

IN THIS
ISSUE

“BAGGING BUNTER!”

A NEW AND AMUSING LONG COMPLETE STORY
OF THE FAMOUS CHUMS OF GREYFRIARS.



No. 739. Vol. XXI.

Week Ending April 8th, 1922.

The Magnet ¹/₂

Library

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
THE “GREYFRIARS HERALD.”



BILLY BUNTER, THE WANDERER, BACK AT GREYFRIARS AT LAST!

(A humorous incident from the long, complete tale in this issue.)

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Address your letters to: The Editor, THE MAGNET LIBRARY, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. I am always pleased to hear from my chums.

FOR NEXT MONDAY.

"THE GREYFRIARS EXILE!"

By Frank Richards.

That is the title of our next grand, long, complete school story of the chums of Greyfriars, and it relates the further adventures of William George Bunter. The Owl of the Remove recently bolted from Greyfriars, you will remember, and apparently his few hours of liberty did him more harm than good, for he promptly gets up to another of his little tricks, and finally the Remove discovers that Billy has once again disappeared.

But Billy has not gone far—he is quite near at hand, and having the time of his life. The humour and sensation in the story is finely expressed, and I strongly advise all my chums to order next Monday's MAGNET LIBRARY, and read all about

"THE GREYFRIARS EXILE!"

THE "GREYFRIARS HERALD!"

Extra Special Number!

Harry Wharton has promised us an extra special number of the "Greyfriars Herald" for our next issue. He is calling it a special Boatrace Number.

These special numbers have always been popular with our reader-chums, and I am quite certain that every one will enjoy this extra special number, which will be found in our centre pages next Monday morning.

THE "POPULAR!"

Every Tuesday!

I hope every reader of the MAGNET LIBRARY discovered in time that the "Popular" is now published every Tuesday instead of Friday, as hitherto. I should not like any of you to have missed the Magnificent Coloured Engine Plates which are being given away in that famous school story paper.

The story of Greyfriars in to-morrow's—Tuesday's—issue of the "Popular" is particularly interesting, for it deals with that period of Harry Wharton's career at Greyfriars when the Bounder, as Herbert Vernon-Smith was known, was succeeding in his wild scheme to drive the Famous Five from the school. The story which appears in this week's issue of the "Popular" is entitled: "The Expulsion of Harry Wharton!" That is a story every one of my readers must read.

There are three other fine, complete school stories in the "Popular" on Tuesday. Rookwood, St. Jim's, and the School in the Backwoods are dealt with, and the adventures of the famous school-boys, Jimmy Silver & Co., Tom Merry & Co., and Frank Richards & Co., make very interesting reading.

I must not forget to mention Sidney Drew's really wonderful serial, for his story of Gan Waga, Prince Ching Lung, Rupert Thurston, Ferrers Lord, and Barry O'Rooney & Co. is one which is making a stir in the world of fiction. Get a copy of the "Popular," and you'll soon understand why.

"Billy Bunter's Weekly" occupies a prominent position in the "Popular," and there is a competition in which money prizes to the value of Forty Pounds are offered.

Don't fail to-morrow, then, to get your copy of the "Popular!"

NOTICES.

Correspondence.

Kenneth C. H. Smith, 6, York Cottages, Court Road, Malvern, Worcestershire, would like to see specimen copies of amateur magazines, with view to becoming a regular reader and constant contributor.

James C. Milne, 12, Gowan Street, Arbroath, Scotland, wants readers for his new pass-round magazine, "The Spitfire."

Robert Winder, 2, Lambton Road, Aigburth Road, Liverpool, wishes to correspond with readers in the British Empire.

Ralph E. Smith, 218, Close Avenue (Apartment 4), Toronto, Ontario, Canada, wishes to correspond with a French boy learning English—for mutual help in languages.

Miss Christiana Knox Essel, 112, Warwassir Lane, Obuassir, Gold Coast, West Coast of Africa, wishes to correspond with readers.

A. G. Slack jun., 165, Birkin Avenue, Gregory Boulevard, Nottingham, wishes to correspond with football enthusiasts, North-country correspondents preferred, Newcastle district, or Liverpool and Manchester. This correspondent also wants to hear from American readers.

Scout Lewis Orbach, 35, Robert Street, Regent's Park, N.W. 1, will be glad to contribute art sketches and stories and articles to amateur magazines.

F. E. Hope, 2, Cage Lane, Chatham, and T. P. Savidge, 17, Dingwall Gardens, Golders Green, London, N.W. 11, would like to hear from readers willing to join the Imperial Correspondence Club, pass round magazine, etc.

S. Hawkins, 20, Alma Street, Stratford, E., wishes to correspond with readers, ages 15-17, in U.S.A.

F. E. Painting, 61, Reynold's Buildings, Millbank Estate, Westminster, S.W. 1, is starting an amateur magazine called the "Boys' Companion," and would like to hear from readers interested.

Thomas Farncombe, 1, Pelham Square, Brighton, Sussex, wishes to correspond with readers, ages 13-15. All letters answered.

Miss Christina McNally, 18, Second Avenue, Victoria Road, Hendon, N.W. 4, wishes to hear from readers, preferably those in the Hendon district.

Albert E. Stokes, 103, Ashwood Road, Parkgate, Rotherham, Yorks, wishes to correspond with readers anywhere.

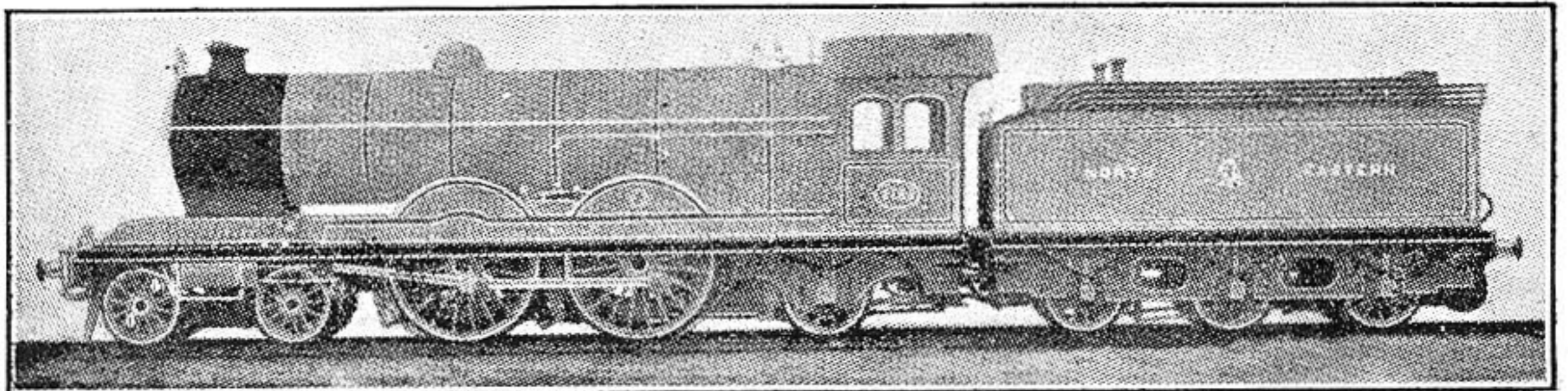
Miss Marjorie Cutting, Hillcrest, 13, Belsize Avenue, Palmers Green, London, N. 13, wishes to correspond with readers, ages 17-18.

Will any reader who is interested in forming a branch in his town of a sports club, kindly communicate with the Secretary, 18, Chester Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne?

William A. Clements, 4, Alfred Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham, would like to hear from readers who are interested in his new advertisement paper, the "Advertising Courier," the amateurs' advertisement paper.

Your Editor.

LOOK OUT FOR THIS SPLENDID COLOURED ENGINE PLATE



Subject: A Famous Express Locomotive of the North Eastern Railway.

GIVEN AWAY FREE IN THE "POPULAR"! OUT ON TUESDAY!



A Magnificent, Long, Complete School Tale, dealing with the adventures of Harry Wharton & Co. and Billy Bunter :: of Greyfriars. ::

By FRANK RICHARDS.

(Author of the Famous Tales of Greyfriars now appearing in the "POPULAR".)

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Nice for the Remove!

"QUELCHY'S got 'em!" It was just like Skinner of the Remove to put it in that disrespectful way.

Undoubtedly the master of the Greyfriars Remove looked cross.

When he came into the Form-room that morning the Remove fellows noted his knitted brow and the glint in his gimlet-eyes, and they read the danger-signals and decided to be very good.

When Mr. Quelch looked like that he was not to be trifled with.

There were six places vacant in the Remove Form room that morning—which was very unusual.

The cause of it was more unusual still.

The fact that Billy Bunter had run away from school was regarded as a joke by the Removites. They chortled over it. But the Remove master was far from taking it as a joke.

He took a dreadfully serious view of the incident. Nobody envied Bunter what was in store for him when he was brought back.

Judging by Mr. Quelch's looks, Billy Bunter was booked for the time of his life when he reappeared at Greyfriars.

And that was not all that had happened to cloud Mr. Quelch's brow. For Harry Wharton & Co. of the Remove had been despatched to bring Bunter back—on the supposition that they would find him in a few hours.

Instead of which, the Famous Five had been led far afield, and they had made a night of it, which was not at all what their Form-master had intended.

So Mr. Quelch was frowning portentously, and Skinner was justified in his whispered remark to Bolsover major that "Quelchy had got 'em"—the "em" to which Skinner referred being the tantrums.

Skinner whispered his remark as Mr. Quelch came in—whispered it almost inaudibly. But the Remove master seemed to be endowed with a wonderful sense of hearing that morning.

His gimlet eye turned on Skinner.

"Skinner!"

"Oh dear!" murmured Skinner.

"Yes, sir?"

"You made a remark!"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"You spoke to Bolsover major."

"Oh, yes, sir! I—I just mentioned that I hoped nothing had happened to Wharton and Cherry and—and the other fellows, sir."

"Is that all, Skinner?"

"That's all, sir."

"Is that all that Skinner said to you, Bolsover?"

"Just that, sir!" said Bolsover major.

"Then it is very odd that you should have mentioned my name, Skinner, in making a remark referring solely to your Form-fellows."

"Oh!" stammered Skinner.

"My name, sir," rumbled Mr. Quelch, "with a disrespectful suffix which does not properly appertain to it, Skinner."

