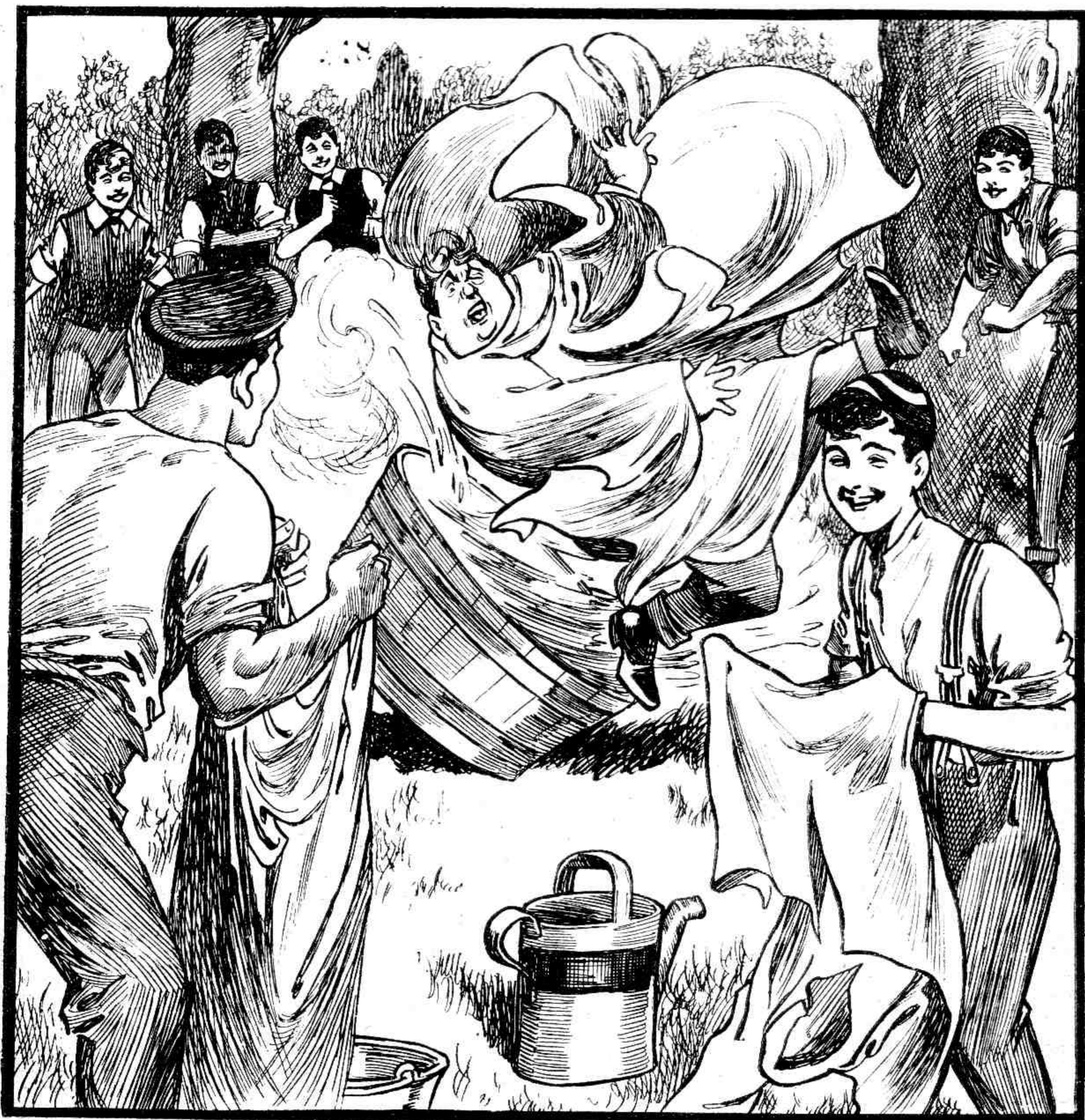




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THE GREYFRIARS TREE-DWELLINGS!



BUNTER!

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THE GREYFRIARS TREE-DWELLINGS!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

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



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Up a Tree!

RASHOOOO!"

"Whoosh! Shut that beastly window!"

"Grooogh!"

There was a chorus of exclamations from the occupants of Study No. 1.

"Shut that beastly window!" gasped Nugent for the second time.

"But we can't be stifled on a day like this!" growled Johnny Bull, rubbing his eyes.

"It's better than being blinded!" retorted Nugent. "That stuff is blowing all in my eyes, and over the tea!"

"Well, you should be more careful—Grooogh!"

Johnny Bull finished his remark suddenly, and the window was shut with a slam. The Famous Five rubbed their eyes and stared at each other dismally.

The table was spread with a meagre, war-time tea. There were two tins of sardines and some jam in a pot as the "luxuries" over and above the ordinary ration. Over the whole lay a fine coating of white dust.

There was more of the dust over the juniors, and the majority of them were busy rubbing it out of their reddened eyes.

"My hat! Doesn't it sting!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, who was crying silently into his handkerchief.

"The stingfulness of the esteemed dust is terrific!" agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur.

The others continued rubbing silently. It was not until nearly ten minutes later that they were able to inspect the remains of their tea.

The trouble was that the builders had been working on the wall just above the studies, and it was evident that they were not as careful with the dust and lime as they might have been. Harry Wharton surveyed the window grimly as he saw the fine dust still blowing against the glass.

"This is getting unbearable!" he said. "The tea is jolly well spoilt, and this place is stifling without a window open! I'm nearly roasted to death!"

"So am I!" muttered Bob. "I shall be a grease-spot in a minute!"

Nugent gave his eyes a final polish and nodded his head.

"Something's got to be done," he said. "It's evident that the study's going to be no use to us while these builder johnnies are about."

"Then we may as well pack up our traps and move," said Johnny Bull. "Our study is just the same. The dust keeps blowing into all of them along the passage. And it doesn't look as though the builders are going to finish much before peace is declared."

"How long have they been on strike now?"

"Two days!" growled Johnny Bull. "That's two days too many. And there's no sign of them coming back. They

want higher wages, and their boss won't give it to them. Shouldn't think he would, either!"

"He'll have to give in in the end," said Wharton. "The men are doing odd jobs in the village while they're on strike, and making plenty of cash. They won't be in a hurry to come back."

The Famous Five exchanged dismal looks.

Tea had been spoilt, and they felt that they were being stifled in the heat of the study. It was one of those days which sometimes come in a spell of hot September weather—as torrid for some hours of the day as July can be. The sun streamed in the window like a shaft of fire.

"Wonder if we could climb up the scaffolding and put things right a bit?" said Johnny Bull at length.

Wharton shook his head.

"Quelch's down on that," he said. "He's forbidden us to touch the scaffolding, and he'd be dead nuts on anyone who did it. We'll have to think of something else."

"But there's still a couple of bags of lime up there," retorted Johnny Bull, "and one of them's burst. It'll be pouring down here for days."

"All the more reason why we must leave it alone," said Wharton. "We couldn't hoist a couple of sacks of lime down without being spotted, and then there'd be the merry dickens to pay!"

"Well, I'm fed up with this!" growled Johnny.

The others surveyed their ruined tea sorrowfully.

"It's a gorgeous mess, anyway!" said Frank Nugent. "We'll have to hit on some plan. Wonder whether the men will ever come back?"

"I don't expect they will," said Wharton glumly. "They're doing too well in the village, and they've been influenced by that silly old peace-monger."

"What, Jawbones?"

Wharton nodded.

"Jawbones," or, to give him his correct name, Peter Miller, was a character who had recently appeared in the neighbourhood of Greyfriars. He was an oldish man, with a rather vacant look in his eyes, and bent of shoulder. The chums had decided that he was not quite right in his mind. Certainly he was a nuisance.

His main obsession was the war. Jawbones Miller was a peace crank. His eloquent arguments had already borne fruit in the neighbourhood. The workmen at Greyfriars, applying the man's reasoning to their own case, had decided to go on strike for more money.

"Jawbones is causing all the trouble here," said Johnny Bull. "I told him yesterday that he was a silly old idiot, and he ought to be ashamed of himself. But he spun me a long yarn about his son being killed at the Front, and I hadn't the heart to say much to him after that."

"He certainly isn't all there," added Wharton. "But he's a giddy nuisance, going about making everyone discontented!"

There was another silence. The juniors fanned themselves to keep cool, and Bob flung the study door open. Even then it seemed just as stifling.

"This is the sort of time when we ought to live out of doors," growled Nugent. "Wish we were a bit more uncivilised than we are. If we were savages we shouldn't have to wear bits of stiff linen round our necks."

Bob Cherry looked up quickly.

"I've got an idea!" he exclaimed.

Nugent affected to faint.

"Thought the window was shut," he said. "I didn't know that anything strange was floating about. Better shut the door again, Bob!"

"It's a brilliant idea," pursued Bob. "Don't rot!"

"Well, what is it?"

"How about living out in the open?" he asked.

"Where?"

"In that little wood of Johnstone's," said Bob quickly. "He's been called up, but he never minded us using the wood as much as we liked. It's only small, but there's some fine oaks and elms there."

"But what does it matter about the trees?" asked Johnny Bull. "You don't intend to live up a blessed tree, surely?"

"That's just the idea," grinned Bob. "It was good enough for our ancestors. I suggest that we select a decent tree and build a little place in it. It won't take more than a quarter of an hour to run out there on the bikes."

Nugent whistled thoughtfully.

"It's a jolly good wheeze," he said. "We could live out there like—like jolly savages!"

Nugent was red-faced and very hot. He pulled at his collar uneasily. It was chafing his neck.

"The excellence of the esteemed idea is great!" observed Hurree Singh. Even Inky was feeling the heat too much. "As your proverb says, a rolling stone is worth two in the broth."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You don't show too much common-sense as a rule, Bob," said Johnny Bull candidly, "but—"

"Look here, Johnny!" snapped Bob wrathfully.

Wharton intervened.

"It's quite hot enough without you two scrapping," he said. "I'll put the pair of you out if you can't be quiet!"

"What I was going to say," said Johnny Bull deliberately, "is that it's a giddy inspiration, Bob. It's just the thing for this kind of weather. What do you say, Harry?"

Wharton grinned.

"Same as you, Johnny," he laughed. "To-morrow is a half-holiday. We'll run out there in the afternoon and select a tree. We can easily fix up a little place in the tree with all the felled boughs

that there are knocking about. What about hammocks?"

"I've got one," said Nugent; "and I know where we can soon borrow some more."

"Then it's a go, to-morrow?"

"Rather!"

And the Famous Five, their heated state forgotten for the moment, fell to discussing the building of a new study in the primitive fashion.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Bunter is Hungry!

TING-A-LING! Ting-a-ling!

Billy Bunter, toiling wearily along the hot, dusty road, heard the sound. But he was feeling too dejected even to worry about it.

Bunter's heart was too full for words. He was the victim of what seemed to him a most cruel practical joke, and he had only just made the bitter discovery that it was a joke.

The fat junior was always expecting a postal-order to arrive, and in the lean times of rationing cash was more acceptable than ever to him. Knowing Bunter, there were not many people at Greyfriars who were willing to cash the postal-order in advance.

That day, however, Bunter had received an anonymous note signed "Admirer," and purporting to come from the village, asking him to come to the cross-roads, where a friend of the Bunter family wished to meet him and give him a present.

So the fat junior had set off hot-foot to keep the appointment. As a matter of fact, the note had been written by Skinner, and it was mainly to keep the eavesdropping junior away from Greyfriars for a few hours that the cad of the Remove had sent it.

Bunter arrived at the cross-roads, and waited for an hour. Then the visions of unlimited ginger-pop slowly faded from his mind, and he began to understand that he had been done. He mooched disconsolately away, intending to come back again in a few minutes, for he still had a vague hope that the note was really genuine, and his admirer was late.

Ting-a-ling!

The cycling-bell sounded very close behind.

Bunter turned his head, and then scurried for his life.

The Famous Five were coming along in great style, and Bunter, being in the middle of the road, had no course but to fly in front of the cyclists.

The fat junior endeavoured to make a bolt for the side of the road, but Johnny Bull, riding on the outside, was just too quick for him. He rang his bell furiously and spurted. Bunter found himself cut off.

He dashed for the other side, but Nugent, seeing the joke, did the same. Bunter glanced desperately behind him. Bob Cherry, Harry Wharton, and Inky were right on his heels, and he was cut off everywhere.

Bunter was afraid to stop. He ran on, blowing like a grampus. He made another desperate effort to get clear, but the faster he ran the faster the cyclists pedalled, until Bunter was charging like a mad bull along the dusty road.

"Stoppit, you brutes!" he panted.

Ting-a-ling!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors could see the humour of the situation, and they intended to make Bunter do a little hard running for once in his life.

"Groooogh!"

Ting-a-ling!

The perspiration was pouring off the fat junior, and his flabby face was red

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with exertion. He would not have come to much harm if he had stopped then, but the sound of five whirring machines behind him, and the touch of a wheel occasionally, frightened him.

"I—I sus-sus-say, y-y-you fellows," panted the junior imploringly, "do stu-stu-stoppit!"

Ting-a-ling!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter plunged on desperately for another dozen yards, and then caught one foot in the other and rolled over in the road. As he did so the bicycles passed harmlessly on, with a peal of laughter.

Bunter blinked furiously after the disappearing figures, and got heavily to his feet. It was beginning to dawn upon him that he had run nearly half a mile at top-speed quite needlessly—that they would not have run him down in any case. The thought did not make his expression any sweeter.

He flopped down on the bank at the side of the road and thought hard. He had given up his intention of going back to meet the mysterious friend at the cross-roads. A brighter idea was beginning to form in his mind.

The Famous Five had passed him twice that afternoon. The first time they had carried nothing. But this time there were large parcels strapped on a couple of the bikes.

Bunter blinked again as the cycles disappeared round a bend in the road, and a moment later he heard sounds which suggested that they had dismounted.

"Grub!" he muttered. "That's what they're after! They're going to have a feed in the woods!"

The Owl of the Remove staggered to his feet, and set off down the road. He was still hot and winded from his run, but the prospect of a feed lent strength to his legs.

Meanwhile, the Famous Five had returned to the scene of their labours. They had been working hard that afternoon, and had only gone back to the school to get some tools and wood.

Wharton had chosen an old elm, which suited the purpose splendidly. There were two places where the branches offered a good situation for the new study. The chums had chosen the top position, and had already commenced making the floor by binding some of the felled boughs across a couple of branches which were on the same level.

