you, Bunter. He has asked me to request your presence at tea in half an hour's time."

"Thank you, sir."

Mr. Quelch quitted the common-room. Then the astounded juniors gathered round Billy Bunter. Bunter grinned.

"Perhaps you believe me now?" he said, with a sniff.

"We—we must!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Unless we wake up presently and find that it's all a giddy dream."

"Bless'd if I don't half expect to," said Harry Whorton dazedly. "I—I'm sorry I didn't believe you, Bunter, as it turns out to be true. But you've told us so many yarns, you know—such awful whoppers—"

"The awfulness of Bunter's yarns was terrific," said Inky, shaking his head; "but the admirableness now is great. May I have the honour of shaking your esteemed hand, my respected Bunter?"

"And I'll slap his esteemed back!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Ow!"

"Good old Bunter! Unless we're asleep and dreaming, Bunter's a giddy hero!" said Squiff. "And what do you think of Skinner?"

"The awful cad!" exclaimed Whorton indignantly. "Why, he was pulling our legs about Bunter, just to keep it dark that he bolted and left Miss Cora in the lurch. The mean beast!"

"We'll talk to Skinner about it!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Yes, rather!"

Billy Bunter rolled away to get ready for tea in the Head's house. Harry Whorton & Co. went to look for Skinner. There was some difficulty in finding Skinner. He was particularly anxious just then not to meet any of his Form-fellows. But he was unearthed at last, and then the Removites told him what they thought of him, and proceeded from words to actions. And the unfortunate Skinner went through such a terrific ragging that, when it was over, he felt dizzily that he could not have suffered much more if he had stood his ground and faced Farmer Snooks's bull.

#### THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER. Bunter's Feed!

"O H, lor!"

Billy Bunter uttered that exclamation dizzily. It was two or three days after the great adventure, and since that incident, Bunter had been basking, as it were, in the sunshine of unearned popularity. Frequently the fat junior was seen going for little walks with Miss Cora, or showing her about the school. He would take her about the gym, and tell her wonderful stories of his deeds of derring-do there, or stroll with her round the footer-field and describe the amazing goals he had scored; and Miss Cora listened to it all with great admiration. Sometimes Bunter would look rather thoughtful and worried after those little walks—his conscience was at work. For the first time in his life he had realised the meanness of lying; but old habits were very strong upon him, and not easy to break. But though Bunter was not yet able to turn over a completely new leaf, the influence of Miss Cora had been quite wonderful. The fellows hardly knew Bunter now. Bunter, the early riser; Bunter, the fellow who was very clean and careful in his toilet; Bunter, who no longer borrowed money, or told apocryphal yarns about expected postal-orders. It was a very different Bunter from the Bunter of old.

Naturally, the new Bunter was liked much better than the old Bunter. Alonzo Todd told him that his Uncle Benjamin would fully approve of him now. Peter Todd had not kicked him for a week or more.

So when Bunter dizzily ejaculated "Oh, lor!" in Study No. 7, Peter Todd looked at him with unusual sympathy.

"What's wrong, Fatty?" he asked. "Losing weight?"

"No, fathead," said Bunter. "I'm in a beastly fix. I—I say, Toddy, I've always made out that my people were rich, you know. Well, they—they ain't."

"I know they ain't, dear boy!" chuckled Peter. "Don't worry; nobody ever believed a word of it."

"Ahem! They ain't poor, you know," said Bunter hastily, "but—but my pater isn't exactly rolling in money. I don't get a whacking allowance, and I don't get a heap of remittances, either. I'm expecting a postal-order to-day—"

It came out from force of habit, and then Bunter pulled himself up. "I mean, I'm not expecting a postal-order."

"Ha, ha, ha! Bunter, old man, you're getting on. Not even one from a titled relation?" asked Peter.

"I—I—I haven't got any titled relations," murmured Bunter.

"Hurray!"

"But you see, I'm in a beastly fix!" groaned Bunter. "I've asked Miss Cora to a special feed in the study—something extra special—and I'm stony. And—and I'm not expecting a

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postal-order. It would be ripping to have Miss Cora here to tea, wouldn't it, Toddy?"

"Stunning!" said Peter seriously.

