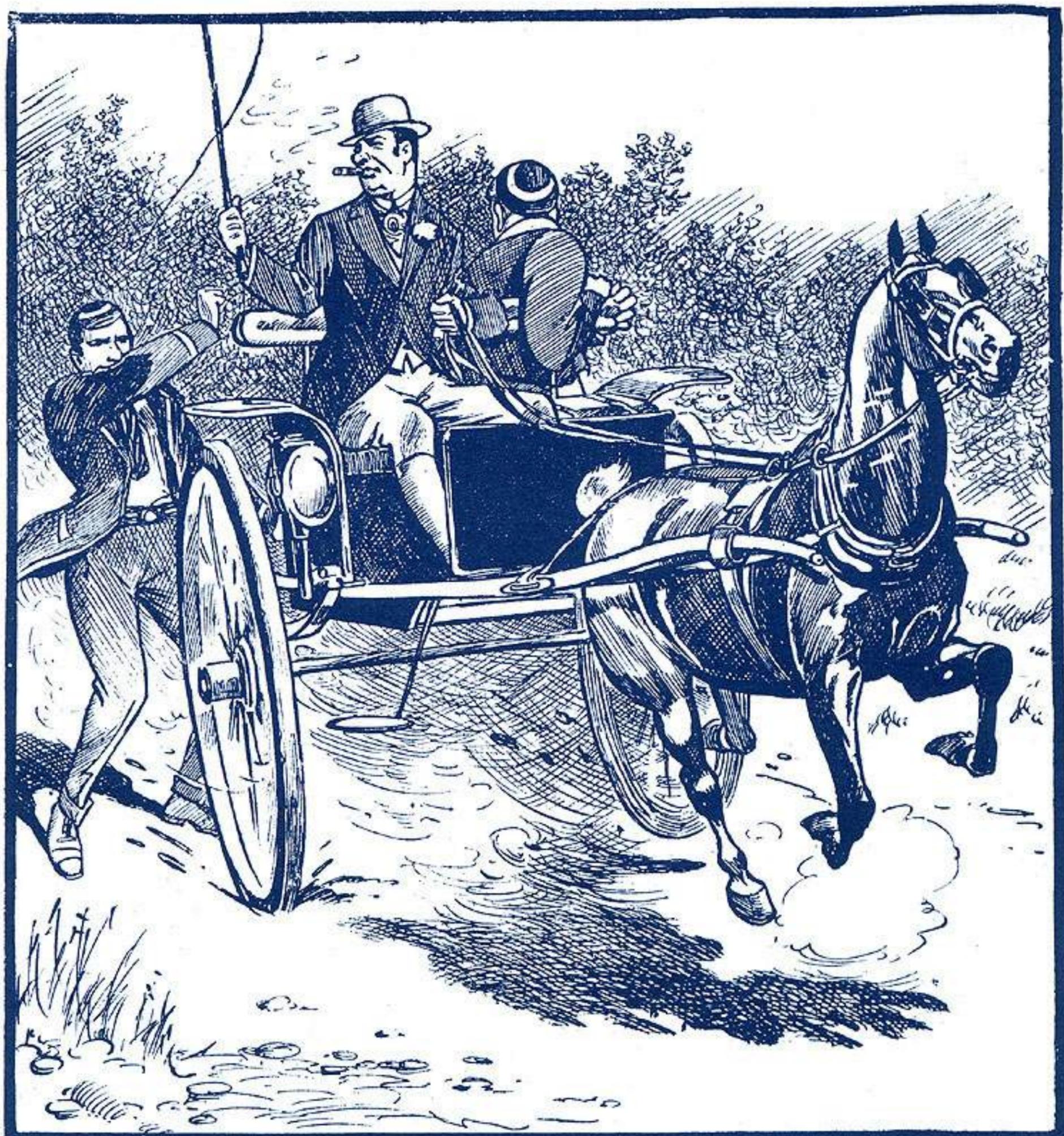


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BOLSOVER'S ENEMY!



BOLSOVER IS LEFT!

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A Magnificent New Long Complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.
at Greyfriars School.

BOLSOVER'S ENEMY!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. A Hot Chase!

"SEEN Bunter?"
Bolsover major of the Remove asked that question in sulphurous tones.

Bolsover had a cricket-stump in his hand, and his look and tone indicated that he was not looking for Bunter with friendly intent.

Harry Wharton & Co. were about to mount their bicycles outside the school gates when Bolsover major strode out and hurled the question at them like a pistol-shot.

"Yes," said Harry, pausing with his foot on the pedal, "I've seen him."

"Where?" demanded Bolsover.

"Before I answer that, you had better tell me what you are going to do with that stump," answered the captain of the Remove drily.

"I'm going to break it on Bunter!" roared Bolsover.

"That's a waste of war-time," said Bob Cherry, shaking his head. "Better not tell him where Bunter is."

"Look here, I want Bunter!" snorted Bolsover major. "He's been in my study. He's raided my grub. He wants a lesson! I'm going to give it to him! I'm going to spicate him! Now, where is he?"

"Gentle shepherd, tell me where!" sang Frank Nugent softly.

"The wherefulness is terrific, my esteemed Bolsover!" remarked Hurree Singh. "Perhapsfully you had better wait till you are less infuriated."

"You silly nigger!" growled Bolsover. "Tell me where that fat bounder is! I'm going to smash him!"

The Famous Five leaned their machines against the wall, to leave their hands free. Bolsover major watched them impatiently. He did not know what this portended.

But he soon discovered.

"All hands on deck!" said Johnny Bull.

"Here, wharrer you at?" bellowed Bolsover major, as the Famous Five coloured him. "Leggo! I'll stump you! I'll—I'll—Yah!"

"Musn't call Inky a nigger," said Bob Cherry chidingly. "In the first place, Inky isn't a nigger. In the second place, it's rude. In the third place, you get bopped for it. Like that!"

Bump!

Bolsover major sat down in the dust, and Nugent thoughtfully jerked away the stump and threw it in at the gateway. The chums of the Remove took their machines again, and mounted, while Bolsover struggled breathlessly to his feet.

"You—you—you—" spluttered Bolsover. "I—I—I'll—"

He made a furious rush after the five as they started. But the pedals were going round now, and Bolsover major was left behind. He kept up the chase for a dozen yards or so, in a cloud of dust churned up by the wheels, and then

stopped, panting, and shaking a big fist after the Co.

The Famous Five rode on cheerily, with smiling faces.

No doubt Billy Bunter, the Owl of the Remove, deserved a "stumping" for raiding Bolsover's study cupboard. But the bully of the Remove was a heavy-handed fellow, and likely to overdo it. As a matter of fact, Bunter had passed them a few minutes before, fleeing from the wrath to come. The five juniors rode up the leafy lane towards Friardale, and in a few minutes came in sight of a fat figure tramping on ahead.

It was William George Bunter of the Remove.

Bunter had left Greyfriars at a run, but he had soon dropped into a walk. He had a bag under his arm, and he was helping himself from it.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" shouted Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter jumped, and looked round hurriedly. His mouth was full of cake, and his face expressed alarm.

"Oh! Only you fellows!" he spluttered. "I—I say, you fellows, seen Bolsover?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's inquiring after you," grinned Nugent. "He's got a stump! I'd give him a wide berth for a bit, if I were you."

"I'm trying to," gasped Bunter, pounding on beside the cyclists, as they slowed down. "I say, Harry, take me up behind you, will you?"

"My bike doesn't carry a ton," answered Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton! That rotter is after me, you know. It's your duty to put down bullying, as captain of the Form, you know."

"Is that Bolsover's cake you've got there?" demanded Wharton.

"Ahem! You—you see, Bolsover thinks it's his cake," said Bunter cautiously.

"You see, I was expecting a cake from my—my uncle. I—I think the labels got mixed somehow, and—and the cake was delivered to Bolsover by mistake. These mistakes keep on happening in—in war-time, you know. So—so I went to Bolsover's study to see if—if it was my cake."

"You fat fraud!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Well, I believe it was my cake," said Bunter. "Of course, I'd pay for it if it weren't mine. 'Taint much of a cake, really—blessed war-time cake, you know. I—I was going halves with Bolsover, but as soon as he saw me with the cake he got into a bad temper—"

"Go hon!"

"Not really?" said Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"Yes, he did! You know what a beast he is," said Bunter plaintively. "Slow down, you chaps, or I can't keep up. He's a beast, you know—he always used to be rowing with Elliott in his study. I believe that chap really left because he couldn't stand Bolsover. I was will-

ing to go halves, but when I saw him going for the stump I—I thought I'd better leave."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, take me up, and I'll go whacks with the cake," said Bunter generously.

"Thanks; we're not grub-burglars!" said Wharton. "Besides, we're going to Cliff House."

"I'll come," said Bunter, at once. "Marjorie Hazeldene will be jolly glad to see me. I've rather neglected her lately—so many engagements, you know. I've meant to give Marjorie a look-in for a long time. Take me up behind you, Bob, old chap. It'll please Marjorie no end."

Instead of taking Bunter up, Bob Cherry disengaged his right foot from the pedal and lunged out with it. Billy Bunter caught the toe of his boot with his fat ribs, and sat down.

"Yarook!" he roared. "Garrrrrrgh!" Some of the cake appeared to have gone down the wrong way. "Gurgh! Yurgh!"

Billy Bunter sat and splattered, while the five cyclists rode on. His remarks on the subject of Marjorie had not, apparently, disposed the Co. in his favour.

"Yow-ow! Beasts!" mumbled Bunter, as he scrambled up, and fielded the cake, which had rolled on the ground. "Yah! Rotters! Jealous beasts! Just because Marjorie likes a good-looking chap! Groogh!"

There was a patter of feet behind in the lane.

Bunter blinked round through his big glasses.

From the direction of Greyfriars Bolsover major was coming up at a run. He had spotted Bunter in the distance.

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Bunter.

Still clutching the purloined cake, Billy Bunter fled for his life.

"Stop!" roared Bolsover.

"Oh, dear!"

Billy Bunter did not stop. He put all his beef into his running. In spite of the weight he had to carry, Bunter put on a good speed. But the bully of the Remove was gaining.

Bunter's fat face was crimson, and the perspiration poured down it in streams. His breath came in jerky gasps as he pounded on.

"Look out there!"

A trap, driven by a man with a cigar in his mouth and a bowler hat on the side of his head, turned into the road from a side lane. It whirled past Bunter, and shot away ahead of him. Bunter's brain did not work quickly as a rule; but it worked quickly now, with the heavy-handed Bolsover so close behind. He made a jump after the trap as it shot ahead, and grasped the tail-board behind. He hung on the back of the vehicle, and was carried on, his boots scraping up clouds of dust, and the remnant of the cake—the bone of contention—strewn the road behind him.

"Stop!" yelled Bolsover. He was within six yards now. "Stop! Whip behind!"

Bunter hung on for his life.

The driver looked round at him.

He was not a pleasant-looking man. Round one of his eyes was a bluish shade, as if it had lately been blackened in combat. His nose still showed signs of damage received in fistful encounter. His face was flabby, and marked by drink and reckless living. Billy Bunter blinked at him imploringly over the back of the trap as he was borne onward. He recognised the man—he had seen him hanging about the neighbourhood—generally near a pub.

"Hallo! Get off!" snapped the man in the trap.

"I—I say, Mr. Smiles, d-d-don't whip behind!" spluttered Bunter. "That beast's after me!"

Mr. Smiles glanced past him, at the red-faced Bolsover dashing in pursuit. A black scowl came over his face at the sight of the burly Removite.

"Hallo! That's Master Bolsover!" he exclaimed.

"Yes; he's a beast! I—I say, I'll pay you for a lift, Mr. Smiles!" panted Bunter. "Lemme get in! Lemme hang on! Ow!"

"Get in!" answered Mr. Smiles.

He slowed down, and Bunter thankfully climbed over the back of the trap and bumped down inside, gasping with relief. Bolsover major came up with a rush as the trap slowed.

The driver reached out with the whip, and the thong sang across Bolsover's shoulder. The junior uttered a wild yell.

Then Mr. Smiles whipped up his horse, and the trap dashed on again, leaving Bolsover major hopelessly behind, spluttering with fury, and brandishing his big fists harmlessly in the air.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

On the War-path!

"LETTER for you, Bolsover!"

Ogilvy called out to Bolsover as the latter tramped in at the gates of Greyfriars.

Bolsover was dusty, and still red with wrath, and his face wore a scowl. Ogilvy glanced at him rather curiously as he spoke.

"Been in the wars?" he asked.

"Yes!" growled Bolsover.

"There's a letter for you sticking in the rack."

"Bother it!" answered Bolsover.

"It's from Elliott. I noticed it, looking over the rack, and knew the fist," said Ogilvy. "If there's news of the chap you can tell us."

"Oh, all right!" said Bolsover, a little more graciously.

He was starting for the bike-shed, but he changed his direction and went into the house. He was rather interested to hear from Elliott, who had left Greyfriars a few weeks before. Elliott had been his study-mate while he was in the Remove, and certainly life had not been pleasant in that study. Percy Bolsover was not a very pleasant fellow to "dig" with. But he had done Elliott a great service just before the junior left, and he was still feeling pleased with himself about it. And certainly Elliott was grateful.

He took the letter from the rack, and sat down in the hall to read it. It was not often that Bolsover did a kindly action, and the fact that he had been kind to Elliott before he left made him feel still kindly towards the absent junior—in a rather lofty, patronising way. Elliott had been led into reckless folly by fellows worse than himself, and



Trapped! (See Chapter 4.)

had fallen into the hands of Mr. Smiles, the sharper. That gentleman, having obtained the foolish lad's signature on a "scrap of paper," had held it over his head, extorting money from him under the threat of exposure and disgrace. Harry Wharton had tried to help him out, and had failed. Then Bolsover had chipped in. Bolsover's way was somewhat unusual and high-handed—he had thrashed Mr. Smiles, and taken Elliott's paper away from him, and even after the lapse of weeks Mr. Smiles had not wholly recovered from the terrific thrashing the burly Removite had given him. Bolsover major had promised Mr. Smiles "some more of the same" if he ever met him again. But they had not met again till this afternoon, when Mr. Smiles' whip had fallen across Percy Bolsover's shoulders.

Bolsover major did not intend to take that "lying down." He had come in for his bike, with the rather reckless intention of riding over to the Three Fishers, where Mr. Smiles lived, and giving him another licking. He was in a state of smouldering wrath, but he calmed down a little as he read Elliott's letter.

"Dear Bolsover,—I'm starting for Canada in a few days with my uncle. I couldn't go without dropping you a line to thank you once more for what you did for me. We weren't very chummy at Greyfriars, but I shall never forget what you did. It meant everything to me. There's another thing I ought to say. Keep your eyes open for S. He is a thorough rotter, and revengeful. He won't forgive you for thrashing him as you did. He deserved it, and more; but he won't forget it. If he gets a chance at you, look out for him.

"Thank you once more, old chap, and good-bye!

"Always yours,

"E. ELLIOTT."

Bolsover major smiled as he put the letter in his pocket. "S" stood for Smiles. The junior had not cared to write the name in full. Bolsover had no doubt that the man would revenge himself if he could, but he smiled at the idea. He was not afraid of Charley Smiles.

"Well, I'm glad poor old Elliott is all right," murmured Bolsover, as he left the School House. "I saw him through, and I'm glad I did. He was too soft to deal with a man like Smiles. I'm the fellow for that! And, by gad, I'm going to deal with him this afternoon, too! I'll teach him to lay his whip across my shoulders!"

Bolsover major walked round to the bike-shed and wheeled out his machine. Ogilvy was at the gates, with Rake and Russell, when he arrived there.

"Any news of Elliott?" asked Ogilvy.

"He's just off with his uncle, and all serene," said Bolsover. "You fellows doin' anythin' this afternoon? How'd you like to come and back me up?"

"Row with Highlife?" asked Rake.

"No."

"If it's a rag on the Courtfield chaps count on us!" said Russell.

"It isn't that. I'm going to the Three Fishers—"

"Great Scott! That hole's out of bounds!"

"I'm going there all the same. You know that man Smiles?"

"I've seen him," said Ogilvy drily.

"I don't want an introduction to him, thanks!"