Skinner could only shiver. Mr. Quelch had heard himself referred to as "Quelchy"—the "y" was the disrespectful suffix. On that morning, of all mornings, Skinner, the sharpest fellow in the Remove, had been caught out first ball, as it were.

"You are a mendacious boy, Skinner!"

Mr. Quelch meant that Skinner was a fibber, but that was his way of putting it. Form-master and Form spoke two quite different varieties of the English language.

"You have also answered me mendaciously, Bolsover."

"Oh, sir!" murmured Bolsover major.

"You will take two hundred lines, Bolsover."

"Oh!"

Mr. Quelch picked up his cane from his desk.

"You will stand out before the class, Skinner!"

"You're for it, old bean!" murmured Peter Todd sympathetically, as Skinner moved out dismally.

"Todd!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Peter. Mr.

Quelch's sense of hearing that morning was really marvellous.

"What did you say to Skinner, Todd?"

"I—I said he was—was for it, sir!" stammered Peter.

"You said that Skinner was for it, Todd? For it!" repeated Mr. Quelch.

"Are you aware of any grammatical rule, Todd, which justifies such a use of that preposition?"

"Nunno, sir!"

"Then for what reason, Todd, did you use that preposition?"

"It—it's slang, sir," groaned Peter.

"Slang!" said Mr. Quelch. If Peter Todd had confessed to holding up a bank the Remove master could scarcely have looked more shocked. "Is it your opinion, Todd, that the Form-room is the proper place for the use of slangy expressions?"

"Oh, no, sir! Not at all, sir!"

"I am glad that that is not your opinion, Todd! I am glad not to be under the necessity of caning you as well as Skinner."

Peter was glad, too!

"After lessons to-day, Todd, you will write out, 'Slang must not be spoken in the Form-room' fifty times."

"Yes, sir," murmured Peter.

"You, Skinner, will hold out your hand."

Swish!

"I trust, Skinner, that this will instruct you to speak respectfully of your Form-master in the future."

"Oh, yes, sir!" gasped Skinner.

If Mr. Quelch really trusted that, he must have been of a very trusting disposition—much more so than he looked!

Harold Skinner crawled back to his place, and did not make any more whispered remarks to Bolsover major. Indeed, the whole class preserved a funereal solemnity and silence. It was only too obvious that Mr. Quelch had "got 'em"—bad!

Lessons went on in a rather electric atmosphere. Probably it was fortunate for Billy Bunter that he was away that morning, and fortunate for the Famous

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Five that they were still hunting Bunter. The Remove Form room that morning was an excellent place to be away from.

Tap!
Mr. Quelch gave a sniff—an audible sniff, almost a snort—as a knock came at the Form-room door half an hour later.

Trotter, the page, put his chubby face in.

"If you please, sir——"
Mr. Quelch held up his hand.
"You should not come here during class, Trotter."

"No, sir! But——"
"Is it a message from the Head?"
"No, sir! But——"

"Then kindly take your departure, Trotter."
"But, sir——"
"Close that door at once."
"Oh! Yes, sir!"

Trotter, looking rather scared, withdrew and closed the door. The Remove fellows wondered a little what he had wanted. Perhaps Mr. Quelch wondered, too, after a few moments. But it was beneath his dignity to call Trotter back, so the mystery remained unsolved for some minutes. Then there came another tap at the door.

Mr. Quelch spun round towards the door like a top. His brow was thunderous.

"How dare you come in here again?" he exclaimed, as the door opened. "This impudence—— Oh! Ah—hem—hum! Excuse me, Mr. Capper! I—I was under the impression that—that it was Trotter—hem, hem!"

Mr. Capper, the master of the Fourth blinked at the Remove master in mild surprise.

"Really, my dear Quelch——"
"Pray excuse me, sir!" gasped Mr. Quelch, with a crimson face. "I was—was under a misapprehension——"

"Oh, quite so—quite so!" said Mr. Capper. "I merely looked in to mention that the telephone bell is ringing in your study. Really, Trotter should have informed you; the boy seems very careless——"

"Oh! Ah! Hem! Thank you very much, Mr. Capper!"
"Not at all, sir."

Mr. Capper retired with rather a dignified look. The Removites watched their Form-master, with great difficulty keeping back a general chortle. It was not safe to chortle just then. Mr. Quelch's eye, more like a gimlet than ever, roamed over his class; and then even the desire to chortle left the Removites.

"I shall be absent from this Form-room for a few minutes," said Mr. Quelch, in a grinding voice. "If there is any disorder——"

He did not finish. The rest was left to the imagination of the Remove. And when Mr. Quelch swept out the Removites did not chortle—they only grinned, silently but joyously.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Bunter Makes Terms!

B UZZZZZZZZZZ!
The telephone bell was going strong as Mr. Quelch came whisking into his study.

The annoyed gentleman jerked the receiver off the hooks.

"What—what——"
"Is that Greyfriars School?"
"Certainly."

"Hold the line, please—trunk call from Rookham."
"Very good!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

He held the line, wondering angrily why anybody could possibly have rung him up from Rookham, a place he had never even heard of. He fairly jumped as a fat voice came through on the wire.

"Mr. Quelch."
"Bunter!" ejaculated the Remove master.

"Good-morning, sir!"
Mr. Quelch did not return Billy Bunter's polite greeting. Instead of that, he looked as if he were going to bite the transmitter.

"I hope you're well this morning, sir!" pursued the Owl of the Remove, fortunately safe at the other end of a very long wire.

"Bless my soul! Bunter! From where are you speaking?"
"Lesser mortals might have said 'Where are you speaking from?' But Mr. Quelch would have perished rather than have wound up a sentence with a preposition.

"Rookham, sir."
"Where is Rookham?"
"In Sussex, sir."

"You—you are in Sussex now, Bunter?"
"Yes, sir. Nice county, sir—jolly good scenery!" said Bunter cheerfully.

Mr. Quelch was not interested that morning in Sussex scenery. He wanted Bunter in Kent—within reach of his cane.

"Bunter! You—you—you will return to Greyfriars at once! Do you hear me, boy? At once!" boomed Mr. Quelch.

"You see, sir——"
"You will be punished severely for leaving school without permission, Bunter. Also for the outrage you committed here. You will not escape, sir, by this—this subterfuge."

"That's what I wanted to speak about, sir. I went to St. Jim's, and was going to stay there, but a lot of beasts came and routed me out——"

"What?"
"Wharton and Cherry and Nugent and Bull and Hurree Singh, sir—they came along to St. Jim's and routed me out."

"They did so by my instructions, Bunter. You are the cause of these boys having remained away from school over the night. That, sir, will be placed to your account."

"I—I want to come back to Greyfriars, sir, if you'll let me."
"I command you to return at once!"
"I'm willing to let bygones be bygones, sir——"

"What—what?"
"I'm prepared to start afresh, sir," went on the cheery Owl of the Remove.

"That mixture I chucked over you, sir, was meant for Coker—Coker of the Fifth, sir. It was all a mistake—quite an accident. Besides that, I never touched it or knew anything about it. Lots of fellows can witness that I was in quite a different place at the time."

"Bless my soul!"
"My suspicion is, sir, that it was chucked over you by Coker himself—it seems very likely. Don't you think so, sir?"

Mr. Quelch did not reply. He could not.

"If you'll accept my word, sir, that I was innocent of the whole thing, I'll come back to Greyfriars at once. I want it understood that there's to be no flogging. If you give me your word, sir, I'll accept it. I know you'll keep your word. Is it a go, sir?"

"A—a what?"
"A go," said Bunter.

"Upon my word! Bunter, you will receive a severe flogging for having

drenched me with an obnoxious fluid, whether it was intended for a Fifth Form boy or not. The flogging will be all the more severe, sir, on account of your having had the audacity—the unparalleled audacity—to run away from school! In all my experience as a Form-master of a public school, I have never encountered an example of such unheard-of insolence and disrespect to constituted authority!"

Mr. Quelch paused, a little breathless.

"I didn't catch that, sir."
"What?"
"Would you mind saying it over again?"

"Bunter! I—I——"
"The fact is, sir, my money's running out—I mean, I feel that I ought to be back at school—at my lessons, sir. I miss my lessons very much. Will you give me your word, sir——"

"I will give you a flogging!"
"That isn't what I want, sir. I want you to promise that there isn't going to be any flogging. Don't I make myself clear?"

"Bunter! I command you to return to Greyfriars immediately—this very moment!"

"You see, sir——"
"Are Wharton and the others with you now?"

"No jolly fear—I mean, no, sir! I think I've dodged the beasts all right. I hoped they'd got back to Greyfriars. Are those awful rotters still after me, sir?"

"In one word, Bunter, you are to take the first train back to your school—the first train, sir——"

"I haven't any money left, sir. Would you advise me to travel without paying my fare?"

"Oh, no, no! Certainly not! How dare you suggest such a thing, Bunter?"

"Perhaps I could borrow it of some friends I am going to see here, sir, if you give me your word that there's not going to be any flogging——"

"You young rascal!"
"Now that you know I'm innocent, sir—now I've explained the whole thing to——"

"Bunter, I command you——"
"You see, sir——"

Bunter's voice suddenly ceased. Apparently he had had his money's worth, and he was cut off. Mr. Quelch rapped out stern commands into the transmitter for a full minute, but he received only silence in return. He jabbed the receiver on the hooks again.

His wrath was almost at explosion point; his face was a study in scarlet. He quitted the study, and whisked away to the Remove Form room. A voice was audible as he reached it—the voice of Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars.

"Bunter's in luck to be away this morning. Jevver see such a real, genuine, giddy old gargoyle as Quelch to-day?"

Mr. Quelch swept in.
"Vernon-Smith!"

"Oh, holy smoke!" gasped the Bounder.

Mr. Quelch picked up his cane. Let us draw a veil, as a novelist would say, over what followed. It was painful.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Runaway!

WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER came out of the telephone-box at the post-office at Rookham. There was a serious expression on Bunter's fat face. It was not, as Mr. Quelch might have supposed, the

NEXT MONDAY!

"THE GREYFRIARS EXILE!"

A SPLENDID TALE OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYFRIARS. By FRANK RICHARDS.

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unheard-of audacity of his action in running away from school that made him look so serious. Matters of far greater import weighed on the mind of the fat junior. Money was running short—and Bunter was hungry.

It was rather a serious matter when Bunter was hungry—as serious as four or five other fellows being hungry all at once. Bunter drifted along to a confectioner's, and stood looking in at the window with yearning eyes. He already regretted the cash he had expended on a trunk call to Greyfriars. It had not turned up trumps, after all.