"She's coming early to help me cook," said Bunter, his eyes shining behind his spectacles. "Think what a time we'll have—simply ripping—if I can only raise the wind, you know. And—and I'm not going to borrow anything. I won't!"

"Why not?"

"Well, Miss Cora said once that it was mean to be always borrowing," said Bunter.

"I've told you that lots of times," said Peter.

"Oh, you're a fathead," said Bunter. "Still, I'm not going to borrow any more. I'm not going to do anything I wouldn't like Cora to know."

"Hear, hear!"

"Only what am I going to do?" said Bunter dizzily.

"You see, I've got only a bob, and you can't stand a stunning feed for a bob, can you?"

"Well, it wouldn't be exactly splendidous," agreed Peter. "Leave it to me. Leave it to your Uncle Peter."

Bunter shook his head.

"I'm not going to borrow anything of you, Toddy. I've got to think of a way somehow. I'm going to sell something. The trouble is, that I haven't got anything that's worth very much—excepting my watch. After, all, that cost my uncle thirty-five guineas—it's solid gold, you know—"

"Eh?"

"No, it ain't," said Bunter, remembering himself again.

"It's only rolled gold, and it only cost a pound, Toddy."

Peter Todd chuckled spasmodically. Bunter in his repentant mood was funny, and at the same time almost touching. Todd wagged his forefinger at Bunter.

"You leave that to me," he said. "I'm not going to lend you anything. But I'll see you through. You trust your Uncle Peter."

After lessons that day, Peter Todd was lousy. He came upon the Famous Five as they were going out into the Close, and stopped them. Peter had a box in his hand, with a slit in the lid. He held it out. The juniors stared at it.

"What's that for?" asked Harry Whorton.

"Subscriptions!" explained Peter. "Can't you see the label?" On the lid of the money-box was inscribed, in large letters, "REMOVE HERO FUND."

"Who's the giddy hero?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Who?" demanded Peter indignantly. "Chap in my study, of course, where all the giddy heroes come from. Didn't Bunter face a lion in his wrath—I mean, a bull in a field? There ought to be some recognition. The recognition, in Bunter's case, ought to take the form of a feed—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There are lots of collecting subscriptions for that noble purpose. There are lots of funds being raised just now for heroes, so why should our fat hero be left out?

"Hear, hear!" said Nugent, laughing; and the Famous Five groped in their pockets, and dropped a shilling each into the box for the Hero Fund.

Lord Maulverer was the next victim. His lordship yawned portentously as Peter explained to him, and slipped a sovereign into the slit in the money-box. Vernon-Smith "shovelled out" a half-sovereign. Quite a number of the Remove fellows shelled out in turn. When Peter Todd had finished his round, he brooded the collecting-box triumphantly into No. 7 Study. Billy Bunter was there, looking dizzily. The time was getting close for the promised feed.

And the funds had not been raised yet, and Bunter was almost driven from his new good resolves. He blinked dizzily at Peter Todd as he came in.

Peter slammed the box down on the table, and it clinked merrily.

"There you are, my fat tulip!" said Peter cheerily.

"What's that?" said Bunter.

"The Hero Fund."

"Wha-a-at! Oh, really, Toddy?"

Peter opened the box, and slid a little stream of cash out on the table. Two pieces of gold, and twenty pieces of silver at least; and Bunter's little round eyes nearly bulged through his spectacles. He counted it up with his fat fingers trembling.

"Two-pounds-fifteen!" he gasped.

"What ho! Now go ahead!"

"I—I—I say, Toddy, this is awfully good of you. Look here, I can easily do the feed on two-ten—here's the five bob I borrowed of you the other day!" said Bunter.

Peter Todd almost fell down. He had been astounded to see Bunter give up borrowing. But to see him offer to repay a loan took his breath away.

"Bunter, old man, you'll make me ill if you go on like this!" stuttered Peter. "You—you shouldn't do these things suddenly."

"I mean it, you ass! Here you are—five bob."  
 Peter shook his head.  
 "No—that's my whack, if you like," he said. "As a matter of fact, I've only put a tanner in. Call that my whack. Now, pile in and get the feed ready; you'll have your giddy guest here soon."

