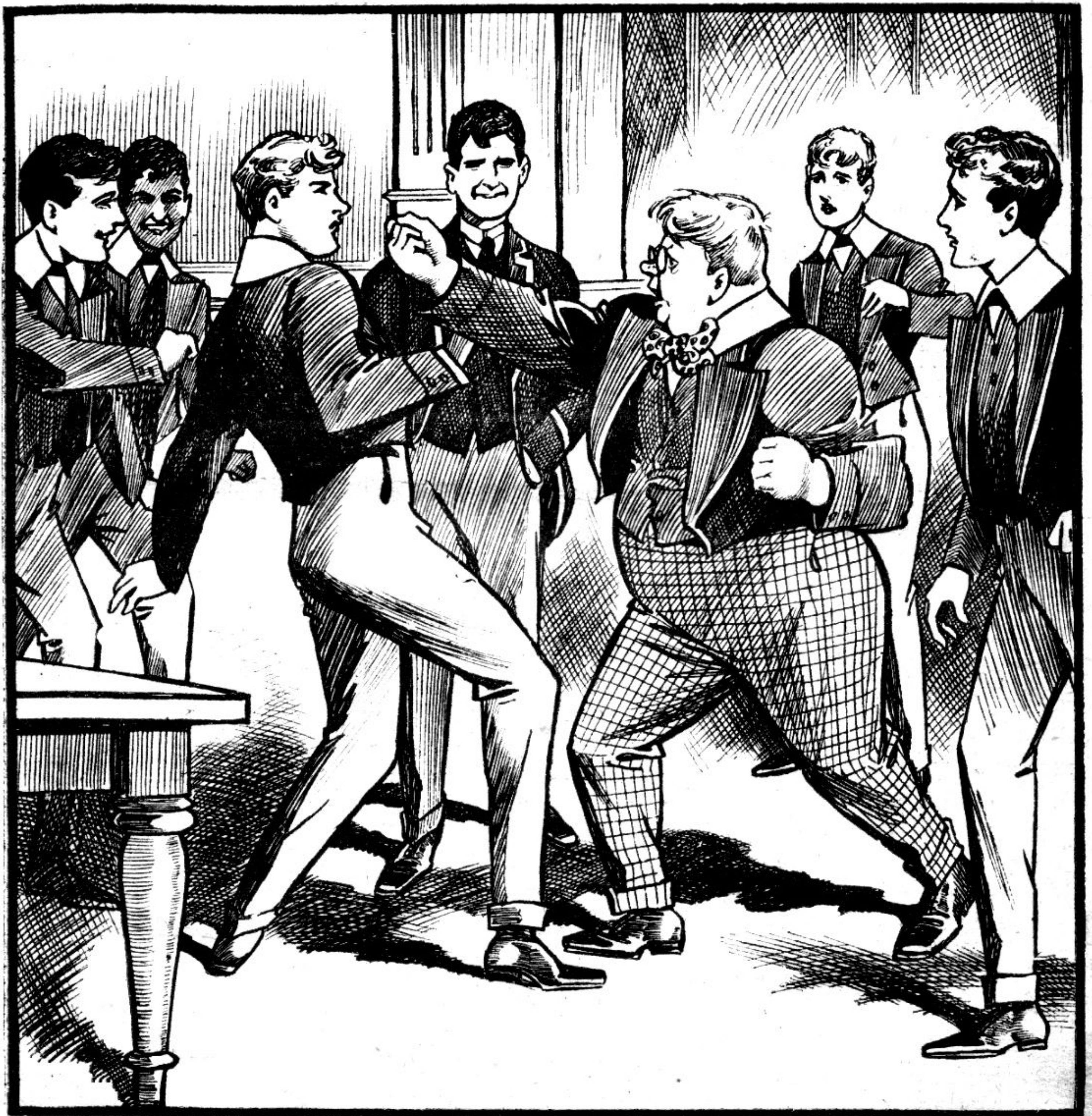




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A CASE OF CONSCIENCE!



THE BRAVE, BAD BUNTER!

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A CASE OF CONSCIENCE!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

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



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Kept Dark!

"HILARY!" said Johnny Bull thoughtfully. "I've heard that name before, somewhere."

"Same here," said Bob Cherry. "It was in a newspaper, I believe."

"I say, you fellows—"

Billy Bunter rolled up, and joined Harry Wharton & Co., who were chatting outside the School House at Greyfriars after morning lessons.

Billy Bunter looked excited.

Bunter was the Peeping Tom of Greyfriars, and always knew everything that was going on; and on this occasion it was evident that he was in possession of startling news.

His little round eyes were almost bulging through his spectacles, and he fairly gasped with haste.

"Shurrup!" said Harry Wharton, without evincing the slightest desire to hear the news with which Bunter was evidently bursting. "Roll away, porpoise! Did you say this chap Hilary was coming into the Remove, Frank?"

Frank Nugent nodded.

"So I hear," he answered. "Mr. Quelch mentioned to somebody that a new boy was coming to-day, and that his name was Hilary. Kipps, I think—yes, it was Kipps, as the new kid is going into Kipps' study, where Glenn used to be. Kippy will be glad to have somebody to dig with him again."

"I say, you fellows—"

"I'm sure I've heard the name, and lately, too," said Johnny Bull. "It's not a common name—"

"I say—"

"Oh, dry up, Bunter!" urged Bob Cherry. "Why don't you give your lower jaw a rest, old chap?"

"But I say—"

"The jawfulness of the esteemed Bunter is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The ring-off-fulness is the proper caper."

"But I say, you fellows, I've heard about the new chap!" yelled Bunter.

"Anything special about the new chap, then?"

"Yes, rather! I know all about it," said Bunter importantly. "He's some sort of a queer toad."

"How do you know, ass?"

"A jolly queer fish!" said Bunter. "You could have knocked me down with a feather when the Head said it."

"The Head said he was a queer fish?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "I can just hear the Head saying it—I don't think!"

"I don't mean the Head said he was a queer fish, of course! He said—"

"Never mind what the Head said," grunted Johnny Bull. "He didn't say it to you, I'll be bound!"

"Well, he said it to Quelch," said Bunter. "I suppose I couldn't help hearing, could I, when I was only three feet away? They were jawing as they

came down the passage, and I was sitting in the window, and they never noticed me. And the Head said—"

"Rats!"

"He didn't, you ass! As if the Head would say rats!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He said—"

"What about punting the ball about a bit before dinner?" said Bob Cherry.

"Good egg!"

"I say, you fellows!" roared Bunter, pursuing the Famous Five as they moved off towards the footer-ground. "I tell you the Head said—"

"Dry up!"

"About the new chap, you know, that chap Hilary, who's coming this very afternoon—"

"Cheese it!"

"He said," gasped Bunter, evidently determined to get out his startling news—"he said there was something fishy about the new chap, and it had better be kept mum."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the five juniors, greatly tickled at the idea of the reverend Head of Greyfriars expressing himself in such language.

"He didn't use exactly those words, I mean," spluttered Bunter. "His words were: 'The unfortunate boy is not to blame, but undoubtedly it would be more judicious for nothing to be said in the school upon the subject.'"

The Famous Five stopped, and stared at Bunter.

His latest version certainly sounded a good deal more like the Head; and indeed it was a ponderous sentence that Billy Bunter was not likely to have compiled all on his own, so to speak.

"The Head said that, did he?" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Yes, rather! He said it to Quelch," answered Bunter. "Now, ain't that jolly queer? There must be something awfully fishy about that new kid Hilary. His people must have done something. Perhaps his father's committed a murder."

"Fathead!" roared Bob.

"Well, a burglary, perhaps," said Bunter, modifying his theory. "Do you think it's likely that Hilary's father is a burglar, Wharton?"

"Oh, awfully likely," said Harry Wharton sarcastically. "About as likely as that he's a German spy or a messenger from Mars."

"Well, he must be something, or have done something, or why did the Head say that the kid wasn't to blame?" urged Bunter. "Why are the Head and Quelch going to keep it dark?"

"Blessed if I know—or care, either!"

"And Quelch said—"

"Ring off!"

"No; he said that Hilary couldn't be blamed because his father was a silly ass—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Not in those words, of course!" shrieked Bunter, exasperated. "I'm telling you what he said, not how he said it.

His words were, as near as I remember: 'The folly of the father should not be visited upon the son.'"

"My only hat!" said Wharton, in astonishment.

"I didn't hear any more," said Bunter regretfully. "They passed on, and I was afraid they'd spot me if I followed them—I—I mean, of course, I wouldn't have listened to a private conversation, under any circumstances whatever. I hope I'm too honourable. But, I say, you fellows, ain't it queer? There must be something awfully fishy about Hilary."

"The queerfulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Singh. "But it is not our esteemed business, my dear and jawful Bunter."

"But, I say, you fellows, what do you think it means?" urged Bunter. "As the chap's coming into the Remove I think we ought to know about him. There's some shady secret, and the Head's keeping it dark—"

"You utter ass!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Do you think the Head would keep a shady secret?"

"Well, it's a secret, anyway. Why ain't we to know about the chap?" demanded Bunter. "It's fishy—awfully fishy. Hilary's father must be some awful character—a burglar, or a murderer, or a—a—a—"

"Or a politician, or a profiteer!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Well, that wouldn't be the kid's fault. Mind your own business, Bunter!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shove Bunter between the posts," said Wharton. "We'll try in turn, and see who can knock his specs off with the footer!"

"Good egg! Come on, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter did not come on. He went off, very hastily. At a safe distance he paused to howl back "Beasts!" and then he rolled on to seek for more interested listeners to his amazing news. The Famous Five chuckled as he fled, but Johnny Bull became serious.

"All the same, there's something queer about that new chap," he said. "I know I've heard the name before, too. This Hilary chap is a queer customer of some sort."

"Looks like it!" agreed Wharton. "Still, it doesn't matter to us. The Head wouldn't have him here if he wasn't fit to come here. Come on, or the bell will be going."

And the Famous Five devoted themselves to punting the ball about, and dismissed the new boy from their minds; but Billy Bunter was far from doing so. Bunter's curiosity, his ruling passion, was keenly aroused, and he told his surprising tale up and down the Remove, with variations and exaggerations at every repetition. By dinner-time all the Lower Fourth Form of Greyfriars knew about Hilary, and what a queer fish he was—according to Bunter. And, naturally, there was a good deal of curiosity among the Removites to see the new fellow when he arrived at Greyfriars.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Trouble in the Form-room!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! That must be the new chap!"

It was time for afternoon classes, and the chums of the Remove were heading for the School House, when Bob Cherry uttered that ejaculation.

A cab had stopped on the drive, and a gentleman in rusty black descended from it, accompanied by a slim, fair-haired boy.

The latter was a stranger to the Remove fellows, and they could easily guess that it was the new boy.

They looked at him with some interest as they came towards the House.

He was a rather good-looking lad, slim in build, and yet sturdy-looking, and his expression had a curious quietness about it which might have been the effect of shyness.

"That must be Hilary!" said Nugent.

"And is that old johnny his pater?" said Bob. "Looks a rather rusty old merchant!"

"More like a lawyer, I should think!" said Harry Wharton. "I rather like that kid's looks!"

"That's the fishy chap, according to Bunter!"

"Oh, bother Bunter!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here you are again!" grunted Bob Cherry, as the Owl of the Remove joined them.

"That's the new kid Hilary—Dick Hilary!" said Bunter. "That's his name. Do you think he looks fishy, you fellows?"

"No, ass!"

"Well, the Head said——"

"Dry up!"

Hilary and the rusty gentleman disappeared into the House, and Bunter further confided to the Famous Five that the latter was a solicitor, who had been charged to deliver Dick Hilary at Greyfriars, Bunter apparently having obtained that information by his customary methods.

Harry Wharton & Co. dismissed the new boy from their minds as they went into the Form-room. A new boy more or less mattered very little to the Famous Five.

Mr. Quelch came into the Remove-room, and lessons began; but ten minutes later Trotter, the page, put in his shock head at the door. He brought a message from the Head, requesting Mr. Quelch to step into his study.

"I leave you in charge of the class, Wharton!" said Mr. Quelch. "Kindly preserve order here while I am absent."

Mr. Quelch quitted the Form-room.

"He's gone to see the new kid, you fellows," said Billy Bunter, wagging his head sagely. "Didn't I tell you there was something queer about him?"

"Fathead!" answered Bob. "Quelch would have to see him anyway, as he's coming to the Remove!"

"Yes; but I tell you——"

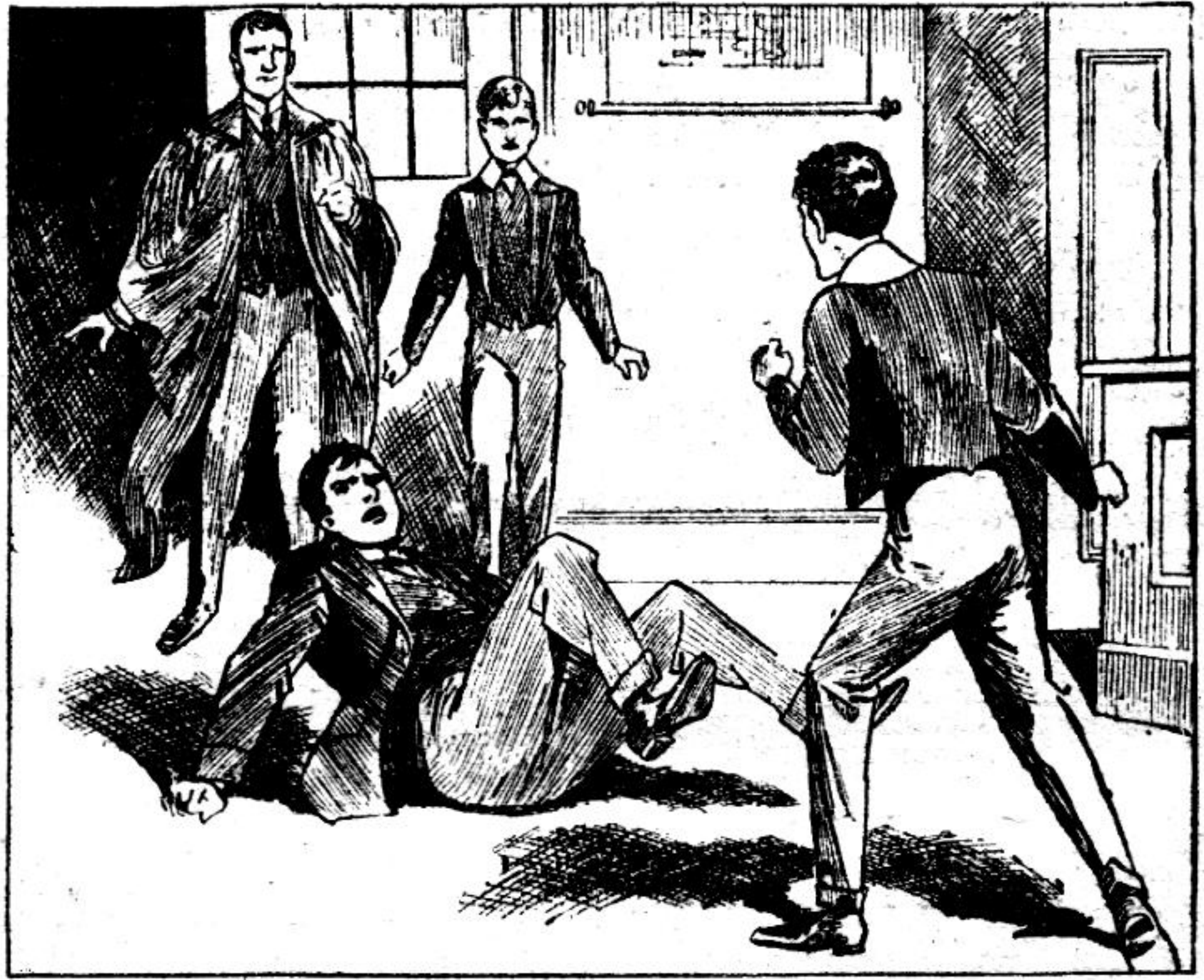
"Looks a spoony sort of chap!" remarked Bolsover major. "I saw him come in. Soft!"