Bunter realised that the situation was serious.

Having bolted from Greyfriars, he had taken refuge at St. Jim's, and he had intended to plant himself there for a time—not worrying about the more distant future. But the Bunter-hunters had arrived, and the Owl of the Remove had barely escaped them; and instead of a bed at St. Jim's, Bunter had had to pay for a lodging for the night, and in the morning he found himself rather at a loose end.

Going home, to face the wrath of Bunter senior, and going back to Greyfriars to take his flogging were equally unpleasant alternatives. So Bunter had thought of Rookwood School, where he knew Jimmy Silver & Co., and they knew him—knew him, perhaps, too well to welcome him.

But, fascinating fellow as Bunter was, he could not blink the fact that his reception at St. Jim's had been far from enthusiastic. He did not feel confident of a warm welcome at Rookwood.

Hence his telephone talk with Mr. Quelch. If only the flogging could be dispensed with, Greyfriars would be a refuge to the wandering Owl.

Mr. Quelch's reply held out no hope on that point! Bunter's complicated explanations had failed to convince the Remove master of his innocence. Bunter's masterly defence was that he had drenched Mr. Quelch in mistake for Coker, or alternatively, as the lawyers would say, that he hadn't drenched him at all. For some reason that defence did not seem to satisfy Mr. Quelch of his innocence of the whole affair!

So Greyfriars was barred off. It was impossible to return while that dreaded flogging stood like a lion in the path.

Rookwood was the only resource now; and even Rookwood was some miles from the little country town at which the wandering Owl had now arrived.

Bunter had enough money left to pay his fare to Coombe, the village near Rookwood—and Bunter was hungry! If he paid his fare to Coombe, he had to travel light—inside. On the other hand, if he filled up that aching void, he would have to walk to Rookwood.

This problem exercised the powerful brain of W. G. Bunter to the exclusion of more trifling problems.

It was a Sphinx problem, and there was no *Ædipus* at hand to offer a solution.

To eat or not to eat?—that was the question; and the longer Bunter blinked at the confectioner's window the more impossible it seemed to him to travel unfed. He had had only one breakfast that morning, and even then he had eaten only enough for three—money being tight.

But having rolled into the doorway, he rolled out again as he thought of the long tramp on dusty roads.

It was the poet's scene over again—the tuckshop was the Paradise, and Bunter was the Peri hovering on the threshold—a very plump Peri.

"Oh dear!" murmured the unhappy Owl, torn by conflicting emotions. "What's a fellow to do?"

Like *Desdemona* in the play, Bunter did perceive here a divided duty!

With an effort he turned his back on the tempting establishment at last, and started for the railway-station.

But each step was slower than the preceding one, till Billy Bunter at last came to a halt.

It was more than flesh and blood could endure. As if drawn by a magnet, the fat junior turned and rolled back to the confectioner's.

Further reflection was banished. Bunter rolled into the confectioner's, and his last shilling disappeared. He was still hungry when he came out, and now the walk was before him.

He had come in headlong, and landed among knees and feet. Bunter sat in a corner and gasped for breath. He had done it, so far as the start at Rookham was concerned. Getting out at Coombe was another matter; but Bunter hoped that his lucky star was still in the ascendant.

Several stations were passed, and then the little country station of Coombe, with scarlet geraniums bordering the platform, came in sight.

"Coombe!" sang out a drowsy porter's voice.

The other passengers left the carriage. Bunter blinked from the door, and did not jump out till the train was about to start again. Having left his jump a second too late, he landed on the platform with a bump, and sat there and



Billy Bunter jumped from the train as it commenced to move again, and landed on the platform with a bump. The train glided away, and the drowsy old porter of Coombe kindly came along and gave Bunter a hand up. "Urt yourself, sir?" said the porter. (See Chapter 3.)

But he had a lingering hope. It was barely possible that he might travel by train yet, if the porters were not very watchful at the station! Some fellows would have been handicapped by moral considerations. Bunter suffered from no such handicap. He was quite prepared to travel without paying his fare, if it was possible—that was the only doubt that worried William George Bunter. He rolled into the station hopefully. The local train for Coombe was just on the point of starting. Bunter made a desperate rush for it.

"Ticket!" howled a voice.

A hand missed Bunter's shoulder by an inch. The next moment he was in the train, and the train was moving.

"Done it!" gasped Bunter.

He sat down in the carriage, and two or three other passengers stared at him.

spluttered. The train glided away, and the drowsy old porter of Coombe kindly came along and gave Bunter a hand up.

"Urt yourself, sir?" said the kind porter, in modest expectation of a tip.

"Nunno," gasped Bunter. And then he had a brain-wave. "But—but I've dropped my ticket!"

The porter glanced round.

"Don't see it, sir!"

"Must have fallen under the train," suggested Bunter.

"Ow could it?" said the porter.

"Or in the carriage," said Bunter.

The porter eyed him. Even in a sleepy little place like Coombe "bilks" were not totally unknown.

"That's all right, sir," said the porter. "You pay your fare, and you claim it back from the kumpny."

"Oh dear!" said Bunter.
 "That is, if you reely 'ad a ticket!" added the porter, growing more and more suspicious as his expectation of a tip faded away.

Bunter gave him a haughty blink through his big spectacles. This low suspicion shocked him.

"If you think I would travel without paying my fare—" he said crushingly.

"And it over," said the porter.

"Where from?"

"Rookham! But—"

"Well, 'and it over!"

"I'll explain to the ticket-collector," said Bunter haughtily.

"I'm the ticket-collector 'ere!"

"Oh!"

"And I'll trouble you to 'and it over, sir!"

Billy Bunter gave a desperate blink up and down the platform. But there was no chance of running for it; Bunter was not a sprinter. The porter towered and loomed over him, stern and suspicious. A horny hand was already held out for the fare. Bunter fumbled desperately in his pockets. If by chance he had overlooked some coin— But he hadn't! Every pocket, like Mrs. Hubbard's celebrated cupboard, was bare.

"I—I must have—have dropped my purse, too!" he stammered.

The porter grew sarcastic.

"Sure you ain't left it at 'ome on the grand pianner, along with your cheque-book?" he asked.

"The—the fact is—" mumbled Bunter.

"I ain't paid to stand 'ere 'olding out my 'and!" remarked the porter casually.

"I—I haven't any money about me just at this moment," gasped Bunter. Too late, the unhappy Owl realised that honesty was the best policy. Even walking along a dusty road was better than this. Indeed, Bunter would have given a great deal at that moment to have been running along a road—any road!

"Thort not!" said the porter. "'Ere, Bill! Call a policeman!"

Bunter shook.

"I'm going to Rookwood—" he stammered.

"Not till you've paid your fare, you ain't!" said the porter.

"I'm well known at Rookwood—"

"Well known at the police-station, too, p'r'aps!" suggested the porter genially.

"Nunno! Not at all! At—at Rookwood I've got lots of money!" stammered Bunter.

"I'll tell you what. You—you walk along to Rookwood with me, and I'll pay the fare, and—and hand you five shillings for your trouble!"

It was a reckless offer. The porter seemed to consider it, eyeing Bunter the while.

"I'm going orf dooty in 'arf an hour," he remarked. "You kummerlonger me, and set yourself down and wait, and I'll see about it."

There was no help for it. Bunter came along with the suspicious porter, and had the pleasure of sitting down for half an hour, and a little over. Then the railwayman was ready to walk to Rookwood. He came out of the station with Bunter, and they started together.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bunter at Rookwood!

"LOVELL!"

Arthur Edward Lovell of the Fourth Form at Rookwood started a little, and glanced round. His name was called in an unfamiliar voice.

The Rookwood junior was sauntering along Coombe Lane, when he was hailed. His glance lighted upon a fat figure that ambled along by the side of a railwayman.

"I've seen that fat oyster before somewhere!" was Lovell's reflection.

Bunter rolled up, beaming.

"Jolly glad to see you again, Lovell, old top!"

Lovell looked at him.

"Same to you, and many of them," he said politely.

"You remember me, don't you?"

"Seem to remember something like you," said Lovell. "But whether it was you, or a cask outside a brewer's, I can't quite recall."

"Oh, really, Lovell—"

"Perhaps you're Bunter," said Lovell, apparently remembering. "Yes, you're Bunter; I remember you by your diameter and your circumference. Left school?"

"I—I—you see—"

"Expelled?" asked Lovell cheerily.

"Eh! No."

"Why not?"

"Oh, really, you know—"

"Are they still standing you at Greyfriars?" asked Lovell, in tones of surprise. "Why do they do it?"

Bunter coughed. This was not a promising beginning. Apparently his welcome at Rookwood was going to be even more unenthusiastic than at St. Jim's.

"The—the fact is, Lovell—"

"Go it," said Arthur Edward. "I remember you as a dealer in facts! What is the fact this time?"

"I was coming over to see you fellows—"

"You're too good, Bunter. No ceremony or formality about you, is there?" said Lovell admiringly. "Some fellows wait till they're asked. Not you."

"I—I—"

"Look 'ere—" began the railwayman.

"I won't detain you," said Lovell. "Your friend's getting impatient."

"Friend!" hooted Bunter. "Look here, Lovell, I—I lost my purse on the train, and couldn't pay my fare—"

"Odd!" said Lovell. "Losing your purse on the train prevented you from paying your fare before the train started. Queer!"

"I—I—this man wants the fare from Rookham—"

"I hope he'll get it," said Lovell. "I've got some doubts about it, though. But I hope he will."

"It's only fifteenpence," said Bunter. "Lend me one-and-three, Lovell, there's a good chap!"

Arthur Edward Lovell gave a snort. He was not pleased to see Bunter, and he did not pretend that he was. And he had little sympathy with a "bilk." But Bunter's state of distress touched him, and very reluctantly he drew out a shilling and three pennies.

"Take it and cut!" he grunted.

"I say, Lovell—"

"Oh, scat!"

Arthur Edward Lovell continued his walk towards the village. The railwayman eyed Bunter.

"There's your fare!" said Bunter loftily. "I shall want a receipt for it. I couldn't be a party to your swindling your employers."

The railwayman gasped.

"What about the five bob?" he asked.

As a matter of fact, Bunter had forgotten that item. But even if he had remembered it, certainly Arthur Edward

Lovell would not have "weighed" it out. Bunter backed away a step—the porter was looking quite threatening—and assumed his haughtiest manner.

