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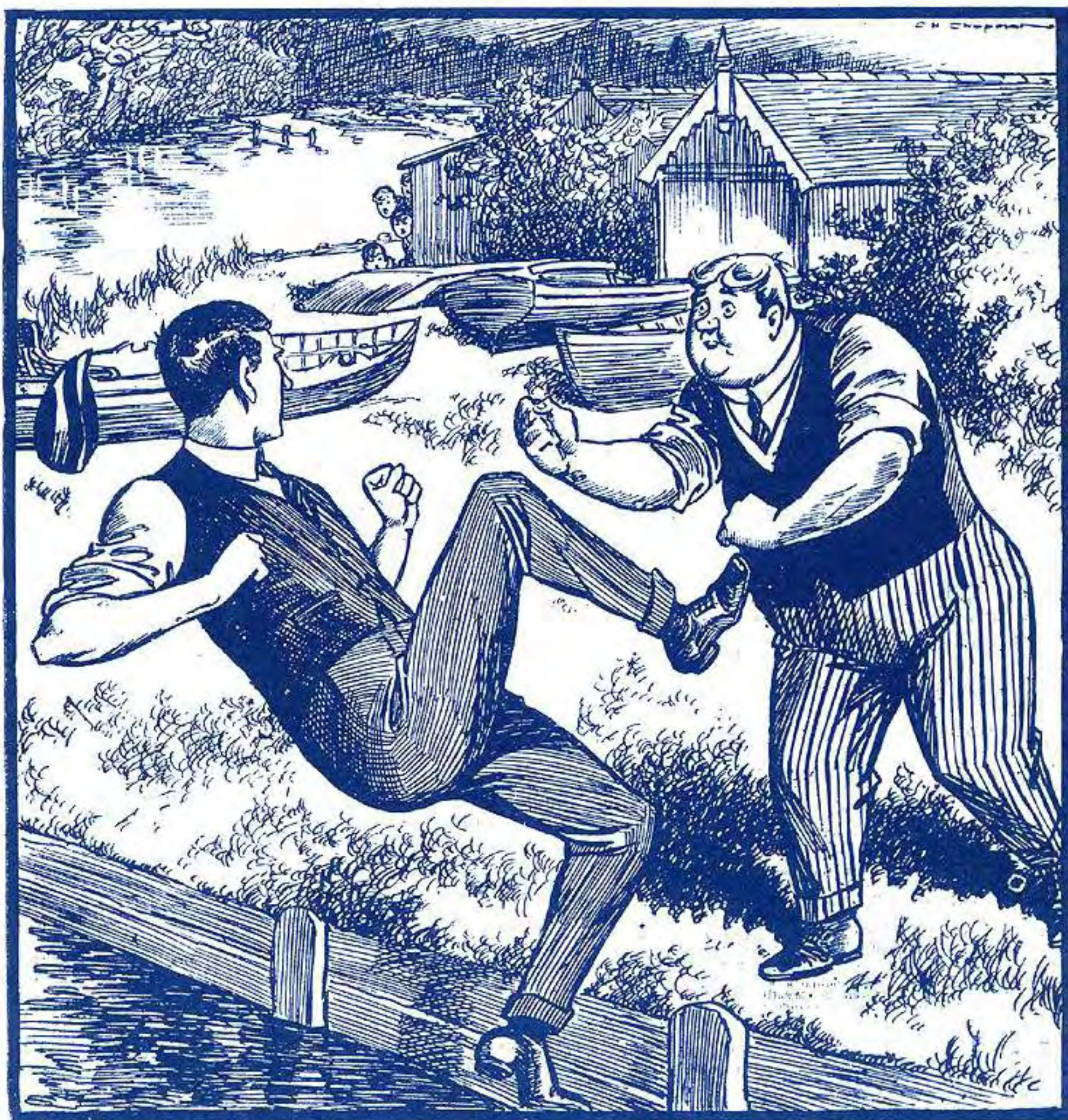
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The Magnet $1\frac{1}{2}$

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FOR NEXT MONDAY.

THE "POPULAR'S" GREAT OFFER!

The first thing I want to write about this week is the really magnificent COLOURED ENGINE PLATES which are now being given away in every copy of our famous companion paper the "Popular." The FIRST OF THE GRAND SERIES is presented with the issue of the "Popular" now on sale, so you can start collecting the plates now.

There are to be ten plates, and they will show you what the most famous express engines really look like. The plate which you can now obtain is that of the LONDON AND NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY'S most up-to-date engine, and on Friday you will be able to obtain the second plate of the series, which shows you the GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY'S "king of the iron way."

The collection will be one to look at and feel proud of.

Needless to say, there are many other fine features in our companion paper. There are four LONG, COMPLETE

SCHOOL STORIES—one each of Greyfriars, of Rookwood, of the School in the Backwoods of Canada, detailing Mr. Frank Richards' schooldays, and of St. Jim's. There is a great new Sidney Drew serial, an easy and interesting competition, and "Billy Bunter's Weekly."

I strongly advise every one of my readers to get a copy of the "Popular," which is now on sale, and to order a copy to be saved every week for the future. Start now, and collect the whole series of fine engine plates. Tomorrow may be too late—you might miss the first plate.

"A FORM-MASTER'S FATE!"

By Frank Richards.

That is the title of our next grand long complete story of Harry Wharton, the chums of Greyfriars, and Wally Bunter, master of the First Form, and cousin to Billy and Sammy Bunter.

In the story we see how Willie Newman's absence from the school affects the young master. Willie was disgraced and expelled, owing to a misunderstanding—partly owing to the fact that Willie would not say why he was in the studies

in which he was caught. When the truth comes out, it is seen that Willie was innocent—and Wally naturally wants to repair the wrong that has been done.

There will also be another grand four-page supplement—the "Greyfriars Herald." Harry Wharton & Co. have got together a magnificent selection of interesting stories and articles, and you are assured of a hearty laugh, and perhaps just a little twinge of sympathy for certain fellows, when you read the "Greyfriars Herald" in next Monday's MAGNET LIBRARY.

In conclusion, let me again urge every reader of the MAGNET LIBRARY to get a copy of the "Popular." Therein is related the early schooldays of Harry Wharton & Co., and the particular time of their career which is now being dealt with is that in which Vernon-Smith was really the Bouncer of the Remove—and jolly well earned his name!

"I'll drive you and your four pals from Greyfriars!" says Vernon-Smith.

Harry Wharton laughs at the threat—but it is not long before he finds out that Herbert Vernon-Smith meant what he said; and, moreover, that the Bouncer at his worst is a very deadly enemy.

So, even if there was not a GRAND, FREE, COLOURED PLATE OF A FAMOUS ENGINE given away with every copy of the "POPULAR" now on sale, the stories have a particular appeal to all readers of the MAGNET LIBRARY.

Your Editor.

(No. 13.)

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WILLIE NEWMAN.

THE . . . MYSTERY OF THE . WARNING!

—BY—
Frank Richards.



PERCY SMITH.

A Magnificent Long Complete School Story, dealing with the Adventures of Harry Wharton & Co., and Mr. Wally Bunter at Greyfriars.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Newman of the First!

"**B**OTHER the beastly thing!"

Mr. Walter Bunter, the young master of the First Form at Greyfriars, spoke with considerable emphasis. His plump, usually good-humoured face was clouded over with annoyance.

There was a note in Wally Bunter's hand. He had discovered it on his desk on going into his study after morning lessons.

The contents of the note were not responsible for Wally's annoyance, though the contents certainly puzzled him.

It was the fact that the note was anonymous that caused Wally to repeat with greater emphasis than before:

"Bother the beastly thing!"

Wally Bunter, honest and straightforward in all his dealings, loathed the idea of anonymity. It was a snake-in-the-grass method of corresponding, he reflected. He himself would not have been ashamed or afraid to inscribe his name at the foot of every letter he wrote.

This particular note, written in an obviously disguised hand, irritated Wally Bunter. He had no idea who had written it. He could not make up his mind whether it was a genuine communication, or merely written for a lark.

There was no address at the top of the note, and no signature beneath it. It had not come through the post; and Wally's first conclusion was that a Greyfriars fellow had written it. On reflection, however, he was by no means certain on that score. The note might easily have been brought to the school by hand.

Wally glanced at the sheet of note-paper in disgust.

"I'm going to chuck this on the fire, and forget all about it!" he muttered. "That's the only way to deal with anonymous letters!"

He hurled the missive to the flames, which devoured it greedily.

But it was not so easy to forget what had been written.

Wally had read the message three times, and he had it by heart.

The words loomed before his mental vision as upon a screen.

"TAKE WARNING!

"Someone is coming into your Form, and into your life, who will make things decidedly unpleasant for you!

"Be on your guard!"

It might have been a friendly warning—it might have been a spoof. If the former, why had the writer concealed his name? Friendly warnings are generally frank and open, not veiled beneath the cloak of anonymity.

Wally Bunter tried to dismiss the matter from his mind. But the words of that mysterious message haunted him. They seemed to hammer at his brain.

"Take warning! Be on your guard!"

What did it all mean?

Perhaps the natural conclusion to arrive at was that a new boy was coming to Greyfriars—a First-Former, who was going to make things unpleasant for Wally.

But how could he? How could a babe of eleven or thereabouts interfere with the happiness of a Form-master?

Although the note itself was destroyed, it had taken root in Wally Bunter's mind. He could not banish it from his thoughts.

When he sat at dinner at the masters' table he found himself doing some extraordinary things. He put sugar in his soup instead of salt. He started to use a dessert-knife for the fish.

"You seem very preoccupied, Bunter," murmured Mr. Prout, who sat next to Wally. "I trust nothing is wrong?"

"Take warning!" muttered Wally.

"What?"

"Be on your guard!"

Mr. Prout gave a violent start. He dropped his knife and fork with a clatter.

"Bless my soul!" he ejaculated.

"What ever is the matter with you, Bunter? Is it possible that these are the first symptoms of a disordered mind?"

Wally Bunter did not look up. He was not even aware that Mr. Prout was speaking to him.

"Someone is coming into your life—" he muttered.

"Bunter!"

"Who will make things decidedly unpleasant for you!"

Mr. Prout fairly gasped. He was almost convinced, by this time, that Wally Bunter was exhibiting the distressing symptoms of insanity.

To the amazement of the other gentlemen at the table, Mr. Prout seized Wally by the shoulder and shook him.

"Bunter!" he thundered.

Wally came out of his reverie with a start.

"Eh? Were you speaking to me, Mr. Prout?" he exclaimed.

"I was!" said Mr. Prout grimly. "Are you aware, Bunter, that you have been behaving like an imbecile?"

"Great Scott!"

"You have been making wild and incoherent statements!" snapped Mr. Prout. "You told me to take warning, and to be on my guard!"

"Dud-dud-did I?" stammered Wally.

"You did! You also said that someone was coming into my life who would make things decidedly unpleasant for me!"

"I—I'm awfully sorry," said Wally. "My thoughts must have been wandering."

"Either your thoughts or your mind!" said Mr. Prout dryly. "I am inclined to think it was the latter!"

And he went on with his dinner.

Wally Bunter kept himself well in hand after that incident. He was aware that several of the masters were regarding him curiously. Mr. Twigg suggested that he was unwell, and should go and see the matron. Wally replied, rather curtly, that he was all right.

After dinner he took a stroll in the Close.

His thoughts reverted to the mysterious warning he had received. He was not scared by it, but he was mystified. He longed to know what it all meant.

The cheery voice of Bob Cherry of the Remove caused Wally Bunter to look up suddenly. He saw the Famous Five advancing towards him.

"Will you do us a favour, sir?" said Bob Cherry.

"All depends!" said Wally, with a smile.

"We'd like you to come and referee our match this afternoon. We're playing Rookwood."

Wally hesitated.

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"I don't wish to be disobliging," he said, "but I'd rather not. I'm afraid I shouldn't be able to conduct the game properly. My wits are wool-gathering to-day."

"Not feeling ill, I hope, sir?" said Harry Wharton.

"No, Wharton; just a bit preoccupied, that's all. I'm sure Mr. Lascelles will consent to referee for you, if you ask him. He is doing nothing special this afternoon."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry suddenly, gazing towards the school gateway. "Look what's blown in!"

All eyes followed Bob's gaze. Tripping timidly along, and carrying a bag almost as big as himself, came a small, curly-headed boy, who was a stranger to Greyfriars.

He had arrived on the station back, and had dismissed the driver of that ancient vehicle outside the school gates.

The Famous Five and the young Form-master surveyed the approach of the newcomer with considerable curiosity.

"Welcome, little stranger!" said Frank Nugent, as the small boy drew near. "New kid, what?"

"Yes, please!"

"Well, don't apologise for it," said Bob Cherry. "You can't help being a new kid. It's your misfortune, not your fault!"

Wally Bunter glanced keenly at the new boy. He could not help connecting him in his mind with the mysterious message he had received.

And yet the child—for he was no more—looked innocent enough. He had the round face of a cherubim, and big blue eyes. Given a bow and arrow, he would have made an excellent Cupid.

"What's your name?" demanded Wally.

"Willie Newman, please," said the boy, in a shrill, piping voice which made the Famous Five chuckle. "I say, are you the school bully?"

Wally flushed.

"Don't be a cheeky young idiot!" he snapped.

"I—I'm sorry. But I've read a lot of school stories, and I've found out that every school has its bully. And you're such a size"—the speaker's eyes rested on Wally Bunter's huge bulk—"that I thought you must be the Greyfriars bully."

"I'm a master!" said Wally curtly.

"Oh!"

Willie Newman was completely taken aback. So startled was he that he would have dropped his bag had not Johnny Bull come to the rescue.

"Please, sir," faltered the new boy, "I—I didn't know—I didn't understand—I hope you won't lick me—"

"It isn't the custom here to 'lick' a boy within five minutes of his arrival," said Wally. "But it was rather tactless of you to suggest that I was the school bully. It's hardly a compliment, you know. Put your bag on the ground, if you like. It seems to be weighing you down on one side."

Willie Newman set the bag on the ground, relieved to be rid of his burden.

"I didn't know that a new boy was expected to-day," said Wally Bunter. "Do you know which Form you are coming into?"

"The First, please, sir."

"Starting at the bottom of the ladder, by Jove!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"In that case, Newman," said Wally,

"you will be under my control. Have you been to school before?"