"Right-ho!" said Bunter briskly. "Look here, you go and tell the fellows to come—ask anybody you like—there'll be plenty for all. Make it six o'clock—that'll give Cora and me time to get the feed ready."

Bunter rushed off at once. Ten minutes later two plump figures were seen in the tuckshop. Miss Cora entered into the question of shopping with as much zest as William George Bunter himself. Two fat faces beamed over Mrs. Mimble's counter—and the two-pounds-fifteen was laid out to the last penny, and to the very best advantage. Then Miss Cora and Bunter proceeded to the study, laden with parcels and packages.

Bunter stacked up a big fire, and brought the cooking utensils out of the cupboard. There was a fat and happy smile on his face, and Miss Cora was bonning.

"This is something like!" murmured Bunter.  
 "Isn't it?" said Miss Cora joyously.

Peter Todd looked into the study.  
 There was a scent of cooking, and the fire was glowing, and two ruddy faces, shining with happiness, were turned round towards Peter.

"Going strong?" asked Peter.  
 "Ready in a quarter of an hour," said Bunter. "You can go along the passage and collect up some crocks, Peter."

"Good!"  
 "What about the onions?" said Miss Cora.  
 "Slice 'em small!" said Bunter.

"Not too small!" said Miss Cora decidedly. "You grease the pan, Billy!"

"Right-ho! But you leave those onions to me!" said Bunter. "You mustn't soil your hands, you know."

"Oh, never mind that—"

"But I do mind that," said Bunter. "You're not going to soil your hands. It doesn't matter about mine."

Peter Todd giggled as he went down the passage to borrow crockery. Bunter "unshed" was almost too funny to live. And yet Peter liked him at that moment more than he had ever liked him before.

A quarter of an hour later a merry party was gathered in No. 7 Study.

The study was crammed; and Bunter and Miss Cora did the honours, and did them well. The feed was a dream—a perfect dream, as Bob Cherry enthusiastically declared. Never had such cooking been seen in a junior study. Evidently two heads were better than one. Never had a feed been such a complete success.

And when Peter Todd proposed Bunter's health—in lemonsade made by Miss Cora's own fair hands—there were ringing cheers. Then there was a shout for a speech from Bunter. Bunter rose to his feet blushing crimson. The fat junior was not generally troubled with shyness, but under Miss Cora's bright eyes it was quite a different matter.

"Go it, Bunter!" said Bob Cherry encouragingly.  
 "Gentlemen—"  
 "Hear, hear!"

"I mean ladies and gentlemen—that is to say, lady and gentlemen—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It gives me—I mean us—great pleasure to see our friends gathered round the festive board," said Bunter. "It is a treat to be able to show you fellows what cooking is really like—"

"Bravo"—and laughter.

"I can cook myself—I can say that's one of the things I can do," I think, gentlemen, you will admit that I can cook—"

"Hear, hear!"

"But what I can do isn't a patch on what Miss Cora can do," went on Bunter. "That pale you thought 's good—I dare say you didn't even know it was a note—but never mind. Well, Miss Cora made that. I only helped. Gentlemen, as a fellow who really knows what he is talking about on this subject, I can say that Miss Cora has a knowledge of cooking that is not to be equalled by the best French chef—not half! I propose the health of Miss Cora!"

And Miss Cora's health was drunk with lemonsade and enthusiasm. And it was a long time before Bunter's speech was forgotten.

But the next day there was a cloud upon the fat brow of Billy Bunter. Miss Cora was leaving Greyfriars.

Under the circumstances, comfort and consolation were not possible. Billy Bunter, like Rachel of old, mourned and would not be comforted. When Miss Cora departed with her uncle to the station Bunter said good-bye with a heavy heart; and some of the juniors noticed that his spectacles were glistening with unaccustomed moisture—but they forbore to take note of it; and Skinner, who ventured to "chip" on the subject, found himself promptly hammered by Peter Todd till he howled for mercy.

It was a matter of considerable speculation among Bunter's many acquaintances, how long the effect of Miss Cora would last after her departure.

For two days Billy Bunter was deep in the dumps. His appetite faded away, and he was silent and morose.

Then he began to pick up again. A visit to No. 1 Study at tea-time, and a tremendous feed there gave the first sign of recovery.