"I shall certainly not give you a gratuity!" he said.

"Wot?"

"Very likely you'd get the sack if your employers knew that you were trying to extort money from a railway passenger," said Bunter.

The railwayman looked at him fixedly, as if mesmerised. He seemed under the influence of some strong emotion.

"My heye!" he gasped, at length.

Bunter waved a fat hand at him.

"You've got the fare," he said. "Take it and go! I certainly refuse to give you anything more. I shall write to the company and complain of your incivility!"

The railwayman seemed to wake up from a trance, as it were. He slipped the fifteenpence into his pocket. Then he made a stride at Bunter, and caught him by the collar.

"Leggo!" roared Bunter, in indignation and alarm.

Smack, smack, smack, smack!

"Yaroooh! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a roar from the distance. Arthur Edward Lovell was glancing back.

Smack, smack!

"Yoop! You awful beast—Yaroooh!"

"There!" gasped the railwayman, apparently somewhat solaced. And he tramped away towards Coombe, fuming.

Billy Bunter stood and gasped for breath. He rubbed his fat ears for some minutes, and then he collected up his cap and dusted it with his sleeve.

"The awful beast!" gasped Bunter. "The cheeky rotter! A low fellow like that laying hands on a gentleman! Ow! I've a jolly good mind to go after him and kick him! Yow! But he's not worth touching! Wow!"

In a breathless and indignant state, Billy Bunter resumed his way to Rookwood School.

His reflections were not wholly agreeable.

Lovell's reception of him was a warning of the wrath to come, as it were; and his hopes were almost at zero. Certainly it was not of much use to tell Jimmy Silver & Co. that he had come to stay at Rookwood for some days, as he had told D'Arcy at St. Jim's. He had learned from Lovell what sort of an answer he might expect to that. But if he told them that he had run away from school, matters would be worse still; the Rookwooders certainly couldn't take him in if they knew that. But he had to get a refuge somewhere; especially as he had learned from Mr. Quelch that Harry Wharton & Co. were still on his track.

"Beasts!" growled Bunter, referring to the Rookwooders, and Harry Wharton & Co., and the St. Jim's fellows, and Mr. Quelch.

"Rotters!" This time he was referring to the Famous Five. "They'll guess I've headed for Rookwood—sure to! They'll come on after me. Why, old Quelch might guess, now he knows I've been to St. Jim's, and he might telephone to Rookwood after me. Oh dear! The beasts wouldn't let me put up at the school, anyhow—blow 'em! Oh dear!"

Bunter rolled on disconsolately.

He had plenty of food for thought before he reached the gates of Rookwood School.

Apparently the best he could hope for at Rookwood was a square meal—he felt

that he needed that—and whatever cash he could contrive to borrow from Jimmy Silver & Co., to help him on his further travels. And even that limited prospect might be spoiled by Harry Wharton & Co. butting in soon after he arrived! The Bunter-hunters might be quite near at hand, for anything that he knew.

He arrived at the gates of Rookwood, and found them open. It was a half-holiday at Rookwood that day. Bunter wondered whether dinner was over, and fervently hoped it wasn't. He caught sight of Jimmy Silver, Newcome, and Raby chatting in the quad, and rolled up to them at once, much to their astonishment.

"Hallo! Where did you blow in from?" ejaculated Jimmy Silver.

"Came over to see you fellows," said Bunter.

"Oh, did you?"

"I've got something to tell you," said Bunter mysteriously. "Something rather important. I say, you fellows, have you had dinner?"

"Not yet."

"I suppose you're going to stand me a dinner," said Bunter warmly, "specially as I've made a jolly long journey to do you fellows a favour."

Jimmy Silver eyed him doubtfully.

"I'll speak to my Form-master," he said.

"Do!" grunted Bunter.

Jimmy Silver did; and received Mr. Dalton's permission to introduce Bunter at the junior dinner-table. And William George Bunter rested his weary fat limbs at last, and distinguished himself at the dinner-table in a way that put Tubby Muffin of Rookwood quite in the shade.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Famous Five on the Track!

"WHAT'S the giddy programme?" asked Bob Cherry. "Echo answers what!" remarked Johnny Bull.

Harry Wharton was looking very thoughtful.

Five juniors had stopped at a wayside place of refreshment, for buns and ginger-beer. Over that provender they discussed the situation.

The Famous Five of Greyfriars were in no hurry, if it came to that, to turn up at school again. They were quite enjoying their little trip into Sussex. But they realised that it would not do to make another night of it. Somehow or other, the Greyfriars fugitive had to be recaptured that day and taken back.

Harry Wharton & Co. had spent most of the morning looking for traces of Bunter, without any luck. Now the captain of the Remove was thinking the matter out.

Bunter had been "routed" out from St. Jim's, and he had disappeared from the neighbourhood. The question was, what refuge was the fugitive Owl likely to be heading for? That was the problem that Wharton was thinking out.

"Got it?" asked Frank Nugent with a smile, as the captain of the Remove gave a nod, as if in answer to his own thoughts.

"I think so," said Harry.

"Good!"

"The goodfulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh. "What is the esteemed and ridiculous programme?"

"You see, he hasn't gone home," said Wharton thoughtfully. "If he had meant to go home he would have gone

yesterday. I fancy that Bunter senior would give him a warm reception if he turned up there."

"The warmfulness would probably be—"

"Terrific!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "But where else can the giddy Owl have wandered to?"

"What about Rookwood?" asked Harry.

"Oh, Rookwood!" said Bob thoughtfully.

"He planted himself on the St. Jim's fellows, and we routed him out," said the captain of the Remove. "If he had the neck to plant himself at St. Jim's, he's got the neck to plant himself at Rookwood—if they'll let him. Just the idea that would occur to a brain like Bunter's, in fact."

The Co. nodded assent. They thought it very likely.

"Of course, we don't want to butt in at Rookwood inquiring for a wandering Owl if he's not there," resumed Wharton. "But I think we'd better head for Rookwood and inquire for him around there. Most likely he would be noticed at the station—his figure rather catches the eye—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You see, we're bound to take him back," said Harry. "Mr. Quelch entrusted us with the job of finding him, and we've rather stretched a point in coming as far as Sussex, and staying out over the night. I can't help thinking that Quelch may be a bit ratty. He mayn't put it all down to zeal. He may think we were glad of the chance of getting a long run—"

"Very likely, I think," said Bob

Cherry with a chuckle. "Quelch's no fool."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But if we carry Bunter home, it will be all right, we shall present Quelch with his long-lost Owl, and everything will be O.K. And for the fat duffer's own sake we've got to bag him—it's the sack for him if he doesn't come back. Let's try Rookwood."

"Done!" agreed the Co.

And the Famous Five, having finished their refreshment, walked on to Wayland, where they boarded the next train for Rookham. There were several changes on the journey, and it was past dinner-time when they arrived at Rookham, and they decided to stop there for a dinner. After dinner they made an inquiry or two at the railway station, but there was no news of Bunter.

"We'll get on to Coombe and ask there," said Harry Wharton. "That's the station for Rookwood, and it's a little place, where strangers would be noticed, very likely."

"Right-ho!"

The Famous Five embarked on the next local train for Coombe. They arrived at that station and recommenced inquiry for Bunter. And there was news at last—undoubted news. Billy Bunter's peculiar methods of travelling had drawn attention to him at Coombe.

The Famous Five found a porter who undoubtedly remembered Bunter. The porter's face assumed an almost homicidal expression when he found that it was Bunter the juniors were inquiring after. Certainly he remembered him.

"That bilk!" said the porter.

"Eh, that what?" ejaculated Wharton.



The railwayman slipped the fifteen-pence into his pocket. Then he made a stride at Bunter, and caught him by the collar. Smack! Smack! Smack! "Leggo! Yaroooh!" yelled Bunter in alarm. "Help!" "Ha, ha, ha!" came a roar from Arthur Edward Lovell in the distance. (See Chapter 4.)

"Bilk!"
 "My hat!" murmured Bob Cherry, "we're on the track. If somebody's travelled without paying his fare, most likely it's Bunter."

"The likeliness is terrific!"
 "Fat feller?" asked the porter. "Fat as a blooming barrel, what?"

"That's the chap!" said Wharton.
 "Looked like a cask jest a-going to burst, eh?"

"Just like that!" grinned Bob.
 "Spees and a fat pug nose?" asked the porter.

"Ha, ha! Yes. You remember the chap?"

"I remember him," said the porter vengefully. "Bilked the company, he did. I was going to call a policeman to 'im, I was. Regler young rascal!"

"You know him almost as well as we do," said Nugent. "Do you know where he went?"

"He went to Rookwood School," said the porter. "Borrowed the money to pay his fare from a young Rookwood gent—Master Lovell."

"He would—if he paid at all!" agreed Johnny Bull. "We're on Bunter's track—it's Bunter right enough!"

"How long ago was that?" asked Harry.

The porter reflected.
 "About two hours, sir."

"And he went on to Rookwood School?"

"He did that, sir."

"Thanks!" said Harry, and he dropped a shilling into the porter's not unwilling hand.

The five juniors left the station. There was no doubt now that they were on Billy Bunter's track, and that they would find him at Rookwood School. And this time they were determined that he should not escape. He had dodged them at St. Jim's; but he was not going to have a chance of dodging again.

Wharton consulted his time-table.

"There's a train from Rookham at five," he said. "That will land us at Courtfield pretty early in the evening, and at Greyfriars well before dorm. We're taking that train—and Bunter!"

"We are!" agreed Bob. "And if he won't come—"

"We'll roll him along," said Harry, laughing. "Now for Rookwood. I don't suppose Jimmy Silver will be sorry to part with him, if he's had Bunter's company for two hours already."

"The sorrowfulness is not likely to be terrific," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur.

The Famous Five walked out of Coombe and started down the green lane towards Rookwood.

They strolled on quite cheerfully and contentedly, little dreaming of what was awaiting them.

They had reached the dip in the lane, half-way to Rookwood, when the surprise happened. From somewhere in the trees beside the lane a voice rang out.

"Here they are!"

"Collar them!"

There was a rush of feet.

Before the Greyfriars chums knew what was happening, the rush had bowled them over, and they were sprawling in the dusty road, with their assailants sprawling over them.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Little Yarn.