"He looks decent!" said Harry Wharton.

"Soft!" repeated Bolsover major aggressively. "We don't want soft spoonies in the Remove. This isn't a soft Form. I'll wake him up a bit after lessons!"

Harry Wharton frowned. Bolsover major's remark meant that he was going to rag the new boy after lessons, a favourite amusement with the bully of the Remove.

"We'll have a little fun with him," said Skinner. "According to Bunter,



Bolsover is knocked down! (See Chapter 2.)

he's a queer fish, with some secret about him!"

"The Head said——" began Bunter.

"Oh, we know what the Head said, or what you said he said!" interrupted Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars. "Give us a rest, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Smithy——"

"There's something in it," said Skinner. "I've heard the name before somewhere, though I can't recall where. There was a Hilary mixed up in something or other, I'm sure!"

"Perhaps his pater's done something in the war," suggested Wharton.

"No; it wasn't that. We'll ask him after lessons," said Skinner. "We'll make him own up, whatever it was. I don't believe in keeping secrets."

"Is it your bizney, begad?" said Lord Mauleverer, with a glance of very strong disfavour at Skinner.

"Bow-wow!" was Skinner's answer.

"Better let the chap alone!" said Wharton.

"Rot! announced Bolsover major. "Let him give an account of himself. In fact, I'll jolly well see that he does! I don't like mysteries."

"You won't bully the new kid, Bolsover, if that's what you mean," said the captain of the Remove.

"Who'll stop me, if I choose? snorted Bolsover.

"I will!"

"Rats to you! I'll do as I like, I know that. And I'll make that kid own up what there is fishy about him!" said Bolsover major. "So you can put that in your pipe and smoke it, Mister Meddlesome Wharton!"

Harry Wharton's eyes gleamed, and he half rose from his seat. Frank Nugent pulled him down again.

"Quelch told you to keep order here while he was gone," said Frank. "Don't play the goat, old chap! Let Bolsover gas if he likes!"

Wharton nodded without speaking. Bolsover major's mode of address was very hard to bear patiently, and Wharton's temper was not of the most patient sort. The bully of the Remove grinned at him, feeling his advantage.

"Understand?" he went on. "You

won't be allowed to meddle, Wharton! You can go and eat coke!"

"Dry up, you gassing ass!" broke in Bob Cherry.

"I'll jolly well haul the new kid over the coals, and make him speak up for himself," continued Bolsover major. "As for you, Wharton, I care that much for you, and no more!"

And Bolsover snapped his fingers in Wharton's face.

The next moment the captain of the Remove was on his feet, and his grasp was upon Percy Bolsover.

The bully of the Remove returned it with interest, and they whirled out before the Form struggling.

It was some time since there had been a row between the Remove bully and the captain of the Form, and Bolsover major was evidently ripe for trouble again.

"Chuck it, you chumps!" shouted Bob Cherry. "Quelch may come in any minute now!"

"Go it, Bolsover!" chuckled Skinner.

"Go it!" yelled Snoop. "Pile into him!"

"Stop it!"

"Go it!"

"You duffers, chuck it!"

Quite contradictory advice came from the Removites as Wharton and Bolsover struggled and pommelled in the Form-room. The combatants did not heed either kind; they did not even hear it!

Bolsover major lived in hopes of downing the captain of the Remove, and he was willing to put the contest to the proof once more. But his luck was not good. They separated breathlessly, and Bolsover major came on again with a rush, his fists hammering, only to meet a drive on the chest that sent him flying backwards. Wharton was excited, and he hit hard.

The Form-room door opened at the same moment.

Mr. Quelch entered, followed by the fair-haired boy who had arrived that afternoon.

Bolsover major crashed at his feet.

"Oh!" gasped the whole Remove.

Mr. Quelch halted, transfixed, as the bully of the Remove collapsed within a foot of him.

Wharton dropped his hands, the flush dying out of his face.

There was a dead silence in the Form-room, broken only by the gasping of the sprawling Bolsover.

Mr. Quelch broke it.

"Wharton!" His voice rumbled like thunder. "Is this the way you keep order in my absence?"

Wharton was silent.

"Owl! Wow, wow!" gasped Bolsover, scurrying up breathlessly.

"Bolsover, go to your place!"

"Owl! Ah! Yes, sir!"

Mr. Quelch fixed his eyes sternly upon Wharton.

"Wharton, I left you in charge of the Form, and I return to find you fighting. You need not speak. You will be detained two hours after lessons. Go to your place!"

Wharton obeyed without speaking.

The new boy had stood looking on quietly, with a faint surprise in his face.

"My boys," said Mr. Quelch, "this is Richard Hilary, a new boy in this Form. He will be your study-mate in Study No. 5, Kipps. There is your place, Hilary!"

Hilary went to the place next to Oliver Kipps, who gave him a nod and a cheery grin.

A good many glances were turned surreptitiously on Hilary during lessons that afternoon.

He did not share in the Form work, but sat and listened and observed, finding his place, as it were.

Kipps, who was a good-natured fellow, spoke to him in a whisper once or twice, in a friendly way.

The new boy answered little more than "Yes!" or "No!" and Kipps concluded that he was shy, as new boys generally were.

When the Remove were dismissed the new junior walked out with the rest, and Harry Wharton was left alone to his detention, not in a happy mood. Bolsover major gave him a vaunting look as he went out. That look indicated plainly enough that the bully of the Remove was on the track of the new boy, and it was out of Wharton's power to interfere.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Funk!

OLIVER KIPPS was making for the big staircase, to go up to his study, when he remembered the existence of the new junior. Kipps, the amateur conjurer, was rather busy of late with some new sleight-of-hand tricks he was practising, the outcome of which would probably be the exasperation of his victims and some severe thumpings for Kipps. With great good-nature Kipps postponed that attractive occupation, and joined Hilary in the passage.

"Like to see the study?" he asked.

"Yes, if you please!"

Kipps grinned.

"My dear man," he said, "speak up! We don't eat new kids! Nothing to be afraid of here, you know!"

Hilary flushed.

"I'm not afraid!" he exclaimed, so sharply that Kipps stared at him in surprise.

"Well, keep your wool on!" said Kipps. "I didn't say you were afraid, old bird! Come up to the study; you've got to dig with me. Look here, you'll be careful in my study, I hope, and not mess my things about as Glenn used to."

"I'll try."

"Well, come on!"

Hilary was about to accompany Kipps up the staircase when Bolsover major

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arrived on the scene, with Skinner and Snoop and Stott and several more fellows. Bolsover's heavy hand dropped on Hilary's shoulder, and spun him round.

"This way, kid!" he said.

"Let him alone!" exclaimed Kipps angrily. "Don't begin bullying the new kid, Bolsover!"

"I'll bully you, if I have much of your chin!" answered Bolsover, with a scowl.

"I'm not hurting the kid, am I?"

"Well, let him alone!"

"We want him to come into the Common-room for a talk," said Bolsover.

"You don't mind, young 'un?"

Hilary, thus appealed to, looked from one to the other undecidedly. Bolsover major had modified his tone as he caught sight of a prefect in the distance. It was Wingate, the captain, and he glanced across at Bolsover, who let go the new boy's shoulder hastily.

"Better come up to the study," said Kipps.

"Come with me, kid!" said Bolsover. "I'm going to introduce you to some fellows. Quite a lot of fellows want to meet you!"

"I know no one here," said Hilary.

"Well, you'll know plenty when I've introduced you," said Bolsover major.

"I'm Bolsover, to begin with. This chap with the face is Skinner. The fellow with the ears is Snoop."

"You silly ass—" began Skinner and Snoop simultaneously.

Wingate had passed along by that time, and Bolsover major slipped his arm through Hilary's.

"Come on!" he said.

Hilary hadn't much choice about coming on, as Bolsover major started for the junior Common-room holding his arm. Five or six Removites gathered round, and Oliver Kipps followed them, frowning.

There were a good many Removites in the Common-room, and some of the Fourth. Billy Bunter's startling statements respecting the new boy had roused general curiosity.

"I say, you fellows, here he comes!" chirruped Bunter.

All eyes were turned on Hilary as he entered with Bolsover major, and the new boy's face flushed.

The stare of so many eyes disconcerted him, as was not surprising.

"Shut the door!" said Bolsover. "Here, you can keep out, Cherry! You're not wanted here! Shut the door, Skinner!"

Skinner was shutting the door, but a powerful shove from Bob Cherry opened it again on Skinner's nose with a sharp crack. Harold Skinner gave a howl, and relinquished the door.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Did that biff you, Skinner?" asked Bob affably.

"Yow-ow!"

"You're always shoving your nose into the wrong place!" grinned Bob. "Trot in, you chaps!"

"It's light enough for some footer," said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, that can wait!"

Johnny Bull, Nugent, and Hurree Janset Ram Singh followed Bob in. Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing followed them, and then came Squiff and Tom Brown and Peter Todd—all of them greeted with a scowl by Bolsover major. It was evident that the new junior was not to be left quite at the mercy of the bully of the Remove. Hilary, of course, was nothing to them, and they did not even know him; but, as Bob expressed it, fair play was a jewel.

"Look here, what do you fellows want?" demanded Bolsover major.

"Nothing, o'ld top!"

"Take it and go, then!" growled Bolsover.

"Wrap it up for us!" answered Bob Cherry humorously.

"If you think you're going to interfere—"

"My dear man, I don't think! I know I'm going to interfere if you start ragging that kid!" answered Bob. "You've got Wharton detained, but the whole family's here. So go ahead, and as soon as you lay your paws on Hilary I'll lay mine on you, hard!"

"The hardness will be terrific!" remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur, with a nod of his dusky head.

Bolsover grunted angrily.

Hilary glanced from one to another, plainly not able to make out the state of affairs very clearly. He was new to Greyfriars, and had yet to learn the manners and customs of the Remove.

"I say, you fellows, don't rag!" urged Billy Bunter. "Let's make the new kid speak up!"

"Do you think I'm going to eat him, you interfering chumps?" growled Bolsover major. "I haven't hit him, have I?"

"And you're not going to!" said Johnny Bull. "No harm in asking him questions if you want to."

"I'll question him!" said Bunter. "You fellows shut up! Now, young Hilary— Yaroooh!"

Bunter broke off with a howl as Bolsover's knuckles ground into the back of his neck. The Owl of the Remove was tossed aside like a bundle of hay, and he sat on the floor and spluttered. Apparently Bunter was not to be allowed to take the lead in the proceedings.

Bolsover major planted himself in front of the new junior, who backed away a pace or two, startled.

"Oh, don't run away!" said Bolsover derisively. "What are you afraid of?"

"I'm not afraid!" exclaimed Hilary, with the same sharpness as when he had answered Kipps.

"Well, if you're not afraid, stand up and answer! I suppose you know you've got to give an account of yourself before we allow you to come into the Remove?"

"Is that so?" asked Hilary.

"Yes, of course!"

"No, of course not!" chimed in Squiff. "Bolsover's only going to ask questions out of sheer inquisitiveness, kid!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up, young Field!" shouted Bolsover. "Now, then, kid, what's your name?"

"Richard Hilary."

"Ever been to school before?"

"No."

"Do you know how to read and write?"

Bolsover's followers chortled, recognising this as an attempt at humour. Hilary looked surprised.

"Yes, of course," he said. "I had a tutor at home."

"Oh, that's why you're soft!" snorted Bolsover. "You've been coddled at home—what?"

"I don't think I've been coddled," said Hilary quietly. "Anyway, I don't see that it matters!"

"It matters a lot in the Remove," said Bolsover major darkly. "We're a tough Form—rough and tough. We slaughter spoonies. It's not an uncommon thing for a new kid to be found dead in the dormitory in the morning."

Hilary laughed. That statement might have frightened a new-comer in the Second Form, but the new Removite knew how to take it.

"Don't you believe me?" roared Bolsover.

"Of course not!"

"Where do you come from?" asked Bolsover, changing the subject.

"I—I lived in Essex."

"Well, where?"

"Knutwood," said Hilary, after a brief hesitation, which, brief as it was, did not escape the notice of the juniors. So far as the Removites could see, there was no reason why the new boy should not state frankly where he came from; it was customary for a new fellow to give some account of himself if anyone took the trouble to ask.

Yet it was quite clear that Hilary would rather not have stated where he came from; and that confirmed the impression, started by Bunter, that there was something fishy about the newcomer.

"Knutwood," repeated Bolsover major. "Never heard of the place. Are your people respectable?"

"Eh?"

"Deaf?" snorted Bolsover. "I asked you whether your people were respectable?"

"I—I hope so."

"Oh, you hope so! You don't know?"

"Of—of course they are respectable!

What do you mean?"

"All serene, kid!" said Bob Cherry. "The silly ass doesn't mean anything. This is only the Bolsover brand of humour."

"You dry up, Cherry! Got any relations in the war?" continued Bolsover. The new junior flushed crimson.

"Yes," he said, in a low voice.

"At the Front?"

"Yes."

"Well, that's better!" said Bolsover major, a little mollified. "How many?"

"Two."

"Better and better! Blessed if I know what they'd think of such a mollycoddle as you look, though! Who are they, and where?"

"My uncle is a captain in the Loamshire Regiment," said Hilary. "My cousin is a private in the Leicesters—I mean, he was."

"Oh, he was?" said Bolsover. "He isn't in the Leicesters now?"

"No."

"Turned out for being a mollycoddle?" sneered Bolsover.

"He is discharged. He lost both legs in the fighting on the Somme," said Hilary, with a quiver in his voice.

"Oh!" said Bolsover, taken aback, and looking, for once, ashamed of himself. "I—I'm sorry! I—I beg his pardon!"

"I should jolly well think you do!" growled Bob Cherry savagely. "Mind how you wag your jaw, Bolsover, or you'll get a punch on it!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!" snorted Bolsover. "So far as I can see, the new kid is all right. There jolly well weren't any of your cousins in the fighting on the Somme, I know that; and if there had been they'd have used their legs to run away with. What do you mean by spinning yarns about this chap?"

"Oh, I say!" ejaculated Bunter, backing way in dismay.

Bolsover's wrath had turned upon him. "I say, what do you mean by it?" roared Bolsover.

"I—I didn't spin any yarns!" gasped Bunter. "I—I only said what the Head said!"

"You made it up in your own head, you mean?"

"I—I didn't! The Head said—"

"Don't spin that yarn over again! You said there was something fishy about Hilary, and he was keeping a shady secret," said Bolsover. "I don't believe a word of it!"

Hilary's face crimsoned.

Bolsover major caught Bunter by the collar and dragged him up to the new boy, Bunter wriggling and struggling wildly.