And the morning after Bunter did not turn out at the clang of the rising-bell, and he grunted savagely when Bob Cherry helped him out with a swiping pillow.

That day he seemed his old self again.

After morning lessons, he rolled up to Harry Wharton & Co. when the Remore came out of the Form-room.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry, grinning. "Feel that you can't eat any dinner to-day?"

"No fear!" said Bunter promptly. "The—the fact is I can't wait till dinner. I had hardly any brocker—only a couple of rashers and three eggs, and—and a bit of cake—and I've had nothing since excepting some toffee. I suppose you fellows couldn't lend me a bob till this evening."

"This evening!" said Wharton.  
 "Yes, I'm expecting a postal-order this evening—"

"What!"

"From one of my titled relations," said Bunter firmly.

"It ought to have been here already, but there's been a delay in the post—on account of the war, I suppose. It'll be here this evening—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you fellows! Look here, if it doesn't come, I'll pop my watch with old Lazarus, and settle up; it's solid gold, you know, and cost thirty-seven guineas—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" said Bunter peevishly. "Look here, will you lend me two bob or not?"

"NOT!" chorused the juniors

And they didn't.

Billy Bunter had quite recovered!

In next Monday's issue of the "Magnet Library,"

there will be another fine tale of the chums of the Remore, entitled "The Schoolboy Auctioneer!"

by the ever popular Frank Richards. Make certain of getting a copy of this grand story by ordering your "Magnet" now.



## The EDITOR'S WEEKLY CHAT WITH HIS READERS.

FOR NEXT MONDAY:

### "THE SCHOOLBOY AUCTIONEER!"

By FRANK RICHARDS.

In next week's grand, long, amusing tale of the chums of Greyfriars, Fisher T. Fish comes to the fore with yet another of his cute wheezes for raising capital. Taking Billy Hunter into partnership, the enterprising Yankee schoolboy buys up a tremendous stock of cheap goods, which he offers for sale by auction in the "Rag." The whole affair is nothing more or less than a gigantic swindle, and fellows in all Forms are highly incensed. Hurree Singh, however, devises an excellent scheme whereby Fisher T. Fish is completely checkmated at his own game, and stormy times ensue for

### "THE SCHOOLBOY AUCTIONEER!"

#### LEAGUES THAT ARE FLOURISHING!

I have recently received particulars of various MAGNET LEAGUES which have been formed for the advancement of this journal and the mutual benefit of its readers.

Those Magnetites who wish to join one of these Leagues should make application in each case to the President, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for reply.

I append the names and particulars of four of these organisations:

**THE MAGNET CLUB, DUNBEATH,**  
A. Sutherland (President),  
Shore Side,  
Dunbeath,  
Caithness, N.B. Present Membership 9.

**THE STERLING CLUB,**  
Archie Murray (President),  
357, Beverley Street,  
Winnipeg, Canada. Present Membership 10.

**THE ALBION MAGNET LEAGUE,**  
Charles E. T. Herbert (President),  
28, Albion Street,  
Chipping Norton. Present Membership 10.

**THE MAGNET CLUB, DUBLIN,**  
D. Green (President),  
10, Bloomfield Avenue,  
Dublin. Present Membership 12.

I am still open to receive particulars of any new "Magnet" Leagues which have been formed throughout the Empire.

#### REPLIES IN BRIEF.

A. E. A. E. (Loughborough).—Greyfriars was originally a monastery, and has been in existence as a public school for over a hundred and fifty years. It contains two hundred and forty scholars, or, on an average, forty boys to each Form.

S. S. L. (Holloway).—It is impossible to give you a complete list at present. Thanks for your good wishes.

H. B. (Hindley).—I am sorry it is impossible to insert your notice in "The Magnet." You will be able to get the photos you require from the Photocrom Company, 61, St. Paul's Churchyard, E.C.

"Anxious."—Mark Linley came to Greyfriars by winning the Mowbray Scholarship. I think I am right in saying that such a scholarship is now non-existent.

J. B. (Preston).—I am sorry I cannot help you to obtain the book you mention.

J. H. (North Shields).—The journal you mention is not a companion paper.

G. Mitchell (South Norwood).—Many thanks for your appreciation of our companion papers. I much regret the issue you mention is out of print, and is therefore unobtainable.