BILLY BUNTER felt better after dinner at Rookwood. He always felt better after a square meal—and his meal had been very square. Not that he had had enough. He had only had as many helpings as could be crammed into the time allotted for dinner. But he had done fairly well—even Tubby Muffin had watched him with wonder. The universe seemed a much more agreeable place to live in, to Bunter, as he came out with Jimmy Silver & Co. Life was brighter—to Bunter! Somehow, it did not seem so bright as usual to Jimmy Silver & Co. of Rookwood. Bunter had that effect upon people!

The chums of the Rookwood Fourth eyed him rather uncertainly. Arthur Edward Lovell, who was a youth with great directness of character, did not even assume to be pleased by Bunter's company. He had been there before, so to speak.

Raby and Newcome smiled as politely as they could. Only Jimmy Silver succeeded in being really urbane. "Uncle James of Rookwood" seemed to feel that it was up to him to welcome the guest.

"Tired after your journey, Bunter?" he asked politely.

"Yes," grunted Bunter.
 "Like to rest a bit?"

"Yes."
 "Good. You can take a rest in the study—a nap if you like," said Jimmy hospitably. "We—we'll see you again later."

"Much later!" murmured Lovell.

"I came over specially to see you fellows," said Bunter, blinking at them.

"I've got something important to tell you."
 "Go ahead with the important communication!" yawned Raby.

"I think I know what it is," remarked Lovell.

"You do?" exclaimed Bunter, in surprise.

"Yes. You've been disappointed about a postal-order," said Lovell grimly. "You want a little advance in cash."

"Oh, really, Lovell—"

"Cheese it, Lovell, old chap!" murmured Jimmy Silver.

"Well, isn't that it?" demanded Lovell.

"No, it isn't!" hooted Bunter. "Still, now you speak of it, I have been disappointed about a postal-order—"

"I thought so."

"Worse than that," said Bunter. "I left my purse in my study when I left Greyfriars. I only hope it's safe. Of course, Toddy's all right; but it's not really safe to leave banknotes lying about, is it?"

"Better cut off at once and look after them!" suggested Lovell.

"Oh, really, you know—"

"I can't think that your banknotes are really quite safe," said Lovell seriously.

"There's another Bunter at Greyfriars, isn't there?"

"Eh? Yes, my minor Sammy—"

"Well, when there's banknotes and Bunters in the same place—" said Lovell, with a shake of the head.

"Look here!" roared Bunter.

"Shut up, Lovell!" implored Jimmy Silver. "It's all right, Bunter—only Lovell's little joke."

"I don't call jokes like that jokes," said Bunter. "If this is Rookwood hospitality, I don't think much of it, I

must say, specially when I came over to do you fellows a favour; and I've got something very important to tell you."

"Well, what is it?" asked Jimmy Silver, displaying as much interest as he could.

"There's a jape on," said Bunter. "There's some fellows coming over from Greyfriars this afternoon to jape you."

"My hat! They're coming a long way for a jape!"

"Yes; they're going to take you by surprise," said Bunter. "You know Bob Cherry—he'd walk a mile to play an idiotic practical joke on anybody. As we've always been such pals, I made up my mind I wouldn't have it—so I came over to put you on your guard."

"Oh!" said Lovell, staring very dubiously at Bunter. The Fistical Four were quite interested now. As they knew nothing of the circumstances in which Bunter had left Greyfriars, they naturally couldn't guess the astute Owl's motive in making this important communication.

"There's five of them," continued Bunter—"Wharton, and Nugent, and Bob Cherry, and Bull, and Inky. I—I got away before them, to—to warn you fellows. They may come along any time in the afternoon. If you don't believe me, Lovell—"

"Well, it sounds rather steep," said Lovell dryly.

"You'll believe it when you see them, I dare say."

"When I see them," agreed Lovell. "Not before."

"Well, you'll see them jolly soon," said Bunter, with a sniff. "It's rather low to doubt a fellow's word, if you don't mind my mentioning it. I don't think much of your manners, Lovell."

"Don't you?" said Arthur Edward, breathing hard.

"No. Those chaps have been bragging at Greyfriars that they'll come over here and rag you in your own study, and get away all right," said Bunter. "I felt I couldn't allow it, being your pal. So I came over to give you the tip. That's all."

"By Jove, if they've got a game on like that, we'll jolly well give 'em something to take home with them!" said Lovell, his eyes sparkling.

"Yes, rather!" said Raby emphatically.

"But—" said Newcome.

"But—" murmured Jimmy Silver.

"My suggestion is that you keep a look-out for them," said Bunter, blinking at the Fistical Four through his big spectacles. "When you see them, you'll know they've come, I suppose?"

"Ye-es—when!" assented Jimmy Silver.

"That's all," said Bunter. "Keep your eyes open, and collar the cads when they come. Don't mention that I've given them away, of course. Don't mention that I'm here. Give 'em a jolly good lesson for their cheek!"

"We'll do that—if they come!" said Newcome.

"And now about that postal-order!" said Bunter.

"That what?"

"Postal-order! Leaving Greyfriars suddenly to do you fellows this favour, I—I missed the post, you know. The postal-order will be waiting for me at Greyfriars this minute. As it happens, I haven't my fare back. I can manage on five pounds—"

"My only hat!"

"I could do it on four!" said Bunter. "I hope you'll raise four pounds

(Continued on page 13.)



EDITORIAL!
By Harry Wharton.

"It's easy enough to be pleasant," we are told, "when life goes along like a song. But the man who's worth while is the man who can smile, when everything goes dead wrong!"

A splendid ideal. But it takes some living up to.

How many of us are able to muster a cheery smile when everything goes dead wrong? Precious few, I warrant.

We all experience those days when nothing seems to go right. Such a day is generally a Friday, and it falls on the 13th of the month.

To begin with, you oversleep, and get into a frightful row in consequence. You find a cold breakfast waiting for you. The bacon is abominably tough; the eggs seem to have been laid during the Flood.

During morning lessons you find you are unable to concentrate. Your Form-master frowns at you over his spectacles or down his Roman nose, and awards you a stiff imposition.

In the afternoon, when you have written your impot, you play footer. Somebody bowls you over with extra-special violence, and you are "crooked." The skipper says to you, "Rough luck, old man! You won't be able to play for us on Saturday."

In the evening, it may happen that you have high hopes of winning a chess championship. And some addle-brained novice, who doesn't know the first thing about chess, goes and wipes up the floor with you—metaphorically, of course.

It has been an "off" day—a day on which the Fates seem to have conspired to kick you, and punch you, and use you as their plaything.

And then the poet tells you that you are to smile, when everything goes dead wrong! No easy matter, is it? Might just as well tell a fellow to burst into tears when he receives a tuck hamper from his favourite uncle!

Of all the fellows of my acquaintance, the only one who lives up to the poet's ideal is Bob Cherry. Bob would laugh through a howling wilderness. He is truly a cheery soul, ever cracking a merry jest, and facing misfortune with a smile on his lips.

I need hardly say it was Bob Cherry who suggested this Special Optimists Number—a number which I sincerely hope will bring a glimmer of sunshine into the lives of those who are feeling "down." Let us try and forget the wailings of the dismal scribes of old—"All is vanity," and "Man is born unto trouble." And let us try to realise that life is priceless, and that it is good to be alive!

HARRY WHARTON.

Supplement i.]

FUN IN THE FORM-ROOM!
By Bob Cherry.

Mr. Quelch: "Bunter, what is the meaning of V.C.?"

Bunter: "Very Careful, sir."
Mr. Quelch: "You are far from careful yourself, or you would think before making such a stupid answer! What does D.C.M. stand for?"

Bunter: "Don't Cane Me!"
But, alas! Mr. Quelch did.

Mr. Quelch: "Skinner, what was the most dreadful calamity of modern times?"
Skinner: "The terrible fire in Australia, sir."

Mr. Quelch: "This is news to me, Skinner. Perhaps you will enlighten me! I have not heard of any particularly devastating fire in Australia."

Skinner: "But there must have been one, sir—because our cricketers went out to try and recover the Ashes!"
Giggles from the class.

Mr. Quelch: "Now, Hurree Singh, recite the first verse of 'Casabianca.'"

Hurree Singh:
"The esteemed and ludicrous boy stood on the burning deckfulness,
Whence all but he had scotfully fled;
The worthy flame that lit the battle's wreckfulness
Shone over those who were expirefully dead!"
Collapse of Mr. Quelch!

Mr. Quelch: "This morning, Field, as I passed along the passage, I heard you address Bunter as 'Procrastination.' Why should you call him by such an absurd name?"

Squiff: "Bunter pinched my alarm-clock this morning, sir. That's why I called him Procrastination. He's the thief of time!"
More merriment!

HOW I SEE OTHER FELLOWS!

By Frank Nugent.



HERBERT SKIMPOLE (St. Jim's.)

KEEP SMILING!
By Dick Penfold.

When you're feeling sick and sorry,
When you've got the blessed hump,
When you're crazed with care and worry
And your spirits sort of slump,
It's no earthly use repining
Or feeling crushed and cowed;
There's a glorious silver lining
To every gloomy cloud!

When a sour, ill-tempered master
Has been slanging you since nine,
When you meet with dire disaster
All along the blessed line,
When you're sad and stale and weary,
And the clouds seem dark all day,
Just determine to be cheery
And to drive dull care away!

When you're hungry as a hunter,
And on going in to tea
You find that villain Bunter
Has devoured enough for three,
You can biff him, you can bump him,
You can slang and you can shake,
You can throttle him and thump him,
But it won't restore your cake!

When the winds of March are blowing
And you wish that it was June,
When it's sleeting and it's snowing
And the world seems out of tune;
When every prospect teases
And only man is vile,
Then the only manly wheeze is
To try and force a smile!

Oh, I know it's often cheerless,
And the way is dark and long;
But it pays you to be fearless
And to laugh when things go wrong.
In the pages of the poet
Some solace you will find,
For when winter comes, why, blow it,
Spring can't be far behind!

SPECIAL NOTICE!

I've just heard from the Editor of the Companion Papers that, in view of the enormous success of the Grand Coloured Engine Plates now being given away with the "Popular," he is making the necessary arrangements for extending the series from ten to fifteen plates.

I call that a ripping idea. I've got the engine plates so far published hung up in my study, having mounted them on a sheet of white Bristol board. I shall be jelly glad to get another five extra plates. I can tell you.

I think the real idea in the Editor's brain-box is to give every reader of the "Magnet Library" a chance to possess a fine collection of plates, although they might have missed the first few plates.