"You silly ass!" roared Bolsover major. "Do you think I know the cad? I'm going over to thrash him!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"I've thrashed him once, on the towing-path," said Bolsover. "I met him in the lane here half an hour ago, and he laid his whip across me. I'm going to make him sit up. You fellows come and see fair play."

"You blessed ass!" exclaimed Ogilvy. "And suppose it comes out that we've been to that low den! What about that? It would mean a flogging!"

"Rats! I'm risking that."

"More duffer you!"

"Do you think I'm going to let him cut me with his whip?" demanded Bolsover.

"Wait till you meet him somewhere, then," said Rake. "You'll get landed into trouble if you go to his den. He'll call in the chucker-out to handle you."

They've got a regular prize-fighter at that place."

"He wouldn't handle me!" said Bolsover major disdainfully. "I'm jolly well going!"

"For goodness' sake don't be such an ass!" exclaimed Ogilvy in real concern. "It will lead to a row, and the Head may hear of it!"

"Rot!"

"Well, a silly ass must have his way, I suppose," said Ogilvy. "I warn you that it means trouble."

"Let it!" sneered Bolsover. "I suppose you mean that you fellows funk it. That's the long and short of it."

"It isn't a question of funk," said the Scottish junior quietly. "Any decent fellow would stop short of going to a pub and kicking up a row there; and that's what it amounts to."

"So I'm not a decent fellow?" roared Bolsover.

"Well, you're a silly ass, at any rate."

"I'd rather be a silly ass than a funk."

Ogilvy's eyes gleamed.

"You'll have a fight here instead of at the Three Fishers, if you don't take a bit more care of what you say," he answered.

Bolsover gave a snort and wheeled his machine out at the gates.

"Dash it all, there's old Gosling listening!" muttered Rake. "I'll bet you he heard the silly ass say he was going to the Three Fishers!"

The porter was blinking out of his lodge, and his glance rested very curiously on the group of Removites. Bolsover major's bull-voice had reached his ears.

Ogilvy glanced at him, and then ran into the road after Bolsover.

The latter had mounted his bicycle and was starting, and the Scottish junior shouted after him.

"Stop a minute, Bolsover!"

Bolsover major looked back.

"Are you coming?"

"No. But—"

"Rats to you, then!"

"Hold on, I tell you!" exclaimed Ogilvy, running after him as he rode away. "Old Gosling heard you! I believe—"

"Blow Gosling!"

"I tell you—"

But Bolsover major was driving at his pedals, and he passed out of hearing.

"Well, of all the thundering idiots!" exclaimed Donald Ogilvy; and he gave it up and returned to his companions.

Bolsover major rode away at a good pace, his wrath undiminished, and all ready to pour upon the devoted head of Mr. Charley Smiles. He had thrashed Mr. Smiles once most successfully—perhaps too successfully—and he was prepared to do the same again. Whether he was likely to be so successful at Mr. Smiles' own quarters was a question the reckless fellow did not stop to ask himself. Bolsover major was not much given to reflection.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bunter in Luck!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

Bob Cherry uttered that exclamation as a trap, driving fast, came whirling up past the five cyclists.

Harry Wharton & Co. drew to the left to let it pass, and as it passed they recognised Mr. Smiles at the reins, and William George Bunter of the Remove sitting in the trap behind him.

"Bunter!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. The fat junior grinned down at them.

Why Mr. Smiles had given him a lift, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 542.

and allowed him to remain in the trap, Billy Bunter did not know. Charley Smiles did not look like a good-natured man. But Bunter was very glad of the lift.

"What's Bunter doing with that blackguard?" growled Johnny Bull.

Harry Wharton rode after the trap, keeping pace for a moment or two.

"Bunter!" he called out.

"Hallo!"

"What are you doing there?"

"Sitting down," answered Bunter.

"I've got a lift. Don't you wish you had? Yah!"

"Look, here, Bunter, you'd better get down—"

"You want Bolsover to nail me," grinned Bunter. "No, thanks! Yah!"

The trap bowled on.

"This way, Wharton," called out Frank Nugent.

The cyclists had reached the turning that led to Cliff House. Harry Wharton turned with the rest, and the trap bowled away.

"It's all right," said Harry, his brow clearing. "He's got a lift to get away from Bolsover. After all, he couldn't have anything to do with that man; he's got no money."

"Lucky for him!" grunted Johnny Bull. "He wouldn't keep it long, if he had, in that rotter's company!"

The Famous Five rode on their way. Harry Wharton remembered the time when Bunter had been in funds, for once in a way, and had had the ambition of following in the footsteps of Ponsonby of Highcliffe, and Skinner of the Remove, and becoming a bold, bad blade. Bunter was a duffer of the first water, and there was no telling what troubles he might have landed himself in, and the Co. had been a little alarmed at seeing him in the company of the shadiest character in the whole district. But the fact that Bunter was as usual, "stony," made it very improbable that he was taking up once more the career of a merry dog. His few shillings were certainly not worth Mr. Smiles' while. So Harry Wharton & Co. dismissed the matter from their minds. It was really not exactly their business, but if the duffer of the Remove had been heading for trouble, they would have felt impelled to lead him out of it by his fat ears.

Billy Bunter settled down contentedly in the trap. Mr. Smiles turned into the Redclyffe Road, and then into another lane that led up the river. Bunter was well content to spend that sunny afternoon driving through the green lanes, especially as it kept him out of Bolsover major's reach. He was more and more surprised at Mr. Smiles' good-nature, however. He did not know the man, but he knew that he was a bad character, and had had one or two painful misunderstandings with the police.

Mr. Smiles, as he drove, had a very thoughtful expression on his unprepossessing face. Once or twice he passed his hand over his eye, where the bluish shade still lingered. He turned his head at last to speak to Bunter.

"Thank you for this lift, Mr. Smiles," said Bunter at once, fearing that the man was about to ask him to get out. "You're awfully good! I am enjoying this—I am, really!"

"You're more than welcome, sir," answered Mr. Smiles civilly. "I'm 'appy to be of service to you. You belong to Greyfriars, sir?"

"Yes; I'm in the Remove," said Bunter. Mr. Smiles' manner was so civil that Bunter's at once became slightly patronising.

"I've 'eard of the young nobleman at Greyfriars," said Mr. Smiles. "It's a great pleasure to me to meet 'im, sir."

Billy Bunter swelled with gratification. Evidently Mr. Smiles mistook him for Lord Mauleverer of the Remove. Bunter had long had a secret conviction that in appearance he might have passed easily for a member of the nobility. Here was proof. It did not even occur to his fat mind that Mr. Smiles was flattering him for some reason of his own.

For a moment or two Bunter was tempted to lay claim to being Lord Mauleverer, in order to enjoy the sweet incense of flattery. But he felt that it would not do.

"I'm not Lord Mauleverer," he said. "He's a pal of mine—my best friend, in fact. We're rather alike. My name's Bunter."

"Yes, sir. Course, I've never seen the young gentleman, but I took you to be 'im, naturally," said Mr. Smiles. "As soon as I see you, I says to myself, this 'ere distinguished-lookin' young gent is the nobleman I've 'eard about up at the school."

Mr. Smiles' manner was still civil, not to say soapy, although Bunter had confessed that he was not a nobleman. Apparently he still regarded Bunter as a person of consequence.

"That feller who was arter you," continued Mr. Smiles, "that was Master Bolsover, I believe."

His narrow eyes glinted as he spoke the name. Elliott had not been mistaken as to Mr. Smiles' revengeful feelings.

"Yes, he's a bullying beast," said the Owl. "I—I'd have licked him, really—I could, you know, only—only—"

"Only you wouldn't soil your 'ands on such a feller," said Mr. Smiles.

Bunter blinked at him quickly; but Mr. Smiles' face was quite grave.

"That's it exactly," said Bunter. "He's really a low fellow. Nobody likes him. Rotten bully, you know. He's made me lose my cake, too, the rotter! I say, Mr. Smiles, could you drop me somewhere near Greyfriars?"

"Wherever you like, sir," answered Mr. Smiles. "Quite at your service in every way. I'm driving 'ome at present. I live at the Three Fishers. P'r'aps you've heard of the place?"

"Yes, rather!" grinned Bunter. "It's out of bounds for us."

"Some of the young gents come there at times, sir." Mr. Smiles was watching Bunter's fat, obtuse face keenly. "Friends of yours, I dessay."

"Oh, I know—Skinner and Snoop," said Bunter; "and Ponsonby of Highcliffe, too. Elliott used to, too."

"Oh, you know Master Elliott?"

"Of course—before he left. He was in my Form. I heard him and Bolsover taking about you once," said Bunter agreeably. "They were calling you some strong names!"

"Was they?" said Mr. Smiles, his eyes glinting again.

"Something about a paper you had with Elliott's name on it," continued Bunter. "I—I heard them quite by chance, of course. I would listen, I say, Elliott was a silly ass to sign that paper. He, he!"

Mr. Smiles gave him a very curious look.

"Don't you believe all that you 'ear, Master Bunter," he said. "I dessay you've 'eard a lot of 'arm of me—"

"He, he! You bet!"

"Don't you believe it, sir. I'm an honest man," said Mr. Smiles. "I know 'ow to treat a gentleman as sich. Where's the 'arm in a young gent 'aving a little flutter once in a way? I dessay you yourself, sir, could play a good game at billiards!"

"What-ho!" said Bunter. "I'm a dab at it—at most things, in fact."

"P'r'aps you'd drop in for a little game some time, sir? I'd always be glad to see you."

Bunter hesitated. He concluded that Mr. Smiles, having taken him for a nobleman, was still under the impression that he was rich, and regarded him as a pigeon worth plucking.

"I—I would," stammered Bunter; "certainly, I'd be pleased. Some—some time when I'm in funds, you know."

Mr. Smiles smiled.

"What does that matter, sir," he answered. "The word of a young gentleman like you would be good enough for Charley Smiles. Don't you believe all you 'ear, sir. Have I ever asked a gentleman to put his name on a bit of paper? Believe me, sir—never! I know a gentleman when I see one, and his word is good enough for me!"

Billy Bunter felt more confident. On these lines, it seemed that he could play Mr. Smiles at billiards, with "quids" on the game, with pleasure and profit. If he won he bagged Mr. Smiles' quids. If he lost, Mr. Smiles would have to wait for his winnings till Bunter's celebrated postal-order came. So long as there was nothing in writing Bunter felt safe enough. It did not even occur to him that the cunning sharper had "sized up" Bunter pretty accurately, and he knew the Owl of the Remove better than Bunter knew himself.

"By gad, there's the place!" said Mr. Smiles, as the red chimneys of the riverside inn showed above the trees. "I wonder if you'd care to drop in this afternoon, sir, seeing as you're so near? I'll drive you back arterwards with pleasure."

"I haven't had my tea," said Bunter doubtfully.

"P'r'aps you'd do me the honour to join me, sir. I don't know whether you'd object to 'aving something over the rations—"

"No fear! I think the rations are all rot!" answered Bunter emphatically. "All very well for low people, if you like. Not for me!"

"Jest so, sir. I know a man who can fix these 'ere things," said Mr. Smiles. "You come in with me, sir! I shall be 'ighly honoured!"

"Oh, I'll come in!" said Bunter carelessly. He was growing more patronising than ever. Mr. Smiles was so civil.

The trap turned into a little lane, and drove round the inn. Billy Bunter blinked round him rather nervously as he entered the place. He was feeling "no end of a card," but he knew that there would be trouble if his exploit was found out. But the Three Fishers was a secluded inn, and there was little danger of being observed.

Billy Bunter sat down to tea with Mr. Smiles—a meal at which the rations certainly were very seriously exceeded, which did not shock William George Bunter, but made him resolve to pay Mr. Smiles another visit. They had tea in a room overlooking the long garden, with French windows—a very pleasant room, if it had not been haunted by the fumes of ancient rum and whisky and stale tobacco-smoke. And the ample meal had just been finished, and Bunter was accepting a cigarette from Mr. Smiles' case to wind up with, when a bull-voice was heard outside:

"Where's that man Smiles?"

Bunter jumped up in alarm.

"M-m-my hat! B-B-Bolover!"

Mr. Smiles rose to his feet too. He knew the voice. A glint came into his narrow eyes.

"I—I say, he's after me!" stammered Bunter, in alarm.

"Don't you be afcared, sir," said Mr.

Smiles. "There's them 'ere that can 'andle that young gentleman."

Bunter blinked nervously towards the open windows. A shadow fell on the greensward outside—the shadow of Bolsover major, evidently in talk with someone belonging to the inn.

"He—he's coming here!" mumbled Bunter. "Oh, dear! The beast! Ow!"

"All right, sir!"

Bunter did not heed. He rolled across to the inner door, opened it, and passed out into a passage. Sooner or later he had to meet Bolsover major, but he was anxious to put off the unpleasant hour as long as possible. As the door closed behind Bunter, the burly form of Bolsover major loomed up in the open French windows, with a muscular potman behind him. Mr. Smiles made a sign to the potman as Bolsover major strode in.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Shut Up!

"SO I've found you, you rotter!"

That was Bolsover's greeting. Mr. Smiles, keeping the table between him and the burly Greyfriars fellow, nodded and smiled pleasantly.

"Been lookin' for me, sir?" he asked cheerily.

"Yes, you cad! You hit me with your whip this afternoon!" roared Bolsover.

"Yes; I laid my whip round you," assented Mr. Smiles. "It was jest what you wanted, young man."

"I gave you a thrashing once."

"You did," agreed Mr. Smiles. "You ducked me in the river, too. You may be sorry for it some day. Charley Smiles is an ugly customer."

"Ugly enough!" snorted Bolsover. "Well, I've come here to give you another licking, Charley Smiles."

Mr. Smiles grinned.

The big potman who had shown Bolsover to the room was grinning, too. He was a very powerful man, with a face like a bulldog, and a broken nose. Burly as Bolsover was for his age, he was but an infant compared with the "chucker-out" of the Three Fishers, and Mr. Smiles felt quite safe.

"I told you I'd give you another hiding if you came my way again," said Bolsover. "Put up your hands, you cheeky cad!"

He came round the table after Mr. Smiles.

The latter dodged quickly, and took up a strategic position behind the big potman.

"Collar 'im, Albert!" he said.

"Stand aside, man!" shouted Bolsover.

Albert grinned, and advanced upon him instead of standing aside. Bolsover major put up his hands defiantly. He was hopelessly outclassed, but he had plenty of bulldog courage.

His hands were swept away, and the big man grasped him; and Bolsover, struggle as he would, was impotent in that powerful grasp. He struggled and struck, but he was held helpless.

"Shall I put him in the ditch outside, sir?" asked the potman, still grinning.

"You dare to!" panted Bolsover.

Mr. Smiles shook his head.

"No, Albert. Don't be 'ard on a 'igh-speritted young gent," he answered. "Put him in the shed and lock him in."

"Hay?"

"Lock him in the shed," repeated Mr. Smiles. "He's come 'ere of his own accord. He'll go away when I choose, and not before. It'll do his 'ot blood good to cool down a little in the shed."

"Jest as you like, Mr. Smiles. Come on, young man!"

"You jolly well won't lock me in a shed!" roared Bolsover furiously.

The potman did not trouble to reply.

He lifted Bolsover major in his arms and carried him, struggling and kicking, out at the French windows.

Mr. Smiles followed, grinning evilly.

Still struggling, Bolsover major was borne round the building in Albert's muscular arms, and pitched into a dark an evil-smelling shed. He lay gasping on the earthen floor.

Albert stepped out, and Mr. Smiles closed the door, and turned the big rusty key in the lock. Then he looked in at Bolsover through a little window a foot square.

"Lio there for a bit, young gentleman," he grinned. "I'll give you a look-in presently."

Bolsover scrambled up.

"You rotter!" he roared. "You dare not keep me here!"

"P'r'aps I don't, and p'r'aps I do," said Mr. Smiles. "You come 'ere of your own accord, didn't you?"

Bolsover rushed to the window, and Mr. Smiles jumped back in a great hurry. The bully of the Remove made an attempt to squeeze himself out. But the opening was much too small. His head came through, but not his shoulders. Mr. Smiles grinned at him, evidently entertained, and the potman burst into a loud laugh.

"Oh, you rotters!" panted Bolsover, glaring at them helplessly.

"Anythin' else to say?" asked Mr. Smiles.

"Let me out!"

"About 'arf-past seven or eight," said Mr. Smiles. "I'll come back an' let you out. Anythin' else?"