Harry Wharton and Johnny Bull swarmed up the tree as soon as they got back and recommenced work. With the aid of a hammer, saw, and some long nails they were rigging up the skeleton of a platform that was to serve as a floor. It was approximately six feet square, and promised to give the juniors quite sufficient room for comfort.

Wharton and Johnny Bull did their work well. They had no intention of coming out of the tree head first in the middle of a meal.

"I say, you fellows—"

The voice of the Owl of the Remove floated up to the workers in the tree. Wharton looked down, to see the panting figure of their late pace-maker.

"I say, you fellows," went on Bunter, with an ingratiating smile, "I've just dropped in to have tea with you, you know!"

"Oh?"

"I thought you'd like to see me at your little picnic, of course!" proceeded the fat junior.

"Who told you that?" asked Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent! I know that people often forget to give invitations. But I'm not going to take offence over that."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Eh?"

"Er—it's very good of you to let us down so lightly, Bunty!" said Nugent. "But you want to do one or two little things first."

"Yes?"

"Just put your tie straight."

Bunter obeyed with alacrity.

"Now brush all that dust off your suit."

"Yes, Nugent; I'm certainly a bit dusty," said Bunter readily, sure now that he was going to be invited to the feast.

"Now rub the dust off your boots," said Nugent, with a twinkle in his eye.

Bunter pulled out a grubby handkerchief and polished his boots. He was panting with exertion when he had finished.

"What about some tea now, Nugent?" he asked.

"Tea?" said the junior, in assumed surprise. "Have you carried out my instructions?"

Bunter nodded.

"Well, then, you're in quite a decent state to go back to Greyfriars!" said

Nugent calmly. "I didn't want you to go back looking like a tramp!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five roared with laughter as they watched Bunter's face. The fat junior blinked and glared at them.

"Bub-bub-but what about the tut-tut-tea?" he stammered.

"Oh, we're going back to school for that!" said Nugent. "You'd better start now. It's a good long walk, you know, and we've got our bikes."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't believe you!" howled Bunter. "What's in those parcels? You've jolly well come out here to defy the Food Controller, and if you don't give me a feed I shall tell Quelchy that you're food-hogging!"

"Ha, ha! Virtuous Billy!" laughed Nugent.

Bunter blinked again, and looked from one parcel to the other. One was on the platform where Wharton and Bull were working, but though it was open the Owl could not see its contents. The other was lying almost at his feet.

The Owl stooped quickly to look at it. But as he did so Bull moved quickly in the tree, and his foot accidentally caught the other parcel. A shower of wood fell out.

Bunter, stooping under the tree, was right in the line of fire. But he was not aware of that until the precious contents of the parcel descended on him.

Smack, smack! Bang! Smack!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Pacifist!

"YAROOOH!"

Bunter leapt to his feet with a yell of alarm. He was a little bit hurt, and a good deal frightened.

"You beasts!" he roared, dashing amongst the trees with his hands clapped to his back. "Grooogh! Yow! I'm killed! I know my back's broken!"

The Famous Five roared with laughter. Bunter had certainly learned what the strange parcels contained, but even now he was not satisfied.

"Oh, really! Hitting a chap when he's down!" he roared. "You ain't sportsmen! Yaroooh! Grooogh! I'm killed! My backbone's busted!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter continued to career about among the trees like a mad horse for a couple of minutes, and then paused as the pain began to go off. He pulled up, hot and panting, and glared at the grinning Removites.

"I'm going to tell Quelchy about this!" he roared. "You're food-hogs!"

"Will you have a deal sandwich, Bunter?" asked Nugent.

"Or a nail-and-sawdust tart?" inquired Wharton, grinning.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Owl of the Remove glared. It was beginning to dawn on him that there was no grub.

"Oh, really! What on earth are you chaps doing?" he gasped.

"Building a rabbit-hutch," said Johnny Bull easily. "We're going to start a rabbit ranch."

"We sha'n't want you for a bit, Bunty," added Nugent. "The pigsty ain't being built yet."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter scowled at them.

"Hanged if I can see anything to cackle about!" he growled.

The fat junior turned appealingly to Wharton.

"Esay, Wharton," he said plaintively, "haven't you brought any grub with you? I'm dying for something to eat!"

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"Not a crumb, Bunty."

"I don't feel that I've got the strength to walk back, really!" protested the Owl. "I shall die!"

"Don't die here!" snapped Johnny Bull. "You'll make the place look untidy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Owl of the Remove glanced desperately round.

"A—a bottle of ginger-pop might save my life," he suggested.

"Then you'll have to die!" said Johnny Bull. "We've got none."

Bunter gave the humorous Removites a basilisk glare that almost cracked his glasses. Then he turned and mooched off among the trees.

"Poor old Bunty!" laughed Wharton as he went. "I'm sorry he's had all the trouble for nothing. He looked hungry enough to eat us!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chums turned to their work again, and the building of the hut proceeded apace. By the time they left the floor was nearly finished, and another couple of days' work ought to make the place quite habitable.

They cycled back to school, and had tea in Hall, returning again before lock-up to do a little more work. They were just about to leave when the figure of an oldish-looking man approached through the trees.

He paused when he saw the youngsters, then came on towards them. Wharton recognised him as the notorious Jawbones.

"Lucky boys!" he said, fixing Wharton with a curiously vacant stare.

"Eh?" ejaculated the captain of the Remove.

"You little realise how lucky you are!"

"Nothing very lucky about what we're doing!" said Johnny Bull bluntly.

"I don't mean that," said Jawbones, wheeling round. "You are, fortunately, not engaged in this horrible war."

"Unfortunately," corrected Bob Cherry. "We wish we could do something."

The man shook his head despairingly.

"This war is a terrible thing," he said.

"You do not understand; you are too young. Youth is heedless. This awful slaughter must stop!"

"It can't!" retorted Johnny Bull. "We've got to whack the Huns first."

"What! Go on killing our brothers?" Johnny Bull laughed ironically.

"Brothers who drop bombs on hospitals and torture prisoners!" he snapped.

"Don't you suppose our side does the same sort of thing?" sneered Jawbones.

Johnny flushed a deep red.

"They don't," he said very quietly. "We're a different sort."

He clenched his fists, and the man took a pace back.

"Do you know why I don't give you a thrashing for saying such an unpatriotic thing?" he snapped.

Jawbones eyed the junior uneasily, but did not reply.

"I'll tell you why," said Johnny Bull. "I'm British, and a Britisher doesn't touch anyone who cannot hit back. If you were as fit as I am I'd knock those words down your throat!"

"Hear, hear!" said Harry Wharton. Jawbones recovered himself somewhat.

"You are too young to know what war means," he said. "But I know. One son dead, and one goodness knows where!"

"I'm sorr, that the war-has hit you like that," said Johnny Bull frankly.

"It's a terrible thing to lose a son. But you've no right to say nasty things about our chaps out there."

"I shall say what I choose!" cried the

man, his voice rising suddenly. "I'll stop the war by hook or by crook. I intend to paralyse industry. I'll bring this country to such a state that our rulers must make peace!"

"Rot!"

"I'll do it!" shouted Jawbones. "I've started already."

"You've got the builders to go on strike," said Wharton slowly. "I don't see how that's going to bring peace. It makes it beastly awkward for us."

"It all helps, I tell you!" retorted Jawbones.

Nugent consulted his watch.

"Here, you fellows," he said, "we've got a bare quarter of an hour to get back. We can't waste time here. Come on!"

The juniors followed his lead, leaving the peace crank gazing after them with a perplexed look in his eyes. Something in their youth and high spirits struck a chord in his memory, recalling the memory of his own sons, perhaps bringing back a touch of sanity to him. Then his mood changed, and, with a scowl on his face, he turned and made off among the trees.

The Famous Five had already mounted their bikes, and were riding back at their best speed.

The road had not been repaired for many months, and was very bad in places. Hurree Singh grunted as the cycle bumped.

"The badfulness of the esteemed road is terrific!" he growled. "If the esteemed Jawbones is the causeful whyfulness of the august steam-roller going on strikefully, the ludicrous chump should be terrifically bashed!"

Frank Nugent grinned.

"Yes, I'd like to make him ride along here for a bit, and then sit in the study and get smothered in lime!" he said. "Perhaps he'd change his views about striking."

"The man's potty!" said Johnny Bull. "Perhaps losing a son has turned his mind a bit, and we ought not to be hard on him. But a fellow like that is dangerous."

"He's the sort of chap who would have a bad effect anywhere," said Wharton, nodding. "If he can't keep his mouth shut he ought to be locked up."

"Where does he live?" asked Bob Cherry. "We never saw him round here till lately."

"Some little place the other side of the village," said Harry. "He keeps it pretty dark where he hangs out."

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Another Strike!

"ISAY, Wharton!"

The Famous Five were crossing to Little Side for a few minutes' kick-about after dinner on the following day when the captain of the Remove heard someone call to him.

"What's up, Smithy?" he said.

The Bounder sauntered up with his hands in his pockets.

"Bunter's spinning some yarn about building a hut up a tree," he said. "Any idea what he's gassing about?"

Wharton grinned.

"I've a shadowy notion," he replied. "Our study's getting unbearable with all that lime and stuff blowing about."

"My hat! I should think it is!" growled the Bounder. "We had to have tea in Hall last night. All the fellows are doing it."

"Well, we've got a better idea than that," said Wharton. "We haven't talked about it too much, because Quelchy might be down on the wheeze. But we're building a kind of tree-dwelling in Johnstone's Wood."

"Dashed good idea!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith. "We'll have to try the same wheeze ourselves!"

There seemed no prospect of the builders resuming work, and the studies were painful to live in. All of the Removites were fed up with the constant clouds of lime that blew in through the windows, and the more energetic ones decided to follow the lead of Harry Wharton & Co.

There were nearly twenty cyclists riding in the direction of the little wood after tea in the evening.

Wharton & Co. arrived upon the scene of their labours first, and were soon hard at work. The others, on arrival, inspected with interest the progress they were making.

The floor needed only a few finishing touches, and while Wharton got on with it, the rest began binding boughs across to form a sort of wall round it.

"Looks all right!" said Squiff approvingly, gazing up into the tree. "Shall we build one?"

Piet Delarey and Tom Brown grinned approval.

Some of the other juniors were already casting about for suitable trees to build in, and gathering the felled timber before someone else came along.

Harry Wharton grinned as he looked down.

"They're all at it now," he said. "Even Skinner & Co. are going to have a shot!"

"Peter Todd and Dutton are going to start one," said Nugent. "I wonder if they'll have Bunty in it? It'll be good-bye, tree, if they do."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry wielded a heavy hammer threateningly.

"Look here, Harry," he said, "are we going to get on with the bizney, or stand watching those chumps? We want to get this finished."

The captain of the Remove grinned, and turned to the work again.

By the time that it was necessary to return about half of the juniors had decided to give the building job a miss. Snoop and Stott, after nearly killing each other with a heavy bough which they managed to pull on to themselves, returned to the school in disgust. Some of the others found the work too strenuous.

But there were three other tree-dwellings beginning to appear. Squiff & Co.'s was the best. The Colonial chums had made splendid progress. Peter Todd and Tom Dutton had done quite well. Micky Desmond, Rake, Morgan, and Wibley had got on more slowly. But they seemed determined to finish now.

The Famous Five left their tree with a feeling of satisfaction. They knew that if they got on the right side of Gosling he would be willing to lend them a few packing-cases for table and chairs. And that, for the time being, would complete the new study. If they wanted to finish the walls and roof it in they could do so later.

They reached the school well before locking-up, and made their way to the junior Common-room. There was an excited buzz of conversation as they entered.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry cheerily. "What's all the fuss about?"

"Haven't you heard the latest?" exclaimed Mark Linley.

"No. Has the war ended?"

"Not that I know of," said Mark Linley.

"Worse than that" asked Bob.

"Much worse," said Mark Linley, laughing. "The laundry people have gone on strike."



Sammy stalked! (See Chapter 10.)

"My hat!"

If this was the work of Jawbones, he was certainly going strong. And it looked as though he had made a special mark of Greyfriars.

"The League of the Dirty Shirts!" said Bob Cherry, in a voice of mock tragedy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter rolled towards the laughing group.

"Hanged if I can see anything to cackle about!" he growled. "It won't suit me having to wear dirty shirts."

"No, it's hard lines on you, Bunty," grinned Bob Cherry, surveying the junior's grubby appearance. "And you ought to know more about it than we do."

"I know all about it," said Billy Bunter, blinking.

"I guessed as much. It looks as though your private and particular laundry has been on strike for about two years."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Owl of the Remove gave the humorous junior a furious look.

"I tell you, it's getting jolly serious," he growled, "all these people striking. We shall have to make peace!"

"And have more grub!" put in Peter Todd sarcastically.

"Rather!" said Wharton, with a wink.

"Hear, hear!" added Nugent.

"The necessity for the esteemed peace," said Hurree Sigh gravely, "is terrific!"

"Oh, really, you chaps, we ought to do all we can to end the war," said Bunter. "I think this is our chance. We can tell the Head that it's impossible to go on living with everyone on strike. The grub's getting so beastly short that we ought to fix up some arrangement with the Huns."

"Yes?"

"It's either that, or I shall pine away and starve!" said the Owl pathetically.

"But you don't eat clean shirts, do you?" asked Bob, with mock seriousness.

Bunter blinked.

"Of course I don't, you silly fathead!" he growled.

"Then what's your tummy got to do with the laundry strike?"

"It—it's all part of the same question," explained the fat junior.

"Grub or glory, I suppose?"

"A fellow can't go about hungry, with a dirty shirt on his back, just because the Government won't fix up some agreement with the Germans!"

Bob Cherry seized the fat junior by the ear and tweaked it hard.

"Yarooogh!" roared Bunter, in alarm. "Stoppit! Oooooer! Wartermarrer?"

"You fat Hun!" growled Bob. "You want the war finished so that you'd be able to get more grub—ch?"

"I—I didn't say that; Cherry, really!" howled Bunter. "I want to see the beastly Huns licked. My uncle's out there fighting them now as a brigadier-general. He won the O.B.E. in a bayonet charge last week."

"Ha, ha! He might, if he was as big a liar as you, Bunty!" grinned Wharton.

"We're getting off the laundry question, Bunty," said Bob Cherry. "I want to show you a jolly good way of cleaning shirts without sending them to the laundry."

"Really?"

"Rather! Lend a hand, Harry. It takes two to show it."

And Bob Cherry winked knowingly at the captain of the Remove.

Wharton understood the wink. He caught the fat junior in a vicelike grip.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Dry Cleaning!

"YAROOOOOOH!"

Bunter roared in alarm as he felt himself seized by the two juniors.

"Don't get excited, Bunty," said Bob Cherry, grinning. "We're only going to show you the new way of cleaning shirts."