Several of our chaps are ordering copies of the "Popular" now. My advice to you is to go and do the same!

HARRY WHARTON.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 739.

WEATHER FORECAST FOR THE WEEK!

By Our Tame Optimist.

MONDAY.

A slight "breeze" may be expected in the Remove Form room, especially if Quelchy is in one of his usual Monday morning moods! There will be thunder in the air, and the Form-master will supply the rumblings. If Billy Bunter should offend by eating toffee in class, the outlook will be stormy, and there will be violent squalls!

TUESDAY.

It will be very dry to-day, as Mrs. Mimble will have run out of her supplies of ginger-pop. The drought will be felt all over Greyfriars.

WEDNESDAY.

Billy Bunter's Christy Minstrels will be giving an entertainment in the Rag this evening, so it will be rather "a frost." Sliding will be in full swing, and the bannisters are being greased in readiness. There will also be "skating" in the fags' Common-room, provided the fags are able to catch sufficient skate in Pegg Bay in the afternoon!

THURSDAY.

It will be decidedly wet to-day, as Tubb of the Third intends to take his annual bath. Still, we have no wish to throw cold water over Tubb's heroic deed.

FRIDAY.

I anticipate that the atmosphere will be very sultry to-day in the Remove Form room, and very close in the Close. Mr. Quelch, however, will be extremely "cold." It is also safe to predict a heavy downpour—of impositions!

SATURDAY.

There will be a sudden change to-day—into footer tugs! There will also be a certain amount of "wind up" on the part of our opponents. There will be a big drop in the temperature, owing to the fellows who are down with 'flu taking a turn for the better. So far as Billy Bunter is concerned, we shall make things "very warm" for him if we catch him study-raiding!

SUNDAY.

Gosling, the porter, informs us that the weather to-day will be either "mild" or "bitter."

SPECIAL BOAT RACE NUMBER

of the Greyfriars Herald

NEXT MONDAY!



By TOM BROWN.

I CAN forgive a study-mate much. But when that study-mate blossoms out into a foolish, fatuous, fatheaded optimist, there is some excuse for my getting ruffled.

You'd never suspect honest George Bulstrode of being an optimist, would you? In the ordinary way, he's a decent enough fellow, but inclined to be gruff and surly.

However, about a week ago Bulstrode was moved by the desire to become an optimist. And for some days he behaved like a raving lunatic. He's cured now. I cured him.

The first hint I had that Bulstrode had become an optimist was on the Monday morning.

You know what the average Monday morning is like, don't you? Pelting heavens hard, as the saying goes, and sufficient puddles lying about to float a squadron of battle-cruisers.

Well, that's what it was like this particular Monday morning. A morning of misery—a morning of damp and slush and depression. Groo!

With one exception, everybody seemed to be depressed by the weather.

The exception was Bulstrode. He leapt out of bed as frisky as a two-year-old. And he was grinning broadly.

"Beast of a morning, old man!" I remarked.

"Eh?"

"Look at it—simply pelting down!"

Bulstrode looked out of the window, and nodded.

"Ripping!" he said.

I fairly gasped, wondering if I had heard aright.

"Surely you mean 'dripping'?" I exclaimed.

"No—ripping!" said Bulstrode. "This rain will do a lot of good."

"You—you—"

"The farmers have been gasping for it for some time."

"And you'll be gasping for it, too, if you don't dry up!" I said grimly. "You'll be gasping for mercy! Ripping, indeed! Who ever heard of rain being ripping? It's always a thumping nuisance. It spoils outdoor sport, and it makes everybody miserable."

"Personally, I like it," said Bulstrode. "I'm an optimist, you know. I can see good in everything. The farmers will bless this rain."

I gazed at Bulstrode in open-mouthed amazement. But the sound of the breakfast-gong put a period to our conversation.

That morning, in class, everything went wrong.

Quelchy, our respected Form-master, was very much on the war-path. He pounced upon me for inattention.

"Brown!" he snapped. "You are day-dreaming again! Take a hundred lines!"

By the time morning lessons were over the imput. had been increased to three hundred lines. And I felt jolly savage about it, I can tell you.

When the class had finished, Bulstrode came up to me with a grin.

"I say, Brown, you're in luck's way!" he said.

"What do you mean?"

"You've got three hundred lines to write."

"D'you call that lucky, you frabjous chump?"

"Yes, rather! You see, it might have been ever so much worse. You might have got a licking, or a gating. You should always look on the bright side, you know. You should be an optimist—like me. Life's ever so much better and brighter when you take a cheerful view of it."

"You—you—"

At a loss for coherent speech, I passed on. My troubles reached their climax a few days later.

Whilst playing footer in the Close, I had the misfortune to punt the ball into Quelchy's face.

The ball was in a fearfully muddy condition at the time, and it left a brown imprint on the Form-master's chivvy.

As soon as Quelchy had sufficiently recovered from the shock, he commanded me to follow him to his study.

I mumbled something about its having been a pure accident, but my mumbblings cut no ice with Quelchy.

"I will teach you to be more careful in future, Brown!" he said grimly.

Arrived at his study, he selected his most formidable-looking cane, and administered six fearful swipes on each hand. I was pretty well doubled up by the time he had finished, I can tell you.

As I staggered out of the Form-master's presence I bumped into Bulstrode.

The same fatuous grin was on Bulstrode's face. I felt that for two pins I'd knock it off.

"Hallo, Brown!" he said cheerfully. "Licked?"

"Ow—yes!"

Bulstrode thumped me on the back.

"Congratulations!" he said.

I stared at him in blank amaze.

"Is it usual to congratulate a fellow on being licked?" I asked.

"No, it isn't usual. But, then, you see, I'm an optimist. I realise that things might have been a jolly sight worse. You were let down jolly lightly."

"Let down lightly!" I almost screamed.

Bulstrode nodded.

"Yes," he said. "It might have ended very differently. You might have been expelled, or hauled up for a public flogging. You must look on the bright side, you know."

That was more than flesh and blood could stand.

I dashed my clenched fist into Bulstrode's grinning face, and succeeded in knocking it off—the grin, not the face.

Bulstrode went sprawling. And I followed up, and gave him the biggest hammering he'd had for many a long day.

"Yow! Wharrer you up to?" he panted. "What's the little game?"

"I'm curing you of your optimism!" I replied grimly. "Take that—and that—and that!"

Bulstrode lay in a groaning heap in the passage when I had finished with him.

"Ow! I believe you've given me a black eye, you madman!" he moaned.

"Cheer up!" I said sarcastically. "It might have been a couple! You must look on the bright side, you know!"

Bulstrode's optimism petered out after that. And I am thankful to say he has become a tolerable member of society once more.

Optimism's all very well, in a way. But one can have too much of a good thing!

[Supplement ii.]



The Reward of Optimism!

By JOHNNY BULL.

"FIVE bob going begging!" exclaimed Fisher T. Fish. "Guess I'm freezing on to this!"

"Same here!"

There was a crowd of juniors gathered around the door of Study No. 1, which is also the editorial office of the "Greyfriars Herald." Pinned to the door was a sheet of paper, bearing the following announcement:

"FIVE SHILLINGS FOR A FOOTBALL FORECAST!"

"The 'Greyfriars Herald' will pay the above sum to the person who sends a correct forecast of the match to be played on Saturday between the Remove Form and Rookwood. Actual score must be given.

"Members of the Remove Eleven are not allowed to compete.

"All estimates to be delivered in sealed envelopes to Harry Wharton by eight o'clock Friday evening."

The announcement caused considerable excitement. The prize was not an enormous one. Still, as Skinner remarked, five bobs didn't grow on every bush.

"What's your estimate of the result, Bolsover?" Skinner inquired.

Bolsover grunted.

"You don't suppose I'm going to shout it from the house-tops, do you?" he said. "I shall keep it to myself—what I think the actual score will be, anyway. Any fool knows that Rookwood will win. They're bringing over a jolly strong team—the same team that made St. Jim's bite the dust last week."

"That's so," said Stott. "To my mind, it's simply a question of how many goals Rookwood will score. The Remove won't get any. Their forwards will be bottled up."

The majority of the fellows were very pessimistic as to the probable result of the match.

Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood, had been going great guns of late. And when a team has struck a winning patch, it takes a jolly good side to lower its colours.

Altogether, there were thirty forecasts sent in. No less than a dozen of them gave Rookwood to win by two goals to one.

Bolsover major, possibly with a view to showing his supreme contempt for the Remove eleven, predicted a score of 7-0 in Rookwood's favour.

Skinner's forecast was a 5-0 victory for Rookwood. And Fisher T. Fish, after careful cogitation, put it at 5-1. He considered that the Remove ought to fluke one goal in the course of the game.

The other competitors were not quite so pessimistic.

Donald Ogilvy gave the result as a draw of 1-1, and Dick Russell also predicted a drawn game, of three goals apiece.

Micky Desmond went a step farther. He actually gave the Remove to win, by a goal to nothing. After all the estimates had been handed in, Micky told Bolsover major what he had done.

"You must be potty!" growled Bolsover. "You've got bats in your belfry. If the Remove win, I'll eat my Sunday topper!"

"Faith, an' I hope you'll find it digestible!" said the Irish junior.

Nobody had taken into account the fact that Rookwood might not be able to field a full side.

As a matter of fact, they were without

Supplement iii.]

Tommy Dodd and Kit Erroll, two of their star performers. Their team was much weakened in consequence.

The Remove, on the other hand, were at full strength. What was more, they were on the top of their form.

The forwards played a masterly game. They were all over the Rookwood defence.

Five minutes from the start, Wharton scored with a terrific drive from twenty yards out. And that was the beginning of the end.

The Rookwood players were rushed off their feet. They strove vainly to stem the rushes of the Remove forwards. They might as well have tried to stem the advance of a mighty torrent.

At half-time the Remove led by three goals to nothing. And all the fellows who had given Rookwood to win looked pretty sick.

"The Rookwood team's gone all to pieces!" growled Bolsover major.

"Who ever would have thought it?" said Skinner.

"I guess nobody will have a correct forecast," said Fisher T. Fish, "so the five bob won't be awarded."

In the second half Rookwood were still further weakened by an injury to Jimmy Silver.

With the wind at their backs, the Remove forwards played with rare dash, and piled on four more goals.

The final score was 7-0. Bolsover had given that score. But he had given it in favour of Rookwood, instead of Greyfriars!