"No, thank you. I've had a private tutor, sir."

Wally frowned.

"It isn't necessary to express your thanks when I ask you a question," he said. "Look here, you had better leave your bag in the hall, and go and report to the headmaster."

"Where does he live, please?" piped Willie Newman.

Wally grinned in spite of himself.

"These fellows will show you," he said.

The new boy was committed to the care of the Famous Five. In this he was distinctly fortunate, for he would be able to dodge the rude and aggressive questionings of such fellows as Skinner and Bolsover major.

Harry Wharton & Co., realising how strange and shy Willie Newman must be feeling—had not they been new boys themselves?—were very kind to him. They escorted him to the hall, where the bag was deposited, and thence to the Head's study.

The door of that sacred apartment closed upon Newman of the First. And the Famous Five exchanged glances.

FREE ENGINE PLATES!

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THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Mysterious!

WALLY BUNTER paced to and fro in the Close, looking very thoughtful. He was still thinking of the anonymous warning he had received.

Part of the message had already come true—the part which said that someone was coming into Wally Bunter's Form.

"Someone who is going to make things decidedly unpleasant for me," murmured Wally. "Well, I can't imagine young Newman crossing my path in any way. The kid couldn't say 'Bo!' to a goose!"

And yet Wally could not be quite sure. Perhaps he had misjudged Willie Newman. Perhaps the new boy's timid ways and inoffensive manner were merely a cloak to cover his true character. It was possible that Willie Newman was playing.

Wally Bunter pondered over the matter for a long time, and he decided to keep an eye on this extraordinary new boy.

The master of the First was aware that he had enemies. Those enemies would not scruple to do him harm. And Willie Newman might be the instrument by which they hoped to depose Wally from his position.

It was rather a far-fetched theory. But Wally resolved to be on his guard. He himself bore no malice to a soul, and he could not understand anybody bearing

malice towards him. But the fact remained that certain people did.

For upwards of half an hour, Wally Bunter continued to pace to and fro, busy with his thoughts. Then he temporarily banished Willie Newman, and the mysterious warning, from his mind, and went into the building.

"I'll go along and ask Wingate of the Sixth to join me in a game of chess in my study," he muttered. "Anything to turn my thoughts into another channel."

As he turned into the Sixth Form passage, Wally heard sounds of anguish proceeding from one of the studies.

The young Form-master frowned.

"Loder again!" he growled. "Up to his beastly bullying tricks!"

He halted outside the door of Loder's study, and listened.

Loder's harsh voice was audible.

"If you don't lay my table this instant, you young cub, I'll give you another cut with this ashplant!"

And then a shrill voice replied:

"Ow! I didn't come here to lay tables, and be a beastly slave!"

There was a swishing sound, as Loder swung the ashplant through the air, as a warning.

A brief pause followed. Then the shrill voice rang out again.

"I sha'n't fag for you! I don't like you! I don't mind helping people who are kind to me, but you're a beast!"

"Why, you—you—" spluttered Loder, almost beside himself with rage. "I'll tan your hide for you, you cheeky young cub!"

The ashplant sang through the air. A further yell of anguish echoed through the study.

Once again the ashplant was raised. But before it could descend the door was thrown open, Wally Bunter made a dramatic if rather undignified entry, and the ashplant was snatched from Loder's grasp.

Little Willie Newman stepped back, gazing at his rescuer with eyes which shone with gratitude. He said no word. His gratitude was of the dumb, dog-like order.

But Wally Bunter had no eyes for the new boy. He was glaring at Loder, who returned glare for glare.

"This isn't the first time I've had to step in and put a stop to your bullying games!" said Wally.

"You mind your own business!" snarled Loder. "It's not your place to interfere!"

"On the contrary, it's part of a Form-master's duty to put down bullying in any shape or form," said Wally.

"Some Form-master!" sneered Loder. "You come here to take charge of a blessed kindergarten, and you immediately start giving yourself airs. You're only a student teacher."

"I am the master of the First Form," said Wally, "and, as such, I am entitled to be addressed with respect. I must insist upon the customary affix of 'sir'—"

"You can insist till you're black in the face," said Loder, "but you're not going to wring any respect out of me! Like your cheek to come barging in when you're not wanted! Why don't you look after your own affairs? I don't want to quarrel with you," added Loder. "All I ask is that you go your way, and I'll go mine."

"A very convenient arrangement from your point of view!" said Wally. "If I agreed to leave you alone, you'd become a bigger bully than ever. Now, look here, Loder. I'm not going to stand here arguing indefinitely. Let me just tell you this. If I catch you ill-using

this kid again, there will be serious trouble!"

So saying, Wally snapped the ashplant across his knee, and tossed the pieces into the fire.

Then, for the first time, he addressed himself to the new boy.

"Come along, Newman!"

"Hold on!" said Loder. "He's going to lay my table!"

"He's going to do nothing of the sort! Come, Newman!" Wally repeated.

The new boy followed his benefactor from the study willingly enough.

When they were out in the passage, Wally turned to him.

"Keep clear of that study," he said. "Avoid it as you would avoid a plague. You see, I may not always be at hand to protect you from Loder. And I don't want you to keep running to me with tales of bullying."

"I sha'n't do that, sir, please, sir," said Newman.

Again the expression of dumb gratitude came into the new boy's eyes.

"Cut along now!" said Wally.

Willie Newman scuttled away, and Wally proceeded to Wingate's study.

The captain of Greyfriars was not at home. Wally waited a few moments, in the hope that he would turn up. But Wingate had evidently gone out for the afternoon.

"Chess is off!" grumbled Wally. "There's nobody else that I care about playing with."

He went along to his own study. To his surprise, he heard somebody moving about within.

Wally opened the door sharply, and there was a startled gasp from within.

"Newman!" exclaimed Wally sternly. "What are you doing here?"

No answer.

"Were you waiting to see me?"

Still no answer.

Willie Newman set his lips tightly, as if determined to throw no light on the mysterious situation.

For mysterious it certainly was.

What was this extraordinary new boy doing in a Form-master's study? He had no right there. He had no explanation to offer. It certainly seemed "fishy."

At first, Wally Bunter was disposed to think that the new boy was trespassing for an unlawful purpose. But he dismissed the notion almost as soon as it occurred to him.

Willie Newman seemed too transparently honest to be a thief. Possibly he was in the study for the purpose of playing some prank. That seemed the most likely solution.

"I am waiting for an explanation, Newman," said Wally, with increasing sternness.

No reply.

"You refuse to explain your conduct?"

The new boy pursed up his lips and nodded.

"Very well," said Wally. "Since you will not tell me what you are doing in your Form-master's study, I shall have to cane you!"

Willie Newman held out his hand in meek resignation. He didn't wait to be ordered to do so.

Wally Bunter picked up a cane, and administered a couple of gentle taps. He hadn't the heart to be more severe.

Light though it was, the punishment would have caused some lags to blub. But Willie Newman, dry-eyed, showed no trace of emotion.

"You may go," said Wally, "and don't let me catch you here again!"



"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry, gazing towards the gateway. "Look what's blown in!" All eyes followed Bob's gaze. Tripping timidly along, and carrying a bag almost as big as himself, came a small, curly-headed boy, who was a stranger to Greyfriars. (See Chapter I.)

Willie Newman looked up at Wally as if he were going to say, "Thanks awfully for licking me, sir!"

But no word passed his lips. He quietly turned and went out of the study.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Mystery Deepens!

"THREE to one!" said Bob Cherry.

He was not offering odds in connection with some sporting event. He was referring to the score by which the Greyfriars Remove had just beaten their rivals of Rookwood.

Jimmy Silver & Co. had put up a great game. At half-time the scores had been level—one goal each. But in the second half the Remove, playing with the wind at their backs, had done doughty deeds. Harry Wharton and Vernon-Smith had put on further goals, and the Rookwooders had retired well beaten.

"Now for tea!" said Frank Nugent. "To misquote a popular phrase, I'm as hungry as a Bunter!"

"Same here," said Johnny Bull. "But there's a famine in the land. Funds are low in our study."

"And in ours," said Bob Cherry. "Oh, what a life! Ours is a happy home, ours is!"

Harry Wharton laughed. "I believe you fellows are angling for an invitation to tea in Study No. 1," he said. "Well, you sha'n't be disappointed. We've plenty of supplies."

"Stuff to give the troops!" murmured Bob Cherry delightedly. "Lead on, MacDuff!"

The footballers, tired but cheery, wended their way to Study No. 1.

Harry Wharton threw open the door, and then stopped short suddenly on the threshold.

"What the thump——" he began.

Moving about in the study, close to the cupboard, was Willie Newman. He had his back to the door, and at the sound of Wharton's voice, he spun round with a start.

"Oh crumbs!" he murmured.

Wharton asked the inevitable question.

"What are you doing here?"

Willie Newman was silent.

"Rummaging about in our study, by Jove!" said Nugent. "I believe he's raided the cupboard."

Investigations, carried out on the spot, showed that nothing had been tampered with. The food supplies were in their allotted places on the shelves. Nothing appeared to have been moved.

Harry Wharton turned to the invader. "I'm waiting for you to explain, Newman," he said.

But the fag had no explanation to offer. He remained silent.

"Bit of a mystery here," said Johnny Bull. "What was the kid doing here, I wonder? Anyway, we can't force an answer from him if he doesn't choose to speak. The days of the thumbscrew and the giddy torture-chamber are over."

"That's so," said Bob Cherry. "But we can kick him out, at least."

The "kicking out" duly took place.

Willie Newman was promptly banished from the study, and five well-shod feet facilitated his exit.

The juniors did not kick him as hard



As Wally Bunter rounded the corner of the passage he came upon Dicky Nugent and Willie Newman fighting like young tigers. It was Willie's first fight since coming to Greyfriars. "Stop that, at once!" commanded Wally, sternly. (See Chapter 5.)

as they might have done. They remembered that he was of tender years, moreover, a new boy.

After Willie Newman had been propelled, owing to circumstances over which he had no control, through the doorway, the Famous Five prepared tea, and sat down to an enjoyable repast.

As soon as the meal was over, Harry Wharton rose to his feet.

"I'm going along to see Mr. Bunter," he explained. "He's got a book—a ripping school yarn—that he promised to lend me."

Wharton went along to Wally Bunter's study, and tapped on the door.

There was no response. Harry was surprised at this, because he could distinctly hear someone in the room.

He tapped again. Still no response.

"May I come in, sir?" called the captain of the Remove.

Getting no answer, Wharton boldly opened the door and entered. Then he uttered an ejaculation, in which surprise and anger were mingled.

Wally Bunter was not in. But, standing in front of the fire, looking wistfully at Wharton, was Willie Newman!

"My only aunt!" gasped Harry. "You seem to spend all your time, kid, in haunting other people's studies. You've a sort of mania for wandering into places where you've no right to be. Only half an hour ago, I found you in Study No. 1."

"Did you, by Jove?" said a voice behind Wharton. And Wally Bunter stepped into the study. "As a matter of fact, this is Newman's second uninvited visit to my room. I have already caned

him for being here and giving no explanation of his conduct."

"My hat!"

It was a serious situation for Willie Newman.

Three times in the course of a single afternoon he had been found trespassing. He was starting his school career in a very mysterious manner!

What was the meaning of this strange behaviour on the part of the new boy?

That was the question with which Wally Bunter wrestled, but without finding a solution.

Wally glanced carefully round the study. He went to the cupboard and opened it. Nothing had been tampered with inside. He opened his desk. Everything was as he had left it.

Whilst Wally carried out these investigations, Willie Newman stood meekly awaiting his fate.

Having satisfied himself that everything was in order, Wally turned to the new boy.

"Newman!" he said sternly.

"Yessir?"

"This is the second time I have found you in my study. On the first occasion you offered no explanation. I now give you another chance to explain."

Silence.

"If you were here to play some jape, kid, I should advise you to make a clean breast of it to Mr. Bunter," said Harry Wharton.

Still Newman was silent.

"This is a very serious matter," said Wally Bunter, after a pause. "I want to say a few plain words to you, Newman. You needn't go, Wharton. Now, in the circumstances, Newman, I cannot but

regard you with suspicion." Wally was thinking of the mysterious warning he had received. "If you were here with a harmless motive you would not hesitate to say so. But your secretiveness leads me to suppose that you came here for an unlawful purpose. I don't quite know what you intended to do. I don't know what you intended to do in Wharton's study, either. But I am going to give you a very severe caution. If there is a recurrence of this conduct, I shall report you to the headmaster, and Dr. Locke will not take a light view of your offence. Do you understand? Is my meaning clear to you?"

"Yes, please, sir."

Wally glanced at the fag's innocent face and frowned.

If the new boy was play-acting, if his meek and timid manner was merely assumed, then he was acting very well.

"This is the last caution you will get from me," said Wally Bunter. "I sha'n't speak to you next time, I shall act!"

Willie Newman bowed his head in meek submission.

"Go!" said Wally sternly.

And the new boy vanished without a word.

When Newman had gone there was a prolonged silence in the study.

"I came along to borrow that book you were telling me about, sir—'The Captain of St. Clive's,'" said Harry Wharton at last.

"Oh, yes! It's a splendid story. There's a mysterious new boy in it, incidentally. He turned out to be a thief."

"My hat!"

Harry Wharton wondered, as he left Wally Bunter's study with the book under his arm, whether what had happened in fiction at St. Clive's would happen in reality at Greyfriars.

Was Willie Newman a thief, or the dupe of a thief?

Wharton decided, on due reflection, that he was not.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Dramatic Developments!

WALLY BUNTER made a staggering discovery next morning.

His stamp-album, containing a very valuable collection of British and foreign stamps, was missing.

That same stamp-album had been reported missing a week before. But it had been a false alarm. The album, on that occasion, had been placed in Billy Bunter's bed, in order to give the fat junior a fright.

Now, however, the album was really gone. Wally Bunter remembered where he had left it—on the top shelf of his bookcase. It had been there when Willie Newman had been caught in the study the previous day. Obviously, therefore, it must have been taken—Wally disliked the ugly word "stolen"—during the night.

This being the case, the person who took it must have exercised great caution. For Wally Bunter, lacking proper sleeping quarters, was temporarily sleeping in his study. There was a camp-bed behind the screen.

Wally was a light sleeper, and he did not remember having been disturbed during the night.