"An Australian" (Maylands).—Thank you for your very interesting letter. The age of the youngest boy at Greyfriars is 11½. The ring-bell rings at seven o'clock.

#### Our Grand Ferrers Lord Serial Story.



## THE UNCONQUERABLE.

A Magnificent Story of Thrilling Adventure

By SIDNEY DREW.

#### An Unsuspected Messenger.

Gan-Waga had stubbornly refused even to learn the English alphabet, but he could write in his own way. With the charred end of a match, he drew the rough outline of a boat. Two large and small circles, with a couple of strokes for arms, and dots for eyes, represented the crew. Over the first he drew a harpoon, above the second a fish-hook. Then he paused and screwed up his forehead, for he was puzzled. Once more his little beady eyes gleamed triumphantly as he set to work. What he drew might have been either an island or a potato, but, by scrawling a house in the centre, and a weird-looking steamboat outside, he succeeded in conveying his meaning. And to show it was Scarran, he drew a whale and a seal.

"Butterfuls!" he said. "Ole Chingy roads dat canifuls. Now I draw an arrows pointings to de island, and Chingy he knows. How dats, Hendricks!"

Hendrick shook his head over the curious hieroglyph. He could not make head or tail of it.

"Why him as plain as yo' noses, yo' mngwump," said the Eskimo. "Dat de boat, and dat yo', and dat me. De harpoons say it me, and de fish-hooks tells it yo'. Den de arrows him show we go to Scarrans!"

"How anybody tells dot id Scarrans!"

"De whales and de seals, silly," said Gan. "Where else we see a whales and a seals? Ohmi! Yo' got a bad 'nuff thick heads, Hendricks!"

"Dot vos wonderful," said the admiring Finn. "Yes, dot vas plain enough, now dot you show him. But how der brinze get dot, Gan?"

"Schwartz take him. Come, my butterfuls doggies, and give dot to mine lovely Chingy-Chungy, Chungy-Chingy! Yo' takes dot to Chingy soon, Schwartz!"

He wrapped the paper tightly round the dog's collar. It was hardly noticeable when he turned the collar under. Then they crept down the steps. They peeped through the window, and listened.

"S-sh! He gone past," whispered the Eskimo. "We backs soonful, Schwartz," he added, stooping to caress the dog. "Yo' go to Chingy!"

Presently they were both outside, their hearts beating heavily. Hendrick closed the window.

"Now, Gan!"

They gained the shrubbery, and lay down side by side. The Finn told Gan where he had left the boat, and Gan-Waga groaned.

"Dat orfuls," he said dismally. "I not tink I climb downs widout breakings my necks. My heads be dizzyfuls, Hendricks. I no munds to swims, but I no ables to climb in de darks. I bad nuffs sorry, but I know I breaks my necks. P'r'aps dey have a bigger boats down dere, hunk?"

"Den ve go und see," answered the fisherman. "Petter get gatched den proak your neck, Gan."

The sentries were lazy and careless, for, as they chatted together at the corner of the house, Hendrick and the Eskimo stole away unchallenged. Unchallenged, too, they descended to the bay. A large boat was lying there absolutely unwatched. Hendrick put his fingers into his mouth, and held them up.

"Huh!" he chuckled. "A breeze is coming. Row chently, very, very chently, und den pop und der sail, Gan!"

The boat slipped softly away into the gloom, and a ripple danced across the sea. Then she spread her wings, and beelied over to the cool breeze.

Meanwhile, the little schipperke was whining and scratching at the door of the room in which the prisoners were confined.

(Continued on page iv of cover.)

"Want yo' massa, hay?" said the negro, who was on guard.

For answer, Schwartz stood on his hind legs, and poked the air supplicatingly. The negro laughed and unlocked the door, and the dog bounded in.

#### Ching-Lung Reads the Riddle—Prount and the Gleaming Eye.

"Shaf!" said the cook fiercely. "I tink dot groundel, Hendrick, had sold us. He bring us here to sell us. I see ef we man prout oop, but I not see dot plakground. Nein, nein. Ar-r-r-r! Der draitor, der vicked draitor! Why he bring us here if it not dot he mean to sell us? Vairo is he, yes?"