"Wonder if anybody's forecasted the correct score?" remarked Bob Cherry, as the Famous Five, muddy and triumphant, made their way to Study No. 1.

"I don't think so," said Wharton. "Nearly everybody plumped for Rookwood."

On going through the estimates, however, Wharton discovered one which was perfectly correct.

He handed the slip of paper to his chums, and they gazed at the words inscribed thereon.

"REMOVE, 7; ROOKWOOD, 0.

"This is my 4-cast of the grate match.

"(Signed) W. G. BUNTER."

"Bunter!" gasped Frank Nugent. "Bunter's won the five bob! Wonders will never cease!"

The door opened suddenly, and the fat junior himself rolled into the study. His face was wreathed in smiles; his right hand was outstretched.

"Five bob, please!" he said.

Harry Wharton handed over the money out of the funds.

"Congratulations, Bunter!" he said heartily. "You were the only real optimist in the Remove. Nearly everybody else thought Rookwood would win!"

Still smiling broadly, Billy Bunter rolled away to the tuckshop with a couple of half-crowns clutched in his palm.

Those half-crowns were the reward of optimism. Or shall we say the reward of ignorance?

OUR CYCLING COLUMN!

By PETER TODD.

Of course, on the afternoon that the Remove Cycling Club had arranged a glorious spin, it pelted with rain.

That's always the way. Wednesday afternoons are always wet, when you have something special on.

When we assembled in the school gateway with our bicycles, we appeared like so many drowned rats.

The skies were weeping copiously. And there was no sign of the rain abating.

"Beastly afternoon, you fellows!" grunted Harry Wharton. "Shall we call it off?"

"No. Might as well defy the giddy rain," said Bob Cherry. "It will be more like a swimming gala than a cycling spin; but it's better than being cooped up in a stuffy study, anyway."

"Yes, rather!" said Dick Penfold, whose face wore a beaming smile. "Let's be optimistic."

"Fat lot to be optimistic about!" growled Johnny Bull.

"We can imagine it's a nice fine day," said Penfold. "It's easily done, if you concentrate your mind on it. Try to imagine that the sun's shining gloriously, and that the sky's blue, and that the roads are nice and dry."

"Chuck it!" said Harry Wharton. "You can't get away from the solid—or rather, the liquid fact that it's raining."

We mounted our machines, and started off on our spin.

It was pretty heartbreaking. I can tell you.

The rain came down in sheets, and even those of us who had taken the precaution of wearing cycling-capes were soon drenched to the skin.

The going was very heavy. Huge puddles of water confronted us as we went.

Everybody was thoroughly miserable—except Penfold.

Pen seemed to regard it as a great joke. He chuckled aloud.

"Stop that cackling, for goodness' sake!" said Wharton irritably.

"I can't help it!" was the reply. "I've convinced myself that the sun's shining, and that it's a ripping afternoon. I've become a giddy optimist, I tell you! This is a glorious spin! Hurrah!"

We were about five miles from Greyfriars, when an epidemic of punctures broke out.

Harry Wharton was one of the victims; Vernon-Smith was another.

"Dash!" growled Wharton, dismounting.

"Bother!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Don't get annoyed, you fellows," said Dick Penfold. "You should act as if the punctures didn't exist. You should take a leaf out of my book, and be optimistic, you know!"

That was altogether too much for Wharton and Smithy. They were fairly long-suffering, as a rule, but Penfold's optimism had got on their nerves.

The poet-laureate of the Remove was dragged off his machine, and dumped unceremoniously into the nearest puddle.

Splash!

"Yarooooh!" yelled Penfold. "What are you up to, you hooligans?"

"We're damping your optimism," explained Vernon-Smith. "P'raps you'll dry up, after this!"

And Penfold did. He considered it a jolly sight safer to become a confirmed pessimist!

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OLIVER THE OPTIMIST!

By Mark Linley.

"WHERE does Kipps get to these days?" inquired Harry Wharton. "We never see him on the football-field. And he never shows up in the Common-room."

"Ask me another!" said Bob Cherry. "The Kipps bird is always doing something mysterious."

"Let's go along to his study and investigate," suggested Nugent.

The Famous Five went along to the study occupied by Oliver Kipps of the Remove.

A queer fellow was Kipps. Very likeable, and all the rest of it, but somewhat inclined to keep himself to himself. He was a pretty good sportsman, but for some days past he had not put in an appearance at practice.

Harry Wharton & Co. burst into Kipps' study without ceremony.

Kipps was seated at the table, on which lay a copy of a sporting periodical called "Football Flashes."

Just as the Famous Five disturbed his peace, Kipps sprang to his feet.

"Got it!" he exclaimed triumphantly.

"Eh?"

"What have you got, Kippy?"

"The solution to this giddy picture!" said Kipps. "There are twelve pictures here, each representing the name of a League footballer. And you've got to solve the pictures. It's a competition, you know."

"Oh!"

"I've been working on it for some time—ever since I picked up this copy of 'Football Flashes' in the Close. Up till last night I'd found eleven solutions, but the last picture has given me a lot of worry. However, I've solved the thing at last! Hurrah!"

Kipps seemed very excited. And the juniors began to suspect that he had caught a bad attack of competition fever.

"Let's have a look at the picture-puzzles," said Harry Wharton.

Kipps handed over the paper.

"The first one's awfully simple," he said. "A brick wall and a lion's-den. That's Walden, of course."

"What's the next one—three flappers, with an arrow pointing to the one in the centre?" asked Bob Cherry.

"That's Middlemiss."

"Good! And what's this fellow with a haversack on his shoulder—Trotter?"

"Walker, you chump!"

"The fourth picture puzzles me," said Harry Wharton. "It's a heap of old iron. What ever can it represent?"

"Ford!" said Kipps.

And there was a ripple of merriment.

"What's this picture of a stage, with all the actors and actresses in a tableau?" inquired Nugent.

"Kirtou," said Kipps. "The play's over, you see."

"Tell us what the others are," said Johnny Bull. "We'll faithfully promise not to compete or to give the show away."

Kipps cheerfully supplied the information.

The last picture was not really a picture at all. It was a blank square. Kipps had been searching his football annual for the name of "Blank," but he found no player of that name. Finally, he had hit upon the correct solution—Nixon. There was nothing on the square, so "Nix on" sounded a very probable solution.

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"You've unravelled these things very well," said Harry Wharton "Dashed if I should have the patience to worry out the solutions to a dozen pictures! What are the prizes?"

"Look at the top of the page, and you'll see," said Kipps. "First prize, a magnificent motor-bike. Second prize, a ripping air-rifle. Third prize, a bicycle-lamp."

"Well, you ought to be certain of a prize, if you've got the whole jolly lot right!" said Bob Cherry.

"Yes, rather!"

Kipps was confident that he would win the first prize. He simply oozed optimism. Nothing would convince him that he was going to be unsuccessful. He had solved the twelve pictures, and it was only a question of time before he received the reward.

Poor old Kippy! It is indeed a sad story which I now have to relate.

About a fortnight later, Kipps received a letter bearing a London postmark.

Eagerly he opened the missive, and his face glowed with delight as he perused the following letter:

"'Football Flashes,'
Fleet Street,
London, E.C.

"Dear Sir,—We have great pleasure in informing you that you have been successful in correctly solving the whole of the twelve picture-puzzles in our recent issue.

"You are the only competitor with every solution correct, and we shall therefore despatch the First Prize to you in the course of the next few days.

"With hearty congratulations on your success,

"Yours faithfully,
"THE EDITOR."

Kipps was promptly transported into the seventh heaven of delight. And there was good reason for his jubilation. He had won the magnificent motor-cycle!

"It'll be here by Saturday!" he said joyfully. "I'll go down to the station and fetch it on Saturday afternoon."

When Saturday afternoon came, however, Kipps found himself under detention. Queichy had given him five hundred lines for repeated inattention in class.

Kipps therefore found it necessary to send a deputy to the station to collect his motor-bike.

The majority of the fellows happened to be on the football-field.

The only person who came near the detention-room during the afternoon was Billy Bunter.

Kipps hesitated a long time before deciding to send the fat junior to collect his motor-bike. Bunter was a notorious fool, and the machine would not be safe in his hands.

It was either a case of sending Bunter, or waiting till Monday. And Kipps was not disposed to do that.

"I say, Bunter!" he called to the fat junior, who was hovering in the doorway.

"You want me, Kippy?"

"Yes. There's a motor-bike waiting for me at the station. It's the first prize in a competition that I've just won. You've heard about it, of course? Well, I want you to go and collect the bike."

Billy Bunter beamed.

"With the greatest of pleasure, old chap!" he said.

Kipps raised a warning finger.

"You're not to try and ride it, mind!" he said. "You're to push the machine up to the school from the station. And if you deliver it here intact, I'll give you a bob for your trouble."

Billy Bunter nodded, and rolled away on his mission.

The fat junior had been absent nearly half an hour, when the Famous Five came in, fresh from their exertions on the football-field. On their way to the building they had met the postman, who had handed them a letter for Kipps.

"Letter for you, Kippy," said Harry Wharton, handing it over.

Kipps perused the letter in great agitation. His face clouded over. He became angry.

"Oh, what a sell!" he growled, at length.

"Anything wrong?" inquired Bob Cherry.

"Oh, no!" said Kipps sarcastically. "I've been dished out of the first prize, that's all!"

"My hat!"

Kipps permitted the Famous Five to read the letter. It ran thus:

"The Editor of 'Football Flashes' begs to inform Master Kipps that he has been in communication with the headmaster of Greyfriars. This gentleman states that Master Kipps is not yet old enough to have possession of a motor-cycle. Moreover, the air-rifle which is being awarded as second prize is too dangerous a weapon for a boy of fourteen to handle.

"At the suggestion of the headmaster, therefore, it has been decided to award Master Kipps a special prize, consisting of a magnificent tuck-hamper. This hamper is being put on rail at once, addressed to Master Kipps at Friardale Station."

"Well, I'm jiggered!" gasped Harry Wharton, when he had digested that communication. "This is shocking bad luck, Kippy, if you like!"

Kipps gave a hollow groan.

"Cheer up, old son!" said Bob Cherry. "After all, you've won a tuck-hamper. And that's a jolly sight better than nothing!"

"You—you don't understand!" groaned Kipps. "Whom do you think I've sent to the station to collect my prize? Bunter! There won't be much left in the tuck-hamper by the time that fat pig has had a go at the contents!"