"Look here, you fool! I have to get in to calling-over!" exclaimed Bolsover, in alarm.

"Is that so?" said Mr. Smiles.

"Yes, you rotter!"

"I'm afcared you'll be late for it, then, Master Bolsover."

And with that Mr. Smiles sauntered away, leaving Bolsover major shaking a furious fist from the little window.

The sharper returned to his own apartment, still smiling. He found Billy Bunter there.

"W-where is he?" asked Bunter nervously.

"Locked in a shed," answered Mr. Smiles reassuringly. "He won't do anybody any 'arm this arternoon, at least."

"He, he, he!"

"And if he gives you any trouble when you get back to school, sir—"

"He will, the beast!" muttered Bunter, his cackle dying away as he thought of it. "He's a rotten bully, you know!"

"Well, if he does, you ask 'im if he'd like you to mention that you've seen 'im at this 'ere show. It wouldn't do 'im any good, would it?"

Bunter brightened up.

"He would jolly well get ragged by old Quelchy if he knew!" he exclaimed.

"All serene, Smiles! He won't touch me if I put it to him like that. He, he, he!"

"Wot do you say to a little game of billiards?" hinted Mr. Smiles. "The room's next to this, and nobody there now."

"Like a bird!" said Bunter.

They adjourned to the next apartment.

Bunter played billiards about as well as he did everything else; but his luck was phenomenal, for he ran out well ahead of the experienced sharper in the first game. There was a sovereign on the game, and Bunter could scarcely believe in his luck as he pocketed it. Mr. Smiles did not seem to care whether Bunter could pay up if he lost.

"Now you'll 'ave to be getting back," said Mr. Smiles. "You mustn't be late for call-over whatever happens to Master Bolsover. P'r'aps you'll give me

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another look-in, Master Bunter? You beat me 'ollow, and I'd like to try you again another time."

Bunter was only too eager to try Mr. Smiles another time. Sovereigns did not come easily his way, and he was already thinking that he would be able to make quite an income out of this easy-going gentleman. That the sharper had let him win, and that he must have some strong motive for wasting his afternoon on an impecunious schoolboy, did not enter Bunter's mind for a moment. He was in a state of complete self-satisfaction. He had just sense enough to be resolved that Mr. Smiles should never get anything from him in black and white, as had happened with poor Elliott, and that was all.

"Certainly," answered the Owl, with an assumption of the air of a man of the world. "I'll give you your revenge any time, old sport."

"Do!" said Mr. Smiles, with great gravity, which showed that he had a good control of his facial muscles. "You're a real sportsman, sir, if you'll allow me to say so. I'll send a man to drive you 'ome, sir. When shall I have the honour of seeing you again?"

"Wednesday afternoon?" asked Bunter. "That suit you?"

"Any time as suits you will suit me, sir."

"Wednesday afternoon, then."

And Billy Bunter trotted out, greatly satisfied, and was driven home to Greyfriars—leaving the trap at some little distance from the school, for the sake of caution, and walking the rest of the way. He had reached the school by the time Albert, the potman, came to the shed, and released the furious and fuming Bolsover. As the potman threw open the door, with a broad grin, Bolsover major strode out, his fists clenched and his eyes gleaming.

"Good-evenin', sir!" grinned Albert. "You'll find your machine where you left it."

Bolsover major looked at him, meditating an assault. But the prospect was so hopeless that he controlled his wrath, and strode away without a word. In the deepening dusk he drove at his pedals, covering the distance to Greyfriars at great speed; but he knew that he would be at least half an hour late for calling-over, and what excuse to give he could not imagine. Certainly he could not tell Mr. Quelch that he had been visiting the Three Fishers, and had been detained there!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

"Rorty!"

"BOLSOVER MAJOR!"

No answer.

Mr. Quelch, the Remove-master, was taking the roll-call. He repeated Bolsover major's name. But the owner thereof was not present, and no answer was given, and Mr. Quelch went on with the roll.

Billy Bunter was grinning as he came out of Hall with the rest. He knew where Bolsover major was; and he charitably hoped that the Remove bully would get a licking for missing call-over.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Wherefore that sweet grin?" asked Bob Cherry, tapping Bunter playfully on the nose.

"Yow-ow! You silly ass! Leave my nose alone!" howled Bunter. Then he added, as he rubbed his fat little nose: "I say, you fellows, can you change a pound note for me?"

Billy Bunter did not specially want his pound note changed that evening; but he wanted the Remove fellows to know that he had a pound note.

Bob Cherry grinned.
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"Not a postal-order?" he asked.

"I've been disappointed about a postal-order," answered Bunter. "But never mind that. Can you change a quid note?"

"Puzzle, find the quid note," said Nugent, laughing.

"Oh, really, Nugent! Look at that!"

"My hat! A real quid!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as Bunter held up Mr. Smiles' pound note in a fat fist.

Bunter sniffed.

"I dare say it's more than you've got about you, Bob Cherry," he said loftily.

"Right on the wicket!" agreed Bob.

"I've got a tanner—but it's my own."

"Do you think this isn't mine, fat-head?"

"I don't quite see how it can be, as you were stony this afternoon," answered Bob, growing grave. "If you've found that quid note, you fat idiot, you'd better buck up and put it back where you found it before you get into trouble."

"Yah!" was Bunter's reply.

And he tucked the note into his pocket, and rolled away, leaving the Famous Five looking after him in surprise.

It was seldom that Bunter had a whole "quid"; and it was extraordinary that he should have this quid, as he had been "stony" only a few hours before, and had been out of doors ever since, and certainly hadn't received any remittance by post.

"My hat!" said Bob. "Has he been winning money from that man Smiles?"

"The winfulness would not be terrific," remarked Hurree Singh. "It would be a boot on the other leg."

"Not likely," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "I don't suppose there's a chap in Greyfriars could beat Smiles at his own games, unless it's the Bounder—certainly Bunter couldn't."

"Well, I suppose he couldn't," agreed Bob. "It's queer where he bagged a quid, though; he must have got it while he was out. Peter Todd had better look into this, as he's Bunter's pig-keeper."

Peter Todd did look into it, as soon as he heard of the pound note. Peter was Bunter's study-mate in No. 7, and he had a sense of responsibility towards the obtuse Owl of the Remove. His sense of responsibility sometimes led him to use a cricket-stump at close quarters, and he never earned Bunter's gratitude.

Peter found the Owl of the Remove reclining at ease in the armchair in No. 7, and he jumped as he saw a cigarette in the Owl's mouth. There was a haze of smoke in Study No. 7.

Peter stood almost transfixed. Once before Bunter had started as a "blade," and on that occasion Peter's stump had been freely used. Evidently, the stump was wanted again, and Peter was ready for the emergency.

"You—you—you fat idiot!" began Todd.

Billy Bunter blinked at him over the cigarette, and gave him a fatuous wink.

"Have a smoke, old chap?" he said.

"Wha-at?"

"Have a smoke—I've got half a dozen," said Bunter. "Chap gave them to me—a sportin' friend of mine. Come, put a fag on," added Bunter encouragingly. "Be a man, you know, like me!"

"I man—like you!" said Peter dazedly.

"Yes. Nothin' spooney about me—what?" said Bunter.

Peter Todd made for the corner of the room where the stump was. Bunter jumped up as Peter seized it.

"Look here, don't you play the ox, Peter Todd!" he shouted. "You mind your own business! I can do as I like, I suppose?"

"You suppose that, do you?" inquired Peter.

"Yes, I do."

"Then your supposer wants oiling, I should say. You can't do as you like, my pippin, if you like to be a silly ass and a shady worm," said Peter Todd. "Put that cigarette in the grate."

"I won't!" howled Bunter.

"Otherwise, I shall touch you up with this stump—like that!"

"Yaroooh!"

The cigarette went into the grate. There was no arguing with a cricket-stump in the hand of an obstinate youth who did not want to be a man—like Bunter!

"Now chuck the rest after it," said Peter.

"Look here, you beast—Ow! Keep off, you rotter! I'm chucking them, ain't I?" howled Bunter.

"That's right," said Peter Todd approvingly. "Now shove that old newspaper under them, and set light to it. That's the best way to smoke them, Bunter; they don't damage your inside, smoked that way."

Billy Bunter would have preferred to smoke them another way, at the risk of damaging his inside; but Peter was adamant. With a lunge or two from the stump to buck him up, the sportive Owl burnt the cigarettes, glowering all the time in a way that bade fair to crack his spectacles.

"That's better," said Peter. "And now, where have you been getting a quid from, Bunter?"

"Find out!"

"That's what I'm doing. Where did you get it?"

Peter Todd gave another lunge with the stump, and Bunter dodged, with a loud howl.

"Yow! Keep off, you beast!"

"Where did you get the quid, dear boy? Whose pocket did you find it in?" inquired Peter. "I'm going to keep you out of a reformatory if I can, my jewel. You're a bit too much of a Bolshevik in money matters, my fat tulip!"

"I—I got it!" gasped Bunter.

"I know that! I'm inquiring about the wherfulness, as Inky would put it."

"Perhaps I've been lucky," said Bunter loftily. "Perhaps I've met a sporting chap, and beaten him at billiards."

"What?" yelled Peter.

"Look here, Peter Todd, don't you interfere with me," said Bunter. "I'm a bit of a dog—I know it—rather rorty, in fact—"

"A—a bit of a dog!" stuttered Peter.

"Rather rorty! Oh, ye gods!"

"This study is too slow for me," said Bunter disdainfully. "I believe in a chap going the pace a bit. It wouldn't do for you, perhaps—a skinny solicitor's son. I'm different. My people are wealthy. I'm rather goey. I'm thinking of changin' out of this study. You're too slow for me here."

"You can change out of this study as soon as you like, and the sooner the better," said Peter Todd. "But so long as you're in this study, Bunter, you're not going to get expelled. It would be a good thing in one way, but it would be a disgrace for the study—see?"

"Oh, don't be a goat!" said Bunter. "I'm fed up with you, Peter Todd. I've got friends outside Greyfriars—sporting friends. They pay up when they lose. I expect to have lots of money in the future."

"You expect to win money at billiards?" asked Peter Todd, wondering whether he was dreaming.

"I'm a dab at the game," said Bunter. "Smiles himself said I beat him hollow."

"Smiles!" yelled Peter. "You've

been playing billiards with that black-guard?"

"Oh, he's all right—quite a sportin' chap. I rather like him. Of course, he's not a fellow's equal, but he's respectful—keeps his distance, you know."

Peter Todd stared at him.

"Smiles is respectful—to you; wastes his time—on you, and lets you win money from him!" he gasped. "What on earth is his game, then?"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Bunter irritably. "He's respectful because he knows how to treat a gentleman properly. As for wasting his time, I suppose it's an honour for a man like that to speak to me; in fact, he said it was. And he jolly well didn't let me win his money. Why should he?"

"Yes, why should he? That's what I want to know."

"I'm a dab at——"

"Oh, cheese it, you fat duffer! Why should that man let you win his money?" said Peter, in amazement. "He can't suppose you're rich. You brag enough, but anybody can see through your silly brag."

"Look here, you rotter——"

"I know the game he played on poor Elliott. Have you given him anything in writing, as that duffer did?"

Bunter winked.

"See any green in my eye?" he retorted. "I'm too fly for that. I told him I was, in fact."

"Then why the thump has he let you win a quid from him?"

"He didn't, you dummy!" howled Bunter. "I beat him by sheer skill."

"Fathead!"

"The fact is, you're a rather spooney ass, Peter Todd!" said Bunter. "You don't understand a sporting chap like me. You've never done me justice or treated me with proper respect. The less you have to say to me the better I shall like it."

And as he caught a threatening motion of the stump, Billy Bunter rolled hastily out of the study. Peter Todd was left in a state of great astonishment. What game, the astute Mr. Smiles was playing was a deep mystery to him, but there was no mystery in it to Bunter.

Smiles had taken him up because his company was an honour to that gentleman, and he had won a quid because he was a dab at billiards. That explanation was quite good enough for the egregious Owl of the Remove.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Trouble for Bolsover!

BOLSOVER MAJOR came up the Remove staircase with a thunderous brow.

He had had a rather painful interview with Mr. Quelch.

As he had been unable to give any explanation of missing call-over and staying out after locking-up, he had been caned. As his caning would certainly have been more severe if the Remove master had known of his afternoon's escapade, he had really got off cheaply. But that was not how he looked at it. He was in a towering rage, and when Bolsover was in a rage he generally "rowed" with somebody. Now he was looking for Bunter.

It was all Bunter's fault. But for Bunter he wouldn't have encountered Mr. Smiles at all that afternoon, and wouldn't have paid that reckless visit to the Three Fishers. He wouldn't have been locked in the shed, wouldn't have been late home, and wouldn't have been caned.

All those misfortunes had to be paid for by somebody, and Bunter was to be the happy victim. So Bolsover, staying

only to get a fives-bat from his study, looked for the Owl of the Remove with Hunnish intent.

As he came away from his study, bat in hand, he spotted William George in the passage, and ran him down at once. Billy Bunter dodged promptly into Study No. 1, where Wharton and Nugent were at work. He scuttled round the table as Bolsover glared in at the doorway.

"Come here, you fat cad!" roared Bolsover major.

"No jolly fear!" answered Bunter. "I say, Harry, old chap——"

Bolsover tramped in, and Wharton rose to his feet, interposing. Bolsover major had to stop, with a furious stare at the captain of the Remove.

"I'm going to lick that fat cad!" he roared.

"What for?" inquired Wharton.

"That's my business."

"Mine, too," said Wharton coolly. "You're not going to bully Bunter or anybody else, Bolsover, so long as I'm captain of the Remove. He ought to be licked for raiding your grub certainly. A couple of licks with that bat will do, and I'll see it done."

"I'm going to thrash him till he can't crawl!" roared Bolsover.

"You're going to do nothing of the kind!"

"I say, Wharton, you lick him!" chirruped Bunter, safe behind the sturdy captain of the Remove. "You can do it, you know. I'll hold your jacket."

"Will you let me get at him?" bellowed Bolsover.

"No."

"You just mind your p's and q's, Bolsover!" went on Bunter, blinking round Wharton. "How would you like me to tell Quelch where you were this afternoon?"

Bolsover started.

"How do you know where I was, you spying cad?" he shouted.

"Perhaps I saw you go in at the Three Fishers," grinned Bunter. "Quelch would like to know why you were late for call-over. He, he, he!"

"So you're going to tell him?"

"I'll jolly well tell him if you touch me with that fives-bat!" said Bunter. "You'll get a flogging, and serve you right."

"You can tell him if you like, and you can tell him at the same time what I do to a sneak!" roared Bolsover major.

And he made a fierce rush. Wharton was shoved aside for the moment, and Bolsover reached the Owl. Bunter gave a wild yell, as the bully of the Remove caught him by the collar, and the fives-bat rose and fell.

Whack!

"Yow-ow! Help!"

The next moment Wharton's grip was on Bolsover's collar, and the burly Remove was spun away from Bunter.

He went spinning, and landed in the doorway on his hands and knees.

"Yow-ow-ow! Keep him off!" howled Bunter. "I'll tell Quelch that he was at a pub this afternoon! I'll tell Quelch why he was late for call-over! I'll tell Quelch——"

"Shut up!" snapped Wharton.

Bolsover major scrambled to his feet, red with rage. He rushed in again, and Wharton met him with his hands up. While they were hotly engaged, Bunter dodged round them, and fled from the study.

Immediately Bolsover left the captain of the Remove, and rushed after him.

Bunter was making for the stairs, and he put on speed as he heard Bolsover's heavy tread in pursuit.

Halfway down the staircase Bolsover pursued him furiously, but further he did not venture to go. He was likely to come upon a master or a prefect down-

stair. But Bunter, in a state of terror, dashed on, yelling at the top of his voice, and ran blind into Mr. Quelch, who was in the lower passage.

"Yaroo!" roared Bunter, as he collided with the surprised master. "Get out of the way, Coker, you beast!"

"Bunter!"

"Oh, crumbs!" The Owl recognised the Remove master. "Oh, sir, I—I thought it was Coker! Ow!"

"Bunter," thundered Mr. Quelch, "how dare you rush into me in that manner? What do you mean, sir?"

"Yow-ow! He's after me!" gasped Bunter. "Oh, dear!"

Mr. Quelch glanced up the staircase, and caught sight of Bolsover major just backing out of view. His eyes glinted.