"Don't talk through your hat!" said Ching-Lung. "Hendrick is as honest as the daylight. Keep quiet about him! He may be hiding, and if those brutes hear yo're a man short, they'll start a search. A traitor! Oh, fiddlesticks to that! Hendrick is one of the best."

"And so say I, some no," remarked the bo'sun, who was eating cold beef. "He may be missin'; but he ain't missin' in honesty."

They had recovered from their first fit of rage, and, like Maddock, Prount, O'Roosey, and Captain Kennedy, were doing justice to the fine sirloin of cold beef.

The windows had been boarded up, and covered with a network of barbed wire. In the inner room, mattresses had been spread, and their captives had supplied them with books, chessmen, and playing cards, and plenty to eat and drink and smoke.

"And, bedad, they say that the age of adventures is dead and buried," remarked Barry, helping himself to pickles, "and that the last cold pirate outside China, Morocco, or Borneo was hanged a hundred years ago. We live and larn, boys. Altho ye uid the cucumber, unless ye mane to ate the lot, Tom. Thank ye, cold lad. Of'll say wan thing about 'em, they go the whole hog. There's none o' the milk-and-water foolery wid the lastes."

"Was Paravalls drunk, Rupert?" asked Ching-Lung. "It was an enable thing for a sober man to do to tie you up like that."

"He said that he was drunk afterwards, the hound, when he apologise. He had had an interview with Arkland, I think. A fight is a fight, but when it comes to cold-blooded outrage like that, it cuts to the quick. What do you say, Kennedy?"

"Don't ask me," laughed Kennedy, "or I shall lose my temper, and with it my appetite. I am still hungry. Another slice of beef, bo'sun."

Martin Arkland had not hesitated in making the position plain. He regretted the necessity, and he wished to render their brief imprisonment as pleasant as possible. Their treatment would depend wholly upon their own attitude. When the great airship race was over, they would be free to go. Surely before that time Paul Guthrey would be safely shut up in a lunatic asylum. Even Arkland himself had admitted that the millionaire was mad.

"Arkland puzzles me altogether," said Ching-Lung. "You'd never think he had the grit he has in that miserable little body to look at him. I've got an idea that he's playing for more than a few sackloads of Paul Guthrey's dollars. And he's been too good to Gan-Waga. He didn't strike the dear chap, and he was jolly sorry about it. One can't help admiring pluck, even in a brute like Arkland. When I have to wring his neck, I shall apologise, and do it like a gentleman. As Lord and Honour can look after themselves, I could sit here and enjoy it if we hadn't made such absolute asses of ourselves."

"Ar-r-r-r!" hissed the cook. "Ar-r-klund! Dunder and blitzen! Ven ve meet! Ar-r-r-klund! Blitzen, ven ve meet!"

"Cold meat, eh?" said Prount. "Arkland, he will be der gold meat, yes," said Herr Schwartz. "Der goldest meat dot efer vos, unless der meat frozen. Shaf, vot vas dot?"

It was the whining of a dog. The key clicked in the lock, and the schipperke raced in, and sprang on Ching-Lung's knees.

"Hallo!" cried Ching-Lung. "Where's your boss? What have you done with him? Don't scrape my nose off! What's the matter? Collar too tight?"

No, the collar was quite loose, and yet the dog kept scratching at it. Then Ching-Lung uttered a low, long whistle.

"My hat and wig, boys," he said, "I didn't know what I was buying when I gave that red-nosed Dutchman a sovereign for that tyke! Look here, Rupert! Here's a letter from Gan-Waga!"

The strip of brown paper had unrolled a little. Ching-Lung opened it carefully, and laughed aloud. "A letter from Gan-Waga, Ching? Another of your imbecile jokes?"

"Say what you like, but here it is, and as easy to read as print," said Ching-Lung. "Who said Hendrick was a fraud? Read it out, Rupert!"

They had all gathered round. They knew that Gan-Waga could not write a line.

"I suppose that is meant for a boat, and here's a fish of some kind, and a house, and—hanged if I can see anything else decipherable, Ching," said Thurston.