"This is serious, by Jove!" muttered Wally. "Of course, the album might have been taken for a lark, but I don't like larks of that sort."

Wally was very worried. His stamp

collection was valuable to him in more than a mere monetary sense. He prized it dearly. It had taken him years and years to compile that collection; he had put lots of time and energy into the pursuit of his hobby.

And now that "perfectly priceless collection," as he was wont to call it, had taken until itself wings.

"I'm not quite sure what steps I ought to take," muttered Wally. "Perhaps, for the time being, it would be as well to lay low."

Wally had decided on this course when the bell rang for morning lessons.

More than once, in the course of the morning, Wally glanced in the direction of Willie Newman.

The new boy sat in the front row. There was nothing in his conduct to excite suspicion. He was a hard-working little fellow in class. He was ignorant of many things, but he showed keen willingness to learn.

Occasionally he looked up and met his Form-master's gaze, and he always met it frankly. His eyes were not furtive or shifty, as those of a dishonest person might be expected to be.

Wally Bunter's suspicions of Willie Newman—for he had not been able to help harbouring suspicions of the fag—now began to melt away.

If the new boy had been to Wally's study and appropriated the stamp-album, he would unconsciously have shown some sign of guilt. But there was not the faintest trace of guilt in his manner. He was the living embodiment of blue-eyed innocence.

Wally Bunter was relieved when lessons were over for the day. With such a worry on his mind he had found it difficult to concentrate on his job.

When the class had been dismissed in the afternoon, Wally remained in the Form-room, in order to clear up a few small matters. Then he went along to his study.

To his utter amazement, he found that the door was locked on the inside.

Wally turned the handle, and pitted his huge bulk against the door; but it refused to budge.

"Somebody in my study, by Jove!" he muttered. And then, in a louder key: "Unlock this door!"

There was no movement inside the study.

Wally looked grim.

"I advise you to give yourself up, whoever you are!" he exclaimed. He knew that the intruder could not escape by means of the window, for it was too far from the ground. "Unlock this door immediately, or I shall take steps to force an entry!"

Still no sound from within.

Wally Bunter, thoroughly exasperated, heaved himself against the door. But it was a stout door, and merely quivered slightly under the onslaught.

Footsteps sounded in the passage. The Famous Five came hurrying to the spot.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Anything wrong, sir?"

"Yes," growled Wally. "There's someone in my study. The door's locked on the inside."

"My hat!"

"You'd better help me force the door open," said Wally.

"Half a jiffy," interposed Nugent. "No need to smash up the happy home."

He produced a piece of bent wire from his pocket; then, stooping down, he proceeded to force the lock.

"A dangerous accomplishment that, Nugent," said Wally Bunter, with a dry

smile. "I shouldn't advertise the fact that I was an expert at picking locks, if I were you!"

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Oh, everybody knows Franky's honest," he said. "He's got one of those nice, open faces—the face of a novelette hero, you know!"

"Stow it, Bob!" growled Nugent.

Then he stood up, flushed, and not a little excited.

"All clear now, sir," he said.

Wally Bunter threw open the door. He strode into the study, expecting to come face to face with the intruder.

The Famous Five crowded in after him.

On every face there was an expression of blank amazement.

For the study, save for themselves, was untenanted.

"Great jumping crackers!" gasped Bob Cherry. "The giddy bird has flown!"

"Popped out of the window, I expect," said Johnny Bull.

"Impossible!" exclaimed Wally Bunter. "Glance out of the window yourself, and you will see that it is a sheer drop which not even the most daring individual would negotiate."

"Then the fellow must be hiding somewhere," said Harry Wharton. "We'll jolly soon see!"

He dived underneath the table, expecting to see a form concealed there. But he drew blank.

Meanwhile, Wally Bunter pulled the screen aside, and looked in the bed and under the bed and around the bed. But there was no sign of the mysterious intruder.

Wally stroked his chin in perplexity.

"I don't know what to make of this," he said. "Somebody's been here, that's certain. Else how could the door have been locked on the inside?"

"There's only one explanation, sir," said Nugent.

"I shall be interested to hear it, Nugent."

"The fellow, whoever he was, must have got in through the window by means of a ladder. He left the ladder there, and escaped by it. Then he carried the ladder away."

Wally Bunter shook his head.

"Not a bad theory," he said. "But I don't think it quite meets the case. Fellows can't go walking about with ladders, and climbing up to study windows, without exciting considerable comment and suspicion. However, we will see if there is anything in your line of reasoning, Nugent."

Wally crossed to the window, put his head out, and glanced down into the Close, where Tom Brown, Bulstrode, Vernon-Smith, and Dick Russell were engaged in punting a football about.

Wally hailed them, and they paused and looked up.

"How long have you fellows been playing?" inquired Wally.

"Ever since we were dismissed from afternoon school, sir," replied Tom Brown.

"Have you, whilst you have been playing, seen anybody carrying a ladder?"

The juniors shook their heads.

"You have noticed nothing unusual?"

"Nothing at all, sir," said Vernon-Smith.

"Thank you!"

And Wally withdrew his head.



As Wally peered round the corner of a chimney stack he saw Willie Newman pop up from a chimney a few yards away and drop down on to the roof. The fag's face and clothes were smothered with soot. "That job's done!" Wally heard him mutter. (See Chapter 5.)

"The ladder theory is squashed!" he said. "There is a mystery here."

"Seems to be nothing but mysteries, since young Newman came to Greyfriars!" said Johnny Bull.

"Do you suggest it was Newman who came to my study, Bull?"

"I suggest nothing, sir," said Johnny. "The affair puzzles me altogether. It would take a trained 'tee to get to the bottom of it."

"Well, let us investigate, and see if our mysterious visitor has removed anything," said Wally.

The investigations were carried out, but they proved fruitless.

Wally Bunter's stamp album was still missing from the top shelf of the bookcase. Apart from that, everything was in its proper place, and the study presented an appearance of tidiness.

"Nothing doing!" said Harry Wharton. "There's not a single clue as to why the fellow was here, and how he got away."

Wally Bunter turned to the juniors.

"I am going to tell you fellows something in strict confidence," he said. "You must not let it go beyond yourselves. During the night my stamp album, containing a very valuable collection, has been taken from this study."

"My hat!"

The Famous Five were electrified by the news.

"Have you formed any suspicions, sir?" asked Harry Wharton at length.

"No," said Wally. "I have nothing tangible to go upon. I admit that the thought of Newman came into my mind, but I have dismissed it. It would be unfair to tax the kid with theft, simply because he was twice found in my study and offered no explanation. But I have told you about my loss for two reasons. Firstly, you will be able to keep your eyes open, and, secondly, you will take the precaution of locking up everything of value. You, Nugent, are treasurer of the Remove Football Club, and no doubt you have custody of a large sum of money?"

"That's so, sir," said Frank Nugent. "Matter of fact, all the subscriptions were due to-day, and I've collected them. There's a matter of over eight pounds in the games fund box."

"And where is the box?"

"On the mantelpiece in Study No. 1, sir."

"Then if I were you I should take the precaution of locking the box in my desk, and also of locking the door every time I was absent from the study."

"Very well, sir!" said Nugent.

"Don't let me detain you fellows any longer," said Wally Bunter. "And remember that what I have told you is in the strictest confidence."

The Famous Five quitted the study.

They proceeded straight to Study No. 1, where Frank Nugent made sure that the funds had not been tampered with.

"All serene, Franky?" said Bob Cherry.

Nugent nodded.

"Then I vote we go and join Smithy and the others in the Close. A game of footer will give us good appetites for tea."

On leaving the study Frank Nugent, having secured the football funds in his desk, locked the door, and put the key in his pocket. Harry Wharton had taken the additional precaution of fastening the windows. In the case of the junior studies the windows were at no great distance from the ground, and a

sufficiently daring person could have entered any of the studies from without.

The Famous Five joined their school-fellows in the Close, and played football for about an hour.

It was an enjoyable game, and, as Bob Cherry had predicted, it whetted the juniors' appetites.

Arm-in-arm, flushed, and in happy humour, they trooped along to Study No. 1. In the passage they encountered Billy Bunter, and the fat junior was obliged to squeeze himself into a doorway in order that they might pass. The width of the passage was such that five juniors arm-in-arm left no space for a corpulent youth like Bunter.

"Beasts!" growled the Owl of the Remove, shaking his fist after the quintette. "Ill-mannered pigs! Don't know what Greyfriars is coming to!"

Frank Nugent groped in his pocket for the key of the door. A moment later the juniors stepped into the study.

"Hallo!" ejaculated Harry Wharton, in blank bewilderment.

"What's up, O king?" asked Bob Cherry, peering over his chum's shoulder.

"Somebody's been here!"

"Impossible!"

"The door was lockfully locked, and the window fastenfully fastened," said Hurree Singh.

"All the same," said Wharton, "somebody's been here! Look for yourselves! When we left the study an hour ago the fire was low. Now it's blazing merrily, with half the contents of the coal-scuttle piled on it. Then, again, the chairs have been moved. And I remember that a hockey-stick had fallen into the fender. During our absence the hockey-stick has been picked up and placed in the corner."

"Harry's right!" said Johnny Bull excitedly. "I noticed all those things myself."

The juniors exchanged startled glances. They were not a little alarmed.

This uncanny visitation of studies, on the part of some person unknown, was beginning to prey upon their minds. It had a touch of the supernatural about it.

Both door and window had been fastened. How, then, had the mysterious visitor gained access to the study?

Frank Nugent's first thought was for the funds. Had they been tampered with?

Swiftly he unlocked the desk, and then the box which lay within.

The money was quite in order.

"Correct to a penny!" said Nugent.

"The funds haven't been interfered with, at any rate."

"And nothing has been taken that I can see," said Harry Wharton. "The window's still fastened on the inside, so the invader couldn't have got out that way. This is a giddy poser, and no mistake!"

"Let's go and report to Mr. Bunter!" said Johnny Bull.

Wally Bunter was promptly informed of the strange affair, and he became more mystified than ever.

He seemed to be enveloped in a thick fog of mystery lately.

First had come the mysterious warning—"Be on your guard!" This had been followed by the arrival and the inexplicable conduct of the boy called Willie Newman. Then the stamp album had disappeared. And now there was evidence that somebody had an uncanny knack of forcing an entry into locked studies.

Wally Bunter, as we have already

seen, did not believe in ghosts. That it was a human being who had entered the studies he felt certain. But how? By what ingenious ruse had the unknown person gained admission?

Wally pondered over the matter that evening, and far into the night. But he came no nearer a solution. And when at last he turned in, he slept with one eye open, so to speak, in case a nocturnal visitor should arrive.

But the long night slowly passed, and nothing happened.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Solving a Mystery!

"I DON'T allow anybody to call me names! Take that, you cheeky rotter!"

There was a sound as of a blow being delivered.

A yell of anguish followed, and then a fierce scuffle.

Wally Bunter, clad in his official gown and mortar-board, quickened his pace.

As he rounded a bend in the passage he came upon an animated scene.

Dicky Nugent of the Second and Willie Newman of the First were fighting like tigers.

This was Willie Newman's first fight since coming to Greyfriars. And he was acquitting himself well.

Wally Bunter did not immediately interfere. He was almost lost in admiration of the plucky manner in which the new boy was holding his own.

The usually mild blue eyes now flamed fire. The usually quiet face was now crimson with indignation.

Willie Newman had evidently been the first to strike a blow. It was his voice that Wally Bunter had heard saying, "I don't allow anybody to call me names!"

Dicky Nugent was half a head taller than his opponent. And he had a heftier punch.

Although Willie Newman was having the better of the argument so far, Wally Bunter knew that he would eventually be licked, if the fight went on without interference.

But it did not go on without interference.

"Drop that!" commanded Wally sternly.

Becoming aware for the first time of the Form-master's presence the combatants dropped their hands to their sides.

"What's it all about?" demanded Wally Bunter.

Willie Newman pursed up his lips in the obstinate way he had when he was determined to keep silent. Wild horses would not have dragged any information from the new boy. Wally Bunter saw that. He turned to Dicky Nugent who was dabbing at his nose with a handkerchief, which came away with a crimson stain on it.

"Come, Nugent minor! Why were you fighting?"

"My fault, sir," mumbled Dicky. "I called Newman a grubby young sweep, and he didn't seem to like it. Bless if I thought he'd show fight, though!"

Wally frowned.

"If you go about calling people grubby young sweeps, you must expect to nurse a swollen nose from time to time," he said. "What inspired you to make such a remark?"

"Newman's always got soot on his togs, sir," said Dicky. "Look at his bags

(Continued on page 13.)



The GREYFRIARS HERALD

THE SCHOOL-HOUSE

Supplement No. 61.

Harry Johnston
Editor

Week Ending February 25th, 1922.



A STARTLING DISCOVERY! Bulstrode opened the door, and I saw a horrified expression come over his face. "What the thump——" I began. And then, glancing over his shoulder I saw our study in a terrible state. The Greyfriars spring-cleaners had done their work only too well!

IF there is one thing that "gets my mad up," as the Americans say, that thing is spring-cleaning. This sort of game may be all right for a housewife, but for a schoolboy to roll up his sleeves and start spring-cleaning is, to my mind, all wrong!

Every year our studies are supposed to be thoroughly scoured and cleaned. It's a job I thoroughly detest. It takes about a day to swamp the study with water and white-wash, and about a week for the place to dry. Living in a damp study leads to rheumatoid arthritis, lumbago, creaking of the joints, and other horrible maladies.

Why do they always select the spring for study-cleaning? Why do they call it spring-cleaning at all? It ought to be called winter-cleaning, and be carried out in November, when things are fairly slack. But in February and March, when there are crowds of footer matches to be played, it is a sin and a shame to inflict this menial task of spring-cleaning upon us.

I must admit that Study No. 2—the private residence of Thomas Brown, Esquire—was sorely in need of a wash and brush-up. Dirt and dust lay thick on carpets and furniture; there were stains on the walls and the ceiling; the fire-grate was an unclean thing. Pretty nearly everything in the study was stained or soiled or soot-begrimed.

"What are we going to do about it?" I said, addressing Bulstrode and Hazeldene.

Supplement 1.]

Bulstrode made a wry face. "Pull off our coats and get busy, I suppose!" he growled.

"But I don't like hard work."