"Come down here, Bolsover!" he called out.

Bolsover major unwillingly obeyed.

"You were pursuing Bunter with that fives-bat," said Mr. Quelch, glancing at it. "You are bullying again, Bolsover!"

"I—I—I was going to lick him, sir. He raided my grub!" said Bolsover.

"Tain't that!" howled Bunter. "He's afraid I'm going to give him away. I couldn't help seeing him go into the pub, could I?"

Mr. Quelch's face became thunderous.

"Come into my study, both of you!" he snapped.

Billy Bunter kept a nervous eye on Bolsover as they followed the Form-master into his study. Mr. Quelch's face was like iron now.

"This requires explanation!" he said icily. "You were very late in, Bolsover. Is it possible that, as Bunter says, you have been in a public-house?"

"I—I——" stammered Bolsover.

"Bunter, tell me at once where you saw Bolsover?"

"I—I don't want to sneak, sir!" stammered Bunter.

"You have said too much, Bunter, not to say more. Answer my question at once!" snapped the Remove master.

"I—I saw him at the Three Fishers, sir!" mumbled Bunter.

"And what were you doing there?"

"I—I was just passing, sir—just walking by."

"Is this true, Bolsover?"

Bolsover major set his lips. It all had to come out now. In sullen tones he explained the whole story, Mr. Quelch listening grimly, watching his face as he spoke.

"I accept your statement, Bolsover, that you went to that disreputable place for no worse purpose than to make a disturbance," he said, after a pause.

"You must have been well aware, however, that you ought to have done nothing of the kind. Have you ever been to the Three Fishers before?"

"Of course not!" muttered Bolsover.

"I wouldn't go to such a den, even if it wasn't out of bounds. I went there to thrash that fellow Smiles for cutting me with his whip."

"I hope that statement is correct; but even so, you did wrong, and you were well aware of it at the time. As you do not know how to use your leisure to advantage, Bolsover, you will be detained in the Form-room for the next four half-holidays. And I warn you to keep your bullying propensities within check. I shall keep my eye on you. You may go!"

And Bolsover went, with feelings too deep for words.

Mr. Quelch turned to Bunter, who was grinning now. His grin died away as Mr. Quelch's severe glance rested upon him.

"Bunter, it appears that this disreputable man, Smiles, gave you a lift in his trap. Did you remain with him long?"

"Only—only a few minutes, sir!"

gasp'd Bunter. "I—I had to get away from Bolsover."

"Very good. It appears that you have taken food from Bolsover's study."

"I—I—I—"

"Hold out your hand, Bunter!"

"Oh, dear!"

Swish, swish!

Billy Bunter left the Form-master's study with his fat hands tucked under his arms, looking as if he were trying to fold himself up like a pocket-knife. And his feelings towards Bolsover major were about as brotherly as Bolsover major's feelings towards him.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Happy Afternoon for Bunter!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. came out in their flannels on Wednesday afternoon in cheery mood. They were playing a visiting eleven from St. Jude's that afternoon, and the weather was glorious. Peter Todd was in the Remove eleven, and he had a rather thoughtful look. He was thinking of Bunter, though really that fat youth was not worth thinking of on a bright summer's afternoon with a cricket match in prospect. Bunter came out of the School House with a cheery grin on his fat face, and joined the cricketers.

"Coming to watch the match, Bunt?" asked Peter.

Bunter sniffed.

"No fear! I say, you fellows, I've just given Bolsover a look-in. He's in the Form-room, doing Latin." Bunter chuckled. "He looks like a regular Hun. He, he!"

"You ought to be there, too, you young rascal!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Oh, rats! I say, you fellows, can any of you lend me a quid?" asked Bunter. "I'll settle up this evening."

Peter Todd's face darkened.

"You'd better come and see the cricket, Bunter," he said quietly.

"Oh, don't be funny!" said Bunter impatiently. "I've got somethin' on this afternoon—a rather important engagement. I happen to be short of money—but I expect to have quite a lot later. If you can lend me a quid—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here come the St. Jude's chaps!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton & Co. went to meet the visitors, but Peter lingered. He was really anxious about Bunter.

"Look here, Bunter, don't be such a silly goat," said Peter earnestly. "I know what your silly game is. You'll get into trouble—"

"Can you lend me a quid?"

"Whether I can or not, I won't! Look here—"

"Oh, rats!"

Billy Bunter stalked away with great dignity.

Peter stood hesitating; but he was wanted on the cricket-ground, and he could not do anything more.

Bunter rolled away to the gates, and, bestowing a last sniff on the cricketers, started down the road. Cricket seemed to Bunter quite a puerile occupation that afternoon—he did not envy Harry Wharton & Co. He was going on what he elegantly styled the "randan"; and though he was unfortunately "stony" once more, he had no doubt of winning further quids from the genial Mr. Smiles. With his wonderful skill at billiards, and Mr. Smiles' curious willingness to pay up, he really did not need capital. And though the walk to the riverside inn was a long one, and tiring to the fat junior, Bunter arrived at the forbidden precincts in great spirits.

He found Mr. Smiles smoking a cigar in the garden, and in a genial mood.

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Bunter, after blinking round to ascertain that the spot was screened from the lane, sat down on the bench under the trees, and accepted a cigarette from Mr. Smiles.

"Very kind of you to give me a look-in again, sir," said Mr. Smiles, as he held a match for Bunter to light up.

"Well, I said I would," answered Bunter. "I've put off several engagements—Lord Mauleverer particularly wanted to take me home to see his people this afternoon. But a promise is a promise."

"Of course, a young gentleman like you must be very much sought after," Mr. Smiles remarked.

"That's how it is," confessed Bunter. "I never get much time to myself, really—always some fellow claiming a chap's time. Mauly was quite disappointed. Wharton wanted me, too—he's rather doubtful about beating St. Jude's without me in the team. But I told him it couldn't be done."

Mr. Smiles smiled.

"Ow are you getting on with Master Bolsover?" he asked.

"Oh, he's a rotter!" grunted Bunter.

rotter. I'll give him a jolly good hiding one of these days. He makes a chap's life a burden."

"He ought to be paid out," suggested Mr. Smiles. "Much nicer for you if he was turned out of his school, Master Bunter."

"Yes, rather! I wish he'd gone instead of Elliott!"

"I'm very indignant about the way he treats you, sir. It gets my back up," said Mr. Smiles warmly. "A gentleman like you! He ought to be punished! He ought to be turned out of the place, sir! I've got an idea! Suppose he was turned out of Greyfriars, it would serve him right, wouldn't it?"

"It would, rather!" agreed Bunter, with one eye on the billiard-room. He was anxious to get to work on Mr. Smiles' quids. "Never mind him! What do you say to fifty up?"

"But I'm very indignant about it!" persisted Mr. Smiles. "I've got an idea. S'pose it could be managed to turn him out of the school?"

"It couldn't!"

"It could," said Mr. Smiles, watching Bunter's face through his cigar-smoke. "F'instance, s'pose it came out that he was in the 'abit of coming to a place like this 'ere—"

"He isn't!"

"It could be made out," said Mr. Smiles.

Bunter started. For the first time he began to realise the kind of rascal he was dealing with, and a feeling of fear came over him.

"I—I say, that's rot, you know," said the fat junior uneasily. "I couldn't do anything of the sort, of course. Let's have fifty up."

"It could be made out," repeated Mr. Smiles, unheeding. "S'pose you was to put something in Master Bolsover's room—something I'll give you?"

"What?"

"That's all you need do," said Mr. Smiles, eyeing him. "Do that, and say nothing. I'll do the rest. Jest you take the envelope I'll give you and hide it in Master Bolsover's study somewhere he won't see it, and leave the rest to me."

Bunter's fat face became quite white.

"Wha-at for?" he stammered.

"Well, the young gentleman was 'ere last Saturday afternoon," explained Mr. Smiles. "He was 'ere a long time. I thought he was locked in a shed, but it seems he got out. He was locked in that shed because he came 'ere worse for drink, and was quarrelsome."

"He—he wasn't!"

"He was," said Mr. Smiles calmly. "The potman could bear witness to that if necessary. Well, he got out of that shed, 'aving sobered down. He got into my room 'ere, and 'elped himself to my money."

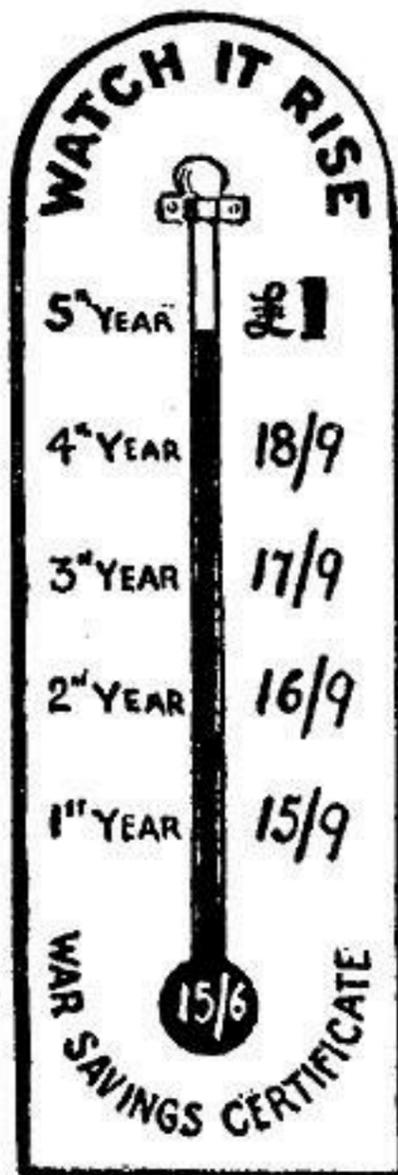
"But—but he didn't!"

"Yes, he did," answered Mr. Smiles. "I missed the money—bein' a banknote, with the number duly took—but never could find out where it had gone till I suddenly thought of 'im. I come up to Greyfriars about it, to ask for a man's money, of course. If it's found in Master Bolsover's study, that's the finish for that very 'igh-'anded young gentleman at Greyfriars, I s'pose."

Bunter sat glued to his seat, white with terror. He tried to rise, but his fat legs would not support him. His jaw dropped, and his eyes opened wide and round behind his spectacles. He could only stare at Mr. Smiles, as if that gentleman were a Gorgon.

"Ave another fag, sir," said Mr. Smiles.

"I—I think I'll be getting off!" stammered Bunter. "I—I remember now I've got an engagement!"



"I told Quelchy—that's our Form-master—about his being here last week, and he's got detained."

"Oh, you told your Form-master that?"

"Yes, and old Quelchy was jolly suspicious, too," grinned Bunter. "He believed Bolsover only came here to kick up a row, but he's suspicious. Lucky Bolsover didn't know I was here, too. He'd have mentioned it to Quelchy—he's quite cad enough. He's detained for four half-holidays. Serve him right!"

"Detained for coming to this 'ere place?"

"Yes; out of bounds, you know. He was jolly lucky not to get a licking."

"I s'pose he's been down on you since, sir?"

"The beast rags me every chance he gets!" growled Bunter. "I regard him with contempt. He can't go too far, because he's afraid of Quelchy, but he goes for me every chance he gets, the

He made an effort, and staggered to his feet.

He was scared almost out of his fat wits. He had come to the Three Fishers in a merry mood; but he was feeling now as if he were in a den of thieves, and all he asked was to get safe outside. But it was not so easy to get out of the trap as to get into it, as Bunter soon found.

"You're not goin', sir?" exclaimed Mr. Smiles.

"Yes; I—I think—I—"

"What about that fifty up?"

"Another time!" stammered Bunter. "Next term—I mean, next week! I—I—in fact, I've simply got to get off now! The—the Head's expecting me to tea!"

"Sit down!"

Mr. Smiles rapped out the words in a commanding tone, and Bunter, surprised by his change of manner, and alarmed, too, collapsed into his seat again.

"You won some money off me last week," said Mr. Smiles. "A pound note, I reckon! 'Ave you got it about you now, sir?"

"Nunno!"

"I reckoned you'd spend it," remarked Mr. Smiles.

"Of course I've spent it!" exclaimed Bunter indignantly. "I suppose you don't want it back?"

"Not at all!" said Mr. Smiles. "You're very welcome! I s'pose you know, sir, that pound notes are numbered, same as banknotes?"

"Ye-es."

"I could prove that that there note 'ad been mine, 'aving duly took the number, Master Bunter."

"C-c-could you?"

"Easy as winkin', sir! S'pose I was to miss that note, instead of the bank-note I was torkin' about? S'pose I went to the police-station and says, says I, 'A young gent, name of Bunter, was visitin' me for a game of billiards on Saturday, and arter he was gone I misses a pound note, and 'ere's the number? Would that do you any harm at the school, Master Bunter?"

Bunter stared at him in terror.

"You—you wouldn't do such a thing?" he gasped faintly. "I—I won the pound note from you! You know I did!"

"Who's going to prove that?" inquired Mr. Smiles, with an air of friendly interest.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

"Even s'posin' it was proved, would it do you any good, up at the school, to prove that you had been winning money 'ere at billiards?" asked Mr. Smiles.

Bunter shuddered.

"I—I should be expelled!" he muttered feebly.

"Yes; I reckon it would amount to that!" assented Mr. Smiles. "So it looks to me, sir, as if it's between you and Master Bolsover. Which would you prefer to 'ave expelled from Greyfriars—that 'igh-anded young gentleman or yourself, sir?"

Bunter groaned.

The scales had fallen from his eyes at last. He understood now that he was not an object of Mr. Smiles' friendly admiration, as he had supposed—that he was to be a helpless tool in the hands of a cunning rascal.

"That young gentleman is too free with his 'ands," said Mr. Smiles, passing a hand over his shadowy eye. "He lays 'ands on a man, and wallops him, and ducks him in the river, very 'igh and 'aughty. He makes a man give up a vallyble paper. P'r'aps he'll be sorry for it when that man's Charley Smiles, P'r'aps!"

And Mr. Smiles grinned in a way that



Mr. Quelch wants to know I (See Chapter 10.)

indicated that, to his mind, there was no "perhaps" about it.

Bunter panted for breath.

His feelings were a good deal like those of a helpless fly in the web of the spider.

"Master Bolsover's detained this arternoon, I think you said?" asked Mr. Smiles.

"Yes," groaned Bunter.

"Where is he?"

"In the Form-room."

"What a chance for getting into his study unbeknown," suggested Mr. Smiles. "Easy as winkin'. He's not treated you well, sir, any more'n he's treated me well. He gave me this 'ere eye, he did. I think you'll do as I want, sir. If you don't, I'll 'ave to cut up rusty. You don't want me to do that, now?"

"No," whispered Bunter.

"And that 'igh-anded young gent has asked for it, hasn't he, now?" urged Mr. Smiles. "He treats you badly, and me, too. You'll do as I want, Master Bunter. Won't you? You'll come along to-morrow and tell me you've done it—what?"

"I—I can't!"

"If you mean you won't, sir, there's nothing more to be said. Can I give you a lift in the trap?" asked Mr. Smiles, rising to his feet.

Bunter gave a gasp.

"Where—where are you going?"

"I'm jest going to drive over to the police-station to lay information about a pound note that was took the other day—"

Bunter staggered up, trembling.

"Don't!" he muttered huskily. "I—I—I'll do as you want! I—I—"

His voice quavered away.

"I thought you'd do the sensible thing," said Mr. Smiles. "Ain't the fellow a bully? Don't he treat you badly?"

"Ye-e-es. After all, it serves him right!" muttered Bunter. "He's a rotten bully. He rags me whenever he gets a chance now. I have to keep on dodging him. I—I don't see why I should care for him."

"Not a bit of it! 'Ere's the envelope,"

said Mr. Smiles, taking it from his pocket. "Put it away. That's right!"

Bunter, with a trembling hand, slid the envelope into a pocket. He knew what it contained.

"I—I'll get off now!" he muttered.

"Well, if you will go, you will!" said Mr. Smiles. "I 'ope you won't think, sir, of puttin' that there envelope in the fire, and leavin' me in the lurch, 'cause I'm coming up to Greyfriars in a day or two, and if anything goes wrong I shall go straight on to the police-station and lay information about that pound note. I'm a bad man to quarrel with, Master Bunter. I'll see you to-morrow—what?"