"Here he is!" said Bolsover. "Here's the fat rotter who said you had a shady secret, and were fishy and all that! Give him a hiding!"

"Leggo!" roared Bunter. "I'm not going to fight the new chap! I—I like him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Bunter!" chortled Squiff.

"I ain't going to do it!" howled Bunter. "I—I like him! I respect him no end. I—I never said he was fishy! It—it was Wharton!"

"What?" yelled Bob Cherry.

"I—I mean, it was Kipps!"

"Me?" howled Kipps.

"Oh, I didn't see you there, Kippy! I—I mean, it was Redwing!" gasped Bunter. "That fellow Redwing—"

"Here's 'that fellow Redwing,'" said the owner of the name, stepping forward. "Now, what did I say, Bunter?"

"Oh dear! I didn't see you—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I meaner say, it—it's tea-time!" gasped Bunter. "I—I've got to cook the kippers. Make him leggo, Toddy!"

"Make him leggo yourself, my pippin!" answered Peter Todd. "My advice to the new kid is to give you a hiding. You wag your lower jaw too much, Bunter!"

"I—I say, Bolsover, old chap—"

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.

"Don't 'old chap' me!" growled Bolsover, shaking the unhappy Owl. "You're going to fight Hilary. Take off your jacket, Hilary!"

The Removites crowded round, grinning. Billy Bunter, as a fighting-man, was likely to be very entertaining. Hilary had flushed red, but his handsome face grew curiously pale now. He made no move to take off his jacket.

"Do you hear me?" asked Bolsover.

"Yes."

"Well, then—"

"I'm not going to fight."

"What?"

"I shall do nothing of the sort," said Hilary quietly.

Bolsover major's aggressive manner returned at once.

"You won't fight Bunter?" he shouted.

"No; I won't!"

"Then you'll fight me!"

"I shall not do that, either!"

Bob Cherry made a move forward. "This has gone far enough," he remarked. "Enough's as good as a feast, Bolsover. The new kid's not going to fight anybody if he doesn't want to!"

"He doesn't want to, that's a cert!" said Skinner, with a sneer. "The chap's a funk! He's afraid of Bunter!"

Billy Bunter pricked up his fat ears. The new boy had stepped back, with a quick, nervous movement. It seemed

absurd to suppose that anybody could be afraid of the fat, unwieldy Owl of the Remove; and Hilary was half a head taller than Bunter, and evidently much stronger and more fit. A fight between the two would have been an absurdity.

Yet the new junior was so plainly averse from an encounter that even the short-sighted Owl of the Remove could see it, and as he saw it his courage revived. Billy Bunter was a great fighting-man if the other party was afraid.

"You can take your choice, Hilary," growled Bolsover major—"Bunter or me! I advise you to choose Bunter!"

"Neither," said Hilary.

"You're a funk!" hooted Bolsover.

"I hope not."

"He hopes not!" sneered Skinner.

"But he jolly well is, all the same!"

"Leggo, Bolsover!" howled Bunter. The Owl of the Remove was warlike now, as he could not help being aware of Hilary's unwillingness to fight. "Let me get at him!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"I'm going to fight him!" said Bunter. "I said he was fishy, and I say it again!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I said he was shady, and I say it again—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it!" grinned Bolsover. "I'll hold your specs!" He pushed Bunter forward. "Go it, porpoise!"

Billy Bunter advanced a step, nervously and watchfully. If the new boy had clenched his hand Bunter would have retreated again promptly. But Hilary did nothing of the kind; he backed away, with a troubled look.

That was enough for Bunter. He swaggered up to the new junior now with his fat hands up.

"Come on!" he roared belligerently.

"Keep off, you fat fool!" said Hilary, still retreating.

The juniors stared blankly at Hilary. One punch was enough to knock Bunter out, and it need not have been a hard punch. But the new junior was retreating helplessly before the Owl.

"Are you potty, Hilary?" exclaimed Bob Cherry in wonder. "Tap him on the nose and he'll run!"

"The runfulness will be terrific, my esteemed Hilary."

"Come on!" roared Bunter. "I'm going to give you the coward's blow, you blessed funk! Yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you come on?"

"No; I will not!"

"That's for your nose, then!"

Bunter rushed forward and hit out. The new boy backed too late, and the fat fist crashed on his nose, and he staggered back.

For a moment he straightened up, and the look on his face made Bunter start. But the fierce look passed in a second. With all eyes upon him in a stare of wonder, Hilary turned quickly and walked out of the Common-room.

There was a general gasp.

"Well, of all the funks!" said Bolsover major, in utter disgust.

Bunter chirruped with glee.

"I'm going to smash him!" he roared, and he rushed after the new boy; but Bob Cherry caught him by the collar and swung him back.

"Enough of that!" said Bob curtly.

"Look here—"

"Oh, sit down!"

Bunter sat down hard, and yelped. He was not to be allowed to rejoice in an easy victory over a self-confessed funk. The scene had left an unpleasant taste in the mouths of the juniors.

Bob Cherry and his chums left the Common-room, silent and uncomfortable.

They passed Hilary in the corridor. He looked at them, but they did not look at him. They passed him without a sign.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Very Queer Fish!

HARRY WHARTON came into Study No. 1 on the Remove passage in far from a good humour.

His detention was over at last.

Having wrestled with Latin conjugations for a couple of hours—with more or less benefit to his knowledge of the subject—the captain of the Remove left the Form-room with great relief, and took a turn in the quadrangle in the dusk to clear off the cobwebs, so to speak, and then came up to his study to a late tea.

He found his chum, Frank Nugent, there, and the table set, with the rations on it, and several little articles over and above.

"Oh, here you are!" said Frank cheerily; and he jammed several sticks under the kettle, and brought it to the boil. "Tea's ready."

"Haven't you had your tea, Franky?"

"No. I wasn't in a hurry."

Wharton smiled, and sat down to tea. Nugent had waited for him, and had added one or two unusual little delicacies to the festive board as a sort of compensation for the detention.

"By the way, did Bolsover go for that new chap?" said Wharton, when he had started.

Nugent's cheery expression changed.

"Not much," he answered. "I wouldn't bother about the new chap, Wharton."

"Well, he's nothing to do with me, of course. I don't know him from Adam; but I don't think we ought to let Bolsover rag a new kid at his own sweet will, Frank."

"I know. But I don't think Bolsover will touch him."

"That's all right, then. I'm not looking for trouble, of course. I thought Bolsover would go for him, especially as I was detained."

"There was a bit of a scene in the Common-room," said Frank. "As it happens, the new kid was punched; but it was Bunter who did it."

"Bunter?"

"Yes."

"Bunter on the war-path!" ejaculated Harry in astonishment. "What on earth has that fat boulder got against a new fellow he's never seen before? He didn't quarrel with him because he's been spinning yarns about him, I suppose?"

"He went for him because he's a funk, and wouldn't stand up for himself."

"Well, that's Bunter all over. But you don't mean to say that Hilary let Bunter punch him?" said Wharton incredulously.

"He did."

"Without mopping up the fat duffer?"

"Yes."

"Perhaps he thought Bunter would burst if he hit him," said Wharton, laughing. "I suppose he was going easy with Bunter because he's a fat idiot!"

"I don't think so," said Nugent drily.

Wharton stared at his chum.

"You don't mean to say that the kid showed the white feather to such an extent as to be afraid of Bunter?" he exclaimed.

"That's about the size of it."

"Well, my only hat!"

Wharton set down his tea-cup, and blinked at his chum across the table. He was astounded.

"Spin us the yarn," he said.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 559.

Nugent related what had occurred in the Common-room.

"It made me feel sick," he concluded.

"I could understand a fellow wanting to keep clear of a big brute like Bolsover; but to show the white feather to Bunter—it beats me!"

"He must be potty!" said Wharton, in wonder. "I suppose a chap might be a coward, poor wretch; but that isn't cowardice; it's idiocy! He could knock out two or three Bunters at once, from his looks."

"If he had the pluck, he could."

"Well, he must be badly in want of pluck if he's afraid of Bunter. Blessed if I don't think he must have been pulling your leg, somehow! One thing's certain, if he's such a wretched coward as that he will have a dog's life in the Remove."

"I don't think many chaps will speak to him," said Frank. "I know I sha'n't!"

Wharton whistled.

Nugent was the kindest-hearted fellow in the Remove, and if disgust moved him to that extent it was easy to guess what the other fellows would feel like.

"I can't understand it," said Harry.

"Of course, a funk isn't a pleasant critter; but—but the kid may have been nervous and shy. His first day here, you know. It was a rotten shame to bait him like that, when he was strange to the place. I dare say he'll pull round."

Nugent did not answer.

The picture of Dick Hilary was before his mind, walking quietly out of the room, with the mark of Bunter's fat fist on his face, and it sickened him.

"Dash it all, Franky," exclaimed Wharton, in surprise, "don't be hard on a new kid, you know! You're usually too easy-going."

"Well, he makes me sick!" said Frank candidly. "Still, I don't want to be down on him. He'll get trouble enough without me. Skinner & Co. will torment him to death when they know he won't hit back."

Wharton knitted his brows.

"I think I'll speak to the chap," he said. "There's something jolly queer about this. He may be ill, or something."

"He doesn't look ill."

"No, he doesn't, for a fact. But this isn't natural," said Harry. "I'll give him a look-in after tea."

Nugent nodded, and the subject dropped. After tea, when Wharton rose, he glanced inquiringly at his chum; but Frank shook his head.

"Trot along," he said. "I don't want to speak to him. I don't think you'll want to more than once."

Wharton quitted the study, and went along the passage to No. 5, where he expected to find the new boy with Kipps. He was puzzled, perplexed, and rather curious. Hilary of the Remove was a new experience for him.

Even Billy Bunter himself was not such a hopeless funk as the new boy had shown himself. Wharton had an idea that the strangeness of his new surroundings, after perhaps a tiring journey, accounted for Hilary's conduct, and excused it; but it was plain that Nugent did not agree with him. Frank, generally the most tolerant of fellows, had a pronounced down on the new junior.

Wharton tapped at No. 5, and Kipps' voice bade him enter. Oliver Kipps was alone there, engaged in the peculiar task of keeping six balls in the air at once. He caught them, one after another, and dropped them on the table, as Wharton came in.

"Your study-mate's not here?" said Harry, glancing round.

Kipps grunted.

"Pretty thick, shoving a fellow like that in my study!" he answered. "I suppose it's no good speaking to Quelchy about it; but I don't like it."

"You're down on him, too?"

"I fancy everybody's down on him," said Kipps tartly. "If I'd known the kind of worm he was I'd never have spoken to him. Why, even Bunter and Fishy are a credit to the Form in comparison! Poor brute! He'll have a holy time in the Remove!"

"It was rotten to pick on him his first day here," said Harry. "I dare say he was tired and nervous in a new place."

Kipps snorted.

"He could have knocked Bunter out with one hand!" he answered. "Why, Bunter was nearly howling at the idea of being made to fight him till he saw that the rotter was afraid. Hilary must have seen it. But even then he hadn't pluck enough to punch the fat beast's nose! Pah!"

Kipps was manifestly of Nugent's opinion.

"Well, give the chap a chance," said Wharton judiciously. "Hallo! Here he comes!"

There was a step in the passage, and Richard Hilary looked in at the half-open door.

He came rather hesitatingly into the study.

Kipps gave him a grim glance, but did not speak. He had no word of welcome for his study-mate.

Wharton, however, bestowed a nod upon the new junior. There was a lurking look of distress on the boy's handsome face that somehow touched him.

"I've been looking for you, kid," said Harry pleasantly. "I'm Wharton—captain of your Form, you know."

"Yes," said the new boy, in a low voice.

"I hear you've been in trouble with some of the fellows?"

"Yes."

"I was detained in the Form-room," said Harry. "Look here, Hilary, if Bolsover bothers you, and you don't feel equal to tackling a fellow of his size—you couldn't very well—there are others who will see you through. We don't allow bullying in the Remove."

"Thank you!" said Hilary.

"I hear you've had trouble with Bunter?"

"Yes."

Hilary's face crimsoned as he answered, in a sinking voice.

"Now," said Harry, seating himself on a corner of the table, "as an old hand, I'll give you a word of advice, kid."

"You're very kind."

"I've heard what happened in the Common-room. The best thing you can do is to come along to No. 7 and call on Bunter. Shake him!"

"Shake him?" repeated Hilary.

Wharton nodded.

"Yes; you can't fight a fat duffer like that; he can't stand up to anyone. But you can't allow him to punch your nose; that's too much forbearance, and it's liable to be misunderstood."

"Forbearance!" Kipps snorted. "Pah!"

"Shut up, Kippy, old man!" said Harry. "You understand me, Hilary? If you let a chap punch your nose you'll be set down as a funk."

"I'm not a funk," said Hilary quietly. A snort came from Kipps.

"Well, I'll show you to Bunter's study, and you can shake him," said Harry. "That will be enough for Bunter."

"I'd rather not shake him."

"It won't hurt him, and it will set you

right," said Wharton. "You see, you've given the fellows the impression—to be quite plain—that you've shown the white feather."

"I—I know."

"That's a bad beginning," explained Harry. "As you're a new kid, you probably don't know the ropes. I'm trying to help you."

"I am grateful," said Hilary. "But I do not want to touch Bunter."

Another snort from Kipps.

Wharton looked at Hilary's harassed face, his own growing a little harder. It was not Wharton's custom to bother so much about another fellow's affairs, but a kind impulse had moved him. Such a bad break as Hilary had made might tell against him for a long time if it was not set right at once. The imputation of funk, unless disproved at once, was likely to stick, and to be remembered. But it came into Wharton's mind now that the imputation was just, and he could not help a feeling of repugnance.

"Look here, Hilary," said the captain of the Remove quietly. "I feel that I ought to point this out to you for your own sake. You've made a bad start."

"I know."

"You ought to set yourself right. Don't you understand—if you let Bunter punch your nose once, he'll punch it again?"

"I hope not."

"You hope not!" ejaculated Wharton. "Do you mean to say you would let him?"

"I shall not fight him."

"Well, he's too fat and blind for you to fight him, but I suppose you'll stop him punching your nose."

Hilary was silent.

Harold Skinner passed the half-open door with a grin on his face. Something white flew from his hand and circled into the study, and Skinner passed on with a grin.

A white feather dropped on the floor at Hilary's feet.

Kipps gave a grunt, and Wharton frowned. Hilary's face crimsoned, and then paled.

"Do you know what that means, Hilary?" asked Wharton very quietly.

"Yes!" muttered Hilary.

"That fellow was Skinner. You can fight him, I suppose, if not Bunter?"

Hilary shook his head.

"If you let a fellow give you the white feather, Hilary, without calling him to account, your life won't be worth living here!" said Wharton abruptly.

"I—I know!"

"Well, then, call on Skinner, and make him answer for it. Dash it all!" exclaimed Wharton angrily. "I don't understand you, Hilary! Are you ill?"

"No."

"Weak heart, or anything like that?"

"No."

"It isn't that a doctor told you not to scrap?"

"No."

"Cold feet!" explained Kipps.

Hilary did not answer that.

"Well," said Wharton, slipping off the table, "I thought I'd give you the tip, Hilary, as you're new here. It doesn't seem to have been much use. You know what you ought to do, and if you don't do it you'll have reason to be sorry."