"That's all," said Wharton.

Bunter glanced nervously at Bob.

"Oh, really! Leave me alone, Cherry!" he said peevishly.

"Let's explain first," said Bob. "Now, the first thing to do is to shake the shirt. Harry, just help me to shake Bunter's shirt!"

The two Removites caught the fat junior and gave him a violent shake.

"Groooh!" roared Bunter. "Brrrrr! Yaroooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter glared through his thick glasses with the glare of an angry Hun.

"Warrermarrer? Warrer doing?" he growled.

"Only shaking your shirt, Bunty," said Bob innocently.

"But I'm inside it!" roared the Owl. "You're shaking me!"

Bob Cherry passed a hand across his brow.

"My hat! So you are!" he exclaimed.

"Never mind, it's easier than making you take it off. Now the next thing—"

Bunter made a frantic struggle for liberty.

"Not too quickly!" said Bob sternly, gripping the fat junior more firmly.

"You were grumbling just now because you hadn't got a clean shirt. If we clean yours for you there won't be any reason to end the war—eh?"

"Lemme go, you beasts!" panted Bunter, drenched with perspiration from the first part of the process.

"Not much more now, Bunty," said Bob Cherry grinning. "After shaking the shirt to dislodge the dirt—see?—you bang it on something hard, to knock the dirt out!"

"I don't want to be banged!" roared Bunter.

"But your shirt does!" said Wharton.

"Then I'll take it off!" screamed the fat junior.

"Don't trouble about that, Bunty!" said Bob. "We'll soon have it done now. One, two, three—heave!"

Bunter was jerked off his feet and landed heavily on the floor. Then he was solemnly bumped.

"Yaroooooh!" roared Bunter.

Bump!

"Yow! Lemme go!"

Bump!

"Grooogh! You're hurting! Stoppit, you brutes!"

Bump, bump!

"Oooooer! Yooooop!"

"Think all the dirt's out yet, Harry?" asked Bob Cherry innocently.

"Not quite, Bob. What do you think, Bunty?"

"Hang the shirt!" howled Bunter.

"We sha'n't need to hang it after all this," said Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter scowled at the grinning crowd.

"Lemme alone, you beasts!" he howled.

"I don't think all the dirt is out yet, Harry," said Bob. "Better make a good job of it!"

Bump!

"Yaroooooh! I say, stoppit, you fellows!"

Bump!

"I know all the dirt is out of it now! Grooogh!"

Bob Cherry paused.

"Good way of cleaning shirts, isn't it, Bunty?"

"No!"

Bump!

"Y-yes, it is, Cherry! It—it's like a new shirt now!" gasped the Owl.

"And you don't mind the laundry shutting up while you know such a fine way of cleaning them?"

"Not at all, Bob, old man!" said Bunter eagerly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry surveyed the unfortunate Owl grimly.

"Then you've changed your mind about ending the war?"

"Y-y-yes, rather! I want the war to go on for ever!"

Bob Cherry groaned.

"Bump the Hun again!"

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"Stoppit!" roared Bunter. "I mean, I want it to go on until we've licked the Huns!"

"That's better, Bunty!" grinned Bob Cherry, releasing the fat junior. "Let's know when you want another clean shirt, won't you?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter did not reply. He scrambled to his feet, and, bestowing a terrible glare on the japing juniors, scuttled out of the door.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a howl of laughter as Bunter disappeared. He had not many sympathisers in his eagerness to end the war. And they felt that Bunter had received a well-deserved lesson.

"I suppose the bizney of the laundry strike is quite genuine?" asked Wharton, turning to Mark Linley.

"Quite," said Mark. "And Jawbones is at the bottom of it again. He's been round there spouting a lot of rot, and made them feel dissatisfied with the money they're getting."

"Well, it's going to be a nuisance," said the captain of the Remove. "I've got enough clean clobber to carry on with for a bit, for one, but I hope they don't stay out on strike too long."

"I'm going to pull that old busybody's nose when I see him again!" declared Skinner.

DOES YOUR SOLDIER PAL WRITE TO YOU?

Notepaper is "some" price these days, but none of us would grudge Tommy all the paper he needs on which to write those cheery letters of his if paper were treble the price it is to-day. Still, it's no use simply "gassing" about it; it's up to each one to do his bit to pay the piper.

It costs the Y.M.C.A., who supply Tommy with free stationery, no less than £60,000 a year. Sixpence will supply your own or somebody else's pal with enough notepaper to write one letter each week for a year. Going to let him have it? Of course you are!

So send sixpence along to-day to Y.M.C.A. (Stationery Fund), Tottenham Court Road, London, W.C., mentioning that it comes from a reader of this paper.

"I should advise you not to," said Wharton. "He's hardly your weight, and he's an old man."

"Well, it's got to be stopped, somehow!" growled Skinner.

A good many schemes were vented, but none of them seemed to promise a satisfactory solution to the trouble, and the matter was still being discussed when the juniors went to bed.

The next day was almost as stiflingly hot, and the Famous Five, packing up their tea rations, sallied in search of boxes after school was over for the day. From Gosling and Mrs. Mimble they managed to secure a wooden box each, and an extra one for the table, and cycled in the direction of the wood.

The other builders were there, making progress with their tree-dwellings, by the time the juniors arrived, and the Famous Five grinned as they saw that more had turned up to try the experiment.

They laid their bikes on a stretch of grass, and picked up the boxes. As they approached their own particular tree a very fat figure, staggering under a tremendous bough, stumbled out from among the trees just in front of them.

"Bunty!" breathed Wharton. "My hat! He's going to build, too!"

Bunter caught the sound of a voice, and swung round suddenly. Wharton dodged, but he was too late, and the

bough caught him a heavy blow on the shoulder.

"Yoop!" he roared, as he dropped to the ground.

Bunter staggered, and lurched to one side. Inky and Johnny Bull had been so interested watching the downfall of Harry Wharton that they forgot their own peril. The bough smote them heavily.

Bump, bump!

"Yoop!"

"Yow!"

Nugent and Bob Cherry, seeing three of their companions on the ground, turned to bolt out of the path of the devastating Bunter. But the fat junior, aware that something was getting in the way of his work, swung suddenly in the other direction.

Nugent ducked to dodge the bough. Bob Cherry, close on his heels, ran into him. And just at that moment Bunter slipped and fell, with the bough on his shoulder, right on to them.

Crash!

"Yoooooop!"

"Yaroooooh!"

There was a confused, fighting mass of arms and legs and boxes on the ground.

"Lemme get up!" roared Bob Cherry.

"You're breaking my back!" howled Bunter.

"Groooh!" added the others in chorus.

The Famous Five were all down. And Bunter, with the lump of wood, was on the top of them.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Builds!

"H A, ha, ha!" The other builders had gathered round to watch the comedy, and they roared with laughter.

"Sock it into 'em, Bunty!" roared Skinner. "Well done you!"

"They're all down!" yelled Snoop. "Go it!"

"Give 'em socks!"

Bunter was floundering about like a porpoise, swaying from side to side on the top of the heaving mass of juniors.

"Lemme get up, you dummy!" howled Wharton, giving the fat junior a hearty shove.

"Yaroooooh!"

Bunter rolled off the top of the mass of juniors, and the Famous Five, flushed and panting, struggled to their feet.

Bunter pushed the bough off his legs, and scrambled up. He blinked at the juniors indignantly.

"You beasts!" he growled.

"Eh?"

"You rotters!"

"Mum-mum-my hat!" gasped Nugent.

"I call it beastly rotten form to set on a chap when he's carrying something heavy!" growled the Owl, in a hurt voice.

"But—but—"

"It's no good making excuses, Wharton," said Bunter. "I know you couldn't beat me in a fair fight. But it ain't cricket for the whole lot of you to attack me when I'm unable to defend myself."

"Well said, Bunty!" shouted Skinner.

"Shame!" added Snoop.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I consider that it's up to you fellows to apologise," said the Owl loftily. "Otherwise, I shall have to—er—take further action!"

"My only aunt!" muttered Bob Cherry.

"And I sha'n't have anything further to do with you if you don't apologise!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The onlookers roared again.

Johnny Bull found his tongue at last.

"You burbling duffer!" he howled. "You're worse than a giddy steam-roller gone mad. What on earth do you mean by dashing about flourishing young trees, you purblind fat idiot?"

"What did you call me?" shouted Bunter.

"A purblind fat idiot!" snapped Johnny Bull. "You're a danger to the community! Knock five of us down with your beastly tree, and then want us to apologise! My hat!"

"It's no good," said Bunter firmly.

"I'm not going to be bluffed like that!" "Bluffed!" gasped Johnny Bull. "I'll come and rub your face in the dirt in a minute!"

"You came out of the trees like a blessed tornado, Bunty," added Bob Cherry. "Johnny's quite right. You're not fit to be allowed out without a keeper!"

Bunter blinked.

"I don't believe a word you say," he growled. "It's a conspiracy against me. You saw me at a disadvantage and you sailed in."

"The sail-fulness was terrific!" agreed Hurree Singh, rubbing his ear tenderly. "The heaviness of the esteemed bough was also great."

The Owl of the Remove eyed the Famous Five doubtfully. It was beginning to occur to him that he might have been the aggressor. He did not wish to pursue the argument. Johnny Bull looked dangerous.

"It—it's no good standing about here, now," said Bunter. "I haven't got time to fight you fellows, and it wouldn't be fair to you. You all look pretty well knocked out. I prefer to tackle a chap when he's fresh!"

"Mum-my hat!"

Bunter stooped and picked up the bough again. It was very heavy, but he felt that it would save him from the wrath of the Famous Five.

"Just give me warning if those fellows attack me!" Bunter called to the crowd, as he ambled off.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton gazed wrathfully after the fat figure for a moment. Then he laughed.

"Same old Bunty!" he said. "But I dare say he was hurt as much as we were. And it's a pity to stop him now that he's trying to build a house. Bring the boxes along, you chaps, and we'll get on with the bizney!"

"Watch where he settles," said Bob Cherry. "He's just like a big bluebottle. B-z-z-z-z! Well, I'm hanged! He's going to build in our tree!"

There were a couple of branches jutting out from the side of the tree about six feet off the ground, but these the Famous Five had rejected as being too low. Bunter, however, thought otherwise.

He set the branch down against the tree, and waited until the juniors came up.

"I say, Wharton," said the Owl of the Remove meekly, turning to the captain of the Remove, "you might just give me a hand with this bough, will you?"

Wharton grinned.

"Haven't you got a partner, Bunty?" he asked.

"As a matter of fact, Wharton," said Bunter confidentially, "I'm rather particular who I dig with, you know."

"Won't anybody have you?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter blinked indignantly. That, as a matter of fact, was the reason why Bunter was building alone. But he did not wish to admit it.

"That's rot, Bull!" he growled. "I thought you'd like to have me in the same tree as you. Of course, I'm quite willing

to come up in your place if—if you'll drop a rope and hoist me when I want to come up."

"Ha, ha! I think you'd better stop where you are, Bunty," said Nugent, with a laugh. "You'd smash the top of the tree off."

"Oh, really! But you're sure to want me to come up and see you now and then, though," said Bunter. "When you've got a feed on, you know."

"Well, it won't be hard to sling you out," observed Johnny Bull. "And it'll take you a good time to climb up again."

Bunter glared through his thick spectacles fiercely. The Famous Five would never take him seriously.

"Give him a hand with the bough, you fellows," said Wharton good-humouredly. "Then we'll get up to our place."

The bough was heaved up on the strong shoulders of the Removites and dropped into place. Bunter eyed it with satisfaction.

"I'll let you fellows know when you can put the rest up for me," he said. "As a matter of fact, I don't mind if some of you go down and get some more boughs. I think I can trust you to choose decent ones."

"You can't, Bunty!" said Johnny Bull emphatically. "Come on, you fellows. Up to the study!"

Wharton swarmed up first. He had brought a rope with him, and with this the boxes were hoisted into place. Then the others joined him, and they sat down to their first tea in the tree-top.

It was a novel experience, and the juniors thoroughly enjoyed it. The air was beautifully cool up there, and a tremendous relief after the close atmosphere of the study.

"This is great!" said Johnny Bull, pitching into the frugal war tea with fine appetite. "Pity we can't live like this always!"

"I reckon the old chaps who used to live in trees weren't half as daft as we think 'em," said Bob Cherry. "They must have had a rather decent time of it—except when it rained."

"They'd be all right then," said Nugent. "We could thatch this place and make it quite water-tight."

Wharton was watching the progress of the other builders. His eyes lighted on Bunter. That youth had lugged a couple more of the branches to the tree, and then given the job up in disgust. He was now taking in the contents of a brown-paper parcel which he had brought with him.

"Bunty doesn't intend to do much," said Wharton. "He's evidently got fed up with it."

Bob Cherry winked, and snapped off a few small twigs from the tree. Bunter was just below the tree-dwelling, and, taking careful aim, Bob threw them. They descended on Bunter's head suddenly, causing him to drop his tea and spring to his feet with a cry.

His voice was answered by a strange one, and in another minute the chums saw the figure of a sailor come from among the trees.

The Famous Five could see that he was a tall, well-built, genial-looking chap, and he was apparently interested in Bunter. He approached the tree, and said something, and Bunter requested him to help him with his tree-dwelling.

The sailor grinned, and looked up at the dwelling of the Famous Five. Then he took off his jumper and got to work.

"Bunter's luck's in!" laughed Bob Cherry. "He'll get his place built, after all!"

And from the way that the sailor was going about the job it rather looked as though Bob was right.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Won't Borrow!

BILLY BUNTER smiled contentedly. He was sprawling on the ground watching the sailor work. It was a part that suited the fat junior down to the ground.

Bunter preferred watching. He fancied that the sailor had taken a liking to him. Bunter was nothing if not conceited.

As a matter of fact, the sailor was interested in Bunter because he had never before seen anything quite like him. He worked at the tree-dwelling with a will, for he was a fellow who always liked to be doing something. But he kept an eye on Bunter.

"I say," he said suddenly, "do they go in for rationing at your school?"

Bunter blinked.

"I should think they do!" he growled. "I'm wasting away to a skeleton!"

The sailor looked in astonishment at the junior for a second, and then chuckled softly.

"That's hard luck, isn't it?" he said, in tones of apparent sympathy. "I suppose you were a bit inclined to be fat before the war."

"Fat!" said Bunter indignantly. "No, I wasn't fat! Well-built, if you like. I wasn't like these skinny scarecrows!"

"I—I shouldn't think you were!" said the sailor, suppressing his laughter.

He turned, and resumed his work on the tree. Bunter watched him. He had an idea that he had made a favourable impression on his new friend.