"Then you ought to go to school again," said Ching-Lung. "Bravo, Gan! Bravo, Hendrick! I'll read it. This is what it says: 'Hendrick and Gan-Waga are making off Scarran Island in a boat.' And it means that they're not going to come back alone, either. Why, it's as simple as A B C! See that harpoon and that roly-poly? The roly-poly is Gan in the boat. The other with the fish-hook in his scalp is Hendrick, the fisherman. The arrow points to the island. Gan, dear old laddie, tells us it's Scarran by means of that eerie whale and the seal with both eyes on the same side. Isn't it easy?"

"Bedad, ut's marvellous!" said Barry. "And ut's meself that'll raise me hat to that same intelligent Eskimo when next O see him. More power to ye, Gan, darlint! Aisy, is ut? Sure, O could rade ut backwards now ye've tould me how! Why, it's handsomer than an oil-painting!"

"But are you certain it means that, Ching?"

"Am I certain?" Ching-Lung almost growled. "Why, my dear old Rupert, isn't it clearer than daylight? Hendrick got away, and in some lucky fashion he has fallen in with Gan. They have a boat, and they mean to fetch aid from Scarran Island. The thing is perfectly plain. Can you read it in any other way? Could it be simpler? Can isn't a great artist, but that message is not only plain English, but mighty clever plain English!"

Their faces had brightened. It was so absurdly simple that they all wondered why they had been unable to translate it at a glance. The dog, whose intelligence was something abnormal, was petted and stroked and praised. He was the greatest bargain in dogfish that had ever been bought for a sovereign.

"We shall know whether Gan has got away very soon," said Kennedy.

But Kennedy was mistaken. Once or twice the door opened, and the sentry on duty inserted his good-natured, grinning head to see that all was well. He had taken a fancy to the dog, and he said so.

"Call him, Sambo," said Ching-Lung. "Go with Sambo, Schwartz. You'll let him in before we go to bed, Sambo!"

"Yes, massa. 'Lo' yo', dhisto when yo' want him, sah," answered the sentry. "Dat a gran' dawg, sah. I wish he was ma dawg, sah. I let him in, sah."

Schwartz went rather reluctantly, and Ching-Lung winked. "Now we shall know all about it boys," he said. "If Gan's in the house still, Schwartz will find him and bring back another message. He'll soon give the sentry the slip. If we don't get a message we can be fairly certain that old Gan is out on the briny safe and sound. What! Another visit!"

They had already been searched, but six armed negroes entered and collected the knives and forks. The leader bowed to Ching-Lung.

"Gress of dis' angting yo' Highness or de gentlemen need," he said, "yo' only giv a ring on de bell, and yo' get it. Good-night!"

"Oh, go home and amuse yourself wid spreadin' margarine on bricks!" said Barry O'Roosey. "Sthay! Can ye oblige me wid a nitro-glycerine sandwich? Oi mane ut. Ye see, Oi have to slape wid the gentleman in the corner, and Oi always take a nitro-glycerine sandwich at night. He kicks dreadfull av Oi don't, but when Oi do he kapes quoin, fce av he kicked he knows O'd explode and blow him through the roof."

Ching-Lung whistled, and the dog trotted in. He waited until the door was shut and locked. Schwartz had brought no message this time.

"Hoocoo! Gan's done ut!" said Barry. "O'm wondering phwat else he can do. There's not twenty men on all Scarran Island."

"By honey, there's more than twenty of us, Pat," said Prount. "Do you think we'll sit here all the time twiddling our thumbs? Now for a walk round."

Prount's tour of inspection only resulted in the dismal knowledge that this prison was an unusually strong one of its kind. The point of an auger came twisting through the panel of the door, and when it was withdrawn a bright eye peered through the hole.

"I'm going to bed," said Ching-Lung, and went. The others drifted away to their mattress one by one, leaving the steersman to smoke his pipe in solitude. The shining human eye that kept appearing at the hole in the door every time he looked up, began to irritate Prount, for the sensation of being watched is always unpleasant. Prount pushed the table forward, placed a chair on it, and threw a rug over the back of the chair, thus stopping the sentry's view.

(A splendid instalment of this grand serial next Monday. Order your copy now.)