"I think I know what I ought to do," said Hilary steadily. "And I'm going to try to do it."

"What you ought to do is to punch Skinner's nose for pitching a white feather into this study!" said Kipps savagely.

"I don't think so," said Hilary.

"Well, I'm blessed!" said Wharton, quite perplexed. "If you're a funk, I suppose you can't help it, but—but you

ought to make an effort to help it, at least!"

"I am not a funk."

"You're acting jolly like one!"

"I suppose it looks like that."

"It does!" said Wharton drily. "Awfully like it! Well, I've finished!" And the captain of the Remove quitted the study, and returned to No. 1, puzzled and repelled.

Frank Nugent gave him a rather curious look as he came in.

"Well?" he said.

"Well"—Wharton shrugged his shoulders—"I'm afraid the poor beast is an awful funk, Franky! He will have a bad time here!"

"He shouldn't have come to Greyfriars," said Nugent. "The sooner he realises that and gets out the better for him and for everybody."

"He doesn't look like a coward, either," said Wharton, ruminating. "He may be a bit potty—perhaps brought up among cranky people with queer ideas. Good Little Georgie in the story-book used to let fellows punch him, you know, and only smiled sweetly and gave them his nice rich apples."

"Br-r-r-r!"

"Well, some idiot may have taught the kid on those lines—you never know," said Harry, laughing. "He doesn't look such a worm as he makes himself out to be. If he's been taught to be a silly prig, he'll soon get it knocked out of him in the Remove, that's certain. Now for prep."

Wharton and Nugent sat down to prep, and forgot the new junior. In No. 5 Olyer Kipps worked in stony silence, without a word or a look at his study-mate. The new boy's first evening at Greyfriars was not a happy one.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter the Bully!

RICHARD HILARY received a good many glances in the Remove dormitory that night.

He hardly seemed to observe it. His face remained quiet and set, and he did not meet anyone's eyes.

His case was a puzzle to the Remove.

How a fellow could be such a funk was perplexing to the juniors. According to his account of himself he had two relations who had plenty of courage. Their example ought to have had some effect upon him. Yet, though in his conduct he carried cowardice to the point of absurdity, he did not look like a coward. His head was held erect, and there was pride in his look, as well as a curious, haunting distress. He seemed, to an observant eye, like a fellow who was unwillingly acting up to some peculiar idea of duty, and that was the impression he gave Harry Wharton. But most of the juniors were quite unaccustomed to making fine distinctions; and Hilary was set down as a hopeless funk, a fellow who was afraid of his own shadow, and was utterly despised accordingly.

Bolsover major contemptuously let him alone. He was not even worth ragging, in Percy Bolsover's opinion. And most of the Remove had no desire whatever to take any advantage of his want of spirit; they simply despised him and left him alone.

But all were not like that. Skinner and Snoop, who were not exactly courageous themselves, were delighted to have a victim to persecute in perfect safety. And Billy Bunter was swelling with all the pride of a conquering hero.

The new junior had fled before Bunter; and Bunter, as soon as he got used to the idea, was very pleased, and very important. Naturally, Bunter did not often have an opportunity of spread-

ing himself as a fighting-man, and this opportunity was too good to be lost.

As Hilary could apparently be relied upon not to hit back, a new development of Bunter's charming character was brought to light. He assumed a bullying manner. In his dealings with the unfortunate new boy, Bunter modelled himself upon Bolsover major at his worst.

He bestowed several truculent blinks upon Hilary in the dormitory; but they were without effect, as Hilary did not even glance at him.

"Hallo, funk!" called out Bunter presently.

Hilary did not speak or look at him.

"Shut up, fatty!" growled Bob Cherry.

Bunter did not heed. He was going to distinguish himself.

"Funk!" he shouted. "Come here!"

No sign from Hilary.

"Do you hear me, Hilary?" demanded Bunter, with a manner quite worthy of the great Bolsover. "Come and take my boots off!"

Hilary started.

There was a chuckle from some of the Remove. Bunter as a bully was exceedingly entertaining.

"Do you hear me, you funky cad?" roared Bunter.

No reply.

"Do you want me to come over to you?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors were roaring now. But William George Bunter was in deadly earnest. It was a new experience to him to be able to bully somebody, and he was enjoying it.

As Hilary took no heed of him, he rolled over to the new boy, who was sitting on his bed taking his boots off.

"Get up!" commanded Bunter.

All eyes in the Remove dormitory were upon the two now, the fellows wondering what Hilary would do. If he chose to let himself be bullied by Bunter, certainly no one was likely to interfere.

"Hilary, get up, you worm!"

"Please leave me alone, Bunter," said Hilary at last, looking up.

Bunter snorted.

"I've told you to take my boots off!" he answered. "Are you deaf? Do as you're told, or I'll jolly well thrash you!"

Silence.

"Will you do as you're told?" thundered Bunter.

"No!"

"Do you want me to kick you round the dorm?"

No reply.

Billy Bunter rolled at the seated junior and grasped him by the collar, yanking him off the bed. But a surprise happened to Bunter the next moment. He found himself seized by the collar in his turn, with a grip that was like iron.

He let go the new boy in a great hurry.

"Yaroooh!" he roared, in surprise and wrath.

Hilary held him at arm's length, quite helpless. Bunter blinked at him wildly, and wriggled in his grip.

There was a buzz among the juniors.

"Shake him, Hilary!" said Peter Todd.

"Leggo!" howled Bunter. "I say, you fellows, make him leggo! Yow-ow!"

Hilary did not shake him, but he held him in an iron grip. There was plenty of strength in the new boy's arm if he had chosen to use it.

Quietly, almost without an effort, Hilary marched Bunter back to his own bed, and pitched him upon it.

Bunter sprawled on the bed, gasping.

He was not hurt, but he was nearly

winded, and he lay and gasped and gasped, as if for a wager.

Hilary went back to his bed, sat down, and resumed taking off his boots. Billy Bunter sat up at last, set his spectacles straight on his fat nose, and blinked at him.

"Ow!" he gasped. "You rotter!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I'll jolly well thrash you, Hilary!" spluttered Bunter. "I—I—I'll make shavings of you! Ow!"

But Billy Bunter did not approach the new junior again, in spite of his threat. Funk or not, he had a grip that Bunter did not like, and the Owl of the Remove did not want any more of it.

"Aren't you going to make him take your boots off, Bunter?" grinned Ogilvy.
 "Oh, rats!" grunted Bunter. "The beastly funk ain't worth taking notice of. I'm going to treat him with contempt."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 Billy Bunter snorted, and turned in. His career as a bully had come to a sudden stop, and he was annoyed.

Hilary turned in without further interference. Skinner and Snoop had been laying some little plans for his benefit; but after the easy way in which they had seen him handle Bunter they decided not to put these plans into execution just at present.

So there was no ragging in the Remove that night, and Hilary passed his first night at Greyfriars peacefully enough. But it was long before the new junior slept. After the rest of the Form had fallen into slumber the new boy remained awake, his eyes staring into the darkness, and his lashes wet with tears. The prospect before him at Greyfriars was a dreary one, and his heart was heavy.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Hilary's Secret!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. saw little of the new junior during the next few days.

They did not concern themselves about him, naturally, and Hilary was too unobtrusive to draw much attention to himself.

They could not feel any liking or respect for him; but they did not want to hurt him, and they simply went their own way regardless of him.

But less good-natured fellows gave Hilary a good deal of attention, and in those first days his life was certainly not a happy one.

Skinner and Snoop tormented him at their own sweet will, and even Bunter occasionally forgot his handling in the dormitory, and assumed a bullying air towards him.

Contemptuous looks and words were his daily portion in the Remove.

Even the fags, finding out that there was a fellow in the Remove who hadn't the courage of a mouse, looked for him in the quadrangle and the passages, and jeered him, knocked his cap off, and worried him.

Sammy Bunter of the Second Form even pulled his nose in the quadrangle, and bragged of it with great pride in his Form-room. It was a feat for a fag to pull the nose of a Removeite, for even Billy Bunter's nose could not be pulled with impunity by a fag.

A fellow who would submit to such an indignity was not likely to get much consideration in any school.

If Hilary had been a weakling or an invalid, or even a fellow with glasses, like Bunter, Harry Wharton & Co. would soon have interfered. But there was no call for their interference in this case. Hilary was able to take care of himself.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 559.

if he chose, and if he did not choose he could take the consequences.

Mr. Quelch sometimes eyed Hilary rather curiously; but the new junior made no complaints to the Form-master. That was rather a puzzle to the Removeites, for a fellow who was so hopeless a funk might have been expected to be a sneak, too; and certainly Hilary had plenty to complain of, and still more certainly he was in need of his Form-master's protection.

But he never complained, and never asked protection. It surprised the juniors at first; but they soon concluded that he did not even dare to sneak, and despised him all the more.

His life in the Remove was that of a pariah.

He was not exactly sent to Coventry; but hardly a word was ever spoken to him that was not contemptuous or offensive. Kipps, his study-mate, let him severely alone. Kipps felt that he was a

ALONZO TODD

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

IS NOT



A CADET.

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disgrace to No. 5, and he would have got rid of him if he could. As that was impossible, Kipps gave him the marble eye, and Hilary accepted it quietly.

He never displayed anger, even when he found the pages of his books gummed together by some practical joker, or his trousers sewn up, or all the buttons cut off his coat. He owed these kindly attentions to Skinner & Co., and Skinner gave full rein to his mean, persecuting nature, without fear of reprisals.

It was no wonder that the new junior's face was always clouded, and it was easy to see that he was very unhappy.

He had been five or six days at Greyfriars when Harry Wharton, happening to stroll into the Cloisters, came on him in that secluded place. Hilary was leaning against one of the old stone pillars, his eyes on the ground, and a look of utter dejection on his face that went to Wharton's heart.

With a kindly impulse, Wharton came up to him.

"Cheero, kid!" he said, speaking in a friendly tone, though with rather an effort.

Hilary looked up quickly, his face flushing.

"Feeling down?" asked Wharton.
 "Yes," said Hilary, in a bitter tone. "I'm not exactly enjoying life. I wish I'd never come here!"

"You oughtn't to have come here, kid," said Harry frankly. "With your—ahem!—your queer ideas, you're out of place among ordinary fellows. Any chap who shows the white feather is sure to be ragged a bit at any school. Excuse me," he added, as the junior winced. "But—but you do show the white feather, you know."

"I suppose you think so."
 "You puzzle me," said Harry. "Why do you do it? Skinner would let you alone if you punched him once; one punch would be enough for Skinner. Why the dickens don't you do it?"

"I can't!"
 "But you can't be afraid of Skinner, really; you could make rings round a weedy boulder like that if you tried."

"I know that."
 "Then why don't you do it?"
 "I can't! You wouldn't understand." Hilary sighed. "I oughtn't to have come here—I can see that."

"Then why stay?" asked Wharton. "I suppose your father would take you away if he knew how badly you're doing here. Why not write to him and ask?"

"I—I can't write to my father," said Hilary, hesitating. "He—he's not at home now."

"In the Army?" asked Harry, with interest.

"Oh, no—no!"
 Wharton looked at him oddly. He remembered Bunter's account of what the Head had said to Mr. Quelch. Certainly there was something mysterious about Hilary.

"But somebody sent you here," said Harry, after a pause. "Whoever it was, he would take you away, perhaps, if you asked."

"I was brought here by that old gentleman who came with me—my father's solicitor," said Hilary. "It was by my father's instructions, of course. But—but the pater isn't at home now, and—and I can't write to him."

He did not explain where his father was, though why he should make a secret of it was rather a puzzle.

"Well, if you can't communicate with your pater, I suppose that settles it," said Harry. "It's dashed queer, I must say! Were you ill before you came here, Hilary?"

"Ill! No; I've never been ill."
 "Not suffered from air-raid shock, or anything like that?"

Hilary smiled.
 "I've been through an air-raid," he said. "I did not suffer from shock, though. I helped to carry out the bodies after it. The house next to ours at Knutwood was blown to bits."

"And you weren't scared?"
 "No."

"Well, my hat!" said Wharton. "You weren't scared by Hun bombs, and yet you're afraid of Skinner!"

"I'm not afraid of Skinner. You don't understand."

"Blessed if I do!" said the captain of the Remove. "Look here! You were brought up at home, I believe?"
 "Yes."

"Did they teach you any rot like Good Little Georgie in the goody-goody books?" asked Harry. "Is that at the bottom of it?"
 Hilary coloured again.

"I was taught that it is wrong to fight," he answered, in a low voice.

"Well, so it is, of course; but—but we're not yet quite civilised enough to do entirely without fighting," said Harry, with a smile. "After all, there's no harm in a scrap with the gloves on. Fighting's necessary sometimes; for instance, we have to fight the Germans. Not much good turning the other cheek to the Huns, you know."

"I don't know," said Hilary.

Wharton stared at him.

"Oh, draw it mild!" he exclaimed.

"When Huns go on the war-path, how would you deal with them without fighting?"

"I—I don't know! But my father says——" Hilary broke off abruptly.

"Your father says——"

"Never mind. It's not much good talking, anyway," said Hilary. "I shall get used to it all; I've got to stand it, anyway."

"Now, look here," said Wharton patiently. "I can see that you've got some queer ideas in your head. They're no good at Greyfriars, or anywhere else, except some secluded spot where you don't come in contact with the real world. A fellow who never hits back will always be ragged, all over the world. Decent fellows would let you alone; but any cad, and any coward, will rag a fellow who's known never to hit back. It's too strong a temptation for them to resist. Non-resistance simply means giving any bully a chance to spread himself."

"His better nature might stop him in the long run."

"That's rather a rotten reed to lean on. How long do you think you will have to wait before Skinner's better nature crops up?"

Hilary smiled slightly, but did not answer.

"And suppose we relied on the Huns' better nature instead of hitting them?" said Wharton, with a laugh. "It wouldn't take them long to mop up the British Empire at that rate. And wouldn't they do it?"

"I—I hope not."

"You hope not!" yelled Wharton.

"But you know they would!"

"I don't know."

Wharton started a little, as a new thought came into his mind.

"Do you know what you're talking like, Hilary?" he asked quietly.

"Well, what?" asked Hilary, with a touch of defiance.

"Like a Conchy!"

"Do you mean a conscientious objector?"

"Yes, that's what I mean!"

Hilary drew a deep breath.

"And you'd despise a Conchy?" he asked.

"Well," said Harry, slowly and thoughtfully, "I don't know about that. If the chap's genuine, I should think him a hopeless crank. War is a horrible thing, and to make war, if it can be helped, is the biggest crime possible. But when the other party makes war on you, what are you to do? Is it any good to face bayonets with tracts in your hand? Now, is it?"

"I—I don't know."

"Well, you must know it would be no good," said Harry quietly. "You know what's saved England from being treated like Belgium; bayonets, not tracts. I can see what's the matter with you, Hilary. You'd been listening to Conchy gas, and it's got into your head."

"I'm bound to believe what my father tells me. Even if I have any doubts, I've no right to set myself up against my father."

"Your father! But—but your father—— You don't mean to say——" Wharton broke off, understanding at last.



The worm turns! (See Chapter 9.)

"I didn't mean to say so," said Hilary, crimsoning. "I was told not to mention it here, because—because it would be misunderstood. But—but my father is a conscientious objector, and he's been put on Home Office work on the land. And—and I'm his son, and I back him up."

"My hat!" said Wharton, with a whistle.