"I—I say——" said Bunter suddenly.

"Hallo, mate!" said the other genially. "Anything the matter?"

"I want to take you into my confidence," said the Owl, blinking. "I've got some rich relations, you know, and they send me a lot of remittances. But the post has been awfully bad lately, and there have been a lot of robberies."

"Yes?"

"It's all these new hands, you know," went on Bunter. "These wounded soldiers, and those sort of people."

"What's that?" snapped the sailor, stopping his work. For a moment he felt like giving Bunter something that would teach him not to slander the Army.

Bunter saw that he had made a slip.

"I—I don't quite mean that," he said quickly. "But a lot of my letters have been lost, and I haven't had a remittance for some time. And there's a rather big postal-order for me on the way, I know. I heard from my pater this morning."

"Didn't he send it when he wrote?" asked the sailor.

"No. The—er—the post-office was shut then."

"Hard luck, mate!" said the sailor.

Bunter blinked again. The sailor had not taken the hint.

"I was just wondering, old chap," said the Owl, deciding to come to the point. "if you'd mind advancing me a quid until the postal-order comes. I expect I'll find it when I get back to the school, you know."

"Think you will?"

"Almost certain," said Bunter positively.

"Well, you won't have a chance of spending money before you get back, will you?" said the sailor. "So there's no need to get yourself into debt."

"It—it might not come, you know," said Bunter uneasily.

"It won't be long, in any case," said the sailor reassuringly.

"They often get delayed, you know," persisted the fat junior, not taking the hint. "It might be a week before it arrives."

"Then all I can say is that it's a rotten post-office your dad deals at!" drawled

the other. "They can't be much good if they shut up for a week!"

Bunter gasped. The sailor winked solemnly at a tree, and turned again to Bunter.

"Speaking about money, you know," he said in his genial way, "reminds me of a very funny thing. Now, there are some fellows you can't trust with money at all, and I know them all at a glance. Of course, anyone can see you are honest. But the fellow I'm going to tell you about was always ready to borrow, but never ready to pay back."

Bunter's eyes opened. He did not like the taste of the powder that went with the jam.

"This fellow tapped me for a loan," pursued the sailor. "Well, being very flush at the time, I lent him half-a-crown."

"H-h-half a cuck-cuck-crown?" gasped Bunter, shocked at the smallness of the sum. The sailor seemed to consider half-a-crown of importance.

"That's the amount! Well, he had it, and blued it. He blued all the rest of the money he had. And when I came to him for it, he hadn't got it."

"Rotten trick to play on you!" said Bunter virtuously.

"It was. But here comes the funny part. You see, I completely lost my temper," proceeded the sailor, winking at the tree again. "I caught hold of him, and shook him till his teeth rattled. Then with one kick I heaved him right up on deck."

"How fuf-fuf-far was that?" gasped Bunter, paling.

"Fourteen steps down, and fifteen up," said the other. "He lay on the deck gasping, and I soon caught him again. There was a rope just by, so I tied it round him and dropped him over the side."

"D-d-did he dud-dud-dud-drown?" murmured Bunter, looking almost green with fright.

"Jolly near it!" said the sailor cal- lously. "I just managed to keep his head above water. He was there for two hours. When they pulled him out he had to stay in the sick-bay for a fort- night. My stars! That was funny! Ha, ha, ha!"

"He, he, he!" tittered Bunter faintly.

"And the first thing that that man did when he recovered was to come and pay me my two bob—or whatever it was. He never tried to borrow again."

"I—I shouldn't think he would!" gasped Bunter.

"Fact is, you see," said the sailor, "I have sudden fits for getting all my money in, especially when I'm on leave. And I've got a simply awful temper if I can't get the oof. By the way, was it five bob you wanted me to lend you, mate?"

"It's—it's all right," said Bunter faintly, imagining what the consequences would be if he couldn't pay it up when required, in view of the fate of the man who had borrowed half that sum. "I—I expect I shall find the postal-order there when I get back. It—it doesn't matter now."

"I'd like to oblige you if I could," said the sailor earnestly.

Bunter swayed between the temptation of a glorious feed at Mrs. Mimble's and the dread of the sailor's hasty temper. He decided on the safer course. The occasions in Bunter's life when he had refused a loan could be counted on the fingers of one hand. But he refused this.

"It's quite all right, thanks!" he said re- ally. "I can manage!"

"Then we'll get on with the little place in the tree," said the sailor briskly. "I see you've got some cord with you. Just scramble up into the tree and tie the boughs in position."

Bunter did not dare to disobey orders. He made a wild scramble at the tree, and endeavoured to climb it.

The sailor gave him a helping hand. Bunter reached the bough, and swayed precariously. He remained, clutching for a minute, then disappeared from sight.

Bump!
"Yaroooh!"

Bunter appeared from the other side of the tree rubbing himself tenderly.

"I—I wish you wouldn't push a chap when he's in a dangerous place like that!" he growled.

"Oh, that's nothing!" laughed the sailor. "It takes fifty-one falls to make a good tree-climber! Come on! Up you go!"

ALONZO TODD

will arrive like this when he is called up, because he

IS NOT



A CADET.

If you are not a Cadet, apply at once to "C.A.V.R., Judges' Quad- rangle, Law Courts, W.C. 2," who will send you particulars of your nearest Corps.

And before he realised what was hap- pening the Owl of the Remove was up in the tree again.

This time he stayed there. Several of the boughs which were to form the floor were in place, and, feeling that he must do something, Bunter cautiously wriggled out upon them.

"That's the way!" said the sailor ap- provingly. "My word! I'd like to see you in a full-rigged schooner. You'd be absolutely at home aloft!"

"Rur-rur-rather!" gasped Bunter, his teeth chattering.

He shifted his position slightly, and as he did so a bough moved. Bunter flung up his hands, and disappeared neatly through the floor of his new study.

But he did not hit the ground. His trousers caught on a projection on the bough, and held fast. Bunter remained in mid-air, floundering about like a sack of potatoes gone mad.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

"Dusty" Miller!

"GROOOOOH!"

Bunter roared in alarm. But the sailor, taking in the situa- tion at a glance, dropped to the grass, and fairly roared with laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!" The Owl of the Remove kicked and floundered helplessly in mid-air.

"Let me down!" he shouted. "It's hurting! Groooh! I'm sore all over! It'll tear me in half!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" The sailor's laughter echoed from the tree-top, where the Famous Five were enjoying the spectacle immensely. It looked to them as though Bunter was trying to swim on the ground.

"Get me down!" howled the fat junior, blinking wrathfully at the sailor through his thick glasses, perched on the end of his little nose.

The sailor, however, did not hurry to move. He gave Bunter a little advice.

"Just grip the bough with both hands, and raise the body backwards," he said. "You'll get off easily that way."

The Owl made a wild grab at the air, but failed to do what he was told.

"Buck up!" he panted. "I shall strangle here!"

"No, you won't!" laughed the other. "Just sway gently from side to side. It's jolly good exercise, you know!"

Bunter gave a frantic kick, and wrenched himself free.

Bump! Bang!
"Yoooooop!"

Bunter struck the ground heavily, and the bough, also falling, struck Bunter heavily. The junior emitted a roar of pain, and sprang to his feet, catching his foot in the bough as he did so.

"Yarooogh!" he roared, as he sprawled again.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Under the delusion that the sailor was knocking him about, the Owl scrambled to his feet again, and set off at a furious pace through the trees, the bough trail- ing behind him. It had fastened itself firmly upon the junior's ample trousers, and evidently did not intend to be cast aside.

The sailor sat at the bottom of the tree, his sides shaking with laughter. The Famous Five chortled as heartily.

"Looks a decent sort of fellow down there," said Wharton presently. "I'm going down to have a jaw with him. Coming?"

He led the descent down the tree, and dropped lightly beside the man in blue.

"Hallo!" said the stranger, looking up. "That a pal of yours I've just frightened away? I don't think he was hurt."

"Hurt? Oh, no!" laughed Wharton. "He's not exactly a pal of ours, but we know him pretty well."

"Not surprised at that," grinned the other. "He's large enough. Told me that they're starving him at school. He must have been a picture before the war!"

"Bunter doesn't starve," said Bob Cherry. "He has ways and means. By the way, did he tap you for a loan?"

The sailor grinned. "Yes," he said. "I offered him five bob, but he wouldn't take it."

"W-w-wouldn't take it?" gasped Bob Cherry. "My hat! He must be ill!"

"Well, I don't know about that," said the other, with a twinkle in his eye. "You see, I told him the story of what I did to a chap who didn't pay me half-a-crown he owed me."

Wharton grinned. "You must have heard of Bunter before!" he laughed. "But please don't take him for a specimen of Greyfriars."

"Greyfriars?" said the sailor. "Is that your school?"

Harry Wharton nodded.

"You must be a stranger here," he said. "On leave?"

"On leave is right. Ten days of the best, chummy. I am a stranger round here. As a matter of fact, I'm doing a bit of detective business, and I wish I could get it finished. It's nothing exciting, but I don't seem to get on with it. Still, it's a relief from sub-hunting."

"I should say it is!" said Johnny Bull. "Can we help you at all?"

The sailor shook his head.

"I'm afraid not," he said slowly. "Thanks for the offer. By the way, my name's Miller—Dusty Miller, as they call me on board."

"Dusty?" said Nugent. "You don't look it now, and I shouldn't think you get much chance of getting dusty at sea."

The sailor laughed.

"That's not the point," he said. "All Millers are called Dusty in the Navy, the same as Clarks are called 'Nobby,' and Martins 'Pincher'."

The Famous Five told him their names, and stayed some time yarning with him. He struck them as a fine, good-tempered, resolute fellow, and they took to him as one man.

He laughed when they told him of Jaw-bones and the strikes which he had caused.

"So you can't get any washing done—eh?" he said. "That's nothing. Everyone in the Navy learns to do his own 'dobeying,' as we call it. Look here, bring your stuff out to-morrow night, and I'll give you a hand with it. I'm staying quite close here, and I'll bring some hot water in a tub."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"That's a fine idea," he said. "We'll be over here to-morrow, and be independent of the laundry. We've got over the building difficulty all right."

The Famous Five cycled back to the school talking of their new acquaintance, and discussing the "benders" which he had spun them.

It was quite a novel idea, that of doing their own washing, and they wrapped the garments needing attention in an old sheet which also badly needed attention, and started off early the following evening.

Bunter spotted them as they were going out of the gate.

"I say, you fellows!" he called. "Hold on a jiffy! I'm coming with you, you know."

"Where?" asked Wharton.

Bunter smirked at the bundle of washing.

"I know what you've got there," he said. "You can't kid me that you've built that place in the tree for nothing. You're going food-hogging. What about taking an old pal with you?"

"Do you want to come?" asked Nugent.

"Rather!"

"And share in the bundle?"

"That's the idea!" said Bunter, with a broad grin.

Nugent smiled to himself.

"Then you can sit on my carrier," he said. "I'll give you a lift, seeing that you're such a pal of ours."

"Right-ho!" said Bunter readily.

"You'll help do the necessary to the stuff we've got here?" grinned Nugent, tapping the sheet that covered their dirty clothes.

Bunter winked.

"Trust me for that!" he said.

The Famous Five chuckled softly, and mounted their bikes. It was a bit of a pull for Nugent, but the jape was too good to lose.

They reached the wood, and, dismount-



The man who would not be saved! (See Chapter 12.)

ing, found their new friend "Dusty" was already awaiting them, with a steaming tub of hot water.

"That's the way," he said approvingly.

"And you've brought my dear old mess-mate, Bunter, too—eh?"

Bunter eyed the sailor and his tub of water dubiously.

"I ain't come to do any more building," he declared.

"Ha, ha! No," said Harry Wharton.

"Bunter's come for a feed. Open the bundle, Johnny!"

Bunter's eyes gleamed. From the size of the bundle he expected a royal gorge.

"I am rather peckish, you chaps," he said. "It's just as well to begin now."

Johnny Bull opened the sheet and shook the dirty linen on to the grass. The Owl gasped in dismay.

"Oh, really! Where's the grub, Wharton?" he demanded.

"Grub?" said the captain of the Remove in apparent surprise. "We never said anything about grub. Didn't you understand what we were bringing?"

"Of course I didn't!" howled the disappointed William George. "You don't think I eat dirty shirts, do you?"

"Can't tell what you'd do if you were hungry enough, Bunt!"

"Well, I'm off, anyway!" said Bunter decidedly.

Johnny Bull gripped his arm.

"That's where you've made a mistake, Bunt," he said genially. "You said that you'd do the necessary to the stuff in the bundle. So now you're going to stop and help. Sorry if you've got another appointment!"

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Washing!

THE Owl of the Remove glared balefully at Johnny Bull.

"I tell you I didn't know what was in the bundle!" he howled.

"I ain't going to do your beastly washing!"

Wharton shook his head gravely.

"No good telling that yarn now, Bunt," he said. "We know you're modest, and don't want to show off in front of Miller here. But he's a good chap. He won't make fun of you."

"I tell you I ain't going to mess about with dirty shirts!" howled the fat junior. "Lemme alone, Bull! I've—I've got to meet a fellow!"

The juniors laughed, and Johnny Bull tightened his grip on the Owl. Having brought him out, they did not intend to let Bunter escape so lightly.

Wharton turned and gazed at the junior critically.

"Bunt," he said severely, "your shirt's dirty!"

"Course it is!" howled Bunter. "The laundry people are on strike!"

"That's no excuse!" said Harry firmly.

"You know the way we showed you—shaking it and banging it. Better try it again, you fellows!"

"Yooooop!" yelled Bunter wildly. "I don't want to be shown again! I know the way."

"Well, you will if you don't stop and watch the washing, so you can do your own next time," said Wharton.

Dusty Miller had taken off his jumper, and tucked up the short sleeves of his flannel vest. He picked up the first shirt, and, rinsing it in the water, began rubbing it vigorously with soap. Bunter stood, an unwilling spectator, as the business started.

"These things want boiling, really," said the sailor. "When you do your own at school you must boil them. They don't come a very good colour this way."

The juniors nodded, and, taking off their coats, commenced work themselves. Bunter stuck his hands in his pockets and watched. He was too closely observed to bolt.

In half an hour the whole of the work was done, and hung on trees to dry. Only the sheet remained, and the sailor had picked this up, when an idea struck Wharton.

"It'll be good practice for Bunter to do that one," said the junior, with a wink. "Come on, Bunt! Take your coat off!"

"Look here," said the fat junior warmly, "I ain't going to wash your sheets for you, Wharton!"

"But you must have some practice."

"Oh, rot! I don't want any!"