"Neither do I," agreed Bulstrode. "Still, we can't let the study remain in this deplorable state, you know. It's a positive eyesore!"

"Let's go along to the woodshed and fetch a pail of whitewash to kick off with," said Hazeldene.

"All serene!"

On our way to the woodshed we had to pass through the hall, and on the notice-board we beheld the following announcement:

"SPRING-CLEANING!
The Greyfriars Spring-cleaning Corporation will gladly undertake the task of study-cleaning at a nominal charge of one shilling per study. Cleaners will find their own whitewash, paint, hot water, scrubbing-brushes, etc.

The work will be carried out with great thoroughness. All orders promptly and efficiently executed.—Apply to
FISHER T. FISH
(General Manager)."

"My hat!" I ejaculated. "This solves all our giddy problems!"

"Yes, rather!"

"For a paltry bob we can get our study thoroughly overhauled. Let's go and see

Fishy. We want to get our order in first before there's a rush."

We hurried away in quest of the general manager of the Greyfriars Spring-cleaning Corporation.

Fisher T. Fish was run to earth in the woodshed. He had a suit of overalls on, and he was surrounded by buckets of white-wash, stacks of brooms, and a whole crowd of cleaning implements.

"What can I do for you, gents?" inquired the Yankee junior, rubbing his hands.

"You can give Study No. 2 a jolly good spring-clean," I said. "Here's a bob! When will you undertake the work?"

"Right now!" said Fish. "This hyer Corporation doesn't beat about the bush. It doesn't procrastinate. Nope! Your study shall be done this very afternoon while you're playing footer."

"Oh, good!"

We beamed at Fishy in gratitude. And then we toddled off to the football-ground, thankful to have escaped the worries of spring-cleaning.

But had we really escaped them? Ah, no! It was only a rumour!

After a hard game of football, we went along to Study No. 2 for tea.

Bulstrode opened the door, and I saw a horrified expression come over his face.

"What the thump——" I began.

And then, glancing over Bulstrode's shoulder, I saw that he had good grounds for looking horrified.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 733.

Our study was in a terrible state. The Greyfriars Spring-cleaning Corporation had done its work only too well! I shall never forget the sight that greeted our gaze. Whitewash on the carpet, whitewash on the chairs, whitewash smeared upon the glass panels of the bookcase—whitewash everywhere! The study reeked with it.

Where there was no whitewash, there was soot.

The spring-cleaners, in a burst of zeal, had decided to have a shot at sweeping the chimney. Goodness knows what they had swept it with, but they had contrived to dislodge about a ton of soot, which had dispersed itself all over the study.

The place was in a truly shocking state. Chaos on chaos, confusion on confusion!

The furniture was all over the place. The sofa was covered with alternate black and white streaks.

Hazeldene's coat, hung behind the door, represented a black-and-white-striped football jersey.

Never in all my life had I beheld such a scene of disorder!

Bulstrode nearly choked.

"This—this is Fish's doing!" he spluttered.

"The villain! Let's go and slay him!"

There seemed to be no other course open to us in the circumstances.

We rushed pell-mell to the woodshed, where we found the general manager of the Greyfriars Spring-cleaning Corporation.

"Fish, you imbecile!"

"Fish, you blundering idiot!"

The Yankee junior stared at us in astonishment.

"What's got your goat?" he inquired.

"You have!" I roared. "Give us our bob back!"

"Guess this firm doesn't return cash!"

"Then you've guessed wrong, you frajious chump! Give us our money, and look sharp about it!"

"Look here, you galoots!" shouted Fishy, brandishing a paintbrush. "This firm doesn't return money after the contract's been fulfilled!"

"You blundering chump! You've slashed paint and whitewash about our study and reduced its contents to a complete wreck! Pounds of damage done!" cried Bulstrode, exaggerating a little in his excitement.

"You can't expect us to pay you for doing that!"

"Say, you just come off!" returned the manager of the Spring-cleaning Corporation.

"It's not so bad as all that. Perhaps a little whitewash has been slashed about, maybe. But my men are only novices just yet. We hope to do better next time!"

"Do better!" yelled Bulstrode. "Do worse, you mean, you bilthering chump! It'll take hours of hard work to clean up that study, and we're going to have that money back, sharp now!"

Reluctantly Fisher T. Fish parted with the coin. And then we gave him a bumping that he will remember for many a long day.

Never again, when our study is in need of spring-cleaning, shall we hand it over to the tender mercies of Fisher Tarleton Fish!



PEOPLE tell me that I air my grievances as frequently as I lose my dictionary—which I can't find now.

However, I'm such a good speller nobody will notice the difference.

It is true that I generally have a grievance; but that's not my fault, is it? It's the fault, I suppose, of circumstances.

My latest grievance is in connection with my cousin Wally.

As you have doubtless seen, Wally has been appointed master of the First Form at Greyfriars.

When I first heard this news, I danced a hornpipe in my eggshite.

"Hoorry!" I cried. "Fancy having a cousin for a Form-master! I shall have the time of my life—and so will Sammy!"

We looked forward eagerly to Wally's arrival. When he came we rushed up to him and tried to ring him by the hand. But he stood and regarded us with a freezing stare, as much as to say, "I don't no you!"

"Wally," I said, "you are hear!"

"Of course I'm hear!"

"You don't seem pleased to see me," I remarked.

"As if the site of a prize potuss would please me!" he replied.

"Oh, reelly, Wally—"

"Don't address me as Wally! I am a Form-master, and as such I am entitled to respect!"

"But—but I am your cousin!" I stammered.

"More's the pity!"

"Ain't you going to take us along to the tuckshopp and stand us a feed?" asked Sammy.

"Certainly not!"

"But we're cousins!" protested Sammy.

"Our blud runs in your vaines!"

"I should feel jolly uncomfortable if it did!" said Wally.

And there was loud laughter from the fellows who stood near.

"Look here, Wally," I said seriously, "if you think you're going to ride the high horse just bekwase you've been made a Form-master, you're jolly well mistaken!"

Wally frowned.

"Take a hundred lines, Bunter majer!" he eggshited.

"What!"

"And if you cheek me again, I will give you a stiffer indisposition!"

"M-m-my hat!"

"I'm not going to show any favoritism to you and Sammy!" said Wally. "Henseforth we are utter strangets! You are merely skollers! The question of our being cousins duzzent enter into it! You will go your way, and I'll go mine!"

Of course, it was a terrible blow!

Sammy and me had been looking forward to such a grate time when Wally was a master. We had pictured ourselves having tea every day in a Form-master's study. We had hoped to get all sorts of plezures and privileges.

The fact is, Wally's new appoyntment has terned his head. He's simply eaten up with konseet—and just bekwase he has been placed in charge of a kindergarten!

I have never been so dredfully dis-

appoynted in my life. To think that Wally won't even acknollidge me as his cousin!

If our positions were reversed—if I was a Form-master and Wally a pupil—I should be as pice as pie to him. I should do all sorts of favours, and back him up in every way.

Wally is a hateful, unjennerns beast, that's what he is! I have already made up my mind never to speak to him again, and so has Sammy.

Wally's a broot, too. Already he has given me several lickings. Only this mourning he sent for me, and the following konversation took plaice.

"Have you ritten your indisposition, Bunter majer?"

"No!"

"No—what?"

"No, I haven't!"

"I will trubble you to call me 'sir,' you young rascal!"

"Very well, sir, you young rascal!"

"How dare you! How dare you insult me in that manna! Why haven't you ritten your indisposition?"

"Bekawse I've not been well."

"Bunter majer, your indisposition is dabled! In addition to that, I will give you a severer caning! Hold out your hand!"

And then the hateful beast administered six stinging cuts, which made me rithe like a sole in torment.

If this sort of thing goes on much longer I shall go off my rocker! Oh, the injustiss of it! Oh, the yewmiliation of it!

Sammy agrees with me that it is the limit, and the outside edge rolled into one.

Don't you think I am hard done by, dear reeders? What would you do if you were in my shooze? Would you tolerate the situation? Would you allow a cousin of yours to ill-treet you in that way? Of course you wouldn't! You'd kick against it, and that's precisely what Sammy and me are going to do.

If only Wally was a sport, what a ripping time we should have! Free feeds in his studdy every day, late passes every night, invitations hear, their, and everywhere! Every time we were boollied by such fellows as Loder of the Sixth, Wally would champion our cause.

Life would be worth living in such ser-kumstances. As it is, both Sammy and me are thoroughly mizzerable.

How is it all going to end? Goodness nose!

I only hope that sumthing will soon happen to make Wally chuck in his mitt, and return to the offis at Canterbury, where he was employed before he inflicted his hateful presence on us.

The sort of treatment I am reseeving at Wally's hands is rapidly pulling me down. I am a nervus reek. I shall finish up either in the sanny or in an asylum, and it will all be Wally's fault.

Confound these uncousinly cousins!

May the rain of Wally Bunter, Form-master, soon be over!

[Supplement ii.]

**YOU MUST READ
"BILLY BUNTER'S
WEEKLY"**

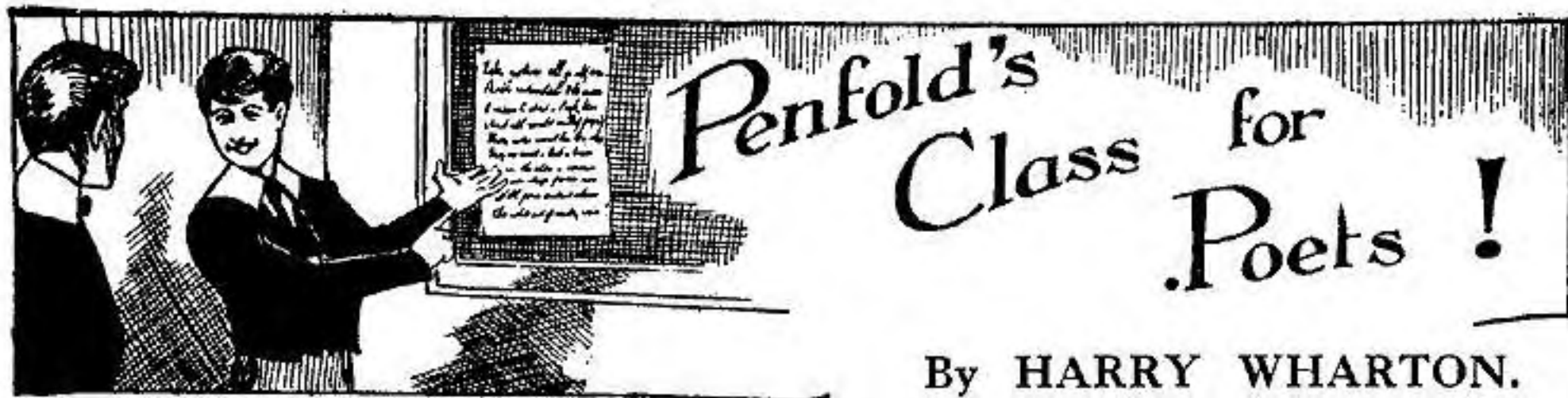
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WEEKLY,"**

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DICK PENFOLD of the Remove found himself the centre of congratulation. His Special Parody Number of "the Greyfriars Herald," which had been written almost entirely off his own bat, was the cause.

All sorts of fellows stopped Pen in the Close or in the corridors, and patted him on the back, and said: "Marvellous, old chap! Can't think how you managed to do it! I'd give anything to be able to write poetry like you!" And so on and so forth.

Even Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, stopped Dick Penfold one day, and added his congratulations to the rest.

"A very creditable achievement, my boy!" he said. "What you have written is not poetry, in the highest sense of the term; but you have a happy knack of stringing verses together. I wonder you do not turn your talent to better account."

This gave Penfold an idea. Why not conduct a Poetry Class at Greyfriars?

There were a good many fellows who would be willing to take lessons in poetry-writing, and pay a small sum for their tuition.

"It's quite a good stunt," Pen reflected, "and it will mean extra pocket-money for me. I'll form the merry class right away!"

Penfold promptly wrote an announcement, and posted it on the notice-board in the hall. It was rather a novel announcement, and ran thus:

Take notice, all ye silly asses,
Both individuals and the masses,
I mean to start a Poetry Class.
(All rivals can keep off the grass!)
Those who would learn the way to rhyme
May do so at a bob a time.
To-night the classes will commence,
And every chap of common-sense
Will join instanter, and rehearse
The noble art of making verse!"

There was no lack of pupils in response to this announcement.

It was surprising how many fellows decided to take lessons in poetry.

Visitors to Pen's study came in a constant stream.

Skinner and Snoop and Stott of the Remove were the first to arrive.

"Brother Richard!" said Skinner, in his jocular manner. "We would fain join thy poetry class."

"Yea, verily!" said Stott.

"And in good sooth!" said Snoop.

Penfold looked businesslike.

"A bob each, please!" he said.

"For shame!" said Skinner. "You ought to take the three of us for half a crown!"

"No reductions," said Dick. "Pay your bobs, and then bag some seats while you can get 'em. There'll be such a crush in here directly that I shall only have standing room, I'm thinking."

Reluctantly, as if they were having teeth out, Skinner and Snoop and Stott parted with their shillings. Then they promptly commandeered the sofa.

Other visitors began to arrive.

Dick Russell and Donald Ogilvy came in, grinning.

"How long will it take you to make giddy Shakespeares of us, Pen?" asked Russell.

"Oh, about three lessons," said Dick.

"After the first lesson you'll be able to write doggerel. After the second you'll be able to write poetry. After the third you'll be able to write epics."

"Good! I've been wanting for a long time to do something that will stagger humanity," said Ogilvy.

Supplement iii.]

The two newcomers paid their shillings, and seated themselves on the only two chairs available.

Then Bob Cherry came in, followed by Hurree Singh, Wun Lung, Alonzo Todd, and Fisher T. Fish.

More shillings were swept into Penfold's coffers, and the latest arrivals ranged themselves in a row on the window-sill.