"And now you know!" said Hilary bitterly.

"I'm sorry," said Wharton. "I'd advise you not to mention it here; Conchies aren't popular at Greyfriars. It's not your fault. I understand now what Bunter heard the Head say. I sha'n't mention this, of course, and I recommend you not to."

Hilary nodded, and walked away up the Cloisters. Bob Cherry's voice was heard calling from the quad, and Harry Wharton went to join his chums.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Been jawing with Cold Feet?" said Bob.

"Poor beast!" said Harry. "I'm sorry for that chap! He can't help being a queer fish."

"I suppose you're not getting pally with that funk?" asked Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"I don't think he's a funk," said Harry. "He's been taught a lot of rot by people who ought to know better. In a way, it's rather plucky of him to be acting up to his queer principles."

"Blessed if I ever heard of letting a chap punch your nose on principle!" said Bob Cherry. "I know I shall always be unprincipled on that point. Wharton, old scout, you're talking rot! Let's go and get some footer."

Hilary came along by Little Side while the Removites were at footer practice. He stood for some minutes looking on. Angel of the Fourth came along with Kenney, and entertained himself by catching off Hilary's cap and tossing it among the elms.

Hilary spun round, his eyes gleaming. Aubrey Angel looked at him coolly.

"Well, funk?" he said.

The new junior walked quietly away, picked up his cap, and went off towards the School House, followed by a mocking laugh from the Fourth-Formers.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Hard Up!

"BETTER say nothing about it, Smithy!"

Tom Redwing was making that remark to his study-mate when Skinner came along the Remove passage to No. 4 a few days later.

The door of the study was half open, and Skinner, from the passage, saw Vernon-Smith standing with a newspaper in his hand, his back to the door.

Skinner's footsteps were always quiet, and generally stealthy, and the two juniors in the study had not heard him.

The cad of the Remove stopped silently. Redwing's remark had roused his curiosity, and he wanted to know what it was that Tom thought it was better to say nothing about.

"I don't mean to say anything, of course," replied the Bounder. "It's not my business."

"It would make it harder for the poor chap here," said Redwing.

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders.

"He's not bound to be a fool like his father, Redwing, or a rogue, which ever he is. Still, I sha'n't say anything. I wonder the fellows haven't guessed, though. I heard Bull say he'd seen the name in the papers somewhere. Skinner says the same, but they don't remember what it was connected with. I had an idea, and that's why I looked out this old paper."

"Burn it!" said Redwing.

"Can't! It's got the report about my uncle's regiment on the Somme; that's why I was keeping it," said the Bounder.

"The Hilary bizney is in the next column, that's how I came to see it; and the other chaps must have seen it when I showed them the paper. Of course, the Hilary affair was very likely reported in a good many papers. The old buck made no end of a speechifying, and it attracted some attention."

"Keep it out of sight, then!" said Redwing. "It would make it worse for Hilary if it was known, and we don't want to drop on a fellow when he's down."

"Quite so. I agree."

Vernon-Smith folded the paper and put it into the table-drawer. Skinner stepped back out of sight in the passage, breathing rather quickly.

There was a vague remembrance in his mind of having seen the name of Hilary in some newspaper report, and he was keenly interested in finding that the Bounder had the very newspaper. Evidently it was something up against Hilary, and Skinner had fully made up his mind to see the paper. But he was aware that it was no use asking the Bounder for it after what had been said.

He waited a minute or two, and then came into the doorway, as if he had just arrived there, and tapped on the half-open door.

"Hallo!" said the Bounder, looking round carelessly.

He was not on the best of terms with his former study-mate.

"I've looked in to ask you a little favour, Smithy," said Skinner, with his most agreeable manner.

"Look out again, then!" suggested the Bounder.

"I've had some hard luck——"

"Oh! Those gee-gees!" said the Bounder, with deep sympathy. "Did the special snip come in tenth or eleventh?"

Tom Redwing laughed.

"Well, as a matter of fact, I dropped some money last Saturday," said Skinner. "Could you lend me a couple of quids, Smithy?"

"I could!"

"And will you?"

"No; I won't!"

Skinner looked sullen.

"Jerry Hawke's worrying me for money," he said. "It's not so very long since you used to drop money on the gee-gees, Smithy."

"I dropped my own money, not yours!" said the Bounder drily. "Try the next study, old bird!"

"You won't lend me any tin?"

"Oh, come off!" said the Bounder. "You wouldn't settle if I did. You owe me a small fortune from the time you used to dig with me here. I won't lend you money to lose on races, and it's like your cheek to ask! Go and eat coke!"

The Bounder's answer was plain enough, and Skinner realised that there was nothing doing. He had, in fact, only come to the Bounder as a sort of forlorn hope. Smithy had plenty of money, if he chose to part with it. But it was pretty plain that he did not intend to part with it.

With a scowling face Skinner quitted the study and returned to his own quarters, where Stott and Snoop looked at him with mute inquiry.

"Nothin' doing!" growled Skinner.

"Have you tried Mauly?" asked Snoop.

"Yes. N.G."

"You'll have to put Hawke off, then."

"The trouble is that the beast won't be put off," growled Skinner. "Where the merry dickens am I going to raise a few quids?"

"I'll tell you what," said Stott. "What about Hilary?"

"Hilary!"

"Well, he seems to have plenty of money," said Stott. "I dare say he would lend you some rather than have his nose punched."

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Sidney James Snoop, with some disgust. "We haven't come down to highway robbery, I suppose?"

"Well, it's a chance, you know. I know he's got oof."

Skinner looked thoughtful.

"Blessed if I don't try it!" he said.

"After all, he's a sneaking worm, and I don't see why I shouldn't make use of him. I simply must have a couple of quid! I'll jolly well try Hilary!"

With new hope the black sheep of the Remove looked for the new junior. He found him in his study at work, Kipps being out. Kipps did not spend more time with his study-mate than he could help.

Hilary looked up with a weary expression as Skinner came in and closed the door after him.

"You had better get out, Skinner," he said. "You're trying my temper rather hard. I shouldn't keep on too far if I were you."

"My dear man, I haven't come here to rag you," said Skinner agreeably. "I'm going to ask you a little favour."

Hilary looked at him in surprise and scorn.

"Ask me a favour?" he repeated.

Skinner looked sullen.

"Yes. I'm hard up for a few days. Will you lend me a couple of quid till next week?"

"You ask me to lend you money after the way you've treated me?" exclaimed Hilary contemptuously.

Skinner set his thin lips.

"Well, I don't ask you; I tell you!" he said. "Lend me a couple of quid, Hilary. I know you've got the money."

"I will do nothing of the kind!"

"You don't deny that you've got it?"

"No; I have the money, and more," said Hilary; "but I shall lend you nothing! You must have plenty of nerve to ask me."

"I'm not asking you; I'm telling you! Will you shell out?" asked Skinner threateningly.

"No."

"Mind, if you don't oblige me I'll lay into you!" said Skinner. "I'll wipe up the study with your cowardly carcase!"

Hilary's lip curled.

"You mean that you are a bully and a thief as well!" he answered. "You will not touch my money, you cad!"

Skinner advanced on him with hands clenched.

"By gad! I'll lick you till you can't crawl!" he said between his teeth.

Hilary breathed very hard. The queer principles he had learned in his curious home did not seem of much use here. Skinner was evidently in deadly earnest. He had to part with his money or take a thrashing, or——

"For the last time!" said Skinner savagely.

Hilary did not speak, but he advanced to meet Skinner half-way. He received, without heeding, a blow full in the face. Then his strong grasp was laid on Skinner, as it had been laid on Bunter a week before, and the cad of the Remove was whirled off his feet.

Skinner gave a startled howl as he was swung into the air, utterly unable to help himself. He had no shadow of a chance in Hilary's powerful hands.

"Let me go!" he shouted. "I—I'll smash you! I'll——"

"What's to prevent me smashing you, Skinner?" said Hilary calmly. "I am twice as strong as you are, and I could dash you on the floor if I chose."

Skinner realised that only too clearly, and he struggled in a frantic manner, but quite without success.

In a few minutes he was exhausted and breathless, and still the strong grip held him pinned.

"Will you let me go?" he panted at last.

"I'll let you go if you'll leave the study and leave me alone."

"I—I will!" gasped Skinner.

Hilary set him on his feet again, and

Skinner stood dazed and breathless. He backed out of the study, his eyes gleaming like a snake's. The door closed with a slam, and Hilary returned to his work, and he was not interrupted again by Skinner.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Skinner Raises the Wind!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! What's the news?"

Bob Cherry came upon Skinner in the quad the next morning suddenly. Skinner had a newspaper open in his hands, and was scanning it eagerly—so eagerly that he did not see Bob approaching.

"Anything fresh?" asked Bob, with great interest. He naturally supposed that Skinner was on the war news.

To his surprise Skinner crumpled the paper in his hand.

"Eh? Not Nothing?" he said confusedly.

"You seem jolly keen about nothing, then!" said Bob, in astonishment.

"Mind your own business, can't you?"

"Well, I can," assented Bob, staring at him. "I don't see any harm in asking what's in the paper. No secrets there, I suppose?"

"Of—of course not!" stammered Skinner. "You—you startled me!"

"I'll startle you some more if you're not a bit more civil!" said Bob. "Like that, f'rinstance!"

And Bob took Skinner by the collar and shook him, not at all pleased by Skinner's rudeness.

"Leggo, you idiot!" snapped Skinner, jerking himself away. "Don't play the goat now, Cherry!"

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

Bob Cherry headed for the School House; but Skinner, heedless of the bell, began scanning the paper again. He grinned as he read it. Twice he read through the paragraph that interested him, and then, thrusting the folded paper under his jacket, he hurried into the School House. It was Smithy's paper, which he had abstracted from the study, and he had to put it back where he had found it. It had served his purpose now.

Vernon-Smith and Redwing were going to the Form-room, so Skinner found it easy to whip into their study and replace the newspaper in the table-drawer. He was grinning as he came down to the Form-room, where, a minute later, he received a sharp reprimand from Mr. Quelch. That banished his grin. The Form-master had an acid tongue when he was annoyed.

But Skinner was soon looking quite pleased with himself again, and several times during afternoon lessons he glanced at the quiet, sedate face of Dick Hilary with triumph in his look.

When the Remove were dismissed Snoop and Stott joined Skinner at once in the passage.

"Did you find it out?" queried Sidney James.

"Eh? What?" said Skinner vaguely.

"What was in Smithy's paper. You told us——"

"Oh, Smithy's paper!" said Skinner carelessly. "I'm going to have a look for that later."

He walked away before his chums could question him further, leaving them looking suspicious.

"He's got on to it, and he doesn't want to tell us," grunted Snoop. "Just like Skinner to be keeping secrets!"

"I don't see why he should," said Stott.

"Depend on it he's got some axe to grind," said Snoop discontentedly.

"Bother him, and the paper, too!"

Harold Skinner kept out of the way of his inquisitive chums after that, and they had no chance of asking him questions. Whatever it was he had learned from the Bounder's newspaper he intended to keep it to himself, for the present at least; and no doubt Snoop was right in suspecting that he had an axe to grind.

Skinner was looking for Hilary presently, but for some time he did not find him. But Bunter, who saw everything, informed him, after a while, that he had seen the funk going to the library. To the library hurried Skinner, and in that quiet spot he found the new junior, reading.

Hilary laid down his book as Skinner came in.

"I've been looking for you," said Skinner blandly.

"Well, you've found me!" said Hilary shortly.

"What's it like to be a Conchy?" smiled Skinner.

"What?"

"Conchy!" chuckled Skinner. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Hilary rose to his feet, his face very pale.

"Has Wharton——" he began.

"Wharton!" exclaimed Skinner, quick to catch the name. "Did Wharton know? And he's been keeping it dark, has he?"

Hilary was silent.

"So Wharton knew?" chortled Skinner.

"Well, Wharton hasn't told me. I've seen it in print!"

Hilary sank into his chair again. Skinner regarded him with a gloating look. He felt that he had the whip-hand now.

"What do you know about——about my affairs?" exclaimed Hilary, at last, in an uncertain voice.

"The whole merry history!" smiled Skinner. "I've read it in a three-months-old paper. All about Mr. Hilary at the tribunal, and his jaw there. Blessed if I ever heard of such a cringing cad!"

Hilary's eyes blazed, and he made a step towards Skinner, who backed away very promptly. He looked much more of a Conchy just then than Hilary did.

"Don't say anything to me about my father, you cad!" said Hilary, between his teeth. "Don't make me hurt you, Skinner!"

"Keep your wool on, old nut! Isn't it against your merry old principles to get your rag out, Conchy?" said Skinner, putting all the scorn he could into the last unpleasant word.

"You had better take care, all the same!" said Hilary. "There's a limit to my patience, I can tell you, Conchy or not!"

"Well, I've read the whole report, and I can produce the paper, if necessary," grinned Skinner. "My only hat! What would the fellows say if they knew we had a Conchy here! The Head must have been potty to let you in! And your pater talked about his German brothers when he was called over the coals! Ha, ha, ha! A chap with German brothers wouldn't be popular at Greyfriars!"

Hilary breathed hard.

"And he's got a brother at the Front, and a nephew who's lost his legs in the Battle of the Somme. It's mentioned in the paper," said Skinner. "You see, I know all about it. I wonder what they think of him! I'd like to hear your uncle's opinion of your pater, Hilary."

"Is that all you have to say?"

"Not quite! Your cheery old conscientious pater has been put to work on the land——what? He doesn't like trenches!" grinned Skinner. "He prefers to leave the trenches for other chaps!"

"You wouldn't understand," said Hilary.

"I think I do——rather! Trenches ain't nice places to live in, and a man would prefer to work on the land if he happened to be born with cold feet!"

"That is not his reason."

"Oh, no; his reason's his dear old conscience!" said Skinner, with a roar of laughter. "He discovered that he had a conscience all of a sudden when he was called up! Ha, ha, ha! Never mind. 'Tain't my business," added Skinner, with a change of tone. "It would do you a lot of harm to have this known here, Hilary!"

"I know that!"

"You've kept it jolly dark, though really we might have guessed. But do you want to keep it dark still?"

Hilary looked at him.

"Yes," he said, in a low voice.

"You ain't exactly proud of it——what?"

"I am proud of my father," said Hilary. "Whether he is right or wrong, he is sincere; and I will neither criticise



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him myself nor allow you to do so, Skinner!"

"Oh, rats!" said Skinner mockingly.

"How are you going to prevent me, if I choose? Conchies musn't fight, you know."

"I warn you not to provoke me too far! I am trying to act as my father has told me to act; but you make it very hard. You may make it too hard," said Hilary quietly.

"Well, don't let us row!" said Skinner, more amicably. "Look here, you'd like me to keep this secret?"

"I've said so."

"Well, one good turn deserves another. Will you lend me two pounds?"

Hilary started as if a serpent had stung him. The scorn in his face made even Skinner flush a little.

"You want to be paid for keeping it secret?" exclaimed Hilary.

"You can put it like that, if you like," said Skinner scowling. "I know I'm hard pushed for a couple of quid, and you've got plenty of money. One good turn deserves another."

Hilary was silent for a few moments,

thinking. He put his hand into his pocket at last.

"It's a go!" he said.