Wharton looked meaningfully at Johnny Bull.

"Then we'll dry-clean your shirt again, Bunty!" he said. "A good shake first, and then—"

"Lemme go!" howled Bunter. "I'll wash the sheet!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors laughed, and watched Bunter pull off his coat and prepare for the operation.

A stiffish breeze had sprung up, and was blowing right across the clearing where the washing was being done. Bunter had some difficulty in getting the sheet into the water, but that was nothing to the trouble he had washing it.

In ten minutes his legs were covered in soapsuds, and he was red in the face. But the Famous Five were not going to let Bunter give up until he had finished the task. Part of the sheet dragged on the ground, and picked up more dirt than had been upon it at the start. The Owl did not seem to be making very good progress.

"I—I think I've washed this enough, Wharton," he gasped pathetically.

"Enough?" said Wharton, in surprise. "Why, you've hardly started yet!"

"H-h-hardly stus-started!" gasped the Owl. "This blessed sheet is as clean as— anything!"

And as evidence Bunter held up a portion of the sheet, displaying a large mud-stain which it had lately acquired.

The juniors roared with laughter. Bunter turned the sheet round quickly, and blinked in amazement.

"Shake it, Bunty!" said Johnny Bull mischievously. "It'll all fall off then!"

Bunter hauled the wet sheet out of the water and gave it a vigorous shake. But he had forgotten the wind. A gust caught the sheet and blew it back on Bunter. It wrapped round him in clammy folds.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Owl struggled furiously with the wet sheet, looking like a fat ghost. He stepped back to escape it, and as he did so caught his foot on the edge of the tub. There was a wild howl of alarm from Bunter.

"Yaroooh!"

Bump! Splash!

"Whoooosh! Yoooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter sat up in the tub of hot water howling, still wrapped in the folds of the sheet.

"That's the way to wash 'em, Bunty!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Put your heart into the job!"

"You're doing splendidly!" added Wharton.

"The thoroughness of the esteemed Bunter is great!" laughed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The washfulness of the esteemed sheet will be terrific!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter staggered out of the wash-tub gasping. He trod on the sheet in his hurry, tearing a great hole in it, and falling over heavily.

"Grooooooh! I'm killed!" he roared. "Stoppit! Oooooer!"

He rolled out of the ruined sheet. He looked a pitiful object. His glasses were hanging to one ear; his face was crimson with exertion, and smeared with some of the dirt from the sheet; and he was dripping wet.

The Famous Five lay on the grass and roared with laughter. Dusty Miller did likewise. Bunter was too funny for words.

The Owl of the Remove adjusted his glasses, and favoured the juniors with a glare that a Hun might have envied.

"You beastly rotters!" he howled. "You—you—you—"

The fat junior gasped in sheer fury.

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"Stop it, Bunty!" protested Johnny Bull, weak with laughter. "It's very silly to play such games with the washing, you know. You'll have to do it all over again!"

"Games!" screamed Bunter, finding his tongue again. "Do you call it a game to tie a fellow up in a sheet and try to drown him?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter's glare increased in intensity. His thick glasses almost cracked under the strain.

"Have another go at the sheet, Bunty!" said Bob Cherry, between his chuckles. "You were doing it so nicely!"

The Owl's expression became more Prussian than ever. He looked simply murderous.

"H-h-have another gug-gug-gug-go!" he spluttered wrathfully. "I'm nearly dead after the murderous attack you cads made on me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fat junior scrambled to his feet and stamped off indignantly through the trees.

"My only aunt!" murmured Wharton hysterically. "Ain't Bunty great!"

"I should have died if he'd stopped any longer!" sobbed Nugent, tears of laughter running down his face.

It was some time before the Famous Five could do anything but laugh. But at last they recovered their gravity. Then, with the help of the sailor, they washed the remains of the sheet, wrung it out, and hung it up to dry. Bunter had torn a very large hole in it, and it could hardly be said that it had profited by his labour.

In the course of the talk the Five had with the sailorman he told them his whole story. He had come on leave to see his father. But to his surprise the house was shut up, and he could only find out from the neighbours that the old man had seemed very strange in his manner before he left, and had told no one where he was going.

So, following a vague clue, the sailor had come to Friardale, and was endeavouring, in the days of his leave which remained, to find his father.

The juniors sympathised with their friend in his quest. They knew that Dusty, with all his gaiety, was not having the enjoyable leave that he might have had from H.M.S. Terrier.

They rode back to Greyfriars discussing the sailor's story, and wondering if they could do anything that would help.

But they had hit on no scheme by the time they reached the school gates and wheeled their machines to the shed.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Prout Goes Shooting!

"THIS is great!"

Harry Wharton, stretched lazily in a hammock suspended just outside the "study" in the tree-top, voiced the sentiment.

The others murmured agreement. They were all too happy to trouble to answer.

Wharton's eyes moved round. He could see Squiff and his two chums enjoying themselves in the neighbouring tree, and Peter Todd, farther off, was brewing tea. The more energetic of the Greyfriars juniors had taken kindly to the tree life.

Bunter, however, had not come out that afternoon. He had had enough of the entertainments provided by the Famous Five. So far, Bunter had been the chief performer, and he was not feeling very pleased at the parts which he had played.

The Famous Five felt no grief at

Bunter's absence. He was very funny at times, but he was a nuisance for all that, and enough of the fat junior was as good as a feast.

Seen Jawbones to-day?" inquired Wharton suddenly.

"No!" said Bob Cherry. "He seems to have disappeared lately."

"It's funny that he didn't come round and jaw at the builders for starting work again this morning," pursued Harry Wharton. "He seems to have given the strike business a rest."

"Good thing, too!" said Johnny Bull. "By the way, where's Dusty?"

"Gone for a long tramp, I think," returned Harry. "I heard that he started off early!"

He was silent for a minute. Then suddenly his eyes opened wide.

"Ware invaders!" he chuckled.

The others looked down at the ground. A fat figure was moving about down below. At first the chums thought it was Billy Bunter, but a second glance showed that it was Sammy, his minor.

Sammy suffered from the same brand of voracity that his major did, and, like him, he was quite convinced that the Famous Five were using the tree-dwelling for illicit feeds.

And the fat junior has decided that, where his brother had failed, he might succeed. He regarded Billy's tales of his sufferings as being, like most of Billy's yarns, lies. Sammy was not to be bamboozled like that. He had come out on a borrowed bike to see for himself.

Wharton watched the fag curiously.

Sammy was very hungry. He would not have attempted a climb if he had not been urged by the feelings within him. As it was, he made very slow progress.

It was a very easy tree to climb for an active fellow. But to Sammy it was full of perils.

He passed the spot which had been the scene of Bunter's labours, and climbed a few feet higher. Then he paused, as he heard a rustling in the tree.

Peering round the trunk of the tree, Sammy saw a figure with a rifle approaching. It was Mr. Prout, the short-sighted master of the Fifth Form.

"Oh, crumbs!" murmured Sammy, in great alarm.

Mr. Prout was out with the patriotic intention of improving the nation's food supply. He knew the tenant of the wood had been called up, but he was not aware that any of the fellows were there. He had seen none. And, thinking it a suitable place to commence operations, he was ready to fire at anything that moved.

Sammy hung on to the branch, trembling. When Mr. Prout was abroad with his gun prudent people took shelter. The Fifth Form master spoke of the old days when he had killed grizzlies in the Rockies. But those days were past, and now he was certainly not the dead-shot that he said he had been then.

Taking another peep, Sammy saw Mr. Prout regarding the tree where he was hanging. He hastily withdrew his head.

Mr. Prout saw something move, clapped the rifle to his shoulder, and fired on chance.

Crack!

"Yoooooop!"

Sammy was not hit. But the explosion of the rifle caused him to lose his nerve. He fell out of the tree and dropped heavily on the ground.

"Got it!" shouted Mr. Prout, bounding forward.

Sammy Bunter sprang to his feet, and dashed away like one possessed. Mr. Prout stopped short as he recognised the shape, and passed a handkerchief across his moist forehead.

"Good gracious!" he muttered. "A—boy!"

Sounds of mirth came to his ears. Looking up, Mr. Prout spotted the tree-dwelling of the Famous Five, and saw that the Removites were gazing at him.

"Who is that?" he shouted.

The Famous Five regarded each other blankly. They were not disobeying any actual rule, but they had grave doubts whether their dodge would be approved by the authorities.

It was no good keeping silent, however. They had betrayed themselves by laughing.

"This is Wharton, sir!" said Harry.

"How many more are there?"

"Four, sir!"

Mr. Prout paused for a moment.

"What are you doing up there?" he asked at length

Wharton explained the idea, and the Fifth Form master nodded. He turned, and disappeared among the trees without another word.

The juniors exchanged significant looks.

"He'll tell Quelchy," said Bob Cherry gloomily, "and then we shall have to give this up! And it's all because of that silly young ass Sammy!"

Nugent laughed.

"But it was funny to see him fall out of the tree," he said. "He must have been jolly hungry to attempt the climb at all. And old Prout scared the wits out of him."

"Serve him right!" said Bob Cherry. "It's pretty certain that he didn't shoot him, by the way he scuttled away."

"He's not hurt," said Johnny Bull confidently. "Prout aimed at him, and that's absolute proof that the bullet didn't go anywhere near."

"I reckon that every blessed Bunter ought to be done away with in war-time!" growled Nugent, seeing that the end of the tree-dwellings was well in sight through the indiscretion of Sammy. "I hope that over-fed pig hurt himself!"

"It is rather a nuisance," agreed Wharton. "But we've had a decent time here, and the studies will soon be all right again. This wouldn't be much of a place in rainy weather, and the fine spell can't last for ever."

But Nugent and Johnny Bull continued to revile Sammy Bunter. That youth was scudding towards the school as fast as his short, fat legs would carry him. He was still very hungry, but he was more frightened than famished. He was quite convinced that Mr. Prout had taken him for a rabbit, and, under that delusion, would pursue him with his shot-gun to the ends of the earth. It did not occur to Sammy that tree-climbing rabbits were rare.

The juniors had brought their prep with them, and now they settled down to work.

They toiled steadily for more than an hour. The cool atmosphere of the tree-top made work less burdensome than it was indoors.

At length Wharton rose to his feet and stretched himself.

"I'm going down for a bit of a walk," he said. "Think old Dusty will turn up to-night? I'd like to have another yarn with him."

"He is jolly good company," said Nugent. "Go down and see if you can spot him. I'll be down in a jiffy, when I've finished this."

Wharton swarmed down the tree, dropped to the ground, and walked through the wood.

As he came to the road he saw the bent figure of an old man approaching him. It was not difficult to recognise Jawbones, but he seemed strangely different to-night.

"Nice evening!" said Wharton cheerfully.

The man regarded him with haggard eyes.

"Nice for those who are young and can enjoy it," he said, in a low voice.

"There's no nice evening for me!"

"Oh, cheer up!" said Wharton. "Don't harp on that rot about finishing the war! We're winning now. There's better news in the paper to-day."

"In the paper to-day!" muttered the old man. "Ay, it's right enough for those who take a delight in other people's sufferings. That's no good for me!"

"I don't understand."

"One day you will, my lad. The war doesn't interest me now."

"What? Have you given up the peace idea?" demanded Wharton.

Jawbones regarded him with eyes in which there was more sanity than the youngster had ever seen before. He felt a strange conviction that this man had, somehow, recovered his reason. But how? What did he mean?

Still in a daze, Harry listened.



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"I've given up all that," said the man wearily. "Life's nothing to me now—nothing at all! Good-night, my lad!"

He passed slowly on, leaving the captain of the Remove staring.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Mystery of Jawbones!

HARRY WHARTON frowned thoughtfully.

Something was different about Jawbones, he knew. But what it was he could not decide.

He turned, and retraced his steps towards the tree.

Nugent and Johnny Bull had just come down to ground.

"What's Jawbones got to say?" asked Johnny Bull curiously. "I saw him talking to you."

"He's mum to-night," said Wharton slowly.

"He always is," laughed Johnny Bull. "What's the next strike—window-cleaners?"

"No. He didn't say anything about

another strike. In fact, he seems to have given up all that bizney."

"Given it up?" asked Nugent, in amazement.

"He said that life was nothing to him now. Don't quite know what he means by that."

"Oh, he's dotty!" growled Johnny Bull. "I've always said so."

"I thought so, too," replied Harry. "But he struck me as quite sane to-night. He was gloomy enough, but he didn't look half as wild as usual."

"H'm!"

Bob Cherry and Inky came down from the tree. Nugent repeated what Wharton had just told them. Bob looked sceptical.

"No good taking too much notice of him," he remarked. "He'll be dashing round with the red flag again to-morrow."

Harry Wharton was looking in the direction of the road.

"There's a chap there with an evening paper," he said. "I wonder if there's any good news?"

He ran across to the roadway, and touched his cap.

"Is there any good news from the Front to-night?" he asked.

The man smiled.

"It is rather good," he said. "Slight British advance. But we've lost a destroyer, it seems. The Terrier hasn't returned to port."

"Terrier?" said Wharton, in dismay. "Could I see the paper a moment, please?"

"Certainly!"

Harry read the few lines of print. It was brief enough, and to the point. H.M.S. Terrier was a week overdue, and believed lost. That was all.

"Thank you, sir!" said Wharton, returning the paper. "Good-night!"

"No one belonging to you on board, I hope?" said the other kindly.

"No—er—that's all right, sir!"

The man passed on, and Wharton turned back towards his chums.

"What's the news, Harry?" asked Bob Cherry eagerly.

"Slight British advance," said Harry. "And the Terrier is missing."

"Really?" said the others, in chorus.

Harry nodded, and explained more fully.

"It's beastly unfortunate!" he said. "And it will be a nasty blow to Dusty to lose all his messmates. That's what it means."

"Lucky for him that he's on leave," said Johnny Bull, nodding his head.

"But it will hurt him, I know. He's attached to that old ship."

The chums were silent for a few minutes.

"The hard luckiness for Dusty Miller is terrific!" observed Hurree Singh gravely.

"Miller!" said Harry Wharton suddenly.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What's up now?"

"Something's struck me!" said Wharton.

"My hat! Hasn't hurt you, has it?"

"Don't rot, Bob!" snapped Harry. "I'm serious now."

"Well, what is it?"

"Well, Miller is the old man's name, isn't it?"

"Yes. Jawbones Miller."

Wharton rubbed his chin.

"Rather funny that they should both have the same name," he said. "It's never struck me before, because we call one of them Jawbones and the other Dusty."

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Nugent. "There's something in that."