"I—I'll remember!" muttered Bunter.

Mr. Smiles walked down to the gate with him, and let him out, smiling. As the fat junior, still white as a sheet, dragged himself away, Mr. Smiles went into the bar, smiling, and stood himself a drink. He felt that he deserved it.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Taking the Plunge!

"WELL caught!"

"Bravo, Smithy!"

There was a shout round the cricket-field as Bunder held up the ball, hot from the bat.

Bolsover major, grinding away at a dull imposition in the Form-room, heard that shout, and grunted. It was a dreary afternoon to Bolsover. His minor, of the Third Form, had looked in to speak a word of consolation to him, but Bolsover was not in a mood to be consoled. He had snapped at the fag angrily, and Bolsover had retired discomfited. The bully of the Remove laboured through Latin conjugations, and growled and grunted, and anathematised Billy Bunter.

Meanwhile, the St. Jude's match went on. The Remove were ahead on the first innings, and St. Jude's were now batting a second time. Billy Bunter came in at the gates, dusty and tired and dispirited, and blinked towards the cricket-ground. He could see Peter Todd in the field, recognising his lanky form at the distance, and he thought of Peter's

well-meant warning. There was a shout as Bunter tramped on to the house.

"Caught! Well caught, Toddy!" Bunter did not look round. His study-mate was playing up well for Greyfriars, but Bunter cared nothing for that. He had too much to think of just then.

He rolled dismally into the house. Only a short time before he had left Greyfriars in great spirits to have a "rorty" afternoon. He did not feel very rorty now.

He went to his study, deserted now, and sank down in a chair to rest. He tried to think over the position he was in. The envelope in his pocket seemed to be burning a hole. He had not dared to look into it, but he knew it contained a banknote, of which the number had been "duly took," as Mr. Smiles expressed it. It brought into Bunter's mind a trick Ponsonby of Highcliffe had attempted to play on Tom Redwing. That trick was to be played on Bolsover major, and Bunter was to help.

Stupid as Bunter was, he could see it all clearly enough now. Mr. Smiles had a bitter grudge against Bolsover over the Elliott affair, and he had been awaiting his opportunity to pay off the old score. His opportunity had come at last. Doubtless he had been on the look-out to get hold of some Greyfriars junior, who was foolish enough and rascal enough, to fall into his clutches, in order to use him as a tool. Bunter had fallen into his hands, and Mr. Smiles had found in him just the tool he needed.

Bolsover's utter recklessness in visiting the Three Fishers had played into the cunning rascal's hands, too, and helped him. Even without that, however, he would have planned this dastardly scheme. Bunter realised that. Bolsover's folly only made it easier for him.

And Bunter had to carry out his orders. Otherwise, he would be the one to suffer instead of the bully of the Remove.

It was all Bolsover's fault, he told himself, in a miserable attempt at self-justification. But for Bolsover he would never have made that villain's acquaintance at all, and this couldn't have happened. And certainly he would be greatly relieved if Bolsover left Greyfriars.

In spite of Mr. Quelch's warning, and Harry Wharton's protection, the Remove bully had made things very warm for Bunter during the past few days. Indeed, it was quite probable that when he came out of the Form-room in a savage temper after detention, he would bully Bunter as a solace.

At that thought the fat junior started to his feet. If his work was to be done, it had to be done while Bolsover was still in the Form-room.

He blinked out into the Remove passage.

It was deserted. Slowly, with reluctant steps, Billy Bunter crept along the passage and into Bolsover major's study. It was empty. Bolsover's study-mate, Dupont, was on the cricket-ground, watching the game. Bunter closed the door, and stood trembling. He was frightened at what he had to do—frightened at what would happen to him if he did not do it.

But it was long before he could make up his mind. The fear that Bolsover would leave the Form-room stirred him on to action at last. He took the envelope from his pocket.

He opened the bookcase and selected a book which belonged to Bolsover, and which he knew Bolsover was not likely to open. It was a big, gilt-edged volume entitled "A Good Boy's Trials," presented to Bolsover by a kind aunt, and never opened by its recipient. Bunter crammed in the envelope among the leaves, most of which were uncut, and

replaced the volume on the shelf, closing the bookcase carefully.

He did not immediately leave the study:

He stood rooted to the floor, the perspiration pouring down his fat face, and his knees knocking together.

The realisation of what he was doing was forced in upon his mind, and in spite of his fear of Mr. Smiles, he felt that he could not leave the banknote there.

"I—I can't do it!" Bunter gasped aloud.

There was a heavy step in the passage, and Bunter jumped as he recognised the footstep of Percy Bolsover.

He stood quaking: it was too late to escape. The door was flung open, and Bolsover major strode in.

His face was angry and sullen, and as he saw Bunter it blackened into a fierce scowl.

It was upon Bunter's lips to blurt out what he had done, so terrified was he at Bolsover's sudden appearance, and so burdened was his wretched conscience with the knowledge that what he had done was a crime.

But Bolsover gave him no time to speak or move. In a twinkling his heavy hand was on Bunter's collar.

"Caught you again, have I?" he exclaimed.

Bunter wriggled feebly in his grip.

"I—I say—leggo—"

"Yes, I'll let you go, you fat rotter, when I've done," said Bolsover, looking round for an instrument of punishment.

"After my grub again—what?"

"No. Ow! No."

"Don't tell lies. What are you doing here, then?"

"I—I—"

Bolsover caught up a ruler with his disengaged hand.

"Now you're going to have it," he announced.

"Yaroo! Leggo!" yelled Bunter.

With a laugh, the Remove bully forced him across a chair, and began with the ruler. Whack, whack, whack!

Bunter roared and yelled.

Every vestige of repentance for what he had done was banished now. Bolsover major little thought what that gratification of his savage temper was likely to cost him.

Bunter wriggled, and squirmed, and howled, but the Remove bully did not leave off till his arm was tired.

Then he pitched Bunter neck and crop out of the study.

"Cut off, you crawling cad!" he exclaimed contemptuously. "Let me find you in this study again, that's all!"

Bunter scrambled up.

The look he gave Bolsover major through his glasses was a deadly one. At that moment he rejoiced in Charley Smiles' plot.

"You rotter!" stammered Bunter, shaking a fat fist at him. "You bully! I'll make you sorry for this! Oh, you rotter! You wait a bit."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bolsover major. Threats of vengeance from the Owl of the Remove entertained him, and restored his good humour. "What are you going to do, fatty? Have it out with the gloves on? Ha, ha, ha!"

"You'll see!" gasped Bunter.

He rolled away, gasping, and left Bolsover still roaring with laughter.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Mysterious!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were in Study No. 1 that evening, discussing the cricket match—which had resulted in a win for the Remove—when Billy Bunter came in. "Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob

Cherry. "How did you know we had chestnuts, Bunter?"

Bunter blinked at him dismally. "I—I didn't know," he mumbled. "I—I say, you fellows—"

The Famous Five looked at him. His fat face was so troubled that they could see something was the matter. Evidently it was something more serious than a disappointment about a postal-order this time.

"Anything up?" asked Wharton.

"N-n-no."

"Been on the merry randan again?" asked Frank Nugent, laughing. "Have you brought home another quid?"

"You young ass!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"I—I haven't!"

"You don't want to borrow quids to settle up with a sporting gentleman?" asked Bob, grinning.

"Nunno."

"The wantfulness is the esteemed chestnuts," remarked Hurree Jamset Singh. "Help yourself, my fat and ludicrous Bunter."

"I—I don't feel hungry, thanks."

"WHAT!"

The Famous Five jumped together. Frank Nugent fanned himself, and Bob Cherry pretended to faint.

Billy Bunter blinked at them dolorously.

"Is anything the matter, Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton, in real concern. "If you've been poking your silly nose into trouble, tell us, and we'll see what we can do."

"Nunno."

"Then what are you looking so blue about?"

"Am I?"

"Yes, you are," said Wharton, more and more surprised. "What's the matter? Has Bolsover been bullying you?"

"He licked me this afternoon. It isn't that! I—I don't mind."

"Oh, my hat! You don't mind!"

"He'll be punished for it," said Bunter. "I don't care! I—I don't care what happens. He's a beast. A fellow who's an utter beast like Bolsover can't expect a chap to consider him, can he?"

"I suppose not," said Harry, puzzled.

"If he gets it in the neck, all through his own beastly bullying, it serves him right, doesn't it?"

"Eh! What do you mean?"

"Oh, nothing."

"But, look here—"

Billy Bunter rolled out of the study as if he thought he had said too much.

The chums of the Remove looked at one another.

"What on earth does that mean?"

said Johnny Bull.

"Blessed if I know."

"The knowfulness is not great. But the esteemed Bunter seems to be terrifically down on his luck."

The juniors were puzzled—and they were not the only fellows in the Remove puzzled that evening by Bunter. The wretched Owl of the Remove, with his crime upon his conscience, was like an unquiet ghost. He tried to justify to himself what he had done, on the ground of Bolsover's bullying—but he could not quite succeed in that. He wanted very much to confide in somebody, and to be comforted by that somebody's approval; but he dared not breathe a word to reveal what he had done. But it was uppermost in his mind, and he could not keep from mysterious hints, which naturally astonished fellows who did not know in the least what he was talking about.

He came into No. 7, where Peter Todd and Tom Dutton were at prep, looking the picture of woe. Peter glanced at him curiously.

"You've been to that den again today?" he snapped.

"Yes," mumbled Bunter. "I—I came away almost at once, though. I—I haven't won any money."

"Lost any?"

"No; I hadn't any."

"Then what are you looking down in the mouth about?"

"Wa-a-was I?"

"Yes, you were, and are," replied Peter. "Anything wrong?"

"Nunno. Suppose—"

"Well?"

"Suppose a fellow—"

"Well, suppose a fellow—" said Peter, as Bunter paused.

"Suppose a fellow was a beastly bully, then a fellow wouldn't be bound to run a lot of risk on a fellow's account, would he?" said Bunter. "Suppose—"

"What?"

"Suppose a fellow was in a fix, and had to do something he didn't like, if a fellow was a bully, and had been the cause of it all, then a fellow would be justified, wouldn't he?"

Peter Todd's expression was extraordinary as he gazed at Bunter. What the Owl was talking about was a deep mystery to him.

"Are you potty?" he exclaimed.

"Eh? No. Suppose—"

"Suppose what?" shrieked Peter.

"Oh, nothing!"

Billy Bunter turned to the door.

"Aren't you going to do your prep?" demanded Peter.

"I can't. I'm not fit for work with all this on my mind," groaned Bunter.

"All what?"

"Oh, nothing!"

Bunter left the study with that, and Peter Todd blinked after him. He shook his head seriously as he recommenced his work. He was really beginning to fear that the Owl was not quite right in his head.

Bunter drifted aimlessly along the passage. He could not work or settle down; he was haunted by the thought of the banknote in Bolsover major's study, hidden there from the knowledge of everyone in Greyfriars but himself. That guilty knowledge would not leave his thoughts for a moment.

Bunter had never been what could be called a conscientious youth; his sense of honour left very much to be desired. But what he had done now was actual villainy, and he knew it, and all Bolsover's brutality could not excuse it or offer a shadow of excuse for it. He knew it, and it haunted him. The bare thought of Mr. Smiles coming to Greyfriars and accusing Bolsover of theft—of the search and the discovery of the hidden banknote—filled him with horror and fear.

If he was silent—and he must be silent—the proof against Bolsover would be conclusive, for who could suspect that a schoolfellow had "planted" the banknote in his study at the order of the sharper? Even Bolsover could scarcely guess that, amazed as he would be at the finding of it, Percy Bolsover would suspect, probably, that Mr. Smiles had somehow penetrated into the school and placed the banknote there, but everyone else would know that that was quite impossible, and Bolsover's guilt would seem as clear as the sun at noonday. He would be expelled from the school with every circumstance of ignominy, for what headmaster could refuse to be convinced by such evidence? Indeed, the Head would probably find it difficult to keep Mr. Smiles from blazoning the matter far and wide, and making a police-court affair of it.

Bunter munched about the Remove passage, with those disturbing thoughts in his mind, torturing him. There was only one alternative; he could defy Mr. Smiles, and take the punishment instead of Bolsover, for he felt that the sharper

would be merciless if he disappointed him.

"By gad, you look ill, dear boy!" Lord Mauleverer's voice interrupted Bunter's miserable reflections. "Anythin' wrong inside?"

Bunter blinked at him miserably.

"I—I say, Mauly—" he began.

"Hard up, old bean?" asked his good-natured lordship.

"Nunno."

"Oh, gad!"

"I—I say, Mauly, suppose a fellow—"

"Yaas?"

"Suppose a fellow—"

"Well?"

"Oh, nothing!" said Bunter. And he walked away, leaving Lord Mauleverer simply blinking with astonishment.

The unhappy Owl wandered downstairs. He kept out of the Common-room, not caring to face so many eyes, and stood blinking out of the hall window into the darkness of the quadrangle. In the glimmering pane he seemed to see the evil face of Charley Smiles grinning at him, and he shuddered.

"I can't do it!" he gasped aloud. "I—I can't, I can't!"

There was a step and a rustle, and Bunter spun round in alarm. His heart almost died within him as he saw his Form-master, Mr. Quelch. He blinked at the severe-featured gentleman in terror, his eyes growing big and round behind his glasses.

"Bunter!" To his surprise, the Form-master's voice was quite kindly, different from his usual severe tones. "What is the matter, Bunter?"

"N-n-nothing, sir."

"You look very disturbed, my boy," said Mr. Quelch, eyeing him. "What is it you cannot do? You were saying—"

"I—I—I was just thinking aloud, sir, that's all," stammered Bunter.

"You are not in any trouble?"

"N-no! I—I'm as happy as a king, sir!" gasped Bunter.

The Form-master smiled slightly, and passed on. Bunter hurried away, gasping with relief. If Mr. Quelch had guessed!

The next day Billy Bunter scuttled out of Greyfriars after lessons, and hurried away to the Three Fishers. There he saw Mr. Smiles, who learned with satisfaction that his orders had been carried out. In the exuberance of his spirits, Mr. Smiles challenged Bunter to fifty up, willing to lose another sovereign to him by way of reward. But Bunter had had enough of Mr. Smiles' quids and of Mr. Smiles himself, and he hurried away.

Mr. Smiles strolled into the bar, and stood himself several drinks, ruminating over the visit he was to pay Greyfriars the next day, and the remarks he was to make to the Head. Mr. Smiles was looking forward to that visit with the keenest satisfaction. That very high-handed young gentleman, Percy Bolsover, would be sorry for having handled Mr. Smiles before twenty-four hours had elapsed.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Quelchy is a Brick!

HARRY WHARTON looked for Bunter in the quad the next morning. Bunter, quite contrary to his usual custom, was down first of all the Remove. He had fallen into the way of late of avoiding his Form-fellows.

"Bunter, old son!" said Harry, as he joined the fat junior. He spoke with more kindness than was usual when Bunter was the person addressed.

"Hallo!" mumbled Bunter.

"What's the matter with you?"

"Nothing."

"Look here, kid," said Harry

"There's something wrong, I can see that. If you won't tell me, tell Toddy. If you've landed yourself in trouble, we'll help you out of it if we can."

"You can't!" said Bunter, with a groan.

"Well, let us see. You've been looking like a ghost. Even Mr. Quelch has noticed it," said Wharton. "He asked me yesterday if anything was wrong with you."

Bunter trembled.

"Won't you tell me?" asked Harry.

"There isn't anything."

"If it's money—"

"It isn't that! It's—it's—nothing! After all, he's a rotten bully, and he deserves it," muttered Bunter.

"Eh? Who?"

"Nothing."

Bunter rolled away to avoid further questioning. Harry looked after him with real concern. He would gladly have helped, if help had been possible, troublesome duffer as Bunter was. But if the fat junior would not reveal his trouble, there was nothing he could do.

Peter Todd was still more puzzled and concerned. He had questioned Bunter several times, and had elicited nothing from him. It was all the more perplexing, because Bunter was generally ready to place his trouble's on other people's shoulders, and to leave them there.

Mr. Quelch glanced very curiously at Bunter when the latter came into the Form-room that morning with the rest. Bunter was distraught during lessons, and he construed in a way that made the Removites stare, accustomed as they were to his blunders. Mr. Quelch was surprisingly patient, however. He had seen that Bunter was not quite himself, and he was lenient with him.