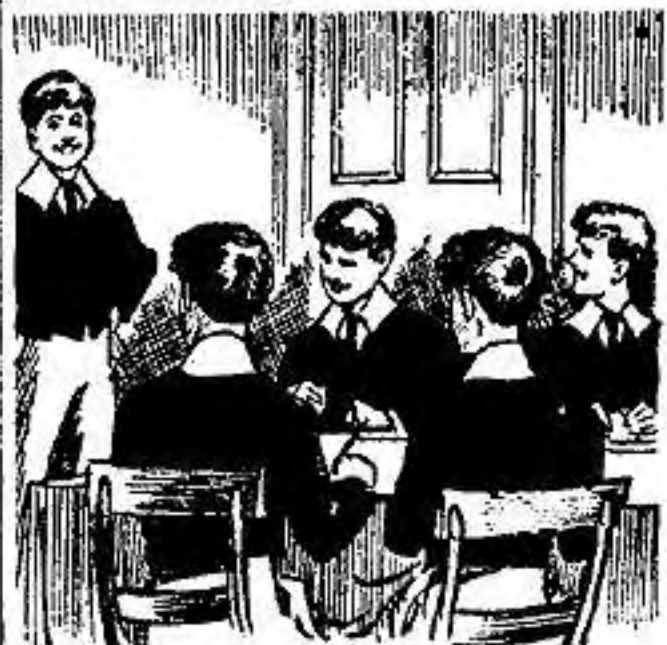
Dick Penfold's eyes glistened with satisfaction. He began to think that running a poetry class was a highly-remunerative business.

Billy Bunter was the next visitor. He wanted to take lessons in poetry, on the principle of paying for them when his postal-order arrived.

This arrangement did not appeal to Dick Penfold. Opening the door wide, he applied his boot to the tail-end of Billy Bunter's plump person, and the Owl of the Remove shot out into the passage, alighting on the linoleum with a bump and a yell.

Lastly, came Coker of the Fifth.

The study was uncomfortably crowded by this time, and Penfold was obliged to place a piece of cardboard on the outer side of the door, bearing the words: "FULL UP!" Like Billy Bunter after a big feed, Penfold had no more room inside.



"Now," said Dick Penfold, glancing round the study, "having taken your money, I will now proceed to earn it!"

"Now," said Dick, glancing round the study, "having taken your money, I will proceed to earn it. Now, in writing poetry, it is essential that at least two lines in each verse should rhyme. Some clever johnnies write what is known as blank verse. It doesn't rhyme, but it contains great and lofty thoughts. But I'm not going to teach you fellows to write blank verse, which is only glorified prose. You've got to learn to rhyme. And your rhymes must be correct. The other day I saw a poem of yours, Coker, which commenced:

"Come into the garden, dear,
And see the gay chrysanthemums."

Now, you can't rhyme 'dear' with 'chrysanthemums,' any more than you can rhyme 'Coker' with 'Bolshevik.' Do you get me, you fellows?"

There was a general nodding of heads.

"Now, with regard to metre," said Penfold. "This is most important. I can't go into all the details at this stage, but I want to warn you against making one line about ten yards longer than another. I'll give you an illus-

tration of what I mean. One of our greatest poets commenced one of his odes as follows:

"Many a green isle needs must be
In the deep wide sea of Misery."

That couplet is metrically correct. Now, supposing he had written:

"Many a green isle needs must be
Situating in the Indian Ocean, the Pacific
Ocean, and the North Sea."

That would be all wrong. You would need to get an axe and lop off about six words. You follow me? Very well, then. Get your paper and pencils ready, all of you. I want you, for a start, to write a verse beginning: 'Mary had a little lamb.'

"I seem to have heard that before somewhere," said Bob Cherry vaguely.

"Doubtless you have. Well, I want you to keep to the original first line, and add three more lines. Go ahead, all of you!"

For some moments there was silence in the study, save for the busy scratching of writing implements.

Dick Penfold passed criticisms on all the verses, and shortly afterwards the first lesson came to an end.

The real fun of the fair commenced a few evenings later.

It happened to be the Head's birthday.

"Now, you fellows," said Dick Penfold, "some of you are fairly advanced now, and you'll soon be able to write poetry almost as well as I can." The speaker laid stress on the word "almost." "This evening, I want you all to write a birthday ode to the Head. I'll select the best one, and send it to him."

The poetry class settled down to work.

When Penfold collected the poems and read them, he found that the best birthday greeting had been written by Dick Russell. He intended to put it in an envelope and send it to the Head, with the compliments of "Penfold's Poetry Class." But in the rush of the moment, Pen made a dreadful mistake. The poem he put in the envelope was the one which Horace Coker had written!

This is what the reverend Head of Greyfriars received that evening:

"ODD TO THE HEAD
On the Occasion of His 75th Birthday (or thereabouts).

Deer Dockter Locke, deer Dockter Locke,
I hope you will servive the shock
Of having verses from a joker
Who's known to all as Horace Coker.
To-day, methinks, you're seventy-five,
(A wonder you are still alive!)
I trussed your hooping-koff is better,
And that you've not become a debtor,
May you keep clear of influenza,
I know you get it now and then, sir,
May you be free from gout and bronchitis,
And other evils that affright us,
May you, in future, be less cool
In ruling this historrick skool.
Destroy your birch-rod, burn your cane,
And never give your pupils pain!
Deer Dockter Locke, my spirit yearns
To wish you Menny Happy Reterus!"

The effect of this "Ode" on the Head was extraordinary. Coker's tactless statements, coupled with his shocking spelling, infuriated Dr. Locke. He at once gave orders for the suppression of Penfold's Poetry Class. And he swept aside Penfold's protests and apologies.

Poor old Pen! It's jolly rough on him, and I expect he feels like slaughtering somebody. I suggest that he starts on Coker!

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 733.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS!

(Dealing Solely With Sport.)

Mark H. (Chesterfield).—In reply to your query, I think that without doubt the finest senior sportsman at Greyfriars is George Wingate. I realise that Gwynne and Faulkner and Tom North have strong claims to this honour; but when we consider Wingate's all-round ability, it is only fair to put him at the top of the list.

J. H. M. (Douglas, I.O.M.).—I do not care to say who is the best oarsman in the Remove. Opinions differ widely. Johnny Bull would take some beating for strength and endurance on the river; but there are several fellows who could outpace Johnny over a fairly short distance. In reply to your second query, we shall no doubt have a boat-race story in the "Herald" later on, round about the time when the 'Varsity Race takes place.

Harold C. (Torquay).—If your friend tells you that he threw the cricket-ball a distance of two hundred yards, you may safely conclude that he is a lineal descendant of Ananias. We always consider, at Greyfriars, that a throw of ninety yards is jolly good. Either your friend has a wonderful arm, or a wonderful imagination!

Mabel R. (Chatham).—Do we have draughts in the junior Common-room? Any amount of them, dear lady—especially when the fresh air fanatics insist upon keeping the windows open!

Jimmy O'H. (Co. Kerry).—Yes, I think it possible to cycle 120 miles in a day. But it's a strenuous performance. A fellow would need to be in the pink of condition to do it. No use an ill-conditioned chap like Billy Bunter trying it on!

"Football Enthusiast" (Wolverhampton).—Speaking quite impartially, I should say that the strongest part of the Remove Eleven was its half-back line. Bob Cherry, Peter Todd, Mark Linley—there you have three of the finest junior halves in the South of England. The Remove owes much of its success to them.

"Freckles" (Windsor).—No, I shouldn't call marbles "a manly pursuit." Jolly good game for infants, but fellows haven't any use for it when they are over fourteen. Nevertheless, I wish you luck at the game. If I might mention it, your spelling reminds me forcibly of Billy Bunter's!

"Heraldite" (Purley).—There has been a great deal of controversy as to which is the better goalie—Bulstrode or Hazel-dene. My own opinion is that Hazel, when he is good, is very, very good; and when he is bad, he is horrid! Bulstrode, on the other hand, is consistently good, and certainly much more reliable.

P. H. R. (Hastings).—Many thanks for your article "How to Play Dominoes." Sorry no space for it in the "Herald." The majority of our readers learnt dominoes at the tender age of five, or thereabouts!

"Water-Rat" (Highgate).—Has Billy Bunter swum the Channel? Certainly not! Even were he to make the attempt, he wouldn't be "in the swim."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 733.

EDITORIAL!

By Harry Wharton.

The success of his recent Parody Number inspired Dick Penfold, our tame bard, to start a Poetry Class.

Now, the course of a Poetry Class, like the course of true love, doesn't always run smooth, as you will discover when you read the short complete story which appears in this issue.

It was Pen's own fault that the Poetry Class came a cropper. He made a jolly silly mistake, and one that he won't repeat in a hurry!

We have just had a most amusing footer match at Greyfriars. Quite a friendly fixture, between the Remove eleven and a team of masters.

It was a sight for the gods to see Mr. Prout keeping goal. He pranced about like a cat on hot bricks, and was always on the spot—except when he happened to be wanted!

The result of Prout's priceless goalkeeping was that the Remove scored freely. Even the solid defence of Mr. Wally Bunter, at back, could not keep our fellows out.

At half-time we led by four goals to nothing. Bob Cherry suggested that we ought to ease up in the second half, and give the masters a chance.

"If we lick them by about twelve goals to six," said Bob, "they might be angry, and we shall have a thin time during the next week or so. Impots will be flying about like leaves in an autumn gale. But if we slack off a bit, and let the masters get a few goals, everything in the garden will be lovely."

We fell in with Bob's suggestion, and allowed the masters to do pretty much as they liked in the second half.

Bulstrode, our goalie, managed to be out of his goal every time a master tried a shot. And Johnny Bull and Tom Brown, at back, were constantly miskicking.

The result was that the masters managed to put on five goals, and beat us.

Mr. Prout was wildly elated.

"It was my wonderful goalkeeping that gained us the victory!" he exclaimed. "I was only beaten four times in the first half, and on each occasion the Remove forwards were offside! I venture to think that such clubs as Tottenham Hotspur and Aston Villa would be willing to pay a tall fee for my services."

"And I venture to say," murmured Bob Cherry, "that they'd sooner stick a scarecrow in goal than play Prout!"

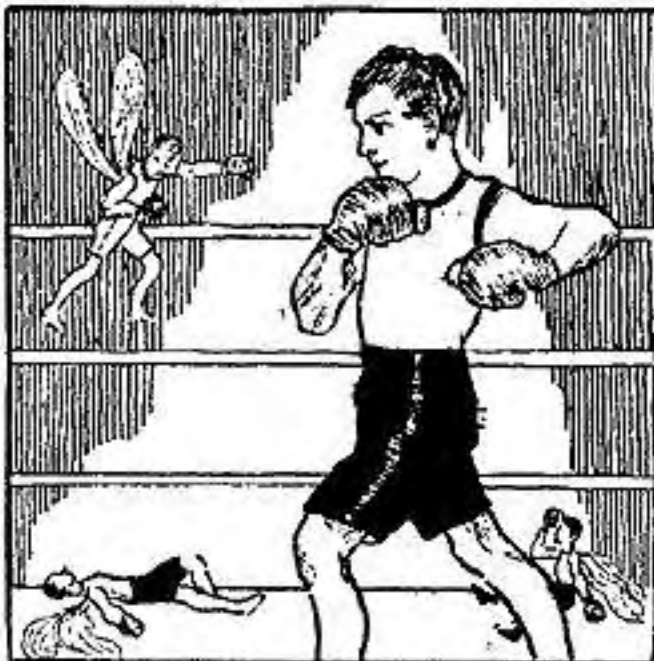
"Ha, ha, ha!"

The masters were awfully bucked, of course, at having beaten us. Little did they dream that they had been befooled by us in the second half of the game. Had we played our hardest throughout, I have no doubt the masters would have been licked by at least a dozen goals to nil!

HARRY WHARTON.

HOW I SEE OTHER FELLOWS!

By Frank Nugent.



BOB CHERRY.

THE SCHOOLMASTER'S SONG!

Written by DICK PENFOLD.
Sung by Mr. HORACE QUELCH.

In cap and gown I stand and frown
In manner most forbidding;
And woe to those who should suppose
That I am merely "kidding!"
I seize my cane and dole out pain
To all my erring pupils;
Some people say "A cruel way,"
But I have no such scruples!

Whack! Whack! Whack!
When the cane comes down on his back,
The victim squeals,
And writhes and reels,
And he groans "Alas! Alack!"
He sinks to the ground at the dreadful
sound—
Whack! Whack! Whack!

My arm is strong, my reach is long,
I smite with vim and vigour.
The victim groans, and hoots and moans,
He cuts a sorry figure!
I make him leap, as roused from sleep,
I make him skip and dance, sir,
How do I make my pupils ache?
I flog them—that's the answer!

Whack! Whack! Whack!
The cane comes down with a crack.
The victim cries
In pained surprise:
"Yow-ow! You'll break my back!"
And minus mirth he falls to earth—
Whack! Whack! Whack!

(Now, readers of the "Herald," join
heartily in the final chorus!)

Whack! Whack! Whack!
"Quelch is hot on my track!"
The victim splutters,
And then he mutters:
"Hands off! I've got a weak back!
You'll feel my fist if you don't desist!"
Whack! Whack! Whack!

RIFLE RANGE JOTTINGS!

By H. VERNON-SMITH.

Shooting has been in full swing lately. On the open-air range at Friardale much good sport has been witnessed. The Remove Shooting Team consists of Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, Peter Todd, and S. Q. I. Field—all sure shots.

The first event of importance was the shooting match between Greyfriars and St. Jim's. Harry Wharton and Tom Merry fired first and great excitement prevailed when it was announced that each had gained a "possible"—35 points.

Appended are the full scores:

GREYFRIARS.		ST. JIM'S.	
H. Wharton	.. 35	Tom Merry	.. 35
R. Cherry	.. 33	R. Redfern	.. 31
P. Todd	.. 30	R. Talbot	.. 32
S. Q. I. Field	.. 39	G. Figgins	.. 29
Total	.. 123	Total	.. 127

Greyfriars were hard put to it to snatch a victory by one solitary point. Against Highcliffe and Rookwood they fared better, each school being defeated by ten points. Harry Wharton was in deadly form with the rifle—in fact, the Remove's shooting was most consistent.

Much alarm was experienced when Mr. Prout appeared on the range with his Winchester repeater. As soon as the master of the Fifth started firing the crowd scuttled away like frightened rabbits. Mr. Prout failed to hit a target—either his own or anybody else's—but he contrived to kill a crow and to puncture the right wing of a blackbird. There were no further casualties.

[Supplement iv.]

THE MYSTERY OF THE WARNING!