Skinner left the library with two pound notes in his pocket and much satisfaction in his cunning face. His next interview with Mr. Jerry Hawke, at Friardale, was much more friendly than his last; and Mr. Hawke confided to him a certain sure snip he had lately received——straight from the stables according to Mr. Hawke. And Skinner, as he walked home, was thinking of that dead cert, and considering ways and means of raising the wind to take advantage of such an extremely good thing.

There was only one way, and that was Hilary. The Conchy had paid once to have his miserable secret kept. Why shouldn't he pay again? Skinner asked himself. True, he had promised to keep the secret for what he had received; but a promise did not cost Skinner much.

"Dash it all!" murmured Skinner, as he came in at the gates. "It's too good a thing to miss; and Hilary can stand me another quid. He's got to, in fact. He would simply be hounded out of Greyfriars if the fellows knew the facts. It's worth another quid to him. He's got to stamp up, and if he won't——" A very ugly look came over Harold Skinner's face. "But he won't dare the rotten Conchy! He'll stamp up all right!"

And after tea Skinner looked for "the Conchy" once more, with the laudable intention of making him stamp up.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Shown Up!

"FUNK!"

Harry Wharton & Co. were chatting in the Common-room after tea when Billy Bunter snorted out that unpleasant epithet.

Wharton glanced round, and noticed that Dick Hilary had just come in. Hence Billy Bunter's snort.

Hilary did not look at the fat junior. He went quietly to a sofa, and sat down with a book in his hand. The unfortunate junior never joined in the talk in the Common-room. He was more likely to receive a stare than a reply if he did.

Billy Bunter blinked across at him through his big spectacles, and emitted a moaning cackle.

"Ho, he, he! Yaroooh! Wharrer you doing, Bolsover?"

"You fat bounder——"

"Oh, it's you, Harry, old chap!" said Bunter, wriggling in the grasp of the captain of the Reserve. "Leggo my collar, will you?"

"Do you want to be shaken?" asked Harry.

"Ow! No."

"Then keep your mouth shut, and let Hilary alone!" said Wharton, releasing the fat junior after a warning shake.

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Let Bunter alone!" boomed Bolsover major aggressively. "If the fellow's a funk, why shouldn't Bunter call him one if he wants to?"

"Oh, shut up!" snapped Wharton irritably.

"I say, you fellows, Wharton's getting pally with that funk!" said Bunter. "I don't think it's right for the captain of the Form, you know. What I think is——"

Wharton made an angry gesture, and Bunter retreated precipitately without stating what he thought. Bolsover gave the captain of the Reserve an aggressive glare, and Wharton turned his back on him.

Hilary had heard all that was said, and though a flush crept into his pale cheeks, he made no sign.

A few minutes later Harold Skinner sauntered in. He glanced round the big room, and crossed over to the sofa and sat down beside Hilary. A good many glances rested on him as he did so.

"I've been looking for you again, Hilary," remarked Skinner, speaking in a low voice, out of hearing of the other fellows in the room.

"Well?"

"Can you lend me a quid?"

"What?"

"I find that I'm a bit harder pushed than I thought," said Skinner blandly. "I'm sure you could manage another quid."

Hilary laid his book on his knees, drew farther away from Skinner, and looked at him fixedly. Skinner flushed a little under his look. Skinner's conscience was of the toughest make, but he was not quite satisfied with what he was doing, though that did not prevent him from doing it.

"No," said Hilary, in a low, distinct voice, "I am not going to give you any more money, Skinner! I gave you two pounds to hold your tongue, and you promised to do so. If you won't keep your promise I've wasted the money, and I don't intend to waste any more."

"Don't speak so jolly loud!" muttered Skinner uneasily. "You don't want the fellows to hear. Look here, Hilary, you needn't think I'm always coming on to you for money because I know about your pater. But I really must have a quid this time."

"You won't get it from me!"

"It's really the last time."

Hilary shrugged his shoulders. Skinner was more or less in earnest, but the new junior did not need to be very keen to see that the next time the cad of the Remove was hard up he would come to the same source for new supplies. It had to end sooner or later, and then his secret would be told. He knew that quite well, and his mind was made up.

"Think it over," said Skinner, in the same low tone, and with a dangerous glitter in his eyes. "You'd better. Suppose I tell the fellows now?"

"You are cad enough!" answered Hilary. "Please yourself."

Skinner set his lips.

"Will you lend me a quid?" he muttered.

"No!"

Hilary rose as he spoke, and moved away from the sofa. Skinner sat with a black brow looking at him. The sure snip confided to him by Mr. Hawke could not be taken advantage of now. The horn of plenty had suddenly dried up. That fact and Hilary's look of utter scorn roused all the malice in Skinner's nature—and there was a good deal.

Skinner strolled over towards the fireplace, where the Famous Five were chatting with some other fellows.

"You chaps like to hear some news?" he asked, with one eye on Hilary, who had sat down again at a distance.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What have you got hold of now?" asked Bob Cherry, with a look of great disfavour at Skinner.

"Something quite interesting, dear boy. Did you know we had a Conchy at Greyfriars?"

"A what?"

"A dear old Conchy, and the son of a cheery old Conchy!" said Skinner. "It's a fact, and Wharton knows, too, don't you, Wharton?"

"Don't talk to me!" snapped the captain of the Remove.

"Smithy knows it, too, don't you, Smithy?" pursued Skinner, unabashed. "Smithy's got the paper with the report of it all in."

Vernon-Smith did not look at him.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 559.

Tom Redwing gave a hasty and rather distressed look at Hilary, who kept his eyes on his book. There was a rumble from Bolsover major.

"A Conchy at Greyfriars!" he said. "What do you mean, Skinner?"

"What price the Head letting a chap into the school whose father is doing work of national importance because he's afraid to go into khaki?" said Skinner.

"Do you mean Hilary?"

"What-ho!"

"A Conchy!" exclaimed Bolsover major, bristling with wrath. "A Conchy at Greyfriars! It's impossible. The Head wouldn't!"

"I say, you fellows, that accounts!" cackled Bunter. "Hilary is a Conscientious Objector. He, he, he!"

"His father is, at least," said Skinner. "It's been in the papers. Before the tribunal old Hilary talked about his German brothers! Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'd German brothers him!" roared Bolsover major. "The cowardly funk! I'd give him German brothers!"

"Look here, that's all rot!" said Bob Cherry. "No man in his senses would talk about having German brothers. Piffle!"

"Old Hilary did at the tribunal."

"Well, if he did he's potty, and not responsible for his actions!" said Squiff. "And I don't see how you know, either, Skinner."

"It was in the papers, and Smithy's got a copy of the paper if he likes to produce it."

"Is that so, Smithy?" asked several voices.

The Bounder knitted his brows.

"I've got nothing to say about it," he answered shortly. "It's nobody's business that I can see."

"Oh, draw it mild!" exclaimed Ogilvy. "We don't want Conscientious Objectors here."

"Well, we haven't any here," said Harry Wharton. "Hilary's father isn't likely to come here, ass!"

"We don't want sons of Conchies, either!" roared Bolsover major. "What's Greyfriars coming to, I'd like to know? I'm jolly well going to get out the truth about this!"

The bully of the Remove strode over to Hilary, whose face was burning. He knocked the book out of the new junior's hand, and Hilary sprang to his feet, to meet Bolsover's angry and aggressive glare.

"Is that the truth?" demanded Bolsover major. "Is your father a Conscientious Objector?"

There was an instant's pause, and then Hilary answered quietly:

"Yes."

"You admit it?" stuttered Bolsover.

"Yes."

There was a buzz in the Common-room.

"And you've got the cheek to come here among decent fellows, when your father's a sneaking, rotten, cowardly worm—"

Hilary's eyes blazed.

"That's enough!" he exclaimed.

"Hold your tongue, Bolsover!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"You can call me what you like," said Hilary, more quietly, "but you shall not speak of my father like that!"

"And who's going to stop me?" roared Bolsover major, almost breathless with rage and amazement.

"I will!"

"You!" Bolsover major burst into a scoffing laugh. "You! You white-livered worm, you're as big a coward as your father; and he's as big a sneaking coward as could be found anywhere,

I fancy—a crawling, cringing—Yaroooh!"

Smack!

Hilary's open hand came across Bolsover major's face, with a crack like a pistol-shot, suddenly cutting short his flow of eloquence. The Conchy had woke up at last!

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Plenty of Pluck!

"WELL hit!" grinned Bob Cherry. Bolsover major staggered back, taken by surprise, and sat down on the floor of the Common-room with a heavy bump.

Hilary stood looking at him with blazing eyes. He did not look much like a Conchy now.

There was a laugh as Bolsover sat down. But it died away as he rose to his feet, his hard face crimson with rage, and his eyes glittering.

"A fight!" sang out Skinner. "The Conchy's on the war-path! Shut the door—don't let him run!"

But Hilary did not look like running. He did not move a step, and his eyes never left Bolsover. Harry Wharton & Co. simply blinked at him. The fellow who had let Bunter punch his nose with impunity had broken out at last, and he had picked the most burly fellow in the Remove—the bully of the Form, for whom he certainly was not a match physically.

Harry Wharton interposed as Bolsover major rushed at the new junior like a bull.

"Hold on—"

"Get out of the way, Wharton!" said Bolsover major hoarsely. "He's smacked my face! I'm going to smash him, I tell you!"

"You're going to fight him," said Wharton. "No hurry; we'll have this in order." He pushed Bolsover back, and turned to Hilary. "I suppose you're ready to fight Bolsover, Hilary?"

"I don't want to; but I shall certainly fight him if he speaks of my father as he did—and anybody else at Greyfriars, too!" said Hilary, his eyes flashing.

"Where have your giddy principles gone to?" chuckled Snoop.

Hilary did not answer that question. It was rather a difficult one to answer.

"I'm ready!" he said.

"Shut the door!" said Temple of the Fourth. "We don't want any prefects here! By gad, I've never seen a Conchy on the war-path; this is interestin'!"

Tom Brown closed the door. There was a good deal of excitement now; and it was easy to see that Hilary had risen in the estimation of his Form-fellows.

He was facing Bolsover major quite calmly, and a fellow who would do that could not be a funk. And though the Removites had their own opinion about Hilary's father, they could not blame his son for standing up for him. It was not a son's place to set up in judgment upon his parent, however mistaken the latter might be; and poor Hilary had evidently tried to live up to the absurd and impossible theories instilled into him at home—till now!

Now it was borne in upon him at last that he had set himself an impossible task.

Certainly there had been doubt in his mind; miserable doubt and uncertainty. But his father was his father, and he was bound to respect him, and to follow his teaching as far as he could. And the more doubt crept into his mind the more passionate he felt in defence of the mistaken man; which was not very reasonable, but very natural.

Bolsover major, quivering with wrath, threw off his jacket. Hilary followed his

example quietly. He was in for it now, and it was quite plain that he did not shrink from the encounter, formidable antagonist as Bolsover was.

"I've got some gloves here," said Hazeldene.

"I don't want any gloves!" roared Bolsover major. "I'm going to smash him!"

"Put on the gloves!" growled Wharton. "We don't want black eyes in the Remove, you chump! Put them on!"

Bolsover growled; but he gave in.

The two juniors donned the gloves, and the crowd of fellows made a ring for them. Temple of the Fourth took out his watch to keep time.

"Ready?" he asked.

Bolsover major snorted assent, and Hilary nodded.

"Time!"

At the word Bolsover major rushed forward. In a moment the fight was on, fast and furious.

Some of the fellows expected Hilary to break away and back; indeed, Bunter sang out, "Mind he doesn't bolt!" But Hilary did not give a step. He showed up as a pretty good boxer, too, and though he received some severe punishment, he stepped Bolsover's savage rush. Indeed, the bully of the Remove, pressing on too recklessly, received a jarring upper-cut which sent him spinning back, and he finished the round sprawling.

"Well done, Conchy!"

"Well hit!"

Skinner picked Bolsover up. The burly Removeite was nearly choking with wrath.

"Time!" said Temple.

"Second round—and last!" grinned Snoop.

But Sidney James Snoop was wrong. It was far from being the last. It was a tough round, with plenty of hitting on both sides, and but for the gloves there would have been black eyes and bleeding

noses. Even as it was both faces showed very plain signs of the grueling.

The third round followed, and the fourth. Till then Hilary had held his own well, in spite of Bolsover's superior strength and weight, skill being about equal, and the lighter junior very quick and nimble. But in the fifth round strength and weight told heavily, and Hilary was evidently getting the worst of it. Twice he went down heavily under Bolsover's fierce blows.

"Time!"

Harry Wharton helped Hilary to his feet, and the new junior leaned on him, panting.

"Better chuck it!" whispered Wharton. "He's too hefty for you, old chap!"

Hilary shook his head.

"I'm disobeying my father in fighting him at all!" he muttered. "I may as well go on now!"

"I mean, you'll get a bad licking."

"Oh, I don't mind the licking!"

"Time!" said Reginald Temple.

Bolsover came on fiercely, and in the sixth round Hilary found it difficult to stand up to his adversary. But he stood up, receiving severe punishment, and giving little in return. He was panting painfully at the end of the round, and one of his eyes was closed, and his nose streaming red.

Bolsover stepped back when time was called, and grinned mockingly at his opponent.

"You can chuck it if you like," he said. "Blessed if I thought you'd put up a fight at all, when your pater's a sneaking, crawling—Ah, would you?" He put up his hands as Hilary rushed at him.

"Here, this isn't in order!" exclaimed Temple. "Can't you wait for time?"

"Go it, Bolsover!"

"Go it, Conchy!"

There were no more rounds; it was hammer and tongs to the finish now. The finish came at last, with Hilary on

his back on the floor, gasping painfully for breath, and evidently licked to the wide. He made an effort to rise, and sank back again.

Bolsover major peeled off the gloves, and rubbed his face. He had a darkening eye, and his nose looked nearly twice its usual size. But Hilary was a good deal more hurt.

"He can't go on," said Bolsover, in a rather subdued tone. "I'm not going to touch him again. He's got pluck!"

Wharton silently helped the defeated junior to his feet. Hilary's head was swimming, and it was plain that he could not go on. Bolsover major approached him.

"Look here, Hilary—" he said.

Hilary's eyes glittered. He made an effort to stand upright, but Harry Wharton had to catch him. But it was not a taunt now that Bolsover was thinking of.

"Look here, kid!" he said. "You've got pluck, though you're a silly fool. And—and I'm sorry I said anything about your father."

And with that—which was a great concession for Bolsover major—he turned and walked out of the Common-room. Wharton took Hilary's arm, and Bob Cherry took the other.

"Come on, kid!" said the captain of the Remove kindly.

They helped Hilary to the dormitory, where he bathed his damaged face—without improving it much, however. It was a good many days before Dick Hilary recovered from the effects of that terrific licking. But it was worth while; for after his fight with Bolsover major the son of the Conchy was no longer an outcast in the Remove!

(Don't miss "HIS COUNTRY'S CALL!"—next Monday's grand complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., by Frank Richards.)

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

BUNTER'S LITTLE LESSON!

By FRANK NUGENT.

BILLY BUNTER, of the Remove Form, had received a remittance.

Now, this fact alone is remarkable enough to deserve special mention. But, in addition, there was something out of the ordinary about that remittance that excited attention in the Remove. To come to the point, it was neither a postal-order nor a pound note, but a five—a real, rustling Bank of England note for five pounds!