"You see," pursued Harry quickly,

"Dusty has come to Friardale to look for his father, who is supposed to have come this way. He hasn't met him, so far; but we know, on the other hand, that Jawbones hasn't been about for the last few days. So that would explain it."

"I believe you're right, Harry," said Johnny Bull slowly. "Jawbones told us one night that one of his sons was dead, and the other goodness knew where. That might mean Dusty."

"It would fit the case," agreed Harry Wharton. "It certainly looks as though Jawbones is Dusty's father. Now I come to think of it, I believe there is a resemblance."

"I'd swear to it!" said Bob Cherry emphatically. "We were fatheads not to think about it before."

There was a short silence among the juniors. They were all thinking of the apparent discovery they had made. It might be a mistake, but there seemed little possibility of this. The circumstances fitted in too well.

There was a short silence among the juniors. They were all thinking of the apparent discovery they had made. It might be a mistake, but there seemed little possibility of this. The circumstances fitted in too well.

Harry Wharton provided the clue.

"I've got it all now!" he said suddenly. "You remember I spoke to Jawbones about good news in the paper tonight. Well, he said it was all right for those who took a delight in seeing other people's suffering. That means that he's seen the evening paper. He looked pretty hopeless. I suppose he concluded that poor old Dusty had gone!"

"Must have done!" agreed Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton's face was very serious. "Then there's only one thing that I can deduce from what he said," he concluded quickly. "There's no time to be lost! I'm going up the tree again!"

He swarmed up to the little tree-dwelling, and eagerly scanned the country in the direction that Jawbones Miller had taken. At first he saw nothing but the fields of golden stubble, and the green trees on the banks of the Sark, which glittered like a silver ribbon in the evening light.

Then he made out a bent, dark figure crossing a ploughed field. It was making straight for the river.

"There he is!" shouted Wharton, pointing.

The chums followed the direction of his pointing finger.

"By Jove! That's Jawbones! I wonder where he's going?"

Wharton's eyes glittered.

"I think I know," he said. "He reckons he's lost his second son, and the blow's too much for him. He's recovered his reason to a certain extent from the shock, but he's frightfully cut up. He seemed to mean that he was tired with life when I saw him to-night."

"And you think——" began Nugent, beginning the question, and then stopping.

Wharton nodded.

"He's going straight to the river!" he said. "There's only one meaning to that, and there isn't a second to lose. He'll be there in a very few minutes, and then it will be too late!"

"If only Dusty would come along now!" said Nugent rather helplessly.

"Can't rely on that chance!" snapped Wharton shortly. "I'm off!"

He turned, and swarmed quickly down the tree.

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THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Reunited!

HARRY dropped lightly to the ground.

His chums followed quickly. But Wharton was ahead. He set off at a tremendous pace in the direction that Jawbones Miller had taken.

He cleared the first hedge at a bound, rushed across the road, and, leaping the next hedge, dashed across the field. If he had been running for the school championship he could not have made better progress.

His start of the others had been short, but owing to Bob getting his coat caught in the tree they were delayed, and were a good two hundred yards behind now.

They had no chance of catching up. It was all they could do to prevent Wharton's lead increasing.

Across a field of stubble they went, then through a small copse, and out upon a ploughed field that made very heavy running. Wharton had reached the other side of it, flushed and panting, for the ground was heavy and the running very hard. But he knew he had no time to spare, and he did not slack off.

The next field was pasture, with a rough track that made the running easier. It came as a relief to the panting juniors.

But between them and the river was a bigger field still, also a ploughed one—that which they had seen the old man crossing. Wharton's heart sank within him as he cleared the last hedge and landed on all fours.

He was up again in a couple of seconds, but he knew that it was going to be a close thing now.

He plunged stumblingly over the heavy soil. Red lights danced before his eyes, and the trees ahead seemed to swim. His breath came in stifled gasps. He put his hand to his side as he felt a sudden spasm of stitch.

But he knew that he must carry on now.

Behind him the others were coming gamely along. They had done their best to catch up with him, but the lead could not be reduced.

The crossing of that field was like a nightmare to Wharton. He staggered on as one in a dream, and when his feet reached the firmer grass beyond he hardly knew it. But he knew then that he must be very near the river now.

Then he heard a stifled cry and a dull splash just in front of him. As he drew up, panting, on the edge of the river, he saw the old man rise to the surface, throw up his hands, and sink again.

Wharton paused only to throw off his coat and wrench his boots from his feet. Then he dived straight into the water.

As he rose to the surface he opened his eyes for another glimpse of the old man.

Miller came up not a couple of yards from him, looked at him from half-closed eyes, and disappeared again. But Harry struck out vigorously, reached the spot, gripped the man by the hair and brought him to the surface again.

"Let me alone!" cried Jawbones savagely. "I've done with life! Let go, I tell you!"

Wharton tried to overcome his struggles.

"It's all right!" he panted. "Your son's safe! He's near here! Don't be an idiot!"

"Leave go, I tell you!" snarled the old man, fighting like a madman in the exhausted youngster's grip. "My son is dead—dead beneath the water! I shall soon be with him where he is now. Leave go, or we shall drown together!"

"He's safe!" panted Wharton.

But the man would not listen. He struggled with all the fury of despair. Harry had not breath for further argument.

Fighting, struggling, panting, he felt himself being drawn beneath the water. He kicked out hard, but the madman's legs twined about his own, and hampered him terribly. He heard a sound of splashing behind him, and then the waters closed over his head.

In a swirl of bubbles dancing through the green water he saw the man's distorted face and twitching features. Fighting to the last, he went down in the arms of Miller.

Down, down, down! His throat choked with the strain of his taxed lungs, and his ears sang.

Then something touched his shoulder. He felt his downward progress stop. For a moment he and Miller hung suspended in the water. Then at last they were rising.

It seemed an age to Harry before he was at the surface again, drawing in great breaths of the sweet air.

"Stick it!" breathed Nugent encouragingly in his ear.

But Wharton was past further effort. Miller still gripped him, however, and that helped, for so Miller could not fight the other two juniors, and, with Bob Cherry and Nugent towing them, they reached the bank in a few seconds.

It did not take Johnny Bull and Inky long to help the others in hoisting Miller on to the bank, and then Wharton was assisted out of the water.

Once on dry land, Harry found himself recovering. The others turned to Miller, who had collapsed completely after the struggle, and was lying senseless on the grass.

For ten minutes or more they tried artificial respiration, and then they were rewarded with a sign of life from the old man. He opened his eyes and blinked dazedly.

"Where am I?" he demanded faintly. "Is that Jack? Jack, my boy, are you there?"

"He will be soon," said Johnny Bull comfortingly. "Don't worry, now!"

Wharton came to them with unsteady steps. He was feeling very much better, but he had not quite recovered himself.

"Better take him to the nearest farmhouse," he said. "Most of us want to get a chance to dry our togs."

"You do," said Johnny Bull. "I'll nip back to the school and explain what's happened. Then I can come back on the bike and bring some dry togs."

"And Inky can go and find Dusty Miller," added Nugent. "It'll cheer old Jawbones up!"

So while the party of wet juniors made their way to the farmhouse, the other two went on their errands. By the time Johnny Bull had explained and returned with dry clothes he found the whole of the party sitting, wrapped in blankets, beside a rousing blaze which the farmer had kindled, with Dusty Miller in the middle talking to his father.

The gratitude of father and son had been rather embarrassing to the juniors, for both realised what a tragedy had been averted.

But the Famous Five had the satisfaction of knowing that the double shock had quite restored the old man's reason. He was himself again. And they shared in the delight of Dusty Miller when the Terrier, badly damaged, but still afloat, crawled into port next day.

She had apparently struck a mine, and her engines had been put out of action, leaving her helpless in the North Sea. So the Terrier had drifted, with her

wireless gone, until the engines could be coaxed sufficiently to allow her to make land.

Mr. Quelch did not take kindly to the idea of the tree-dwellings when he heard the Fifth Form master's story, and the juniors were given to understand that they would have to be given up. But as the fine weather was breaking up they did not mind so much.

Following the example of the builders, the laundry resumed work, and the difficulty there was removed. So the juniors did not have much opportunity of using the training which Dusty Miller had given them.

Wharton was made much of for his rescue of Miller, and he knew that he would never lack a friend in the old man; and, in view of all that had happened,

the Famous Five were never sorry to think about the strike which had brought about the building of the Greyfriars Tree-Dwellings.

(DON'T MISS "THE MISSING MASTERPIECE!"—next Monday's grand complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., by Frank Richards.)

Extracts from "THE GREYFRIARS HERALD" and "TOM MERRY'S WEEKLY."

THE LAST POUND OF BUTTER!

By MONTAGUE LOWTHER.

[Lowther seems to me to be trenching a bit on the preserves of Peter Todd, of Greyfriars, in this veracious yarn. But if Toddy minds, I don't. And I really don't think Toddy will.—T. M.]

THE true and authentic story of the last—positively the last—pound of butter has never yet been told. I am going to tell it. Voila!

In the year of grace 1973 the Great War had been toddling along some fifty-nine years—more or less—and was just beginning to be firm on its feet. For fifty-nine years sanguine individuals had been telling us that it was all to be over before Christmas. But for the last two years or so there had been some hedging—the more cautious omitted to state which particular Christmas they meant

Yes, it was in the year of grace—but emphatically not of grease—1973 that Lady Hortynoze, the richest woman in the world, who was reported to have all her rooms papered with Treasury notes, and to light fires as early as the First of December, bought the last pound of butter.

The cow had by that time come to be ranked almost with the prehistoric animals. You may recall the Hoxton riot, in which some seventy people were injured. It is credibly stated that it was caused by a statement made by one Bill Adams, a discharged soldier of eighty-eight—wounds, not age, were the reason of his discharge—that he had seen a cow. He was called by Ikey Moses, a gentleman of pure Scotch blood, a liar, with the usual trimmings. A fight ensued, and led to the riot.

Nevertheless, a cow there must have been, or that last pound of butter could never have been made.

It was sold by public auction, and Lady Hortynoze paid fifteen thousand pounds for it. Lord Harduppe, who was unable to go beyond fourteen thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine nineteen and eleven-thrèe, retired in chagrin and a taxi. His lordship's regrettable demise—which the jury brought in as suicide during temporary insanity—twenty-four hours or so later, was attributed by some to this cause. By others it was said to be due to the fact that the unfortunate nobleman could not have raised even the elevenpence three-farthings without a further mortgage upon his mansion in Whitechapel; and that he was so fed up with mortgages, and so far from being fed up by food, that—But I am digressing.

At dinner that night Lady Hortynoze, exultant at her coup, made the startling offer which caused so much excitement in Society.

Her daughter Isabella Maria Ermyntude had long been—to put the matter plainly—something of a drug in the market. The law which prevented legacies of any kind whatever to anyone whatever may have had something to do with this, for it was well known that you did not catch Lady Hortynoze giving away anything but good advice while still alive and kicking.

However, so it was. The fair—more or less—Isabella Maria Ermyntude languished unwanted. She did not mind. Many years

before she had plighted her troth. (This was before the law which said won't to anything in the way of a will was passed.) Her lover wandered still in foreign lands; but she was expecting him back almost any minute.

It was not with her good will that mamma offered the last pound of butter as a wedding-present to anyone who should marry Isabella Maria Ermyntude. Isabella Maria Ermyntude was annoyed.

She had fifty-three proposals that evening. They were all turned down, and Lady Hortynoze raged as furiously as the heathen in the psalm—I forget the number of it. But the heathen raged no end, and so did Lady Hortynoze.

It was on the following day that a certain war profiteer who had accumulated cash and a title called to propose to the fair Isabella, etc. (In future we will call her Bella for short.) The name of this gentleman—but "gentleman" is a mere figure of speech—was Count Bagley Lovefat Trimble. (Count had become the highest title of nobility outside the Royal Family, as no one who had not the ability to count up to millions, and also the millions to count, had a dog's chance of getting into the House of Lords in those days.) Bella for short—oh, hang it! I mean Bella, just Bella!—hated and despised the count. But he had been so long accustomed to despiery—even from his youth up—that her feelings simply did not matter to him. He wambled in with a smile upon his fat face. He was resolved to marry Bella and get that butter—or, rather, to get that butter and, incidentally, to wed the fair Bella. It seemed his last chance in this world of a bite of butter. He adored butter, and he thought he could bear Bella.

"Darling," he murmured, squeezing her hand and casting his goggle eyes around in the hope of a sight of the butter, "will you be mine? I do so love butter—I mean, Bella, of course! I wasn't thinking of the butter at all—I should scorn to do so. I proposed for my sake—er—that is to say, for your sake—anyway, it was not on account of the butter. By the way, where is the butter?"

Bella gave a haughty toss of the head, and squeezed herself into a corner to avoid contact with the count. She had to. Cubic space had been severely restricted even in the dwellings of the rich in those days—everywhere, in fact, except in Government offices—and the count had gone on swelling ever since he left St. Jim's. (I dare say you have recognised the count, in spite of his change of name.)

"Darling, turn not away! Beeeee mine! Let us whack out that last pound of but—I mean, never mind about the butter—only beeeeee mine! Think of my wealth! I roll in unlimited Treasury notes of the best brand. I am sick of the very name of John Bradbury, so often does it meet my eyes! I have two sovereigns and a half-sovereign carefully hidden away at home. All of this is at your fairy feet if you will butter—I mean, marry me!"

"Oh, go away!" shrieked Bella. "I hate the very sight of you! This prevarication is useless! It is the butter you adore, not me!"

"I do, and I will have it!" cried the Count Bagley Lovefat Trimble, screwing his face into a horrid grin. (But it hadn't much need

of screwing.) "You shall—you must—marry me! Ah! Great Scott—I mean, my hat—oh, by Jove, what's that?"

The window crashed in, and a man leaped into the room.

"Unhand that lady, scoundr-r-r-rel!" he remarked.

"I—I— Yooop!" said the count.

The new-comer took him by the collar and the seat of the trousers and threw him out of the window in an absent-minded kind of way. But, falling on his head, the count was not in the least hurt. There was certainly a hole in the ground; but perhaps he had not made that. Under the road-mending conditions of 1973 roads consisted principally of holes in the ground.

The count picked himself up by instalments, and wambled off. Here he disappears from this story—which is just as well, as I don't fancy we could have stood him much longer. Between you and me, the count had not improved much in 1973, though he had had quite some time in which to do it.

Within the room he had left the man who had caused him to leave grabbed Bella round part of her waist, and—er—here modesty steps in. Shall I bring a blush to the youthful cheek by saying that he kissed her? Well, I fancy not. The youthful cheek I have lately observed about has scarcely been of the blushing variety.

At last he let her go—only she didn't, not wanting to.