(Continued from page 8.)

—plastered with it! He has soot on his chivvy, too, but I believe he washes about three times a day. Which is more than I do!" added Dicky, in a burst of self-confession.

"I see. So you felt justified in calling him a grubby young sweep?"

Dicky Nugent nodded.

"Well, I shall take no action on this occasion," said Wally. "But if I find you fighting again, Nugent minor, I shall report you to your Form-master."

Dicky, relieved at getting off scot-free, scuttled away before Wally Bunter could change his mind.

The master of the First turned to Willie Newman.

"You must learn to keep yourself clean, Newman," he said. "Cleanliness is one of the cardinal virtues. Washing your face, though a very laudable performance, is not enough. You must also keep your clothes clean. I am aware that in the course of your duties as a fag—lighting fires, and so forth—you are bound to accumulate a certain amount of soot on your clothes. But you must brush it off. Have you a clothes-brush?"

"Yes, please, sir," said Willie, with a return to his meek manner.

"Very well. Don't let me have to refer to this matter again."

Wally Bunter passed on. And Willie Newman went along to the bath-room to wash his face for the fourth time that day, Dicky Nugent's fist having left certain marks which demanded erasure.

"I seem to spend half my days at the wash-basin!" he muttered. "Beastly fag, washing. A fellow only gets dirty again in five minutes."

This was very true, in Willie Newman's case.

After he had washed he merged from the bath-room with a shining face, and scampered off to the football-field.

A couple of fags were in the act of forming sides, and Willie Newman, pressing his claim for consideration, managed to get into one of the teams in the capacity of goalkeeper.

When he left the ground, he was still under observation from his Form-master's study window.

Wally Bunter, much as he disliked playing the part of spy, had resolved to keep the new boy under close observation.

Although the new boy little suspected it, Wally was keeping a vigilant watch on his movements.

When, therefore, Willie Newman re-entered the school building and made his way to the Remove passage, his progress was being observed, from the head of the stairs, by his Form-master.

The new boy paused at the door of Lord Mauleverer's study.

After a quick glance round, he tried the handle. But the door was locked.

Harry Wharton & Co., without going into any explanations, had insisted upon Lord Mauleverer locking the door of his study whenever he went out. It was a careless trick of Mauly's to leave bank-notes lying about. And such recklessness was most unwise, in the light of recent events.

Finding the door locked, Willie Newman walked away. He went out into the Close, with Wally Bunter's keen eyes still on him.

Wally was looking very grim now. He

believed he was on the verge of a discovery.

Willie Newman's next movements were peculiar.

The Close was deserted in the gathering dusk, and the fag had no idea he was being watched.

In a secluded corner of the Close was a fire-escape, leading up to the roofs of the junior studies.

Willie Newman, satisfied that the coast was clear, swiftly ascended the iron steps.

Wally Bunter, from his point of vantage, watched him like one fascinated.

"Great Scott!" he ejaculated. "Surely the kid isn't going to get down the chimney?"

It was too dark for Wally to distinguish the new boy, once he had mounted on to the roof.

The master of the First, a-tingle with excitement, went along to Lord Mauleverer's study.

Listening without, he heard a sound as of soot descending from a chimney.

Wally stood petrified.

This, then, was the explanation of these mysterious visits to various studies.

Willie Newman, agile as a monkey, chose the chimneys as a means of entrance and exit!

The majority of the chimneys at Greyfriars were of the wide, old-fashioned order. There were steps in the interior, so that ascent and descent were made possible.

Wally Bunter remembered the incident of Willie Newman's soot-begrimed clothing. And he could have kicked himself for not having lighted on the explanation sooner.

Undignified though the action was, for a Form-master, he peered through the keyhole of Lord Mauleverer's study door.

He could both see and hear Willie Newman moving about the room. But he could not make out what the fag was doing.

Wally Bunter came to the only conclusion possible, in the circumstances.

Here was proof that Willie Newman was the person who was in the habit of visiting locked studies. And it was Willie Newman, Wally felt assured, who had walked off with his stamp collection.

The knowledge pained Wally. He liked this little new boy, with the curly hair and frank, blue eyes.

And yet the youngster was a thief!

The frank, blue eyes, the open countenance, afforded a striking illustration of how guilt can frequently masquerade as innocence.

"The mad young fool!" muttered Wally. "Why does he want to steal? If he had money troubles, why couldn't he have confided them to me? I'd have helped him. As it is—"

Wally Bunter set his lips sternly.

There was a duty to be done.

For the sake of the community, it was Wally's duty to bring Willie Newman to book without delay. Public and personal property were alike unsafe with a thief in the school.

Wally Bunter did not betray his presence to the fag who was moving about in Lord Mauleverer's study. He went out into the Close, and ascended the fire-escape, and waited on the roof till such time as Willie Newman's curly head should bob up from the chimney-stack.

"He'll have the shock of his life when he finds me waiting for him!" muttered Wally grimly.

There was an interval of ten minutes. The early stars began to twinkle overhead. The wind from the sea buffeted Wally Bunter's face as he stood on the roof, waiting and watching.

And presently, like a human jack-in-the-box, Willie Newman popped up from the chimney. As he vaulted out on to the roof, he did not see that stern, silent figure standing sentinel a few yards away.

The fag brushed some of the soot from his clothes with his hands. There was not a great amount of soot, the Greyfriars chimneys having recently been swept.

"That job's done!" Wally Bunter heard the new boy mutter.

And then the Form-master made his presence known.

"So I have caught you, Newman?" he said.

There was no triumph in the tone. There was none of that self-satisfaction which the majority of amateur detectives betray when they have cornered their victim.

Wally Bunter was more hurt than triumphant, more pained than angry.

Up till recently, he would have backed Willie Newman for an honest fellow.

The thought that the new boy was a thief was painful to Wally. But thief he was, and he must be dealt with as such.

Newman made no attempt to escape. Such a course would have been worse than useless. His Form-master had recognised him, and he must face the consequences.

But he did not look as if he anticipated that the consequences would be serious. He was surprised to see Wally on the roof; but he was not in any way abashed or crestfallen. He actually grinned.

Dark though it was, Wally Bunter noticed the grin. He took it to be bravado.

"Follow me, Newman!" he said sternly.

"Yes, please, sir."

Willie spoke as if he would cheerfully have followed Wally Bunter to the ends of the earth.

Like a devoted dog, he followed his Form-master along the flat roof, and descended the fire-escape after Wally.

In silence they proceeded, master and fag, to Lord Mauleverer's study. Mauly himself was in the act of unlocking the door.



"Good-evenin', sir!" he said cheerfully.

"Good evening, Mauloverer," answered Wally gravely. "I want you to take stock of everything in your study, and see if there is anything missing."

Lord Mauloverer gasped.

"What tho merry dickens—" he began.

"Ask no questions," said Wally, more sternly than was his wont. "Do as I tell you!"

With a dazed expression on his classic features, Lord Mauloverer stepped into the study, switched on the electric light, and proceeded to make a close examination of the contents of his study.

Wally Bunter and Willie Newman stood in the doorway, looking on.

"Well?" said Wally, when the investigation was complete.

"Nothin' missin', sir," said Mauly.

"You are quite sure?"

"Positive, begad!"

"Is everything exactly as you left it?"

"Well, not exactly, sir," answered Lord Mauloverer, in puzzled tones. "The couch seems to have been moved, an' one of the chairs."

"But nothing has been taken from the room?"

"Nothin', sir."

"Thank you, Mauloverer!" said Wally Bunter. "Come, Newman! I am going to take you before the headmaster."

For the first time Willie Newman betrayed symptoms of alarm.

"W-w-what for, sir?" he faltered.

"I am going to prefer a charge of theft against you," said Wally sternly.

Instantly the colour ebbed from Willie Newman's cheeks, leaving them deathly pale.

He gave a startled little cry, as if stabbed by sudden pain, and then became silent.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Fate of Willie Newman!

DR. LOCKE looked up from his desk as a tap sounded on the door of his study.

"Come in!" he called.

Wally Bunter stepped into the study, his face set and stern.

Willie Newman followed, wide-eyed and haggard.

The Head saw at a glance that something was seriously amiss. He looked at Wally Bunter, and there was a question in his eyes.

"I have a serious accusation to bring against this boy, sir," said Wally steadily. "I will place the full facts of the case before you, so that you may satisfy yourself that my accusation is not without foundation."

Dr. Locke looked grave.

"Proceed, Mr. Bunter," he said.

"The conduct of this boy Newman," said Wally, "has been very mysterious. On the very day he arrived here, he was twice found in my study, and once in Wharton's study. He refused to give any explanation. On the first occasion I caught him lightly, and the second time I found him in my study I gave him a severe caution."

"And he gave no reason at all for his strange conduct?" said the Head.

"He maintained a dogged silence, sir. I have since kept a watch on his movements. The night before last my stamp collection, which is a very valuable one, was taken from my study."

"Bless my soul!"

"I did not suspect Newman of being concerned in the affair—at least, I did not suspect him strongly—until this evening. During the last day or two, studies have been entered and vacated, in spite of the fact that doors were locked and windows fastened. I could not understand how it was possible until I watched Newman's movements this evening. I then saw him mount the fire-escape, and descend the chimney of Mauloverer's study."

"Good gracious!"

"I waited for him on the roof, and apprehended him," continued Wally Bunter. "Curiously enough, no money or valuables are missing from Mauloverer's study. What Newman did there is known only to himself. He appears to have shifted some of the furniture about, but beyond that there is no sign of anything unusual. It is possible he was spying out the land, as it were, with a view to paying a further visit to the study, and appropriating something of value."

For the first time, Willie Newman interrupted.

"No, no!" he said, in great agitation.

"Not that—not that!"

The Head was not altogether unmoved by this outburst. He turned to Willie Newman, who stood before him, white-faced and appealing.

"You admit having visited Mr. Bunter's study on several occasions during his absence?" said the Head quietly.

"Yes, sir."

"You admit, also, having entered locked studies by descending the chimney?"

"Yes, sir."

"Will you explain why you did this?"

The new boy was silent. He wanted to tell the truth, but he could not. It would sound so lame and unconvincing, he reflected. They would not believe him. They would imagine it was a concocted story. Better to hold his peace than to be thought a liar as well as a thief.

"I am waiting, Newman!" said the Head.

The fag remained silent. The Head gave him plenty of time to speak, but he did not take advantage of the opportunity.

"Your silence, Newman," said the Head, after a long pause, "can only be taken as a testimony of your guilt."

"But I'm not guilty, sir—I swear it! Do I look like a thief, sir?"

The Head was compelled to admit to himself that Willie Newman looked anything but a thief. If those frank blue eyes stood for anything, they stood for honesty and openness of character. But Dr. Locke reflected, with a sigh, that appearances were proverbially deceptive. Not every burglar who stands in the dock looks what he is. Not every criminal looks the part. In fact, the bullet-headed, heavy-jowled type of criminal is rapidly disappearing, his place being taken by the cultured cracksmen and the gentleman crook.

"Your appearance, Newman, is certainly not that of a thief," said the Head. "But one can neither condemn nor vindicate by appearances. It is the evidence that we have to consider—and the evidence against you is overwhelming. On

your own confession, you have visited studies to which you have no right of access. And you entered those studies in a singularly suspicious way. If you were honest, you would not need to resort to the method of descending chimneys. I have given you ample opportunity to explain your conduct. You have not done so. The fact is, you have no explanation to offer."

The Head paused. Then he fired out the question, like a bullet from a machine-gun:

"Where is Mr. Bunter's stamp collection?"

Willie Newman wrung his hands.

"How should I know, sir? I've not seen it—I've never set eyes on it!"

"Come, come, Newman!"

"I speak the truth, sir! I'm not a thief! I've never stolen anything in my life, and I never shall! Mr. Bunter, you—you don't really believe I did this thing?"

Dr. Locke bent his stern gaze upon Willie Newman.

"It is seldom indeed that I have to expel a boy when his school career is but a few days old," he said. "In view of the overwhelming mass of evidence against you, Newman, I can but believe you guilty. Having in mind your extreme youth, I will spare you the shame of a public expulsion. I will communicate with your father this evening. He will call at the school to-morrow morning and take you home. Meanwhile, you will pass the night in the punishment-room."

Willie Newman stood dazed. He tried to speak, but his tongue seemed to cleave to the roof of his mouth. He felt as if he were going to faint. The walls of the Head's study seemed to be closing in upon him; the pictures seemed to be rocking absurdly. He saw the Head's stern face as through a mist. And then he swayed, and would have collapsed, had not Wally Bunter's ready arm supported him.

Gently Wally piloted him to the door. Gently he was led away through what seemed to be a bewildering maze of corridors until eventually he found himself in a stuffy little room, containing a crude bed and scarcely any other furniture. He sank, half-swooning, on to the bed, and he fancied he heard the voice of his Form-master saying:

"Poor kid! I'd give anything for this not to have happened!"

And then he found himself alone—strangely, terribly alone.

In the morning they would come and take him away. A great sob shook him. His brief innings at Greyfriars had come to an abrupt end. He was expelled.

And he was innocent!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

An Exit—and an Entry!

THE morning brought grim developments.

Willie Newman's father—to whom the news of his son's expulsion had come as a staggering blow—arrived at Greyfriars whilst morning lessons were in progress.

Mr. Newman had a brief interview with the Head, begging the latter to reconsider his decision. But Dr. Locke was adamant.

"I cannot suffer a thief to remain in the school," he said.

Mr. Newman recognised the futility of further argument. He visited his son in the punishment-room, and what passed between them nobody knew.

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY—PRICE 2!

The station hack had been waiting in the Close, and presently father and son got into it, and it rattled away over the flagstones.

Exit Willie Newman!

The unhappy youngster felt that nobody regretted his departure. He did not know that several persons had watched him get into the hack, and looked genuinely distressed.

From the window of his Form-room Wally Bunter witnessed the going of Willie Newman. And he sighed.

"The fool!" he muttered. "The mad young fool, not to have kept his hands from picking and stealing! He deserves this, I suppose, and yet I can't help feeling sorry for the kid."

Harry Wharton & Co., peeping surreptitiously from the window of the Remove Form-room, also felt sorry for Willie Newman.