The unfortunate Owl had little attention for lessons that morning. For that day Mr. Smiles was to arrive and denounce Bolsover major, and every sound seemed to the hapless Owl the footstep of the vindictive sharper. After morning lessons Bunter was sneaking away by himself, when Bolsover major joined him, and dropped a heavy hand on his shoulder.

Bunter gave him a furious look.

"You'd better let me alone," he said shrilly. "You bully—you silly fool—you'd better!"

"I wasn't going to rag you, kid," said Bolsover major unexpectedly. "Look here, you look as if you're going to be ill. What's the matter?"

Bunter blinked at him. He understood that Bolsover was meaning to be kind. But it was too late for that to make any difference.

"I pasted you on Wednesday," said Bolsover. "Well, you were in my study, after my grub. You ought to let a fellow's grub alone, especially in wartime. But, look here, that's two days ago. You're not worrying about that."

Bunter did not speak.

"Well, I'm sorry you're seedy," said Bolsover, kind enough in his gruff way. "You got me into a bad row the other day, but I don't bear malice. Look here, is there anything I can do for you?"

"No!" gasped Bunter.

"Oh, all right!"

Bolsover walked away. Harry Wharton & Co. came out of the School House, and Bunter avoided them. He had a terror of being questioned. He caught sight of Peter Todd in the quadrangle, and went into the House. He wondered whether Mr. Smiles would arrive early in the afternoon, or leave it till after lessons. He passed Mr. Quelch in the passage without seeing him, and went into the deserted Form-room.

There, at least, he was safe from interruptions, safe from questionings that terrified him.

Those few unexpected kind words from Bolsover had added to his misery and self-reproach. If Bolsover had bullied him, he could have faced the events of the day with more equanimity. He would have been glad if the bully of the Remove had cuffed him or kicked him—it would have been some sort of a justification for leaving him to his fate.

When was Mr. Smiles coming? How was he to get through the dragging hours of the day?

The miserable junior sank down on a form, and leaned his fat elbows on a desk, his face buried in his podgy hands.

"I can't do it!" he muttered aloud, in utter woe. "I can't—I can't!"

The half-open door was pushed further open, and Mr. Quelch looked in, with a very grave face.

Bunter did not see him.

He was rocking himself to and fro, as he leaned over the desk, in a state of wretchedness too deep for words.

The Form-master came towards him.

"Bunter!"

His voice was very quiet.

Bunter raised his head from his hands, staring at him.

"I saw you come in here, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch quietly. "I followed you. My boy, you are in some trouble, and, for your own sake, I must insist upon knowing what it is."

Bunter only looked at him in growing terror.

Even in his terror he had a feeling of surprise. Mr. Quelch, usually stern and cold and impassive, was as kind and gentle now as if Bunter were his own son.

Bunter wondered.

"Come, my boy!" said the Form-master. "You must learn, Bunter, to look upon me as a friend as well as a master. I should like all my boys to do so. You must tell me what is troubling you. If you have committed some fault, I will take as lenient a view of it as I can. In any case, Bunter, it will be better for you to tell me."

Bunter gasped.

"I must insist!" added Mr. Quelch. "Come, Bunter! What have you done?"

"N-n-nothing, sir."

"You were saying as I came in that you could not do something. I heard you make the same remark on Wednesday. What is it, Bunter, that you cannot do?"

"I—I— Nothing, sir."

"Bunter!"

Bunter's eyes fell before the Form-master's. He had a terrible fear that his secret was to be dragged from him, and he was far from realising that that was the best thing that could have happened to him.

"If you will not confide in me, Bunter, I shall have to take you to the Head," said Mr. Quelch, kindly enough. "I cannot allow this to pass. It appears to me that you have done something wrong, and are in fear of the consequences. Is that it?"

"I—I never meant to, sir," stammered Bunter. "I—I—I can't stand it any longer! I can't!"

"What is it, then?"

There was a sob from the unhappy Bunter. He was very nearly in an hysterical state, and the Form-master's kindness was the finishing touch.

"I—I can't do it," he stammered. "That beast—oh, that beast! He—he ought to be in prison! It ain't fair to leave a man like that out of prison! I never knew what he was like! I never knew—"

Mr. Quelch's face became very grave indeed.

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"What man are you speaking of, Bunter?" he asked.

"That—that—I—I mean, nobody, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I didn't mean—"

"Tell me at once!"

"It's no good!" mumbled Bunter. "I never stole his pound note; but he's going to say I did, and he's got the number."

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, aghast.

"I—I mean, I—I—" Bunter trembled. "I—I mean— Suppose a fellow—"

"What?"

"Nothing, sir. I—I didn't mean anything. I—I don't know anything about—about a pound note."

"You will tell me the whole matter immediately, Bunter. If you have done wrong, I can see you are repentant, and I shall take that into consideration," said Mr. Quelch. "But I insist upon knowing everything!"

Then it all came out. It was scarcely possible for Bunter to keep the secret now, and a dim consciousness was in his mind that his severe Form-master, after all, was the friend he needed in this sore extremity. In stammering tones he made his confession, Mr. Quelch hardly interrupting him from beginning to end. His chance acquaintance with Mr. Smiles, his wretched essay in being "rorty," and the price he had to pay for it. All of it came out, in stammering and hesitating tones.

He did not dare to look at Mr. Quelch when his faltering voice died away at last.

The Form-master was silent for some minutes, during which Bunter sat in dumb misery.

"You carried out that wicked man's instructions?" asked Mr. Quelch at last.

"I—I—I put it there, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I was going to take it away again, but—but Bolsover came in, and then he licked me with a ruler, and—"

"I understand. And this man Smiles is coming here to-day?"

"Yes, sir!" groaned Bunter. "He's going to accuse Bolsover of—of stealing the banknote I hid in his bookcase. He's got the number."

Mr. Quelch set his lips.

"Is that what has been troubling you, Bunter—the knowledge of what was to happen to Bolsover?"

"Yes, sir," mumbled Bunter. "I—I—I don't like him, but—of course, it's all his own fault for bullying me—but—but I felt I—I—" His voice trailed away. "I—I was afraid that villain would accuse me of stealing his pound note—it was either Bolsover or me. You see, sir, he got me under his thumb—"

"Because you did wrong in the first place, Bunter. Otherwise, he would have had no hold over you. But I am glad to see that you are incapable of acting as this detestable man desired, and I think you have had a lesson to avoid bad characters in future, Bunter."

Bunter groaned. That lesson, indeed, had been firmly fixed into his mind.

"Go to Bolsover's study, Bunter, and bring me the envelope."

"Yes, sir."

Bunter limped out of the Form-room, and returned in a few minutes with the envelope. Bolsover was in the quad, and he had recovered it unseen. Mr. Quelch took the envelope and opened it. A banknote lay within.

"I shall take charge of this, Bunter," he said. "It will be returned to its owner, when he calls. You need have no fear of him. I doubt very much whether he would have ventured to bring the preposterous charge against you, even if you

had refused to obey him. Now he certainly cannot do so. He is liable to imprisonment for what he has done."

Bunter brightened up.

"I shall speak to you later," added Mr. Quelch. "I think you have suffered severely for your foolish wrongdoing, Bunter, and I think that you have been punished enough. As for this man, I shall deal with him, and you need not give him another thought."

Mr. Quelch left the Form-room.

Billy Bunter rolled out after him, and into the quad, feeling as if a mountain had been lifted from his fat shoulders. Peter Todd bore down upon him.

"Oh, here you are!" he said. "Now, Bunter—"

"Hallo, Toddy!" said the Owl cheerily. "All serene! I say, isn't old Quelch a brick?"

"Quelch—a brick!"

"Yes, a regular brick!" said Bunter enthusiastically. "You wouldn't think that a dry old stick like Quelch would be such a brick, would you?"

Peter Todd stared at him.

"What's Quelch done?" he asked.

"Oh, nothing!" said Bunter.

And he rolled away, leaving Peter mystified. But it was evident that the clouds had passed by, so far as Bunter was concerned, and that the Owl of the Remove was himself again.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Exit Charley Smiles!

MR. CHARLEY SMILES arrived at the gates of Greyfriars a little out of breath and perspiring, but in a cheery mood. Gosling, the porter, bore down upon him as his rubicund nose and shady eye appeared there.

Gosling knew the man by sight, and there was a rather curious expression on his face as he accosted Mr. Smiles. The porter had already received his instructions from Mr. Quelch.

"I've called to see the headmaster, my man," said Mr. Smiles, with an assumption of dignity. "Name of Smiles."

"I know your name, Mr. Smiles," answered Gosling. "This young gentleman will show you in. Master Wingate, sir!"

Wingate of the Sixth was seated on the bench by Gosling's lodge. He rose to his feet, and signed to Mr. Smiles to follow him.

That gentleman did so in a state of surprise. He did not know Wingate; but he could see that he was a senior in the school, and certainly it was not the duty of a Sixth-Former to show visitors in to the Head. Why the captain of Greyfriars had taken that duty upon himself was a mystery. Wingate's face expressed nothing, though his eyes had gleamed for a moment as they rested upon Charley Smiles.

The sharper followed him to the House and into it, a good many glances being cast upon them by the way. Wingate tapped at the door of the Head's study.

"Mr. Smiles, sir!"

Assuming a jaunty manner, Mr. Smiles stepped into the room, and he was again surprised by the fact that Wingate followed him in. It did not occur to him yet that his visit was known and prepared for in advance, and that the captain of Greyfriars was acting as he did by request of the headmaster. Wingate closed the study door, and stood leaning against it, evidently to be present at the interview. Mr. Smiles gave him a rather uneasy glance. The sturdy proportions and broad shoulders of the Greyfriars captain did not, somehow, reassure him.

Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch were in the study, and both of them looked very

grave. Mr. Smiles leered at them impudently, with a determination that he was not going to be "put down" by their severe looks.

"Arternoon, sir!" said Mr. Smiles.

"You have called to see me, I understand," said the Head, without returning the greeting or asking Mr. Smiles to be seated. "Kindly state your business."

"A rather serious business, sir," said Mr. Smiles, shaking his head. "P'r'aps it would be better to 'ave this 'ere interview in privit, like."

"Nothing of the kind! Kindly proceed at once!"

"Oh, all right!" said Mr. Smiles tartly. "If you want it 'owled from the 'ouse-tops, suit yourself, old gentleman. I've called 'ere for a banknote."

"Indeed!"

"What was stolen from my room at the Three Fishers by a young feller belonging to this 'ere school," said Mr. Smiles defiantly.

Mr. Smiles expected that statement to fall like a bombshell. Undoubtedly it would have done so but for Bunter's confession to Mr. Quelch and that gentleman's explanation of the facts to the Head. As it was, the astounding statement did not ruffle the Head's serenity in the least. He peered at Mr. Smiles over his glasses very attentively, that was all.

Mr. Quelch, too, looked at the rascal very curiously.

A sense of uneasiness oppressed Mr. Smiles. He could not quite "catch on," as it were, to the atmosphere of his surroundings.

"You accuse a boy belonging to this school of stealing a banknote from your lodgings?" asked the Head.

"Yes, I does," said Mr. Smiles doggedly.

"His name?"

"Percy Bolsover."

"You have the number of the note?"

"I 'ave!" said Mr. Smiles emphatically. "And when that young gent's searched, an' his room, I reckon you'll find the note; and if you don't, the police will, old gentleman." The Head's grave expression did not change, and Mr. Smiles went on with increasing anger and insolence. "It won't do your school no good if it gets into the papers, I fancy. Not that I'm a 'ard man. Give me my money back, and let the dishonest young 'ound be properly punished, and I'm satisfied. I don't know as I'm set on calling' in the police."

"I have no doubt you would hesitate at that step," said the Head drily.

"Don't you be too sure," said Mr. Smiles. "I've been robbed. That 'igh-anded young gent, young Bolsover, comes along to the Three Fishers the worse for drink. The potman locks him in a shed to keep him quiet. He gets out, and I sees him dodgin' about my room, and arterwards I misses my banknote. Thinkin' it over, I says to myself, says I, that young gent Bolsover has took that

note, says I, and lucky it is that I'm a careful man an' keeps the numbers. And there's the number of that fi-pun note, sir, if you doubts a man's word."

Mr. Smiles flung a dirty sheet of paper on the writing-table. The Head glanced at it, and read the number written thereon. He opened a drawer in his desk, and took out a banknote—a proceeding that amazed Mr. Smiles. He laid the banknote by the paper.

"I think you will find the numbers the same," said Dr. Locke. "There is your banknote, Mr. Smiles."

Mr. Smiles stood rooted to the floor. He could only blink at the five-pound note like a fish out of water.

The number on the note was that written on the dirty paper; it was his five. It dawned upon his mind then that Bunter had failed him. Yet he had been absolutely assured that the fat junior was helpless under his thumb, and he had been certain that the banknote was concealed in Bolsover's bookcase in his study. Bunter had reported that to him, with evident truth. And now—there had evidently been a change!

As he stood almost stuttering with consternation, the Head went on, his voice deepening with scorn and wrath.

"Bunter, whom you frightened by your threats into agreeing to carry out your infamous instructions, has confessed all to his Form-master. There is your banknote. There is not a word of truth in your statements concerning Bolsover, of this school. You have endeavoured to fasten a false charge upon the boy, and to make his schoolfellow your tool in doing so. You are liable to prosecution, Mr. Smiles, for illegal conspiracy and defamation of character."

Charley Smiles' knees knocked together.

His flabby hand shook as he picked up the banknote. Wingate, his back still at the study door, was looking at him grimly. Mr. Smiles began to understand what that stalwart Sixth-Former was there for.

Dr. Locke rose to his feet.

"Mr. Smiles, your rascality is exposed," he said, in a tone of contempt that pierced even the sharper's thick skin. "You are, as you know very well, amenable to the law for what you have done with such incredible baseness. I have only to detain you here, and telephone for the police—"

Mr. Smiles cast a longing look at the door.

"Don't be 'ard on a man, sir!" he mumbled. "I—I—I own up, sir! Don't be 'ard! That young feller, Bolsover, walloped me an' ducked me in the river. I was gettin' my own back, sir!"

"That is enough! I do not desire a scandalous case in the newspapers in connection with this school, and for that reason I shall not prosecute you. But you will not go unpunished," said the Head sternly. "Wingate!"

"Yes, sir?" Wingate made a step forward.

"Wingate, this man has brought a wicked and unfounded charge against a Greyfriars boy, as you know. I am too old a man to deal with him as he deserves. May I trust that to your hands, Wingate?"

"You may, sir!" said Wingate.

He dropped his hand on Mr. Smiles' shoulder, and led him from the study. The unfortunate sharper went without a word, utterly crushed by the unexpected ending of his cunning plot. In the hall, as he was led out, he passed a number of the Remove, among them Bolsover major and Billy Bunter. The latter grinned at him cheerfully.

"I say, you fellows, that's Smiles!" said Bunter. "Are you going to lick him, Wingate? I'll hold your jacket!"

"Oh, crikey!" murmured Mr. Smiles.

Wingate frowned, and signed to the juniors to clear off, as he led Mr. Smiles out. He did not lead him to the gates. He led him into the Cloisters. There he stopped at the iron gates, which were generally kept locked, but were unlocked now. Mr. Smiles eyed him in sickening apprehension.

"Now I'm going to thrash you, Mr. Smiles," said Wingate.

"'Ands off! I—I—I— Lemme go! I'll— Oh, my eye! Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow!"

The next five minutes were like a series of earthquakes and air-raids to Charley Smiles. He had earned severe punishment, and he got it. What he had received from Bolsover major on the towing-path was a joke to this. And when he had been soundly thrashed Wingate helped him out at the iron gates with a heavy boot, clanged the gate shut after him, and locked it. Mr. Smiles sat on the ground for ten minutes before he found energy enough to crawl to his feet and limp homeward. His visit to Greyfriars, which was to have been such a triumph, had not been exactly successful, and Mr. Smiles, as he limped and groaned his way homeward, came to the resolution to leave Greyfriars alone in the future.

Harry Wharton & Co.—from a distance—had seen the manner of Mr. Smiles' exit, and they wondered. But Bunter enlightened them at tea-time, when he joined them in quite his old spirits. Bunter seemed under the impression that he cut a remarkably good figure in the transaction, and he was quite surprised to find the Famous Five take a different view. But at least the Owl had had a lesson, and he was likely to think twice the next time he was tempted to become "rorty."