Of course, it was not the first five he had ever had, for Bunter's pater is a "bear," or a "bull," or some other peculiar animal, on the Stock Exchange, and some time ago, when he brought off a big deal, fivers came quite regularly, and the Owl lived in a land flowing with milk and honey. But a change came o'er the fortunes of Bunter senior, and big remittances stopped suddenly.

It came as a great surprise to us, therefore, to note the reappearance of fivers, and we concluded that the elder Bunter had made a success of some new swindle, and was tipping his son with a share of the proceeds.

"What's the odds against Bunter's becoming a blade again, now he's in funds?" queried Vernon-Smith, in the junior Common-room, as the news of the Owl's good fortune spread.

Harry Wharton frowned. The same thought had occurred to him, though he had not voiced it.

"He won't be happy till he's had a bit of a flutter!" grinned Harold Skinner. "I vote we invite him up to the study for a little game—eh, Snoopey?"

A snigger from Sidney James Snoop gave assent to that proposal; but they were saved the trouble of a search by the entrance of Billy Bunter himself.

Billy Bunter walked with a noticeable strut, and was looking unusually thoughtful.

"I say, you fellows, where's Smithy?" he asked, rolling into the middle of the group that had just been discussing him.

"Adsum, magister!" said the Bounder, with mock humility. "What can I do for you?"

"Oh, here you are, dear boy!" said the Owl, with a fat smirk.

There was a gasp from the Removeites. "Dear boy" was rather an unusual expression for Bunter to use.

"I've been lookin' for you everywhere," continued Billy Bunter, with a glare at the Removeites. "Let's go up to the merry study, where there won't be any outsiders listenin' to us."

"Merry study!" repeated Bob Cherry faintly.

"Listenin'!" gasped Tom Brown. "Oh, great pip!"

The Bounder bestowed a wink upon the rest of us with that eye which Bunter could not see, and linked arms with the porpoise.

"Anything you like!" he said, with a grin. "Lead on, Macduff!"

And the oddly-assorted pair quitted the Common-room, leaving the Removeites yelling with laughter.

"Bunter is out-blading the blades themselves this time!" remarked Dick Hake.

"Wonder what the Bounder's game is?"

"It's to be hoped he's not going to play nap with Bunter!" growled Johnny Bull. And there was a chuckle.

As a matter of fact, the Bounder's game was rather deeper than that. When he and the new member of the "nut" brigade had arrived at the Remove passage he led the way to his own study. Once inside, Billy Bunter unburdened his mind and revealed his intentions.

"Look here, Smithy," he said, calmly appropriating the armchair, "I suppose you've heard I've had a five from my pater to-day?"

"The whole school's heard it!" said Smithy, with a grin.

Billy Bunter granted. That was a rather unpromising beginning.

"Well, you know what a go-ahead chap I am when I've got a little capital," he continued. "The fact is, I don't intend to let this opportunity pass. I'm going—I mean, goin'—to turn this five quid into twenty-five, or even more; and you're the one who can help me."

"Yes?" yawned the Bounder.
 "You see, I'm awfully cute at pickin' winners, an' that sort of thing," said Bunter, rather vaguely, "and my game is to put half of the fiver on a gee-gee in the Muggleigh Handicap next Friday, and the remainder on another in the Swindleton Sellin' Plate next Saturday. See?"

"Quite!" chuckled Vernon-Smith. "You're out to make a giddy fortune by bettin'—eh? But how are you going to choose your winners?"

Billy Bunter gave him a fat wink, and produced a badly-printed paper of a dirty pink colour.

"I've bought 'Sporting Snips' to-day, an' they say Bill Bailey is a dead cert in the Muggleigh Handicap. He's the horse for my money!"

"But where do I come in?" asked the Bounder.

"Well, I want you to lay the money with one of your bookies," explained Bunter. "I don't know Banks, or any of those awful blackguards you pal with; and, bein' so thick with 'em, you can do the business better."

"But I've chucked that game, you know," said Vernon-Smith, grinning at Bunter's delicate way of asking a favour.

Billy Bunter gave a fat chuckle.

"Oh, cut that out, old man!" he said. "I'm deep, you know, and you can't fool me so easily as the other chaps!"

Vernon-Smith laughed aloud.

"Then, to put it plainly, you want me to put two pound ten on Bill Bailey in the Muggleigh Handicap?" said Vernon-Smith. And Billy Bunter nodded.

"That's it, Smithy! What odds do you think you can get?" he asked eagerly, producing his famous fiver.

"Ten to one, easily!" said Vernon-Smith, handing over the change in notes.

Billy Bunter made a laborious mental calculation.

"That'll mean thirty quid, and my money back!" he said, with a whistle. "That ain't bad, is it, Smithy?"

"Not at all!" answered Vernon-Smith, with a sarcastic smile. "You'll become a millionaire in no time, at this rate, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter grinned amiably. With unlimited funds, he could see a glorious time ahead.

After that interesting little conversation the Bounder came along to Study No. 1, where Wharton and I were playing chess, and made a little announcement.

"Good man, Smithy!" said Harry Wharton. "It ought to teach him a lesson this time!"

"If it doesn't, nothing ever will!" said Vernon-Smith, as he quitted the study.

How Billy Bunter resisted temptation during the next two days I cannot tell. It was most pathetic at times to see him hanging round the tuckshop, rustling his remaining two pound ten in his pockets. But evidently Bunter was determined to make his fortune, for when Friday came those three Treasury notes were still intact.

"I say, Smithy, when do we get the results in?" he asked after morning lessons as the Remove crowded out of the Form-room.

"The five o'clock editions of the newspapers will give it, I expect, or you may get it by 'phoning Cobb at the Cross Keys. He has the results wired him from the course."

"Good!" said the Owl. "I'll use the prefects' telephone, then."

Bunter was on tenterhooks for the rest of the afternoon, and as soon as lessons were over he rolled off to the prefects' room, and peeped cautiously in.

The room was empty, the Sixth chancing to be still in their Form-room.

Billy Bunter closed the door carefully behind him, and, crossing over to the telephone, called for his number. He was put through immediately, and the wheezy voice of Mr. Cobb asked who was there.

"Is that Mr. Cobb?" asked Billy Bunter, without troubling to answer that question. "I want to know if you've had news of the winner of the Muggleigh Handicap yet?"

"Jest got it in, sir!" called back Mr. Cobb. "Wild Woodbine was first, Terrible Turk second, and Maria third. Crown Prince, Herrin' Pond, and Bill Bailey also ran!"

Billy Bunter put up the receiver in a state of stupefied amazement. Bill Bailey "also ran"! And "Sporting Snips" had given him as a dead cert! Surely there was a mistake somewhere!

Bunter was determined not to believe it. But when the evening papers came in they

only confirmed Mr. Cobb's information, and Billy Bunter sadly reconciled himself to the fact that half of his fiver had vanished. Billy Bunter was a good deal sadder, though not much wiser, for the rest of that day.

II.

THE Bounder could hardly repress a grin as Billy Bunter rolled into his study at tea-time that day. The Owl of the Remove presented a very woe-begone appearance.

"Heard the result of the handicap yet?" he asked cheerfully, though there was really no need for that question.

Billy Bunter groaned.

"Bill Bailey came in last!" he replied. "I say, Smithy, do you think you can get the bookie to cancel that bet if you 'phone at once?"

Smithy laughed sardonically.

"That's very likely, isn't it? No; you've done it now, and your only chance is to sport the remainder of your fiver on the Swindleton Selling Plate to-morrow. Have you selected a horse yet?"

"Well, I fancied Richmond, but—but I don't want to throw good money after bad," said Billy Bunter dubiously. "What do you advise, Smithy?"

"Don't drag me into it, for goodness' sake!" pleaded Vernon-Smith, with a laugh. "Anyhow, you can't do better than back Richmond for to-morrow. I can get you odds of ten to one against."

"That'll mean thirty quid!" said Billy Bunter reflectively, unconsciously repeating his words of three days ago. "And 'Sportin' Snips' says it's a dead cert!"

"I leave it to you," said Vernon-Smith indifferently. "It doesn't matter to me either way."

Billy Bunter hesitated. Then he drew the three carefully-hoarded notes from his pocket.

"Oh, I'll chance it!" he said recklessly. "Put the money on Richmond, Smithy!"

"Right you are!" assented Vernon-Smith, pocketing the notes, with a grin. "Hawke'll be on the course to-morrow, so this business must be settled to-night. Now buzz off! I'm busy!"

"Ta-ta, dear boy!" said Bunter, with what was meant to be an elegant wave of his fat hand. And he quitted the study, leaving the Bounder almost in convulsions.

"The silly young ass!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, on hearing the story of Billy Bunter's latest flutter. "He deserves to lose the money if he's got no more sense than that!"

"Lucky he's got a more experienced blade to look after him, isn't it?" remarked the Bounder, with a chuckle. And Wharton laughed.

Billy Bunter was like a cat on hot bricks on Saturday. The knowledge that the remainder of his fiver was at stake fairly gave him the jumps.

By the time morning lessons began Bunter had informed most of the Remove of his little flutter, and much interest was felt in the Swindleton Selling Plate.

"I say, Smithy, when shall I get my money, if Richmond comes in first to-day?" asked Billy Bunter, when lessons were over that day.

"To-morrow's Sunday, so I suppose you'll have to wait till Monday," replied Smithy cheerfully. "What are you going to do with all that chink, Bunter?"

"I haven't got it yet!" said the Owl dolefully. "Do you think Richmond will win, Smithy?"

"I suppose he stands as much chance as any other horse," replied the Bounder, laughing.

"Here comes the merry punter!" cried Skinner, as Bunter rolled into the Common-room. "Wouldn't he make a good object for a sermon on the evils of gambling?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Skinner," said Billy Bunter, "you're a bit of a goer yourself, you know! I say, when will the result of the Swindleton Selling Plate appear in the paper?"

"In the five o'clock edition for a cert!" answered Skinner. "I'm cycling over to Courtfield this afternoon, and I'll bring one back if you like."

Bunter nodded his thanks moodily, and rolled out of the Common-room in the direction of the dining-hall. All his former confidence had deserted him.

After half-past four he moaned about the prefects' room in the hope of getting a chance of using the telephone again. Unfortunately, there were several Sixth-Formers in occupation this time, and when tea-time came, and none of them had budged, Billy Bunter rolled off to the Remove passage to partake of much-needed refreshment.

Peter Todd welcomed him to the study with a ferocious glare, and, so that there could be no mistaking his meaning, pointed to the door with one hand and picked up the poker with the other.

"No room for you here, Bunter!" he rapped out. "When you've given up being a blackguard again we may take you in. But until then you're barred! Get out!"

Billy Bunter dodged a menacing movement of the poker and fled.

"Beast!" he muttered. And rolled down to the junior Common-room, arriving just as Skinner came in waving a newspaper excitedly.

"You've won!" he yelled, brandishing the paper before Bunter's startled eyes. And there was an incredulous cry from the other fellows in the room.

"Gimme the paper!" said Bunter, almost too excited to know what to do. And Skinner handed it over, pointing to the stop-press column.

A dozen Removites and Fourth-Formers crowded round the Owl to see for themselves. "Swindleton Selling Plate. One, Richmond; Two, Onlooker; Three, Jack Tar," read Bunter aloud. And the juniors simply gasped.

"My hat! You've won, then!" said Temple of the Fourth. "Well, this beats the band!"

Billy Bunter blinked at that little stop-press item almost mesmerised. He had won! Thirty-two pounds ten shillings were his to use as he wished! It seemed almost too good to be true. But there it was in black and white.

"M-m-m-my aunt! Thirty quid and my money back!" said Billy Bunter, in an awe-stricken voice.

Then he folded up the paper, and rolled off at express speed to the Remove quarters to spread the news.

He burst into Study No. 1 without troubling to knock, and found Wharton and me there, entertaining Vernon-Smith at tea. All three of us glanced up inquiringly as Bunter entered, simply bursting to confide his good fortune to us.

"I say, you fellows, Richmond's come home first!" he gasped. "I told you I was cute enough for the bookies, Smithy!"

"Wha-a-a-at?" we yelled, in unison.

Vernon-Smith tore the newspaper out of Bunter's hands, and glanced at the stop-press column. Then he dropped the sheet, and stared at the Owl like one in a dream. "Richmond first! It's impossible!" he cried.

"It's there in black and white, ain't it?" snorted Billy Bunter. "Anyhow, I don't see why you should be so surprised at it, Smithy. Thirty quid, you know, and my money back!"

He rolled out of the study to tell the rest of the Remove, leaving us staring at each other in dismay.

"Well, I'm hanged if this isn't the giddy limit!" said the Bounder. "I had certain information that Richmond was not going to run to-day. What an end to my scheme for teaching Bunter a lesson!"

The Remove passage was in an uproar now. The news that Bunter had won thirty pounds had spread down the studies in a few seconds, and fellows were pouring out of their dens to get authentic information.

We went out, to find Billy Bunter the man of the hour. Fellows like Snoop and Skinner were the first to toady to him, but many others besides these suggested that it was up to Bunter to stand a Form feed. Billy Bunter, in a flush of prosperity, was quite agreeable, and at once made for Mrs. Mible's tuckshop, followed by a score of Removites.

Mrs. Mible flatly refused to give "tick" at first, but when the news of Bunter's expected fortune was communicated to her the good dame thawed considerably, and gave her assent.

The feed that followed brought several fellows in danger of exceeding the ration scale; but Mrs. Mible kept a strict eye on the Removites to see that none should have too much, and Bunter was quite the hero of the hour!

III.

AFTER the feast the feasters trooped back to the School House in a body. As they entered the House they ran against Trotter, the page, who was taking up Mr. Prout's evening papers.

"Let's have a squint at the late editions," suggested Bolsover major. "They may give an account of the race."

"Good egg!" chimed in Billy Bunter. "Hand over those rags, Trotter!"

"Mind you don't crumple 'em, Master Bunter," said Trotter warningly, as he handed over the late editions.

Bunter opened one of them at the sporting section, without troubling to reply to that; then he gave a yell.

"What the dickens—"

Billy Bunter stared at the paper, almost transfixed. There was an expression of utter amazement and blank dismay on his face.

"Anythin' up, Bunter?" inquired Harold Skinner. And, in reply, Bunter pointed vacantly to the paper. He seemed too dumbfounded to speak for the moment.

Skinner glanced curiously at the sporting column, and whistled expressively.

"Phew! This is the limit, you chaps! Listen! We regret that, owing to a printer's error in our five-o'clock edition, the winner of the Swindleton Selling Plate was given as Richmond. This should have been Rich Man. The horse Richmond was scratched just before the race, and did not run."

"My hat!"

There was a chorus of surprised exclamations from the Removites.

"The-the-then I haven't won after all!"

"Won! Of course you haven't!" snorted Bolsover major. "I thought there was something fishy in your winning money like that."

Bunter turned quite green. It was a terrible disappointment to face after having imagined himself the winner. And, in addition to the loss of the fiver, he now had to face a heavy debt at Mrs. Mimble's. His knees nearly knocked together at the thought of the latter. The dame would report him for swindling her, and there would be heavy trouble.

He was almost on the verge of tears when Wharton, Smithy, and I came on the scene. Skinner explained briefly what had happened, and Vernon-Smith, who listened with keen interest, gave a sigh of relief. His scheme had not failed, after all!

"I thought my information was good," he remarked. "The little wheeze is turning out all right, as I thought it would."

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped the unfortunate Bunter. "This is too bad! W-w-w-what the dickens shall I do now? I owe Mrs. Mimble nearly four quid!"