"Isabella Maria Ermyntude," he ejaculated, "wilt marry me?"

"Oh, rather! I wilt!" she replied coyly. "But, of course, it is understood that you are after me, not the butter."

"What, love," said he, "is my name?"

"Bill Sikes—no, that was the other gentleman," she answered. "It is so long ago. Ah, I have it! Jack Spratt!"

"That, beloved of my bosom, settles it, surely? 'Jack Spratt could eat no—'"

"Enough! I am thine for ever, and ever so long after that, if you like!"

It was their wedding-day, and tea was nearly over, a frugal war-time tea, of course. The guests were in intense excitement, for it had been rumoured that the last pound of butter would be brought in to rejoice their eyes, and that some, highly favoured, might even be allowed to smell it.

But we must leave them in their excitement and repair to the kitchen, where the butter was kept—at least, where one would expect the butter to be kept.

In that kitchen were two men. Their names were famous throughout the world. For they were Herlock Sholmes, the greatest detective that ever was or wasn't, and Dr. Jotson, really the champion ass of all two-legged asses.

They stood at the window in a tense attitude, loaded revolvers in each trusty hand. Sholmes was smoking five cigarettes at once, and now and then pulling Jotson's nose, as was his engaging habit when thoughtful beyond the ordinary.

Suddenly the door opened, and in walked the Count Bagley Lovefat Trimble. (Oh, yes, I know I said that he disappeared from the story! My mistake. I refuse to blame any one else for it.)

The count opened the cupboard door, unknowing the terrible eyes that were fastened upon him. He took out the precious pound of butter. (Yes, it was there. How could he have taken it out if it had not been, dummy? No good making a fuss about a little thing like that. Lady Hortynoze wouldn't have left it there, you say? How do you know what Lady Hortynoze would have done? Do you pretend to be conversant with the manners and customs of high society in 1973? And, if so, how?)

The count began to steal back, having already stolen butter. Then he stopped, petrified.

Sholmes and Jotson had him covered! It is true that Jotson's revolvers wobbled a little from nervousness. But the count wasn't exactly a hero himself, and hardly noticed this.

In an awful voice, made still more awful by the fact that he was sucking half a pound or so of bullseyes—which had become the standard sweet—no other need apply—Sholmes spoke.

"Drop it!" he said.

The count dropped the butter in front of the roaring fire, and made a dash for freedom.

"After him, my dear Sholmes!" cried Jotson, in accents of agitation. "Be it mine to stay behind and—er—look after the butter!"

"One moment, Jotson," said Sholmes, in his deep, vibrant voice. "The pursuit can wait. You perceive that I was right, Jotson, as ever, I deduced, upon hearing the door open, that someone had come in. When I saw him go to the cupboard and take something out, I knew that it was a thief after the butter. So it was that we caught him in the act!"

"Marvellous!" exclaimed Jotson. "May I point out, however, Sholmes, that to say we caught him in the act is—"

"Jotson, you are an ass!"

"Yes, my dear Sholmes, but—"

"Lean out of the window, and fire at him, you chump!"

Jotson fired, and by some miracle hit the count, who came round the corner at that moment. But the bullet went right through the count's head without doing him any damage. (Wasn't that the miracle? Rats! No miracle about that! What was there to hinder it?)

The noise of the firing attracted Lady Hortynoze. She rushed into the room; followed by the fair Bella and Mr. Spratt. But the fair Bella only got as far as the door—she stuck there, being too tight a fit for any ordinary door. Somehow, the fair Bella had contrived to keep up her supply of fat-forming nutriment all through the lean and anxious years of the war.

"Good heavens! What is the matter?" asked Lady Hortynoze, wringing her hands—a quite unnecessary proceeding, as they were already heavily ringed.

"The butter is safe, your ladyship!" said Sholmes dramatically. "He threw it down as he ran. My charge for the operation is five thousand pounds. There will be an additional fee of sixpence-halfpenny for the valuable services of my dear friend Jotson!"

He pulled both Jotson's ears in an absent-minded way as he spoke.

"My hat!" said Jotson.

"Hush! No blasphemy!" exclaimed the fair Bella.

But well might Jotson say "My hat!" Hats could still be had at quite reasonable prices, owing to the many objections granted on grounds of conscientious objection to the—but never mind that, for it is quite another story. But that was the very last pound of butter; and where was it?

Gone—vanished—melted in the heat of the fire!

"This is too much—too much!" moaned Jack Spratt—which showed his exceeding affection for the fair Bella, as he was personally quite indifferent to butter.

Bella wept. The tears fell at regular intervals, and a small river began to course over the kitchen floor. It was indeed a dreadful scene—a tragedy long to be remembered!

"The guests are waiting to see—and smell—the butter, Mr. Sholmes!" said Lady Hortynoze imperatively.

"They can smell it here," replied Sholmes off-handedly. "As for seeing it—well, that is another pair of boots. But stay! What room is beneath this?"

"A cellar devoted to—er—cold storage," answered Lady Hortynoze, in tremulous tones. "I—er—you— That is to say, you are not a Government official of any kind, Mr. Sholmes?"

"With pride I say it—Jotson and I are the only able-bodied men left in this country who have not been given employment under the Government," Sholmes replied. "A singular objection to cocaine, in my case, and a well-justified conviction that Jotson is too big an ass even for a Government department, have left us free men!"

"Then you may follow me to the cold-storage cellar, under a solemn oath not to divulge—"

"Your ladyship does me injustice. No oath will be needed. I will make myself a partner in the crime—if any—and so my lips will be sealed, your ladyship. Halves!"

"Oh, confound your cheek—er—that is, oh, certainly, Mr. Sholmes! Get out of the way, Bella, and stop that absurd snivelling! My feet are wet already, and you know very well

that getting wet feet always gives me housemaid's knee!"

Mr. Spratt, with the aid of a large tin-opener, succeeded in getting his very much better half out of the doorway; and the procession proceeded to the cold-storage cellar, Lady Hortynoze leading, Sholmes next, with his hand behind him grasping the nose of Jotson, and the Spratts bringing up the rear.

The door flew open after a dozen or so locks had been turned, and Sholmes said:

"Saved!"

As he spoke he dropped the ashes from the seventeen cigarettes he was smoking down the neck of Jotson, and at the same time flourished his revolver in a way that had disastrous consequences for the left ear of Mr. Spratt.

"All the circumstances considered, Mr. Spratt, I call that remarkably good shooting," remarked Sholmes.

Spratt muttered something—no doubt words of polite agreement.

"I do not follow you, Mr. Sholmes," said Lady Hortynoze coldly.

"That was because your ladyship went in front," replied Sholmes, with one of those rare flashes of wit in which that truly great man now and then indulges.

"But—er—"

"Behold it, madam!" said Holmes, in triumph.

And he pointed to a long, yellow icicle which hung from the ceiling.

"Goodness gracious me!" said Lady Hortynoze, with fervour.

"My hat!" said Jotson, always original in his comments.

"My ear!" moaned Mr. Spratt.

"The lovely, lovely butter!" cooed Bella ditto.

"It came through the floor," explained Sholmes. "It was strong butter, you know. I think a sniff at that icicle will be enough for the greediest of your ladyship's guests. Let us go, Jotson! Three pantechuons will arrive here within an hour to take away my share of this little lot. I should prefer to have it camouflaged as a draughtboard, if your ladyship has no objection.

"Marvellouser and marvellouser!" murmured Jotson, as he and Sholmes departed in the odour of sanctity, mixed with that of strong—very strong—butter.

"Quite an everyday performance, my dear Jotson," said Sholmes, with an airy wave of the hand that sent Jotson's hat into the gutter.

(Have I licked Todd on his own ground, or haven't I? Tell me that!—M. L.)

THE END.

BUNTER AND THE BULL!

By SAMPSON Q. I. FIELD (Squiff).

"I T'S Nemesis!" said Peter Todd. "Looks to me like a bull," Bob Cherry said.

"It looks as if it meant to have Bunter for supper," remarked Frank Nugent.

On the whole, it did look a bit like that; though, of course, bulls don't eat pork, not being carnivorous animals.

Half a dozen or so of us were tramping across the fields when we saw Bunter and the bull. The bull was hustling some. So was Bunter. At the moment Bunter had quite a nice lead; but he was blowing hard. So was the bull; but blowing does not seem to mean so much in the case of bulls as in that of porpoises. Not that Johnny Bull ever blows—most modest chap, Johnny!

Bunter had a basket. At least, Bunter had had a basket. He had dropped it the moment before we caught sight of him. It was one of those soft rush affairs, packed tightly with grub collected in Courtfield, no doubt. Someone must have been cashing one of William George's postal-orders. Shows how much credulity there is in human nature!

The bull had the basket now, and was jumping on it. That explained Bunter's lead.

All this may read as if we felt no alarm about Bunter. But that was not quite the case. We couldn't leave even him to be

gored by a bull. The bull would have to catch him before it gored him, however; and it had not caught him at the moment when we sighted the chase.

But it was a persevering bull. Bunter scrambled somehow through a hedge, howling as he scrambled; and the bull went through that hedge as if it were a paper hoop in a circus and the bull were a fair equestrienne. He didn't howl; but Bunter was doing enough of that for two. (I know bulls don't howl; didn't I say he didn't? You can't take me down on natural history!)

Bunter's fat legs went like machinery. If Bunter could have run like that without the help of a bull he might have made quite a name as a sprinter.

We yelled to him to come our way. But it was no go. He could not hear; he did not even see us.

"Something's got to be done," said Wharton.

"Oh, the bull's simply bound to do something when it catches him," remarked Peter Todd.

Toddy often talks in rather a cold-blooded way. But he is not really cold-blooded.

"Serve Bunter jolly well right!" growled Bob Cherry.

But it was Bob and Toddy who made that heroic dash at the bull, before the rest of us had hit upon a plan of action.

It doesn't sound like a heroic dash when

made from behind, perhaps; but it was the best dodge, and, after all, a bull can turn, though this one didn't look like being turned easily.

Bunter ran. The bull ran. Bob and Toddy ran. And, as soon as we grasped the reason why they were steering to get round behind the bull, we ran, too.

But they were there before us. Bob beat Peter by a yard or so, and grabbed the bull's tail. The bull fairly swung him. But Peter, though he is rather a light-weight, helped to steady the brute. Bob stopped swinging; the bull slowed down a bit; and Bunter increased his lead. He did not lessen his howling, though. He passed out of the picture still howling, without ever seeing or hearing us, or knowing that we were at hand.

By the fleetness of his feet he did it—with the help of Bob and Toddy.

There didn't seem any special reason now why Bob and Toddy should not let go. But they didn't let go. They admitted afterwards that they rather lost their heads, being a bit uncertain what the bull would do when they dropped off.

He was making for another hedge now. Wharton roared out to them that the hedge would be quite a good place to part company with him. He had not time or breath to add if they could bear to do it.

They did not hear—anyway, they did not heed. Toddy's long forelock was waving wildly, and Bob's feet—they really are a bit

sizeable, you know—made tracks like bomb-holes in the turf.

The bull sped on. He went clean through that hedge. They did not.

That was as well, of course. They had no real longing to be on the same side of the hedge as the bull.

But what took the gilt off the ginger-bread of parting with him, so to speak, was the circumstances of the parting—said circumstances being a particularly muddy ditch.

"Yaroooh!" yelled Bob, as he soused into it, and gave up the bull's tail in the shock of the surprise.

Peter took the hint, and also let go. But he did not let go in good time—not even in time to make the same eloquent remark that had come from Bob. He got his mouth full of mud, and it was several seconds before he could even say "Gurrrrg!"

The bull did not even glance round. He sped on. When we last saw him he was still going strong, tail up and head down.

We hadn't been able to give Bob and Peter help earlier; but we now encouraged them with gentle words to get out of that ditch. Johnny Bull went as far as to stretch out a hand; but he snatched it back again before either of them could grab it. They were a bit too muddy to be proper objects for kindness.

They scrambled out, gouging mud from their eyes and ears, and saying things about Bunter and us and the prospect in general.

"It might have been worse," said Wharton consolingly. "Suppose the bull had stopped!"

II.

WE got back. Bunter didn't.

Call-over came, but Bunter came not. Bed-time came, and still Bunter was an absentee.

Had the bull caught him, after all? It hardly seemed possible, and yet— Would the next thing be a subscription for a tombstone? And, if so, what could we put on it that would be of the "de mortuis nil nisi bonum" order and yet have any truth in it?

Quelch seemed to think that looking for Bunter was a more urgent matter than getting a tombstone for him. Peter Todd expressed a strong preference for the tombstone. I don't ever remember seeing Peter quite so waxy.

Even Quelch's praise of the gallantry he and Bob had shown did not comfort Peter. His own opinion was that he had been a mug to follow Bob's lead; Bob a rascal to give him such a rotten lead; and Bunter the most hardened villain in all history for not letting the bull catch him before such a thing could happen!

Search-parties went out. Peter stayed at home. He said that he should be very sorry indeed if Bunter were found.

No Bunter! We saw the bull again, three or four fields away from where he should have been. I suggested that Bob should move him back; but Bob didn't seem on. He was not so morose as Peter; but he said that he would never be able to look at even Johnny Bull again without feeling uncomfortable.

We did our best, and on our way back we talked quite cheerily about that tombstone.

But it was not needed, after all. Bunter came along next morning. A farmer brought him in a market-cart—without a pig-net, as Peter observed bitterly. The farmer said that he had found him wandering in the fields, apparently out of his mind, had taken him home, fed him, and put him to bed. He thought he could surprise us with his account of what Bunter had accomplished at supper; but we know Bunter.

The farmer went. I understand he presented a bill to the Head first. I don't blame him.

Bunter had not heard his story. He had been interviewing Mr. Quelch. When he came out he was quite ready to explain everything to us. He had not the slightest notion that we had seen anything, mind you.

"The beast of a bull came for me while I was botanising," he said.

"You were—er—whatter?" inquired Peter Todd, in tones which ought to have warned the Owl.

"Botanising—in the fields out Courtfield way," Bunter said coolly. "Pity you fellows don't go in for something useful like that, instead of the kind of rot you take up, you

know! Well, the bull came for me. I thought at first of running."

"It wasn't a bad idea," remarked Wharton. "Trusting to my speed of foot, you know. Of course, I could outrun any bull—"

"Except Johnny," said Bob.

"Oh, really, Bob Cherry! I hope I can run faster than Bull!"

"You seemed to be able to," murmured Johnny. But again Bunter failed to catch on.