(Don't miss "TOM REDWING'S FATHER!"—next Monday's grand complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., by FRANK RICHARDS.)

SOME OF OUR READERS.

Horace Pobjoy, of Gloucester, in writing to me, encloses an extract from the "Gloucester Citizen" about his six soldier brothers. All of them were readers of the Companion Papers, he tells me, and I am sure that many fellow-readers will be interested to hear about them.

Sergeant W. E. Pobjoy has been mentioned in despatches by Sir Douglas Haig. While in France he is reported "to have at all times carried out his work with great credit and reliability in varying circumstances and under constant shell-fire during last year's operations." He was then acting as confidential clerk at the Brigade Headquarters Staff. At that time he was a corporal; now he is in France again with another stripe. Of the other five, Sergeant G. Pobjoy, of the Gloucester Regiment, and Driver Bert Pobjoy,

of the R.F.A., both joined up on September 1st, 1914, and are now in Italy. The former is now going in for a commission. Driver Harold Pobjoy, who was six times rejected before he squeezed through, is in France. His brother Harry, who suffered twelve rejections, but got in at last, and Sapper E. V. Pobjoy, R.E., are still in training in England; E. V. is a lance-corporal, and on the staff at Sandwich.

The father and mother of this gallant half-dozen may well feel proud of their sons; and I have no doubt that they do. Congratulations to them—Mr. and Mrs. E. Pobjoy, of 55, Bloomfield Road, Gloucester—on having reared such a band of true Britons! To these two lads who stuck to it still after being turned down again and again, congratulations also. I can only add that the editor of any paper ought to be proud of readers like these.

YOUR EDITOR.

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The Editor's Chat.

For Next Monday :

"TOM REDWING'S FATHER!"

By Frank Richards.

I think all my readers are interested in Tom Redwing, the sailorman's son, now at Greyfriars on the scholarship which Mr. Vernon-Smith's generosity provided. Here we have another story about him, with an unexpected turn to it which I am not going to give away.

Skinner plays an unpleasant part in the story; and Vernon-Smith also comes prominently into it.

A Great New Serial Story.

THE BROWN TORRENT.

BY SIDNEY DREW.

A Thrilling Story of Adventure, in which Ferrers Lord, Ching-Lung, Gan-Waga, the Eskimo, and other Popular Characters, play their parts.

NEW READERS START HERE.

Rupert Thurston buys an idol bearing the inscription, "I am Sharpra the Slumberer, and at my awakening the world shall tremble!" Ferrers Lord, Ching-Lung, Gan-Waga, Maddock, Prout, and O'Rooney arrive. The idol's eyes are seen to open, and with a terrific crash the hotel collapses.

A lank Indian, named Gadra Singh, is employed as cook; and the one-time rebel, Larput Raj, is the shikari. While watching the idol he sees its eyes open, but they quickly shut.

Duke Payton arrives and joins the expedition to the cactus country. They are out hunting a tiger, and Ching-Lung manages to shoot it. They find a blue-eyed native who has been killed by a python, and bury him. Maddock, Gan-Waga, Barry O'Rooney, and the cook are left in camp. Some rebelling natives fire on them. The natives are beaten, and the party proceeds in peace to Dandu's village. Barry accidentally releases Rosti, the python.

(Now read on.)

Zapra, the Priest, Tries to Make Mischief.

ROSTI, the rock-python, had no right to be out in the daytime except for a doze in the sun, for his eyesight was not so good as it might have been in a strong light. He could see better in the dusk, or in the pale rays of the moon, and he usually did his hunting by night. A goat, or a wild-pig, or a monkey or two suited him very well for supper, and then, with a big bulge in him, Rosti would go to sleep for three weeks or a month until the bulge had disappeared.

The python wore a broad collar of gold. There did not seem much of it, for the snake had such a profusion of neck that only a millionaire could have afforded him a gold collar large enough to fit it. His colour was deep amber, and he ran twenty-six feet from his snout to the tip of his tail, and was proportionately thick round the waist.

Like Weeping Willie, the mule, Rosti did not care for strangers, unless they brought him a goat or something else to eat. And his sudden appearance caused consternation. For one thing, every dog in the village bolted.

O'Rooney and Gan-Waga rolled out of the way in opposite directions to make room. Rosti slithered out of the hut, twisting his head from side to side. The kindly old gentleman took to his heels, women shrieked, and children shouted in fear. Though Zapra, the priest, had informed them a thousand times that Rosti was a supernatural being who knew everything about the past and could see into the future, he was not much good at seeing in the daylight at any time, and as he had been cooped up in the dark for ages, that did not improve his powers of vision. The python hit his nose a painful bang against a doorpost, and began to get angry. He butted hard at the door, knocking it clean off its leather hinges, plunged into the hut, bored a hole through the wall behind, and came out again on the other side.

More by luck than good management he made for the gate, and the boys on guard were too wise to attempt to check his advance, for the python was putting on speed, and anyone who had got in his way would probably have shared the fate of Shandza, son of Zapra, the priest, who had had his spine broken by one of Rosti's relatives.

The python was seen from the camp. Rosti preferred rougher ground to travel over, but he managed to maintain his pace on the grass. He had not much of a brain, in spite of Zapra, and knew as little about the future as a boiled egg, but there may have been some glimmering memory of the past in his snaky mind. Rosti did not want to be a god with a gold collar and a dark prison. He was out for liberty.

"Ware snakes! A python, souse me!" shouted Benjamin Maddock. "He seems to be coming for lunch!"

Rosti was making a snake-line for the camp. It was the nearest way to the ravine where he had spent his boyhood.

Larput Raj loaded the rifle the Viceroy had given him. The millionaire's voice rang out first in the vernacular and then in English, warning them not to shoot. Ferrers Lord had noticed the gleam of the gold collar. They gave the python plenty of room. With a crash and a noise of splitting canvas he flattened out the tent like an elongated steam-roller, and went his way amid a good deal of laughter. Ferrers Lord did not laugh, nor did Duke Payton.

"That old rogue of a priest has let the reptile go purposely, I suppose?" said Ferrers Lord.

"You may depend on it, sir," answered Payton. "He will tell the fools that their god is angry because they have made friends with us instead of killing and robbing us, and has abandoned them to their fate. Perhaps it's a pity we didn't shoot the ugly brute. It would have showed them they had a cheap sort of god if a bullet would flatten it out. Zapra will make mischief out of this for certain. We may have to hang him before it's over."

Gan-Waga and Barry O'Rooney came in with the fowl. The Eskimo had left the eggs and the cheese behind. He did not bring the eggs as they had been badly bent, and he would have had to collect them with a spoon. The cheese remained where it had fallen, smothered in dust.

Gan-Waga had got over his fright and his tumble. He sat down, grinning, beside Ching-Lung.

"Where did you get that speckled canary, Wagtail?" asked the prince. "You haven't been looting a hen-roost, I hope?"

"Not a biters, Chingy," said Gan-Waga. "Old Barry Loonatics buy this roosters with a knife-pockets from a fatness chaps. Oh, dears, dears, dears! We gotted some eggsees and some cheeses, only we busted that lots. I—ho, ho, ho!—I gives Barry a smell of the cheeses, Chingy, and that—ha, ha, ha!—that puts the wind upness. He hop back, and tumble through a doors, and outs—he, he, he, he!—pops the snakes. Down I goes ker-slaps, and flop goes the eggs and cheese. I laughs now, but I not laughs then, Chingy. I not likes snakes."

"Was it the door of the big shanty O'Rooney barged into, Gan?" asked the prince.

"That rightness, Chingy. The door shutted on him. I tries to opens it, but Barry opens it more quickfuls, and tumble out on me. This years, next years, sometimes, neverness. Yo' gets out of the frings-line, Chingy!"

Gan-Waga proceeded to pluck the fowl, making the feathers fly. Barry O'Rooney was helping to put up the tent again when he was told by Mr. Thomas Prout that the chief wished to speak to him. Briefly Barry explained what had happened.

"Then the priest wasn't in the hut, O'Rooney?"

"No, sor. At laste, av he was Oi couldn't see the ould rascal. But sure he must have been, sor. There was a dark place at the back, and Oi belave the ould thafe opened some koin of a dure and let the shnake out on me!"

At that moment a bell with a very cracked voice began to ring. Ching-Lung and the millionaire walked towards the village gate. The women had gathered in little groups, muttering together. Zapra's men followers were there, too, and cast glances that were anything but kindly at the strangers. Then the corpulent form of Zapra, the priest, appeared on the upper platform of one of the towers. Zapra had robed himself in snake-skins, and decorated his face with stripes of red, blue, and white paint. He wore a girdle of human skulls, for the make-up of no medicine-man worthy of the name is complete without some of these gruesome adornments. On his head he wore a pair of gilded buffalo-horns.

"Old Zap isn't such a bad imitation of a nightmare, chief," said Ching-Lung.

Zapra raised his hands to the sky, and the villagers cowered down in the dust on their knees. Then the priest began to shout things in a shrill, nasal voice. Ferrers Lord could guess the purport of it. As he warmed up he started to dance and gesticulate, and the skulls clicked together, making a kind of bony accompaniment. Zapra must have found it warm work, but he stuck to it.

"His opinion of us wouldn't flatter us much, Ching," said the millionaire, with a smile. "He is informing them that we are white demons, and because they did not kill us Rosti has shaken the dust of the village off his scales, and left them to a terrible doom. If they repent, and murder us promptly, Rosti may yet be appeased, and return to his den and swallow many goats. One or two of those brown-faced rascals look like murder. It's time to interfere."

Ferrers Lord walked through the gate and climbed the bamboo ladder. Zapra was pouring out curses against the white men and their followers, and jumping about until the platform creaked, when a hand touched his shoulder. The torrent of words died, frozen on his ochred lips, as he turned and saw the millionaire confronting him.

"Painted dog," said Ferrers Lord, "I know well enough you understand the tongue I speak, as I understand the lies you tell these foolish dupes! Get back to your kennel and be dumb, or must I thrash wisdom into you?"

He bent the gold-headed cane. They looked at one another—the erect, broad-shouldered Englishman in his plain suit of flannels, and the savage medicine-man in his hideous paint and barbarous attire. And Zapra knew who was master. He shrank back against the frail wooden railing. It cracked and split, and the next moment he would have toppled over and broken his thick neck, but Ferrers Lord caught him by the wrist and dragged him back into safety.

Ferrers Lord took out his matchbox and struck a match. He pointed the cigarette in the direction of the ladder.

Slowly and heavily Zapra, the priest, went down. He went into his hut without glancing back.

"I think you have made an impression, chief," said Ching-Lung. "But why, oh, why did you haul him back again when he was

going over the top so nicely? I suppose I'd have done it myself, but it seems a pity. Somebody said once that the only good Red-skin was a dead one. That's my firm belief about medicine-men. Zapra would be a lot safer dead than walking about on two legs, and he'd make a lovely funeral!"

A long-drawn shout from a boy who was watching from another tower sounded. As the warping was not followed by the closing of the gate, there was apparently no danger. Presently Dandu arrived, driving in some cattle he had rescued and a prisoner. He brought the prisoner into the camp. He was as brown as the chief of the Darbans, but taller than the majority of them, and more of the Mongol type, with lank, black hair and a flattened nose.

"One of the forest-men, Azada," said Dandu. "We followed up briskly, and slew three of them; but they were too fast. I speak a little of their tongue. With my spear at his breast, he told me that when Sharpra burns again the great advance will be made. My people would have slain him, but I brought him to thee to show thee the manner of men we must fight. He boasts that they are like the leaves of the trees in number, and that they will cross the divide and sweep the land where the Great White Emperor rules from end to end.

"Take him away, but slay him not, Dandu," said Ferrers Lord. "Talk with this man, and tell me what you learn."

Later in the afternoon more Darbans kept coming in in little bands from other villages and camps. The chief lined them up for inspection. There were nearly three hundred of them, counting the men with Prout. There was a great sharpening of spears, and then the whole population of the village settled down to the task of twisting bow-strings and making arrows.

"Wars and rumours of wars, Payton," said Ferrers Lord. "The village would be a death-trap if we attempted to hold it against any force. From a military point of view, it is perfectly useless."

"Hopeless," said Ching-Lung. "We'd be starved out in a week, or some epidemic would appear and kill the people off like flies. I see they have brought in some decent ponies. Let us borrow a couple and have a gallop, chief."

Dandu supplied them with two sturdy ponies. There were bridles, but no saddles, but this was a matter of little moment to the millionaire and the prince. This time Ferrers Lord slung his rifle on his back. They returned in the dusk, having seen nothing of the mysterious enemy that was always threatening, but never appeared. Soon afterwards Thurston and Payton, who had also obtained ponies from the chief, rode into the camp. They had seen Prout, and reported that all was going well, and that he was starting again in the cool of the evening.

The sky was glittering with stars when Ferrers Lord closed the book he had been reading and walked swiftly through the camp. Larput Raj started awake at his touch, and leapt to his feet with a salaam.

"Take the rifle the Viceroy gave thee, old wolf," said the millionaire, "and come with me. Thou canst ride?"

"Never was horse foaled that can throw me once my knees are at his withers, sahib," answered the shikari.

"Come, then, old wolf; we will ride out yonder," said Ferrers Lord. "I would know what the night hides."

Three Men who Went to Look for a Fowl.

MR. BARRY O'ROONEY and Mr. Benjamin Maddock were agreeably surprised by the welcome and unexpected arrival of their friend Mr. Thomas Prout. Prout was pleased with himself, and delighted with the bearers.

"Larput Raj's chaps couldn't have done no better, by honey!" he said. "They're as game as pheasants, these brown polishes, and as tough as jungle fowl, and the way they trotted along with those packs was gorgeous. It took the wind out of old Nacha when I made 'em understand I wanted 'em to try a night march. They were up and at it like bantam cocks, and here we are! What's in the larder? Don't tell me you've gobbled up everything decent, by honey, or I shall be rude to you."

There ought to be a fowl somewhere, and Barry O'Rooney remembered that pleasant fact. He had left the rooster in Gan-Waga's care, having instructed him to pluck it and get the cook to boil it. He made inquiries for Gan-Waga in the tent, and Ching-Lung informed him, with a sleepy yawn,

that he fancied he might find Gan-Waga asleep in the water-hole. This was not the water-hole selected for drinking purpose, but a second one not far away. This proved to be the fact. After passing the sentry, Barry switched on his flash-lamp. Its rays streamed out and fell upon the placid face of Gan-Waga, like a little olive-coloured island asleep in the deep.

As the ears of the Eskimo were below the surface as he floated there in his cool and clammy cot, Barry's shouts failed to rouse him from his slumber. A lump of mud was more effective. It smote the Eskimo on his brainy brow with a gentle plopping sound. With the flash-lamp shining dazzlingly in his little black eyes, Gan-Waga sat up in two feet of water, ejecting a large frog that was seated on his chest, and asked drowsily if the house was on fire.

"Darlint, ut's me," said Barry, "the wun and only pride of swate Ballybunion! Where's that fowl?"

"What fowlses?"

"Phwat d'ye mane—phwat fowl at all, at all? The fowl Oi got for the pocket-knife from the ould bhoy wid the smole."

"I forgotteded," said Gan-Waga. "What old boys, and which smiles, hunk, Barry? What knife-pockets, hunk?"

"Whoy, ye double-sized son of a gun, wake up and talk sense, or Oi'll come in and duck ye!" cried Barry. "Phwat ould bhoy? Phwat smole? Phwat knife-pocket? Whoy, ye miserable murderer of English, where's the speckled rooster Oi towid ye to give to Gadra Singh to boil? Didn't Oi give ut to ye wid my own hands, and tell ye wid my own mouth?"

"Oh, the speckles rooster!" said Gan-Waga. "What I do with that, hunk?" Whys, I cated him, old dears, and very niceful, too. Yo' get another knife-pockets and fetches another fowls, Barry. They cheapness and tender. Good-nights!"

Mr. O'Rooney felt hurt at the ingratitude of the Eskimo, to say nothing about his greed, and said so.

"Oh, fade away!" grinned Gan-Waga. "Yo' tires me, Barry. Why make a fusses about a silly fowls that cated, hunk?"