They had heard the whole miserable story from Wally Bunter. But somehow they were not convinced. They flatly refused to believe that Willie Newman was a thief. He had forced his way into studies, but not with intent to steal. Such was the charitable view that the Famous Five took of the matter. Willie Newman's frank, ingenuous face haunted them. Thief? Never in a thousand years!

The evidence against Newman was overwhelming. But then, had not the evidence been overwhelming against many an innocent person?

There was one memorable occasion when Bob Cherry had been taxed with theft—when a solid wall of damning evidence rose to confront him. Yet Bob had been innocent, and his innocence had been eventually established.

The Famous Five could not concentrate on lessons that morning. Their thoughts were for the expelled fag.

When the word of dismissal came, they went in a body to Wally Bunter's study to see if they could help in solving the mystery of Willie Newman. But before they could approach the subject of their visit, there was a tap on the door of Wally's study, and Mr. Quelch looked in.

"A new boy is arriving this afternoon, Mr. Bunter," said the Remove master. "He is destined for the First Form. His name is Smith—Percy Smith."

"Grand old English name!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"He will arrive on the three-thirty train at Friardale," continued Mr. Quelch. "Would you be good enough to have him met?"

"Certainly, Mr. Quelch!" said Wally Bunter.

And Mr. Quelch, who appeared to be in a great hurry, nodded briefly, and rustled swiftly away.

Wally Bunter turned to the Famous Five.

"Job for you, if you'd care to take it on, you fellows," he said.

"All serene, sir," said Harry Wharton. "We're old hands at meeting new kids. We'll trot down to the station and form a guard of honour for Master Percy Smith."

"Handle him gently," said Wally Bunter. "I expect he is only an infant."

"No doubt he'll be marked 'Fragile—With Care!'" said Johnny Bull.

"Bring him to me on his arrival," said Wally. "I shall want to put him through his paces."

Several hours later the Famous Five set off on their mission.

Although not interested in First-Formers as a rule, they were curious to know what sort of a youngster Percy

Smith would prove to be. They hoped he would resemble Willie Newman. Their hearts had warmed to Willie.

But Harry Wharton & Co. were sadly disappointed.

Percy Smith turned out to be an utterly impossible sort of person. Bob Cherry's description of him—"an ill-bred little puppy"—fitted him exactly.

Dressed expensively, and with his pockets bulging with money, Percy Smith possessed plenty of that commodity known as "swank."

He had little enough to swank about, so far as manners and breeding were concerned. There was no finesse about Percy. His expression was one of foxy cunning, and he looked much older than he really was. He dropped his aspirates, and his replies to the juniors' questions were sullen and surly.

The party walked up to the school, for Smith had very little luggage, and Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh carried what little there was.

"So you're going into the First, Smith?" said Harry Wharton.

"S'pose so."

"Glad you're coming to Greyfriars?"

"No, I ain't!"

"Do you play footer?" went on Wharton, as patiently as possible.

"No, I don't!"

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Nice, sociable little soul, isn't he?" said Bob. "What you might call a winning, winsome youth."

"You shut yer ugly mug!" said Percy Smith.

"Eh?"

"I don't want no narsty, sneerin' remarks from the likes o' you! I'm used to bein' treated with proper respect. I've got money, I 'ave!" added Percy impressively, tapping one of the bulging pockets. "Dessay I could buy up the lot of you!"

"You'll buy a thick ear, if you don't look out!" said Bob Cherry. "The first thing you've got to learn it to be civil to your betters, my lad."

"Far be it from us to commit the assaultful battery on a new kid," said Hurree Singh, "but the ludicrous Smith will drive us to it if he doesn't dryfully shut up!"

The Famous Five walked on ahead, Percy Smith following up behind in sulky silence. He was an altogether objectionable person, and the juniors regretted having gone out of their way to meet him.

On reaching Greyfriars they promptly handed him over to his Form-master.

Wally Bunter looked the new boy up and down, and the result of his scrutiny was unfavourable.

"Sit down, Smith," he said. "I wish to test your knowledge of various subjects."

"Don't want me nollidge tested!" said the new boy sullenly. "Didn't come 'ere for that."

"Indeed!" said Wally, controlling his temper. "Then what do you suppose you are here for?"

"To 'ave a good time, o' course!"

"I'm afraid I must disillusion you," said Wally, in measured tones. "You are here to be educated, and the responsibility for your education rests with me,



"I'm used to bein' treated with proper respect. I've got money!" said Percy Smith, tapping his pockets. "I could buy the lot of you up if I wanted to!" "You'll buy a thick ear if you're not careful!" growled Bob Cherry, and the Famous Five moved ahead, leaving the new fag to follow behind.

(See Chapter 7.)

your Form-master. I can see that I have very raw material to work upon. You will have to rid yourself of the habit of talking to me as if I were a person who didn't count. It is the custom here to address a Form-master as 'sir.'"

"Don't care tuppence about customs!" said Percy Smith defiantly.

"Then you must be made to care!"

Wally Bunter picked up a cane. The new boy squirmed uncomfortably and edged away.

"Are you going to recognise my authority, Smith?" demanded Wally.

Percy Smith looked at the cane, and then at Wally's stern face, and he decided to submit.

"Yessir," he jerked out.

"Very well. Now we know where we stand. I will now proceed to test your knowledge."

Wally did so. And he discovered that Percy Smith's knowledge was peculiar, but not extensive.

Percy informed him, among other things, that it was King Alfred who fiddled while Rome was burning. He also imported the information that the equator was a menagerie lion running across the earth. Further, that Henry the Eighth had possessed nine lives, though Wally Bunter had never suspected that corpulent monarch of being a cat.

"You'll need licking into shape, Smith," said Wally, when the examination was over. "I will take you in hand, and endeavour to make a good scholar of you. You may go."

Out in the passage Percy Smith turned, and shook his clenched fist at the door which had closed behind him.

"Take me in 'and, will yer?" he muttered. "Lick me into shape, wot? You'll find that the boot's on the other foot, my beauty!"

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Bombshell!

PERCY SMITH had been twenty-four hours at Greyfriars, when a very startling thing happened.

Wally Bunter was busy in his study, sipping a cup of tea, and scribbling notes at the same time, when the Head looked in.

Wally set down the cup, and rose respectfully to his feet.

"You wish to see me, sir?"

"Yes, Bunter. I want a nominal roll of the pupils in your Form. Have you one made out?"

"Yes, sir. Just one moment."

Wally Bunter rummaged among the miscellaneous collection of papers on his desk, and presently extracted a double sheet of foolscap. He handed it to the Head.

"Thank you, Bunter!" said Dr. Locke.

He withdrew. Within five minutes he was back again, his face stern and accusing.

Wally stared at the Head in mute surprise. For a moment there was a silence that could be felt.

It was Dr. Locke who broke the spell.

"Bunter," he exclaimed, "I want an explanation of this!"

He handed Wally a note.

The master of the First stared at the missive in blank amazement.

The note was addressed to "Mr. Walter Bunter, Esquire," and ran as follows:

"You owe me five pounds. Black Beauty fell at the post. I want my money at once."

This brief but incriminating message was signed by Mr. Cobb, the notorious bookmaker of Friardale.

Wally Bunter stared dazedly at the written words. He tried to speak, but could only stutter foolishly.

"I can well understand your embarrassment, Bunter," said the Head grimly.

"When you handed me the nominal roll just now you had evidently forgotten that this note was inside the double sheet. I am surprised at you, Bunter. I am disappointed in you. You have been gambling!"

The Head spoke as if he were addressing a refractory junior rather than a Form-master.

Wally Bunter was still dazed. He looked it and he felt it.

To be brought suddenly face to face with this grave accusation knocked him all of a heap.

At last he found words. The Head seemed to be waiting for him to say something.

"I—I know nothing about this, sir!"

The Head frowned.

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"You deny that you have been gambling?"

"Most emphatically!" said Wally, recovering himself a little.

"Then how do you explain the presence of this note?"

"I can't explain it, sir. I don't understand how it came to be there. I can only say that I've never seen it before."

It was only too obvious, from the Head's expression, that he did not believe what Wally said.

"This note has been written by Cobb, the rascally bookmaker, who has been responsible for the downfall of several wretched boys in the past," said the Head. "It is addressed to you, and it refers to a transaction you had with Cobb. You wagered the sum of five pounds that an animal named Black Beauty would win a certain race. Come, Bunter, speak the truth!"

Wally spoke with considerable heat.

"You've never found me guilty of a lie, sir, and I'm not lying now! I repeat I know nothing of this! Great Scott! Do you imagine I've got spare fivers to fling about on betting?"

"Evidently!" said the Head.

"I'm surprised, sir, that you should think this of me!" said Wally, in a

quieter tone. "I can only assure you that I've had no dealings with Cobb."

Wally very nearly added, "Go and ask Cobb yourself! He'll bear out what I say." But he refrained.

Might not this be part of a plot against him? And might not Cobb be one of the plotters?

In that case Cobb would declare that Wally had been betting. And the situation would be made worse instead of better.

"I regret I cannot accept your assurance, Bunter," said the Head. "I am satisfied you have been betting, and I cannot retain on my staff a person who indulges in so pernicious a practice. I am sorry this has happened; more sorry than I can say. But I cannot overlook so grave an offence. I must ask you, Bunter, to accept a month's salary in lieu of notice, and to leave Greyfriars to-morrow."

"To-morrow?" echoed Wally dazedly.

"To-morrow!" repeated the Head, with an air of finality.

"But—but this is rank injustice, sir! It's infamous!"

"Enough, Bunter! I will send your money in a sealed envelope by messenger."

So saying, the Head turned on his heel, and swept out of the study.

Wally Bunter sank heavily into a chair. For once in a way he felt utterly down and out.

Forces were at work of which he knew nothing. Forces, deadly forces—all the more deadly because they were secret—were conspiring to cast him out from the school.

Into the young master's mind flashed the time-honoured words, "An enemy hath done this!"

But which enemy? And by what means?

Wally could find no answer to these puzzling questions. He was still seeking for one when there was tramping of feet in the passage. Then a boisterous knock on the door. Then the gay voice of Bob Cherry.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! May we come in, sir?"

Wally answered "Yes," in a curiously strained and unnatural voice.

The Famous Five of the Remove trooped into the study. They were smiling, but their smiles vanished as if by magic when they caught sight of Wally Bunter's haggard face.

"My hat!" ejaculated Harry Wharton.

"Anything wrong, sir?"

"Everything is wrong, Wharton!" The tone was so hopeless, so unlike the cheery tone Wally Bunter usually adopted, that the juniors knew there must be something seriously amiss. They were silent, waiting for Wally to explain.

"I've just been given marching orders," he said dully. "I leave Greyfriars to-morrow."

The juniors started violently.

"What the thump—" began Bob Cherry.

Briefly, Wally explained the circumstances.

"It's a plot of some sort," he concluded. "Wish I knew who is responsible for it. I can fight my enemies when they come out in the open. I can't fight snakes in the grass."

"I can see Cobb's hand in this, sir!" said Harry Wharton. "Cobb wrote that note, right enough. Goodness knows how it came to be mixed up with your nominal roll, though!"

"But I have no quarrel with Cobb," said Wally.

"My opinion is that somebody bribed the rotter to write that note," said Johnny Bull. "This is a plot, as Mr. Bunter says."

"By the way," said Frank Nugent suddenly, "we saw that kid Smith this afternoon in Cobb's company. They were chatting together in the village street as if they'd known each other for years. We didn't attach much importance to it at the time, but now it seems likely that Smith was the fellow who planted that note here, sir!"

Nugent's words produced a buzz of excitement.

"By Jove, yes!" said Bob Cherry. "I didn't think of that!"

"He's a mean-souled little skunk, and it's just the sort of trick he'd be likely to play," said Johnny Bull.

Wally Bunter made no immediate reply.

He was thinking of the mysterious warning he had received some days before.

He vividly recalled the words of that warning:

"Someone is coming into your Form who will make things decidedly unpleasant for you!"

Wally had imagined that this referred to Willie Newman. He now realised, with a start, that the "someone" was, in all probability, Percy Smith!

"Would one of you mind bringing Smith here?" said Wally. "I want to question him."

Bob Cherry bounded through the doorway like a panther. He sped away in the direction of the fags' quarters.

Ten minutes later he returned, dragging Percy Smith into the study by the scruff of the neck.

"He wouldn't come quietly, sir," explained Bob, "so I was obliged to use a little gentle persuasion."

"Very well," said Wally. "You can unhand him now."

Bob Cherry released the sullen-faced Percy, who stood scowling at the faces around him.

"Smith," said Wally Bunter, "I am going to ask you a direct question. Did you bring to my study and place upon my desk a note from Mr. Cobb?"

Percy's answer was prompt, if ungrammatical.

"No, I never!"

"Be very careful, Smith," said Wally sternly. "If I find you out in a lie, the consequences will be serious!"

The new boy preserved a sullen silence.

"A note was left on my desk," said Wally. "It was placed in a double sheet of foolscap. It was sent by Mr. Cobb, who must have employed a messenger. Were you that messenger?"

Silence.

"Answer me, Smith?"

"I don't know nothing," said the new boy obstinately.

Wally Bunter continued to ask questions. Percy Smith stubbornly repeated his former answer, like a child who repeats a lesson by heart: "I don't know nothing."

Finally, Wally was compelled to give it up. It would have been easier to squeeze blood from a stone than to glean anything in the nature of admission from Percy Smith.

"You may go, Smith!" said Wally, at last.

The new boy slunk out of the study.

"We'll keep our eyes on that kid, sir!" said Harry Wharton, when the door had closed behind Percy Smith. "There's

been a plot against you, and he's in it, right enough!"

"Yes, rather!" said Bob Cherry. "We'll jolly well get to the bottom of this!"

"Then you'll have to hurry," said Wally Bunter, with a wan smile. "I go to-morrow, you know."

"Couldn't you ask the Head for a reprieve, sir?" suggested Johnny Bull.

"Yes, I might do that," said Wally thoughtfully. "I'll go and see him right away."

The master of the First was coldly received when he entered the Head's study.

"Well, Bunter?" said Dr. Locke in a distant tone.

"With regard to the letter which got into your hands this afternoon, sir," said Wally quietly. "I have reason to believe that it was planted in my study by someone who wished to do me an injury."

The Head looked incredulous.

"Are you suggesting, Bunter, that there has been a plot on foot against you?"

"Yes, sir! Given time, I think I could clear myself, and bring the plotters to book."