"We'll see you through with that, Bunter," said Bulstrode. "And next time you back a winner make sure it is the winner before you spend the money!"

"This is the last horse I ever back!" groaned Bunter. "I'll see I have nothing to do with betting again. It is a mug's game!"

Vernon-Smith laughed cynically. "That's a rather different yarn from the one you spun me the other evening!" he re-

marked. "But do you seriously mean it's taught you a lesson, Bunter?"

"If this wouldn't teach a chap a lesson nothing would! Five quid gone, and nothing to show for it! War-time, too, you know! Oh dear!"

"You could do with that fiver now—what?" said Smithy.

"Do with it! I should say I could!" groaned Billy Bunter. "But what's the good of talking?"

"None whatever!" agreed Smithy. "Here's your fiver, Bunter!"

And he handed over a rustling five-pound note.

Bunter stared at it in astonishment.

"Look here, what's the game, Smithy—" he began, when Vernon-Smith interrupted him.

"I'll tell you what happened. I didn't put a farthing on any horse, for I knew very well you'd lose your money. I thought I'd give you a lesson by making you lose the lot, and then hand you back the fiver to do something more sensible with. Well, here it is, and I hope your brief experience of the life of the bold bad blade has taught you to shun the bookies in future!"

"Now you can settle up with Mrs. Mimble, my fat pippin!" chuckled Dick Rake.

"Rats! You fellows had that feed under false pretences, and I'm not going to pay for it!" said Bunter. And he pocketed his precious fiver, and rolled away hurriedly lest any of the wilder spirits should contemplate robbery with violence.

THE END.

GLYN'S LATEST.

By ROBERT ARTHUR DIGBY.

I.

"**C**OME in, fathead!"

The cheery invitation was given by Bernard Glyn, and in response to it the great George Alfred Grundy walked into Study No. 11.

"Where's Kangaroo?" he demanded.

"Ask me another!" said Glyn. "How should I know? Or look under the table if you like! But I don't think he's there."

"I'm going to whop him!" howled Grundy.

"Then I'm jolly sure he ain't under the table!" replied Glyn. "I should rather fancy he's looking for you somewhere."

"I haven't been to the gym," said Grundy.

"I think I'll go there."

"I wouldn't, if I were you," Glyn retorted.

"You might find him!"

Grundy departed with a wrathful snort.

Scarcely had Glyn turned to his work again when another knock sounded at the door. It was Skimpole this time.

"My dear Glyn—" he began, in his usual precise manner.

Glyn hurled a cushion at him, and Skimmy retreated, remonstrating in words of eighteen letters or so.

The inventive Bernard was getting badly fed up. But he chuckled as he thought of what would happen to interrupters of his peace in the future. The project he had in hand concerned them.

That night he called a small meeting of his particular chums, and explained matters to them. The Terrible Three and Talbot were there, as well as the crowd from our study—Blake, Herries, D'Arcy, and myself—and, of course, Kangaroo and Dane, who share No. 11 with Glyn.

"I'm fed up—right to the neck!" he began.

"You're lucky!" sighed Lowther. "In these rationed days—"

"Dry up, ass! That's not what I mean. I'm fed up with having no peace. So I've invented the push-out, and I shall jolly well take out a giddy patent for it."

"A push-out? What's that?" asked Tom Merry; and we all echoed the question in various tones.

"Behold!" said Glyn. And he whipped a cloth from something that stood in the corner.

It was a queer-looking jigger. But there's one thing about Glyn's inventions—they do work. And that's the one thing there isn't about Skimmy's, you know.

"Two wooden levers or bars are fixed vertically on a wooden stand," explained Glyn. "At the end of each bar is a well-padded boxing-glove—see? A lever works the bars, and I work the lever—twiggez-vous? A mere touch does it; but it's no mere touch the intruder gets, I promise you. I fix the thing near the door, and someone I don't want to

see wanders in. I touch the lever, and—But an ocular demonstration is best. Any of you chaps care to try it?"

Everybody thought Gussy would—except Gussy, that is. He seemed more than doubtful.

But it chanced that someone came along at the critical moment, just as Glyn had put the push-out into position.

Someone was Gibbons. We have no special objection to Gibbons; but we don't cherish him to the extent of minding much if he gets a bit damaged in the interests of science.

We fell over one another in our anxiety to get at the lever, and I don't know who actually worked it. It was not Glyn, anyway, because he was near the door, and the lever was on the other side of the room.

I don't think Gibbons knew what it was that hit him.

"Biff, biff!"

"Ow-yow!"

That was how it went, with Gibbons sitting outside nursing his face and saying things to the door after it.

"I call that a howling success, Bernard!" said Kangaroo warmly.

So did we all. But there were doubtful possibilities in the thing, as Blake remarked when we came away.

Anyway, it was decent of old Glyn to give us warning in advance. It made us a bit careful about how often we put our noses into No. 11.

And, when you come to think about it, perhaps that may have been his notion in telling us. I wonder?

II.

TAP!

Only Noble, Dane, and Glyn were in the study when the next caller came.

"Who's there?" yelled Glyn.

"It's me—Grundy!" came the answer.

"What's that ass want?" growled Kangaroo.

"You! Wants to whop you!" replied Glyn, grinning.

"My hat! I'll—"

"No need! Leave it to me! Come in, Grundy!"

Perhaps it wasn't quite fair to ask a chap in, and then—But old Grundy really is several kinds of a nuisance.

Biff, biff!

Out went Grundy, and the door was slammed to before he knew what had happened to him. It was locked in a second; in three seconds he was kicking at it like mad. I fancy he thought it was Kangaroo who had hit him.

Grundy wandered off after a while, saying things. And a few minutes afterwards Trimble came along. The door had been unlocked.

Trimble tapped, and did not wait to be asked in. Glyn pressed the lever, and Baggy did not wait to be ordered out. He went out—with a howl and a thud.

"Great Scott!" said Clifton Dane. "This is your best up to date, Bernard, you giddy old genius! Wonder who will be the next victim?"

No one will ever know who the next victim would have been had things taken an ordinary course.

But Baggy did not let things do that. Baggy is pretty much of an all-round ass, but he has his bright moments.

As he toddled along the passage, moaning and groaning, he met Mr. Selby.

That gentleman was looking for Wally D'Arcy, no doubt with the idea of being specially kind to him. Dear old Selby does so love Wally!

"Have you seen D'Arcy minor, Trimble?" he snapped.

"Yes, sir. He's in Study Number Eleven," replied the veracious Baggy.

Can't say I blame him much. He was bruised and battered. And it was Selby!

Mr. Selby twirled the handle and pushed open the door.

Biff, biff!

Not a fair dodge to represent by a line of stars all that Selby said, and what Glyn said in reply, and what Dane and Kangaroo said to help their pal out of the mess—eh? You don't think so?

Then, my good fellow, you don't know how a story should be told; and you have certainly never been a member of the Third Form at St. Jim's! No one in that Form would want to know what Selby said.

As for Glyn, what could he say? And as for Dane and Noble, what could they say but mere words?

You might as well have tried to bribe a tiger with sugar-plums as Selby with words after that biffing.

He had a cane with him, and he tried to use it. Somehow, that cane got broken in the attempt. Kangaroo doesn't say that he broke it. But we know Kangaroo. He would not take a whacking from the master of the Third.

But the Head is quite another person; and I regret to record that the Head didn't seem as pleased and proud as he should have been about having such a real, up-to-date inventor as our Bernard at St. Jim's.

Nuff said about that!

Was that the end of the push-out? Well, I am not so sure. But we have not heard of it again as yet. Glyn is now experimenting with gadgets for making caning a painless operation, we hear.

THE END.

THE GREYFRIARS GALLERY.

No. 94.—Mr. BULL and Miss BULL.



JOHNNY BULL'S aunt and uncle, you know. They are brother and sister, not husband and wife. Both are wealthy, and both rather like their own way—which is not an unusual complaint. Johnny rather likes his.

Queer old lady, Miss Tabitha Martha Bull! I think her solicitor was quite right when he warned her that sending the sum of five hundred pounds to a schoolboy of fifteen was not a very sensible thing to do. Some of our old readers may remember that scene in Mr. Have's office when the old lady, "with a kind, if eccentric heart" and "a grim face, flanked by Early Victorian curls," insisted on doing as she chose.

Eccentric is the word! Five hundred pounds were to be handed over to Johnny to do as he liked with. Makes one's mouth water—eh? But if he didn't do as his aunt liked—that is to say, if he wasted the cash in drinking and gambling or associating with bad characters—then it was very unlikely that there would be any more coming from the place whence that came. But the old lady was generous, too. It was not extravagance she minded—she realised that the temptation to waste of some kind would be very great. Apparently what she wanted to find out was what extravagant tastes Johnny had. As long as no mean trait in his character was brought to light she did not mind how reckless he was with the money.

Now, Johnny Bull is not a reckless person. He has as much sound, every-day common-sense as most fellows. And he certainly is not mean. So that the danger was less to him than it would have been to many fellows.

Miss Bull liked Johnny, though she had never told him so. He was practically the only one among her nephews and nieces who did not bow down and worship her wealth. He was just his natural self in his intercourse with her; and as it apparently did not matter twopence to him whether he went down in her will or not, she had come to the conclusion that she would rather like to make him her heir. Which shows that the eccentric old lady was not soft or foolish, anyway.

It was one of the other nephews—Lucas Crane—who tried to spoil Johnny's chance of inheriting his aunt's wealth. Aunt Tabitha was not fond of Lucas. He was a wrong 'un, for one thing. But what made her sure that he was an irreclaimable wrong 'un was that her cat shrank from him. "A man from whom dogs and cats shrink away is a man to be avoided," the stern old lady said.

Crane told her—not exactly in those words, but to their effect—that Johnny was probably as big a wrong 'un as he was. She would not believe. She told him scornfully that she was not afraid of anything he could do in the way of leading Johnny into wickedness. It was a direct challenge, for, of course, she had made it clear that if Johnny succumbed to temptation she had done with him. Crane protested against the idea that he would dream of tempting the boy; he would only investigate, he said. But Miss Bull was not deceived by his hypocritical speeches. She

knew that he would do all he could to lead Johnny astray; and she wanted her—destined heir—tried in the fire. If he failed to come through the ordeal pure gold she would cut him out of her will.

Rather hard, maybe; but there was more than a touch of stern hardness in the old lady. And she had lots of faith in Johnny, remember.

He came through it all right, though there was a time when his chums believed that he had listened to the voice of the tempter. Johnny gave Crane his head for a while, well knowing what his game was. When the right moment came Johnny did the talking; he also did some punching.

Another trial awaited Johnny later: but this time it was by his uncle that he was subjected to it. Mr. Bull, who had never seen the boy, having been many years in Australia, had a notion of adopting him and taking him back to Australia with him. So he sent down his confidential man, Friedrich Falke, in whom he had perfect faith, to find out how Johnny was going on at Greyfriars.

It did not suit Falke's book that the boy should be adopted. Falke had rather a notion of being Mr. Bull's heir himself. So he schemed to make Uncle Bull believe Johnny an utter rotter. The Bounder, then on the worst of terms with Johnny, who had just thrashed him after a hard fight, had been dragged into it. Falke had Vernon-Smith under his thumb—or so he thought. But the Bounder kicked; the scheme was too dirty for him. At the imminent risk of being sacked he gave it away. Falke was discomfited, and the Bounder was not sacked. Johnny Bull's intercession saved him.

Johnny was wrathful. He wrote a very plain and outspoken letter to his uncle, telling him that he didn't want him to come down and see him after he had sent his "beastly secretary" to spy on him. The letter never went; Harry Wharton prevented that by putting it in the fire. And while Johnny was trying to get it written again, with all his chums doing their best to dissuade him, Uncle Bull turned up!

At least, it was not really uncle. It was Temple of the Upper Fourth made up as an old gentleman. Johnny had never seen his uncle, it should be remembered. Up to a certain point Temple scored; but he had been found out before Mr. Bull—actually appeared—in fact, the floor was being wiped with him when that gentleman came upon the scene.

Johnny was gruff with his uncle—none too civil, the other fellows thought. Then his aunt wrote that she was coming down to see him. She was sorry that he had not got on better with his uncle. The letter was suppressed by Bunter, and Aunt Tabitha met with a reception that must have surprised her, for she was taken to be Temple masquerading again. Fortunately, the mistake was found out before anything very dreadful happened.

Aunt Tabitha was going back to Australia with Uncle John Arthur, and they wanted

Johnny to go with them. He refused. He did not want to leave Greyfriars.

He went, though—at least, he went part of the way. They worked it by a spoof something like the one put upon the Bounder by his father. Mr. Bull was supposed to have lost nearly all his money by the failure of the firm of which he was the head. Johnny wrote at once to say that he was coming home to his uncle and aunt, and was willing to go to Australia with them now.

He had been tested enough, one would think. Perhaps Uncle John Arthur and Aunt Tabitha came to that conclusion, for, anxious as they were to keep him, they saw that it would be better and happier for him to return to Greyfriars, and they sent him back. He did think of a trip to Australia first. He had quite forgiven the spoof, which was really more his aunt's than his uncle's.

How he came back was told in that capital story, "When Johnny Comes Marching Home!" It was just as well he did not go. I should say; anyway, as well he did not think of stopping with those two dear old managing, arbitrary people. Good sorts, both of them; but Johnny Bull does not need dry-nursing.

The Editor's Chat.

For Next Monday:

"HIS COUNTRY'S CALL!"

By Frank Richards.

Next week's story deals, like that of this week, with Dick Hilary, the new boy in the Remove. His plucky fight against Bolsover, though it tells heavily in his favour with the decent fellows, does not entirely clear the air. The cads, such as Skinner of the Remove, Kenney and Angel of the Upper Fourth, and their like, are still his enemies. How they dealt with him and he with them, and how his father came along to play a part, you will read next week.

THE BOY AND HIS FUTURE.

War-time conditions have had the effect of raising the price of boys in the work market. I wonder whether any of you ever remember that these conditions will not last, and that there will be a big slump in boys when the men come back?

I am not going to gird at you for asking and getting three times as much as fellows of your age had any chance of receiving before the war. That sort of thing is ruled by the laws of supply and demand. If ten thousand boys are wanted at any given time, and eleven thousand are available, the price keeps down. If only nine thousand are available it goes up; there is competition for the nine thousand, you see, whereas the surplus in the other case practically cuts out competition, except as regards possible local shortages.

But the standard of wages will not be maintained when the shortage ceases. You are not worth more than you were—or your predecessors were—four years ago; that is to say, your work has no more real value, unless in those cases where boys are really putting their backs in it, learning to do and doing things thought above their weight in former days.

I hope—and I believe—that there are a good many boys of this sort. With them lies the future. They will not find themselves sacked when the men come home.

But I know that there are a good many of the other sort, whose chief interest in the new condition of affairs is that it gives them more spending-money, who are made stupidly arrogant by the fact that they are wanted, and who are doing nothing to make themselves fit for any higher work than licking stamps and going on errands.

Don't grumble at harder work or greater responsibility. If you are ever to get out of the rut you must learn to bear responsibility; and harder work generally means learning things. I don't in the least counsel you to allow yourselves to be driven to death; I don't say that you should spend all your spare time in cramming.

It is something like a sermon, this, I know. But I am sure it will not hurt you to read it; and it may do you good.

YOUR EDITOR.