"Oi'll make a purty fuss of you, my brave bhoy, whin Oi get you out of that mud-hole!" said Barry, breathing hard. "Ut's a noice thing to rob a man of his supper. Ye're a bad lot, blubberboiter, widout aythur dacency or morals. Ye'd pinch a blind-man's dog, or rob the oies out of a baby's doll. Arrah, ye greedy grampus, and more shame on ye!"

Gan-Waga scooped round the bottom of the water-hole with his right hand. He found something soft and moist, and threw it. Splutterings and gasps and mutterings announced the fact that he had not thrown in vain. The light went out, and Mr. O'Rooney went off. With the happy smile of one who has done a good deed wreathing his lips, Gan-Waga again composed himself to slumber, and once more the frog crawled up to squat on his manly breast and croak a serenade.

"Tom," said Barry O'Rooney, as he polished the mud off his face, "there was a boiled fowl, bhoy, but that baste of an Eskimo has stolen the lot and ate it. And whin Oi raysoned gintly wid him, he slung mud at me and called me names. Bedad, he's gettin' the limit, that same Eskimo. Oi was nearly kilt by thirty fut of snake through the fat rascal this very day, and now he's chewed up our food! Howid me back, or Oi'll do murder! Oi faal loike ut!"

"Where is he, by honey?" asked Prout.

"Snorin' away wid the frogs in the water-hole," said Barry. "Oi don't belave he did eat the fowl, for Oi know he had supper enough for six in the tent wid the prince and the others. Oi belave he's hidden ut."

Convinced that even a person with Gan-Waga's excellent appetite could not have devoured a whole fowl after a heavy supper, or a heavy supper after a whole fowl, Barry roused the cook, who was snoring by his dying fire, surrounded by pots, pans, and kettles. Gadra Singh remembered that he had boiled a fowl at the request of Shinyface, and that Shinyface had come for it and borne it away in a cloth only a few minutes before he, Gadra Singh, had called the sahibs to supper in the tent. And this information seemed to point to the fact that Gan-Waga had been too sleepy to tell the truth, and there was a possibility of recovering the lost rooster.

"Oi'll have that ould fowl, or Oi'll know the rayson whoy, bhoy!" said Barry. "He can't have wolfed ut. Get howid of a bit of rope and a stick, and we'll dhrag the blubber-

boiter out of the pond and thin dhrag the thruth out of him!"

On the way to the water-hole Prout ran against Weeping Willie, the mule. Weeping Willie, who was always doing something he ought not to do, had jerked-out his picket-pin, and was on the wander. If a tiger on the prowl had taken a fancy to Willie few tears would have been shed, but as the mule could be useful when he liked, Prout took him along, to keep him out of worse mischief.

Gan-Waga slept, and his bedfellow, the frog, croaked melodious music to cheer his happy dreams. The flash-lamp did not rouse him. The Eskimo looked so innocent and peaceful that Barry almost relented, but not quite.

"Whin Oi gaze on him," he said, with a catch in his voice and a twinkle in his eye, "ut melts my heart. Och, ut reminds me of those happy days Oi spent at Ballybunion, my swate childhood's home. Oi can imagine my ould nurse, Biddy O'Crone, who got six months for throwin' a mangle at her husband, gazin' down at me loike that wid oies of love as Oi lay in my little whojts cot, and thin wakin' me up wid a beauty from her fist under the ear to ax where Oi'd hidden her false teeth. Swate Ballybunion! Bad luck to the day Oi ran away to say to be a sailor. In the worrds of the bard, 'My swate Ballybunion Oi'll niver forget; Av Oi hadn't cleared out Oi'd be wid you yet. Av Oi hadn't run off Oi can say widout doubt—Whisht, gimme the rope, and Oi'll fish that lot out.'

By mistake, in the gloom, Barry got hold of Weeping Willie's head-rope. He made a loop, which he fastened to the stick, and prodded about in the water, searching for Gan-Waga's feet.

"Bedad, Ben," he said, in a whisper, "isn't ut wonderful how Oi miss thin? They're big enough to see half a moile away in a thick fog, and here Oi am fumblin' about and doin' no good. Show the loight more this way, Tom."

Mr. Prout obliged. Barry lifted the stick, and found a certain amount of resistance that told him the loop was round something. He stepped back to pull, for the edge of the water-hole was muddy and slippery. In doing so Barry hit the nose of Weeping Willie with his elbow. The mule had made a nibble earlier in the day at a tempting-looking morsel of greenstuff. There had been more in that greenstuff than met the eye. It was a wasp, and, objecting to the disturbance, the wasp had done something hot and horrid to the mule's nose, and left it swollen and sore. Willie squealed with anguish and wrath, and jumped back. Another squeal of anguish came from the pond, and a third from Barry that was quickly hushed, and Willie swerved round with flying heels and helped the Irishman into the water-hole.

To save his nose from further ill-treatment Willie decided to go away from these rude people, and proceeded to do so.

"Helps! Ooh! Murders! Helps! Chingy! Oh, dears! What the matters? Chingy! Helps!" shrieked Gan-Waga's voice.

Mr. Barry O'Rooney had had his bowl quenched. The flash-lamp revealed him crawling out of the water-hole on hands and knees, each hand sinking wrist-deep in the mud as he advanced, and emerging with a squelch. Gan-Waga was coming out, too, but he was coming feet first. His feet were jerking up and down, for the rope was round his ankles.

As Weeping Willie, whose head was fastened to the other end of the rope, backed up the bank, Gan-Waga's feet quickened the speed of their advance till they overtook O'Rooney and collided with him. Barry could see the harbour-lights in the shape of the wreck of the Hesperus, and as good as safe ashore, when Willie, deciding that something would have to go, either the rope or his neck, steered a point or two to starboard and reared. The tightening rope took Barry under the chin, and heaved him back into the boiling ocean.

"Bedad, ut's torpedoes and scuttled Oi am!" he howled, as the harbour-lights vanished and the icy waters closed over him.

The naked feet churned through the mud, and then Mr. Maddock suddenly realized what had happened.

"Souise me," he shouted, "the born idiot has anchored up the Eskimo on the mule's head-rope! Haul on it, Tom, or grab his head, or we'll be having a drowned Eskimo to bury."

Gan-Waga was a difficult subject to drown,

but, seeing the danger, Prout quickened the proceedings by slashing through the rope with his knife. In a twinkling the feet plunged below the surface, and Gan-Waga's head popped up. Then Mr. Barry O'Rooney discovered that a little fresh air wouldn't do him any harm, and popped his head up also. Prout turned the flashlight on them in turns, and grinned. They made an elegant pair.

"By honey, Ben, I don't know which of them is the most beautiful!" he said. "What's your fancy? Take your pick."

"I ain't picking any of 'em for their beauty," replied Mr. Maddock; "but I will say, Tom, that red-faced one has the prettiest cough. There's more music in it, and y'r'aps more mud and water. I like that cough. If it was mine, souse me, I'd have it put in a nice gold frame and hang it up on the wall in the drawing-room! And don't he blow bubbles nice, too, all round and shiny till they bust, and then I don't know what shape to call 'em. What's the shape of a bubble when it's bust?"

"Blow me if I know!" said Mr. Prout. "But why don't they do something for a living? I say, you two in there, do you expect me to be wasting all this limelight on you for nothing at all? Give us a song and dance."

Barry leaned on the shoulder of Gan-Waga to get back his lost breath after so much coughing to get rid of the water.

"The rogues are makin' game of us, ould son," he said. "They have no hearts. The misfortunes and miseries of others only bring laughter to their crooil lips. Och, bhoys, they are savages and barbarians! Don't move, for, Gan dear, Oi am weary, and would fain rest my goulden head a bit on your lift shoulder. They are ruffians! They came afther ye to make ye give up our boiled fowl, acushla! Bedad, they're bandits! The plot was to dhrag ye out and jump on ye till ye confessed, beloved, where ye'd hid that same rooster. Faith, they're brigands and highwaymen wid the faces of convicts! Would Oi see ut done? Would Oi have ye robbed and ill-threatened by such villains, Gan mavourneen? No! Phwat did Oi do, alanna? Fearless of death, in honour's cause, Oi plunged into the toide, to breathe a warning in your ear, and bid ye floy and hoide! They guessed my plan, and chased me here, wid murderous threat and howl; but Oi have saved Gan-Waga brave, and we shall share the fowl. On yondher bank they fume and fret, and fierce their anger grows. Gan, give me back my fowl again, and kape the parson's nose. Afther that lovely poem, could ye refuse, now? Where's the chucky, blubberboiter?"

"The saturated idiot!" said Prout. "By honey, Ben, he's gone off the deep end properly!"

"It's water on the brain," grinned Maddock. "He's been standing on his head in it, and it's leaked through."

Gan-Waga smiled a wide and cheerful smile. He did not believe Mr. O'Rooney, but he seemed grateful.

"It awful goodness of yo', Barry, ould dears," he said, removing the cord from his ankles; "dreadfulness nicefuls!"

"Don't mention ut, blubberboiter!" said Barry. "Oid do anything for wan Oi love except lind him money. Oi'm very wet, and my fate are coid, but a koid, warm heart still throbs widin this manly breast.—Where's the fowl, Gan? Whisper ut in my ear, but don't boite my ear doin' ut. Oi couldn't nte a morsel at supper. Whin Oi'm loike that my dochter towid me there's only wan thing to save my precious loife, and that's coid boiled fowl. Ye wouldn't have me doie so young and fair? We'll go halves, and lave those rude rascals out of ut. Have you got ut, Gan?"

"Ho, ho, hoo! I gotted him safe enough, ould dears," chuckled the Eskimo. "He all safeuls, don't frets, Barry."

"And we'll go halves, mavourneen? You and me together, Gan, and those two outsiders roight outside, eh?"

"All the timeses," said Gan-Waga. "I gotted him, Barry, and shares him ups. Ye' such a nice boys."

Barry winked in the gloom. Once he laid hands on that specimen of poultry he did not intend Gan-Waga to have as much as a smell of it.

"Oid go and get into something dhray," said Barry, struggling to his feet. "Come round to the back of the tent, son, and bring the birrd, and Oid foind some biscuits and pickles and a cup of noice tay to wash ut down. Will ye come?"

(To be continued.)

THE GREYFRIARS GALLERY.

No. 78.—UNCLE CLEGG.

THEY always call him Uncle Clegg, but I do not think that the familiar title implies any particular fondness on the part of the Greyfriars juniors for the rather cross-grained old fellow who keeps the tuckshop at Friardale.

In fact, I know of no special reason why they should be fond of Uncle Clegg. A certain glamour may hang about the seller of grub to people of Billy Bunter's sort, who worship grub; but that would cease entirely if you put Uncle Clegg in, say, a bootshop. And there is not sufficient evidence that the quality of the stuff which Uncle Clegg sells is so high as to win esteem for him on that account. Still, grub is grub, be it never so grubby, as someone once said—or, if he did not, it has been said now.

Perhaps it is needless to say that no story in the Greyfriars series has ever revolved chiefly around Uncle Clegg. He is not of such importance as that would come to. There are few characters left to deal with who have ever played anything like principal parts. Herr Gans has been prominent more than once; he will probably be dealt with next week. For the rest, they have always been in minor parts; but it appears to be the general wish of my readers that as many as possible of them should be dealt with. So for a little while longer I shall go on. The enthusiasts who want Elliott and Trevor and Treluce and Glenn to be given places, how-



ever, are doomed to disappointment. Until a week or two ago Elliott was little more than a name to us; and now he has gone. All that matters about him was told in "Bolsover's Way." As for the other three, what is there to say about them? In every school there are boys who do not count greatly in any way—for good or for evil—and these three are among them. That's all.

The first mention of Uncle Clegg that I can recall was in the story which introduced us to that sterling good fellow, Tom Brown of Taranaki.

Snoop made up as a kind of nigger minstrel, and impersonated the new boy, taking in Bunter completely. Bunter also took him in—into Uncle Clegg's. There William George, having money for once, slapped down a handful of silver on the counter, and gave his orders with princely generosity. It was worth while from Bunter's point of view. The false Tom Brown had said that he had a pound a week pocket-money, and plenty of tips besides; and to be the chum of anyone so wealthy as that was just what Bunter yearned for. Uncle Clegg stared blankly at the disguised Snoop, who naturally did not refuse to profit by such a windfall as the finding Bunter in an open-hearted mood. Uncle Clegg may or may not have had his suspicions. If he had, he saw a little later that they were fully justified. For the real Tom Brown came along, and Snoop was shown up.

But before that there was a gorgeous row in which Uncle Clegg's eggs played a part. The Remove and the Upper Fourth were dis-

puting the possession of a football, and the football entered Uncle Clegg's emporium, and smote heavily upon the chest the affable Bunter, who was discoursing pleasantly to Snoop and eating jam-tarts. Bunter was bowled over into a box of eggs. Uncle Clegg wanted paying for those eggs. Bunter could not pay; the twelve bob he had raised had gone in treating Snoop—and himself, of course. Tom Brown paid.

Uncle Clegg and eggs seem almost inseparable. The next incident I can recall had to do with eggs, and showed up uncle in rather a greedy light. It had also to do with the coming of a new boy—Hop Hi in this case—and I think I have already referred to it in writing of him. The two Chinese boys, defended themselves against Bulstrode and Skinner by means of uncle's eggs—not uncle's very best eggs; these were eighteen a shilling, whereas "new laid" were twopence each; "fresh," ten a shilling; "ordinary," fourteen a shilling. I should not have cared much for Clegg's "ordinary" eggs, I think; they may have been like the bashful curate's—quite good in parts. But Wun Lung wanted "velly old eggs—velly old, smelly." And he got them. So did Bulstrode and Skinner—"they were blinded, choked, suffocated." Then Bulstrode sat down suddenly in a box of eggs. Were they the eighteen a shilling? Not much! The very best, at twopence each, warm from the hen, so to speak. Sixteen shillings was the damage, and Bulstrode had to pay or be reported to the Head. So he paid.

Eggs again! And another light on Uncle Clegg's character. "Uncle Clegg, the genial provider of Friardale, sat in his seat behind his counter in the village tuckshop and smiled. Uncle Clegg had done a good stroke of business that day. Two golden sovereigns lay in his till, and he had disposed of ancient and mouldy stock to the value of perhaps four or five shillings in return for those two sovereigns. Uncle Clegg, not being troubled by many scruples in the way of business, was not worried in his conscience by the way he had earned those two sovereigns. Indeed, the Greyfriars fellows often declared that Uncle Clegg had no conscience at all."

Alonzo Todd had paid over those two sovereigns. He had been sent to buy grub, and Uncle Clegg had, in the old phrase, seen him coming. He sold Alonzo stale sausages and the "very best ham"—even to the guileless Alonzo that ham did not look like the very best. But then Alonzo could not suspect Uncle Clegg—or anyone—of deceit. He sold him "specially selected eggs," and lots of other things—pretty nearly everything that would otherwise have become wasted. And Alonzo trotted off, and uncle sat and gloated. But Nemesis was at hand!

Enter Harry Wharton & Co. They bought eggs. Uncle Clegg, being given to understand that those eggs were for japing purposes, sold them some very strong ones—"horrid strong," he said—at fifteen a shilling. They bought a shillingworth. Then they discussed with uncle the fraud practised upon Alonzo. Uncle was very firm indeed. The sale was over and done with, and if the young gent wasn't satisfied, he should have said so at the time—that was uncle's argument. He would not cash up. So the Famous Five gave uncle a shillingworth of his own eggs—horrid strong. No end generous of them—what? But somehow uncle was not pleased. He got other things of his own hurled at him—tins of condensed milk and salmon and the like. And he could not report the assault—the little deal with Alonzo stood in the way of that.

Uncle Clegg gives tick sometimes—but not to Billy Bunter in these days. Once Bunter took three young ladies—Marjorie Hazeldene, Clara Trevlyn, and Miss Wilhelmina, the German girl—into Uncle Clegg's for a feed. When the bill had run up to four shillings—soon done with Bunter and Wilhelmina on the job—Uncle Clegg wanted to see the colour of Bunter's money, reminding him that there was already an account owing. When Bunter said he had no money in his pocket the tuckshop proprietor retorted that none of them would be allowed to leave the shop till he was paid. Marjorie paid, and all three girls said scornful things to Bunter.

Their custom would not in the future be worth much to uncle, of course. But don't waste your sympathy. Uncle Clegg's is not a specially deserving case!