"What did you do?" asked Frank Nugent. "Sling the cheeky beast over your shoulder and walk him off to—"

"Yes—er—that is, don't talk rot, Nugent! I can't sling a bull over my shoulder—'tain't likely! But I did what none of you chaps would have dared to do. I stood and faced him. I stared him down! He lashed his tail and growled—I mean, bleated—or whatever noise it is bulls make."

"Johnny growls," said Bob. "But you couldn't stare Johnny down."

"Oh, rot! Of course I could. There's really something in those yarns about the power of the human eye, you chaps! That bull was afraid of me—positively afraid! He looked at me hard, and then he bolted!"

"I don't wonder," said Delarcy. "Bull of some taste. You're enough to make any bull bolt, Bunter."

"Did you see us hanging on to his tail?" asked Bob.

"See you— Oh, really, Bob Cherry, what rot you do talk!"

"Toddy and me," went on Bob. "Wharton saw us, and Nugent and Johnny here, and Squid."

"Rats!"

We could not convince Bunter. It seems impossible that he should believe his own yarn; but he didn't believe ours.

Toddy says he knows what to put on Bunter's tombstone when it's happily required. It is this:

"Billy Bunter lies here. He lied all his life—still lying!"

THE END.

—:0:—

THE FLAPPER OF THE FEATHER.

By Dick Penfold.

She was what they call a flapper,
She was dainty, pert, and dapper,
And just the kind of girl that "nuts" adore.
But the things that she would sigh for,
Almost cry and freely lie for,
Were money, dresses, choes, and "nuts"
galore.

When the call to arms was sounded,
And the great new Army founded,
She was still the flapping flapper of before.
But the boys she used to flirt with,
Be alert and pert, yet curt with,
Were training now to help to win the war.

Though an adept quite at winking,
She was never good at thinking,
Yet once she had a wheeze she thought
would "go."

To those who shirked their duty,
Wouldn't fight for home and beauty,
She would give a feather white as driven
SLOW.

By the blind, the lame, and armless
She was looked upon as harmless,
But they got as many feathers as the rest.
Though her way, of course, was Hunny,
Yet she seemed to think it funny.
She reckoned it her "bit"—and she knew
best!

The women soon were needed,
And the Army for them pleaded,
To do the washing-up and scrub the floors.
But the flapper wouldn't work—it
Was more her line to shirk it.
And her feathers still she flung about in
scores.

You still can find her flapping,
In a bank on week-days "napping."
But she doesn't join the "Penguins,"
"Waacs," or "Wrens."

Don't you think she needs a feather?
She'd look well in garments nether,
On the land to milk the cows and feed the
hens!

STRAIGHT TALK TO WOULD-BE STORY-WRITERS.

By an Old Hand at the Game.

IT is not really a game at all, you know. It is work, and jolly hard work at that. Pleasant work? Well, yes, in a way, and at times. But there is a lot of drudgery in it, even at its best.

You youngsters don't see that. You fancy a man who writes stories just sits down and writes anything that comes into his head. That's the way you seem to go about it when you attempt it. But it is not the way it is done.

You can no more make stories without knowing how than you can make anything else. You can try—just as you can try making anything else—and there's no harm in trying. It is the way to begin, and by-and-by, when you have gone on trying quite a long time, and have taken care to note where you are wrong, you may begin to do the thing you are aiming at.

But you cannot do it all at once. And most of you seem to think you can. I get stories from readers who cannot spell properly, have no notion of the meaning of a good many of the words they use, and are so lacking in manners and common-sense that they think paper adorned with blots, greas-spots, and finger-marks does not matter a bit. It might not matter much if the stories were works of genius. But—

On the face of it, a slipshod, untidy doer is hardly likely to be a clear thinker. And clear thinking is necessary if you are to turn out a story of any merit.

When I say that I do not in the least mean a story told in eloquent and high-flown language. Better not try that, whatever else you may try! Your vocabulary won't stand it, you know. You may have under command a couple of thousand or so words—probably less, rather than more. If you go outside that couple of thousand or so you are inviting disaster. You must tell your story within its limits. You need not use all the words you know to do that, either. Mr. Frank Richards has a vocabulary far bigger than any of yours—bigger than any of yours is ever likely to be, I should say, for he is a man who has read much, and who knows several languages besides English. But he can tell a story in very simple words—words of which most of you get the meaning without difficulty. You are apt to imagine when you have read a hundred or two of his stories that you have acquired his vocabulary. Well, you may have done, in a sense; but you have not acquired his ability to handle it. And I am not sure that the dictionary will help you very much. For there is more in it than a mere knowledge of the meaning of a word. You have to know how to group them so as to get the meaning you want for the whole sentence. And that is more than grammar teaches, though, naturally, grammar comes into it.

To the fellow with a real bent towards writing most of this knowledge comes unconsciously—through reading. I don't mean that you should try to say things exactly as someone else has said them before you. That would not be unconscious, and it would not really help you much. Where most of you fail now is in trying to imitate Mr. Richards without the necessary judgment to discern what such imitation means. You get the same words that he uses; but you don't use them in the same way. Or, if you do, your work is a pale copy of his, without any real originality. That is to say, when you have something to say that he has said before you it is easy enough, but it isn't yours. When you try to say in his manner what he has never happened to say, it may be yours all right, but it is usually badly worded. The best stories I get in the Frank Richards style are uncommonly like a patchwork quilt. They consist mainly of remembered sentences of his; and the incidents are almost always such as he has handled before. I have now and then been able to use one of these stories; but I should not care to base on them any big hopes of the writer's success.

For if you are ever going to do any good at the work you must write your own stories, not mere copies of another man's. It will not hurt you to practise in the Frank Richards style. I am not prepared to say that it is faultless—that would be too much to say of Shakespeare—but it is a jolly good style, clear, bright, and telling. But you must write something entirely your own in that style before you can prove yourself to possess that measure of originality without which an author will never go far.

THE GREYFRIARS GALLERY.

No. 92.—Mr. JOSIAH SNOOP.

IF there is any truth in the old adage, "Like father, like son," one could not expect much of the father of Sidney James Snoop. But, though Josiah Snoop has endured penal servitude for fraud, there is more manhood in him, I fancy, than his son will ever have.

Once or twice Snoop of the Remove has shown slight signs of good. But they have been feeble flutterings at best—not enough to justify anyone in expecting him ever to develop into a really decent fellow.

It was in one of Mr. Richards' fine double-length stories—"Shunned by the Form"—that we first heard anything much about Snoop's father, I think. The chief character of that yarn was a boy named Brandreth, no longer at Greyfriars.

Snoop was in funds when Brandreth came along as a new boy. He had just been standing treat to all his chums. His father had been making piles of money, he said. When he heard of Brandreth he said that he knew the name; and when he saw Brandreth he recognised him at once. And this was his greeting:

"Where's your father? Have they arrested him yet? Is he still hiding himself, or is he in prison, where he ought to have been a year ago?"

Of course, Snoop did not know that his own father had been the criminal, and John Brandreth merely his scapegoat. But his belief in John Brandreth's guilt could not begin to excuse such words as those. Suppose John Brandreth had been guilty? Was it his son's fault? Snoop did not think his father's crime should be visited upon him when the time came for him to stand in Arthur Brandreth's place.

This is not the story of Brandreth, however; and there is no need to tell of what he suffered through the malice of Snoop and other cads of his kidney. But I must not leave untold the fact that when John Brandreth was captured it was through Sidney James Snoop's denouncing him. He had spied upon the son, and had found out the hiding-place of the father.

Yet when the truth came out, and it was made clear that Josiah Snoop, not John Brandreth, was the criminal, Arthur Brandreth was more than decent to the fellow who had so persecuted and wronged him. Perhaps he saw some slight excuse in the fact that the guilt lay between Snoop's father and his, and saw that Snoop had been made bitter by that fact. Perhaps he thought that Snoop may have had his doubts about his father all along, and that those doubts may have influenced him to insist upon the certain guilt of John Brandreth. Anyway, he was most generous to Snoop.

So were other fellows. Josiah Snoop had to go to prison for a long term of penal servitude. But only a few of the cads—his own friends in moments when they wanted to wound him—ever cast that up against Snoop. Decent fellows avoided anything that might remind him of it. After all, rotter though he was, he could not help what his father had done, and was no more to be blamed for that than any straightforward and honourable fellow in his cruel position would have been.

An uncle took over the responsibility of Snoop's education, and he stayed on at Greyfriars. And after a while most of the fellows began to forget that he had a father in prison. He could not forget himself, of course. But it did not influence him in the right direction. He should have been all the more careful to go straight himself. Perhaps he could not. Anyway, he did not. It seemed very much of a case of "like father, like son."

Then Josiah Snoop escaped, and was seen lurking in the woods near Greyfriars in his convict dress. Harry Wharton saw him, and carried a message to his son for him. Vernon-Smith saw and talked with him.

Josiah Snoop wanted to see his son, as was only natural. It seemed to both Wharton and the Bounder that he was a changed man, though the astute and suspicious Bounder was not too ready to think the change had gone very deep. Both had some sympathy with him, on very different grounds; and both had some sympathy for his son.

But that evaporated when they found how Sidney James Snoop took it. He seemed not to have the least remnant of affection for his

father; all his thought was for himself. He was in a deadly funk lest Josiah Snoop should be captured in the neighbourhood, which would be such a dreadful thing for him. He did not appear to care very much whether he was captured elsewhere or not. He was weakly furious to think that his father should run him into such risk. As for having anything to do with helping him to get away, he would not take any chances in the matter.

Wharton and Vernon-Smith, though on anything but the best of terms at the time, shared the risk and got Josiah Snoop out of danger and into the Army. Well, perhaps, all things considered, one cannot say that being in the Army means being out of danger. But to Snoop's father, now really repentant, the perils he might have to face at the Front were small things compared with the dread of recapture and a return to prison.

Private Smith—under that undistinguished name Josiah Snoop hid his identity—faced perils at the Front, was through one of the great, long-drawn-out battles on the Somme, and came back on leave, still keen to see his son.

Danger awaited him. A detective had got on to the fact that the escaped convict had a boy at Greyfriars, and Greyfriars was being watched. Harry Wharton and his chums, with the Bounder and Tom Redwing, got mixed up with the trouble, and took heavy risks in their keenness to help the man who had tried so hard to redeem his past. And



now Sidney James Snoop was no longer so indifferent to his father; perhaps the attitude of his schoolfellows shamed him into feeling differently. He showed up better than he had ever done before when he refused to let others bear punishment for him; no one had anticipated that he would shy at anything that meant crawling out of it. Those in the secret began to feel some slight respect for the fellow they had always despised.

But they felt far more respect and far more sympathy for his father. Josiah Snoop had undoubtedly been a rascal. But he was no longer. Out of the prison life and the life of the trenches there had been built up, somehow, a new man—a man who could never be guilty of such crimes as had gone down to his account in the past. For Josiah Snoop Harry Wharton and the rest were prepared to do much.

And he justified fully their belief in him. A man may be brave, and yet a wrong 'un; but a wrong 'un would hardly have shown courage such as Josiah Snoop showed when he saved the life of the detective who was chasing him so relentlessly. Most of you will remember the story—how Snoop, disguised, rode from Greyfriars in the midst of a crowd of cyclists so that the watchers should not know him and follow; how he met his father on a football-ground miles away; how even there they were spotted; how the air-raid came, and the detective was pinned in the burning stand and rescued by Private "Smith"—alias Josiah Snoop!

Snoop's father fully deserved to have his past misdeed wiped off the slate after that.

It is a pity that his son cannot have a similar process applied to his. But it would not really be of much use to him. The slate would soon be filled again—not with dark crimes, but with sneaking little mean rascalities, such as a coward practises. For, on the whole, it is pretty certain that Snoop's father is Snoop's superior alike in courage and in character.

The Editor's Chat.

For Next Monday:

"THE MISSING MASTERPIECE!"

By Frank Richards.

Two fellows of whom we do not often hear much—Hobson, the burly skipper of the Shell, and his chum Hoskins, who is by way of being a musical genius—play considerable parts in this story, which is not quite like any other we have ever had before. Musical readers should appreciate it, though they may be inclined to think that Hoskins might have been given a little more sympathy in his heavy loss. I am not going to tell you what that loss was, though the title may give it away to some of you. But I don't mind letting you know that the Famous Five appear as detectives in this yarn, and that Inky wins more credit in the role than any of his chums.

BOYS' TASTES IN STORIES.

There can be no possible doubt that at the present time the most popular stories with nearly all boys—and with a great many girls—are those of the school type. I do not think that there ever has been anything in this line to equal the immense success achieved by Messrs. Martin Clifford and Frank Richards in this paper and the "Gem." For over ten years the stories of St. Jim's and Greyfriars have been running, with the chief original characters well in the foreground; and there has never been any waning of interest in them, while at the present time the interest is undoubtedly stronger than ever.

But, apart from school stories, which have always been popular, there would appear to have been a marked change in the tastes of boys generally. In the days of my youth no boys' paper was without its school serial—serials were the thing then; the series idea had scarcely been evolved. Ralph Rollington, Jack Harkaway, Tom Drake, Ned Nimble, and other heroes had their schooldays recounted first; after that, most of them were taken through all sorts of adventures in all sorts of places. Tom Drake figured as a naval hero. Jack Harkaway went everywhere and did everything. Ned Nimble—he was the stock hero of the "Young Men of Great Britain," one of the papers run by Mr. Edwin J. Brett—I can remember in China and among the Mormons; and he went to many other parts of the world also. When the school hero was promoted thus to adventures abroad, some other school hero came along, and if he proved sufficiently popular he, in his turn, was taken overseas and put through it.

The adventure story we still have with us, though it has not nearly so many admirers as it had even ten years ago. But there is another type of serial which seems to have died out almost completely. I mean the historical story. Brett's papers were never without a serial telling of brave deeds and thrilling 'scapes in the days of old. The stock heroes of history were exploited—Bonnie Prince Charlie, Richard of the Lion Heart, Robin Hood, the Black Prince, Caractacus the Briton, and the like. We had stories of knights in mail, of the Roman gladiators, of the London 'prentice lads, of the Gunpowder Plotters, of Cavaliers and Roundheads, of Highlanders in tartan, of robber barons. Many of them were more or less cribbed from Walter Scott and Harrison Ainsworth, I fancy; perhaps they were none the worse for that. In the "Boys of England" Mr. Brett—whose great hobby was armour—ran a long, long series of serials in which the hero was always supposed to be one of his own ancestors. The Bretts—or De Bretts—did wondrous things all through the Middle Ages, it seems.

Nowadays it is the rarest thing for any boy to mention historical stories. Is it that they get too much history at school, or is it that the rush of the twentieth century makes them impatient of reading about times in which everything—except human nature—was so different from what it is to-day?

YOUR EDITOR.

12-10-18