The Head was silent a moment.

"Your request is not unreasonable, Bunter," he said at length. "I will give you one week. If, by the end of that time, you are able to satisfy me that you have had no betting transactions with Cobb—if you can vindicate yourself—I shall be only too happy to allow you to remain."

"Thank you, sir!"

"In the meantime, you may continue

your duties as usual. I shall give no publicity to this matter."

Wally again thanked the Head, and withdrew.

Now that he had been given breathing-space, the position was not quite so hopeless.

Much could happen in a week. And there was just a chance that either Wally himself or Harry Wharton & Co. might bring the plotters to account.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

At Grips with the Enemy!

DURING the days that followed the Famous Five kept Percy Smith under close observation.

They were delighted to hear that Wally's sentence had been suspended for a week, and they hoped during that time to make a discovery which would establish Wally's innocence.

One mystery seemed to be treading upon another's heel.

There was the mystery of Willie Newman, and the affair of the missing stamp-album. And now there was the mysterious plot against Wally Bunter.

What part had Cobb, the bookmaker, played in the matter? What part had Percy Smith played? And was there anybody else concerned in the plot?

For three days these questions remained unsolved.

The Famous Five kept careful watch on the movements of Percy Smith. But it was not until the afternoon of the fourth day that they happened upon a discovery.



Frank Nugent and Bob Cherry clambered through the window. Frank had a small hand-mirror in his pocket, and by this means he was able to decipher Smith's handwriting on the blotting pad. "My hat, look here!" he ejaculated. "Look what he's written!" (See Chapter 9.)

The new boy was seen to go into the fags' Common-room, armed with a sheet of notepaper and a fountain-pen.

Harry Wharton & Co., peering through the window, saw Percy Smith sit down and laboriously write a note. There was no one else in the room.

"Writing home, I suppose!" muttered Bob Cherry.

"I'm not so sure," said Harry Wharton. "He doesn't look as if he's engaged in such an innocent occupation as that. He keeps glancing towards the door, as if ready to scrap the letter the moment anybody comes in."

Having written the note, Percy Smith carefully blotted it. Then he folded the sheet of notepaper, rose to his feet, and left the room.

"Come on!" said Frank Nugent excitedly. "Let's go and see what he's written!"

"You and Bob can do that," said Wharton, "while we follow Smith and see where he takes the note."

"Good wheeze!"

Frank Nugent and Bob Cherry clambered through the window. The former had a small hand-mirror in his pocket. By this means he was able to decipher the writing on the blotting-paper.

"My hat!" he ejaculated, his voice quivering with excitement. "Look what he's written!"

The following message, which was quite legible, greeted the juniors' eager gaze:

"Wally Bunter not gone yet. Do you want me to see Mr. Cobb, and plant another note in Bunter's study?—P. S."

The "P. S." did not stand for "post-script." The letters were the initials of Percy Smith.

"So it was Smith who planted that note?" said Bob Cherry, drawing a deep breath.

Nugent nodded grimly.

"Wonder where he's taken the note he's just written?" he said.

"Wharton will tell us that."

Nugent and Cherry hurried out of the room. They met their chums in the Remove passage.

"Hallo, you fellows!" said Wharton. "Did you discover what that young rotter had written?"

"Yes," said Bob Cherry. And he repeated what he had seen on the blotting-paper.

"What did he do with the note?" added Bob quickly.

"He's eaten it."

"What!"

"He took it to Loder's study. When he got to the door he saw that we were following him. So what do you think he did? He dashed into the study and locked the door. Loder was out. We peeped through the keyhole—at least, Johnny Bull did, and he saw Smith eating the note."

"Destroying the evidence, by Jove!" exclaimed Nugent.

"But there's the blotting-paper!" said Bob Cherry excitedly. "That's just as good, for our purpose, as the actual note. It will prove to the Head that there's a conspiracy against Mr. Bunter."

"Did you leave the blotting-paper in the fags' Common-room?" asked Wharton.

Bob nodded.

"Then we must recover it, before anybody moves it."

The Famous Five dashed away to the fags' Common-room.

Dicky Nugent and Gatty of the

Second were there. They had evidently just come in, and were about to fry herrings at the fire.

The Famous Five looked round at once for the blotting-paper. It had disappeared.

"You kids seen a sheet of blotting-paper here?" asked Bob Cherry.

Dicky Nugent nodded.

"I burnt it," he said calmly.

"What!"

"There was a sheet on that desk," he said. "It had been used, and I chucked it on the fire. Don't like to see the Common-room in a litter, you know."

"You—you blundering little ass!" exclaimed Nugent major. "You've destroyed valuable evidence."

"Eh?" gasped Dicky, aghast.

"That sheet of blotting-paper might have saved somebody's honour!"

"My hat!"

"No use crying over spilt milk—or, rather, burnt blotting-paper," said Johnny Bull. "The evidence has gone west, and there's an end of it."

Nevertheless, the juniors were bitterly disappointed.

The letter which had been imprinted on the blotting-paper would have cleared Wally Bunter, and possibly have led to the conviction of the plotters.

"What's the next move, you fellows?" asked Bob Cherry dispiritedly.

"We must go and report what we've seen to Mr. Bunter," said Wharton.

Wally was amazed when he heard the juniors' story.

"So Loder had a hand in this?" he said grimly. "It appears to be a little combine—a sort of vendetta—consisting of Cobb the bookmaker, Loder of the Sixth, and young Smith. But I don't doubt that Loder is the arch-plotter. When I first came here, he took exception to the fact that I had been appointed a Form-master; and I've had several skirmishes with him since. It is he who has engineered this business, but I'm afraid I shall have a job to bring it home to him."

"We've got no proofs, sir,—that's the trouble," said Wharton. "As I've just told you, Smith chewed up the original

note, and the blotting-paper impression was unfortunately burnt."

"But we all saw Smith write the letter," said Nugent. "Our evidence will carry weight. If Mr. Bunter cares to go to the Head about this, and there's an inquiry, we'll back him up."

"The back-upfulness will be terrific!"

"And a Form-master's word will be taken in preference to that of a prefect—and a shady prefect at that," said Johnny Bull.

Wally Bunter paced to and fro, deep in thought.

Presently he came to a halt.

"I'm much obliged to you fellows for bringing me this information," he said. "You can leave the matter in my hands."

The Famous Five took their departure.

When they had gone Wally Bunter made his way to Loder's study.

The rascally prefect had now come in, and was at tea. He was being waited on by Percy Smith, who was in the act of toasting muffins at the fire.

Wally Bunter entered the study without knocking.

Loder rose angrily to his feet.

"You've no right to come barging into a fellow's study like this!" he exclaimed. "We all know you're a giddy Form-master, but you seem to have mislaid your manners."

Wally ignored the sneer.

"I want a word with you, Loder," he said quietly. And he plunged into his subject right away. "I have reason to know that you have been plotting against me—that you've planned to get me dismissed from my job."

"Indeed!" said Loder, taking the plate of muffins which Percy Smith handed to him. "I can assure you you're quite wrong. Why should I want to plot against you? I've no time for people like you! I'm not sufficiently interested in you to care whether you go or stay."

"You needn't take that tone," said Wally. "I'm convinced that you and that precious scoundrel Cobb, with the aid of this kid here, have conspired to ruin me."

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"Very melodramatic, I must say!" said Loder.

He tried to speak offhandedly, but there was uneasiness in his tone.

"You caused a letter to be written and concealed in a double sheet of foolscap, which you knew would get into the hands of the Head," said Wally Bunter. "You've placed me under a cloud, and my position is in danger."

"I deny it absolutely!" said Loder. "Are you prepared to deny it before Dr. Locke?"

"You—you're not going to the Head with this cock-and-bull story?" gasped Loder.

"I'm going to give you the option," said Wally. "Either I state my suspicions to the Head—and I have witnesses, mark you—or I meet you outside the school precincts and give you a thrashing! You may take your choice."

Loder did not immediately reply. The colour had left his face.

As for Percy Smith, the new boy, he was looking thoroughly alarmed.

They were the Famous Five of the Remove.

They had seen Wally Bunter going out of gates, with a very business-like expression on his face. A few moments later they had seen Loder do likewise.

Instinctively they gathered that there was "something doing." And, their curiosity getting the better of them, they followed. As Bob Cherry remarked, a bare-fist scrap between a Form-master and a prefect was not to be missed for worlds.

The Famous Five did not make their presence known. They knelt in ambush behind a group of boats.

In any event, it is doubtful if either Loder or Wally Bunter would have noticed them. They were too intent on the business in hand.

"This is to be a fight to a finish, Loder," said Wally Bunter, removing his coat.

"You don't suppose I'm going to give up in the middle, do you?" said Loder.

"Oh, it will be a fight to a finish right

For the first two minutes there was nothing in it.

Both the combatants took heavy punishment, but neither showed any sign of weakening, until Wally Bunter, suddenly disengaging himself from the clinch, shot out his left with stunning force.

Crash!
The blow took Loder on the point of the jaw. He reeled backwards with a snarl of pain.

Wally rushed in, following up strongly. His fists shot out with deadly precision. He had the measure of his man, and he knew it.

He was too intent upon thrashing Loder to realise that the latter was being driven towards the edge of the bank. He hit out with a fierceness which he seldom displayed before. His primitive instincts were aroused. Ever before his mind was the thought that the fellow he was hammering was the instigator of a dastardly plot to ruin his career. This thought goaded him to a savage frenzy. He could not see that Loder

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"I'm waiting for your answer, Loder," said Wally Bunter. "I don't propose to wait indefinitely. Which is it to be—an inquiry in the Head's study or a fight outside the school?"

Loder gritted his teeth. "I'll fight," he said. "And I'll give you the licking of your life for bringing this beastly accusation against me! Outside the school we sha'n't be master and prefect. We shall meet on common ground. This is a personal matter, not an official one."

"Quite so," said Wally. "I'll trouble you to meet me at seven o'clock this evening outside the boathouse on the bank of the river."

"One place is as good as another, I suppose," said Loder.

"If you are not there at the specified time," said Wally, "I shall go straight to the Head. That is no idle threat."

"I'll be there!" said Loder savagely. "Very well. That is all I have to say to you at the moment."

Wally Bunter left the study. He said no word to a soul concerning the forthcoming fight.

Loder said nothing, either. And he swore Percy Smith to secrecy.

And yet, despite these precautions, five spectators turned up at seven o'clock.

enough, and a sorry finish it will be for you!"

"That remains to be seen!"

The couple afforded a strange contrast. Loder towered over Wally, as a lamp-post might tower over a plump policeman. The prefect obviously had the dual advantage of height and reach.

Wally Bunter, however, looked the better fighting-man. His arms were substantial, but not flabby, like those of his cousin Billy. There was muscle in evidence.

"Shouldn't like to get in the way of one of Mr. Bunter's straight lefts!" murmured Frank Nugent, from the ambush.

"No jolly fear!" muttered Bob Cherry.

"Hallo! Now they're off!" whispered Johnny Bull.

It was a very stern affair from the outset.

No quarter was asked or given. Loder landed the first blow—a joit to the jaw which made his opponent's teeth rattle.

Wally Bunter recovered, and then followed a desperate bout of in-fighting. Loder's sharp knuckles crashed into Wally's ribs; Wally, by way of retaliation, pummelled the prefect's chest.

had had enough—that he was already "whacked."

One final blow—a terrific, sledge-hammer blow this, delivered with Wally's full strength—and Loder was swept clean off his feet. He fell backwards through space, and there was a loud splash as his lanky form struck the water.

"Knocked out, by Jove!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, no longer troubling to lower his voice.

"Knocked in, you mean!" chuckled Wharton.

Fortunately, the water was fairly shallow at that part of the river. It came up to Loder's waist, and it numbed his nether limbs. He gasped and spluttered, and would probably have collapsed in the water, had not Wally Bunter taken hold of his arms and, with a superhuman effort, hauled him up on to the bank.

Wally said no word. It was not his way to gloat over a vanquished foe. Loder was not in a conversational mood, either. He shook himself, and, picking up his coat, stumbled away through the darkness.

As soon as the prefect had gone, the Famous Five surrounded the victor.

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"Well done, sir!" said Harry Wharton heartily. "The cleanest knock-out I've ever seen!"

"And a cold bath for Loder into the bargain!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

Frank Nugent and Hurree Singh helped Wally into his coat.

"Did you fellows see the whole thing?" asked Wally.

"Yes, rather!"

"Wouldn't have missed it for whole hemispheres!" said Johnny Bull.

Wally gave a grim laugh.

"Well, whatever happens now, I've the consolation of knowing that I've left my mark on Loder!" he said. "And now we'll be getting back to the school."

There was a big surprise in store for Wally Bunter when he returned to Greyfriars

After he had made himself presentable, he went to his bookcase for a volume. And, to his utter amazement, he found that his stamp-album had been restored to its rightful place.

He reached it down and examined it. The collection was intact!

"Well, I'm dashed!" exclaimed Wally, permitting himself an expression which Form-masters rarely use. "Life is one blessed mystery after another, these days! I'm jolly glad to get my album back. But who returned it?"

That was indeed a mystery. But the greatest mystery was—who had sent the warning, and to whom did it refer?

But one thing, at any rate, was clear—no longer could Wally Bunter believe that his album had been stolen by Willie Newman.

This practically established the im-

presence of the expelled fag, and he would have to be brought back.

As for Wally Bunter, he was still under the ban of the Head's displeasure—still in danger of losing his position as master of the First.

But he was not in despair. As he rested in his armchair that evening, weary from his recent exertions, he yet had hopes of clearing himself of the grave charge which had been made against him, and of bringing the plotters effectively to book!

THE END.

(Another splendid long complete story of Greyfriars next Monday: Don't forget there is a Greyfriars story in the "Popular," the paper that is giving away the beautiful coloured engine plates.)



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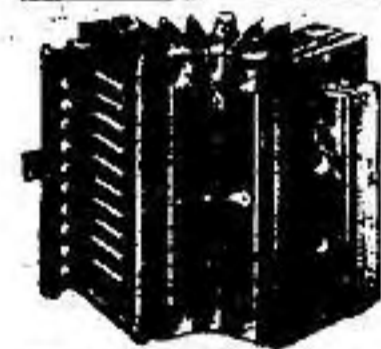
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