"We'll dash down to the station and see if we can save the hamper!" said Harry Wharton. "Come on, you fellows!"

The Famous Five sped away at top speed in the direction of the station. But they were too late.

Midway between the school and the station they found Billy Bunter, sitting on the bank, finishing off the contents of Kipps' hamper.

They remonstrated with Bunter. They biffed him. They bumped him. And they frog-marched him back to the school.

All of which was very necessary. But it was precious cold consolation for Oliver, the one-time optimist!

[Supplement iv.]

BAGGING BUNTER!*(Continued from page 8.)*

somewhere, then," said Raby genially. "It doesn't seem to me likely. But I wish you luck."

"Well, say three—"

"Say anything you like, old scout."

"I mean two," said Bunter hastily. "I meant to say two all along. You fellows can lend me a couple of quids, I suppose? I will send the postal-order straight on without cashing it."

"Might be difficult to cash it," remarked Lovell thoughtfully. "They wouldn't cash it for you at the post-office unless you produced the goods, would they?"

"Make it a quid!" said Bunter unheeding. "What do you say, Jimmy, old fellow?"

"Look here," said Jimmy Silver abruptly. "Is it straight goods about those bounders coming over to play larks this afternoon?"

"Honest Injun!" said Bunter. "Most likely they're at Rookham before this. You'll see them trotting along the lane soon."

"We'll jolly well keep an eye open for them, then," said Jimmy. "If they come, we'll give 'em japes—and after we've seen them, Bunter, we'll talk about that quid."

"Oh, really, Silver—"

"It sounds rather steep, you know," said Jimmy. "You may be pulling our legs—I mean, you may have made a—a mistake! Seeing is believing. We'll watch for the bounders, never fear—and if they come—"

"They'll be glad to go," said Lovell. "We'll see!"

"Like to take a rest in the study, or will you come along and look for the enemy?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"I'll take a rest in the study, thanks," said Bunter hastily.

And the Owl of Greyfriars was escorted to the end study, where the Fistical Four left him in the armchair. After that, Jimmy Silver & Co. held a council of war. Bunter's warning was certainly very surprising, but if there was anything in it, the Rookwooders were quite prepared to act upon it. Indeed, as that afternoon was a half-holiday, they had no objection whatever to a "rag" by way of entertainment.

"Looks to me like gammon!" said Lovell. "But if it's true, we'll make the cheeky rotters sit up! Let's take half a dozen fellows, and wait for them in the lane. If they come along, it will prove that Bunter's told us the truth. If they don't, we'll come back and kick Bunter out."

"That's a good idea," agreed Newcome.

Jimmy Silver nodded.

Mornington and Conroy and Rawson were called in, and they joined the Fistical Four on that little excursion. Seven sturdy juniors were ready to deal with the Greyfriars enemy—if the enemy arrived. Billy Bunter, from the window of the end study, watched them start, and he grinned a fat grin of satisfaction. He had little doubt that the Bunter-hunters would run him down that afternoon, and he was quite satisfied with his masterly strategy in providing a warm reception for them.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.**Dates for Bunter!****"BEASTS!"**

That was Bunter's observation as he blinked into the cupboard in the end study.

There was nothing there in the way of eatables. In similar circumstances during his visit to St. Jim's, Bunter had done remarkably well. But his luck was out at Rookwood.

He rolled out of the end study in a discontented frame of mind. It was not an hour since dinner; but tea-time seemed a very long way off to Billy Bunter. He looked into Study No. 6; but Flynn was there doing lines, and Bunter retired. Study No. 5 was drawn blank, and in Study No. 4 Erroll was at home. Study No. 3 was unoccupied, and Bunter rolled in. But before he had time to begin investigations, there was a step in the doorway, and a sturdy junior came in. He looked at Bunter.

"Want anything here?" he asked pointedly.

"Nunno!" stammered Bunter.

"Take it and go, then!"

Bunter went.

He looked into the next study, where he found Putty of the Fourth. That youth gave him a genial smile and a nod, and Bunter felt encouraged. He rolled into the study.

"Dropped in to see me, what?" asked Putty Grace pleasantly.

"Ye-es—just so!" said Bunter. "I—I wasn't thinking of looking into the cupboard, of course!"

"Of course not," said Putty. "Jolly good of you to give me a look-in, Bunter! Feeling rather peckish, what?"

"That's it," said Bunter. "I didn't get much of a dinner, you know!"

"I noticed that," assented Putty. "I remember saying to myself that a chap who ate so little must be rather delicate. You look delicate, old chap."

"Well, I'm fairly hefty!" said Bunter modestly. "Pretty hefty at football, you know, and cricket and rowing and running and swimming and all that. At Greyfriars I'm considered the champion junior athlete. But a fellow needs some grub to keep up his strength, you know!"

"I know," said Putty sympathetically. "What I should like, Bunter, would be to stand you a jolly good spread."



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Bunter's fat face brightened. "You're awfully good," he said. "Not at all. What do you say to ham and beef?"

"Good!"

"Pickles and pork-pies?"

"Yes, rather!"

"A big plum-cake?"

"Oh, ripping!"

"Three kinds of jam?"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter ecstatically. "Meringues and jam-tarts?"

"Splendid!"

"Ginger-pop—say a dozen bottles?"

"Topping!"

"You'd like a spread like that?" asked Putty.

"You bet! Go ahead!"

"You don't think it's too soon after dinner?"

"Not at all!"

"Good!" said Putty. "I'd really like to stand you that spread, Bunter!"

"Pile in!" said Bunter.

"Only—"

"Only what?"

"Only I haven't any of the things I've mentioned," said Putty regretfully. "Unfortunate, ain't it?"

"Wha-a-at?"

Billy Bunter glared at the humorist of Rookwood with a glare that nearly cracked his spectacles. It dawned upon him that Putty of the Fourth was pulling his leg.

"Take the will for the deed, you know," said Putty genially. "In a legal sense, I believe, a will is a deed. Ha, ha!"

Bunter did not laugh; he had not come there to enjoy Putty's punning. He glared. Putty of the Fourth rose to his feet. Having enjoyed his little joke at Bunter's expense, he seemed to have had enough of the Owl's fascinating company.

But in the doorway he paused. He looked back at Bunter, who gave him a morose blink.

"Care for dates?" asked Putty.

The Owl of Greyfriars brightened again.

"Yes, rather," he answered. "I'm jolly fond of dates! Got any?"

"Lots!" said Putty. "If you'd really care for some dates, Bunter, I can see you through. I can give you a paper full of dates, if that's any good?"

"Right-ho!" said Bunter. "Where are they?"

"I'll get them at once, old fellow! Wait here for me!"

Putty strolled away, and Bunter waited for him in the passage with hope and doubt alternating in his fat breast.

It was ten minutes before Putty of the Fourth returned. He came with a parcel in his hand. It was tied with string, and Bunter blinked at it inquiringly. It was rather a large parcel, and if it was full of dates it was a very welcome parcel.

"Here you are, old top," said Putty cheerily. "I've wrapped the lot up for you. If there's too many—"

"There won't be too many."

"More than three hundred and fifty," said Putty.

Bunter's eyes glistened.

"Three hundred and fifty dates!" he ejaculated.

"Yes, more."

"Oh, good! I—I say, won't you have a few?" asked Bunter, with unaccustomed generosity.

"No, thanks—not so soon after dinner. Besides, I'm going out. You're very welcome, old top!"

Putty handed the parcel to Bunter and strolled away, whistling. The Owl of Greyfriars hurried back to the end study

NEXT MONDAY!

"THE GREYFRIARS EXILE!"

A SPLENDID TALE OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYFRIARS. By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 739.

with his prize. He laid it on the table and jerked off the string. His fat face was beaming now. Putty of the Fourth was the only fellow at Rookwood so far who had shown anything like real hospitality, and Bunter felt almost grateful.

He unfolded a sheet of thick brown paper, expecting to find the dates inside. Next came a folded newspaper, and Bunter unrolled it with surprise in his fat face. There really was no need for Putty to have wrapped his dates up so very carefully, so far as Bunter could see.

Inside that wrapping there was another wrapping, and then another. Billy Bunter looked more and more astonished. He was getting to the middle of the parcel now, and there did not seem to be much room left for such a stack of dried fruit as three hundred dates or more.

Another wrapping came off—and another! With an extraordinary expression on his face, Billy Bunter finally turned out the contents of the parcel—a calendar for 1922.

He blinked at it.

"The—the awful beast! Where's the dates?" he gasped.

It was a full minute before Putty's little joke dawned upon Bunter's fat brain. The dates were there—more than three hundred and fifty, as Putty had said—three hundred and sixty-five, to be exact! Only they were not edible dates. Putty certainly had presented the fat junior with a paper full of dates—but even William George Bunter was not inclined to eat those dates!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Merely a Mistake!

"HERE they come!"
"Collar them!"

Jimmy Silver gave the word. Seven Rookwooders were on the watch in the lane—not quite sure that the Greyfriars enemy would arrive, but prepared to deal drastically with them if—and when—they did arrive.

Happy and unsuspecting, the Famous Five of Greyfriars walked right into the ambush.

Bunter's warning was well founded—at least, so it seemed to Jimmy Silver & Co. For here were the Greyfriars fellows—coming on to Rookwood, just as Bunter had said. And convinced at last—for seeing was believing—Jimmy Silver & Co. acted promptly and drastically.

The rush of the Rookwooders was a great success. Harry Wharton & Co. went sprawling on their backs in the dusty road, and their hats flew far and wide. The grinning crowd of Rookwooders sprawled over them gleefully. The enemy had been captured at a blow.

"Pin 'em down!" roared Lovell.

"Got 'em!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why—what—how—who—" gasped Harry Wharton.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Are you fellows off your silly rockers?" roared Bob Cherry. "Leggo! Gerrup! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Give 'em socks!" yelled Bob.

Mornington had a knee on Bob's chest, but Bob was not easy to hold after the first surprise. He made a terrific effort, and hurled Morny off. There was a howl from Morny as he landed in the road.

"Collar him!" shouted Raby.

Bob Cherry was on his feet before he could be collared. Raby and Newcome,

rushing on him, were met by Bob's right and left, and they went fairly spinning.

"Back up!" shouted Bob.

He rushed recklessly on the enemy.

The Famous Five had been coming along to pay quite a friendly call on Jimmy Silver & Co. of Rookwood. But there was no time to ask questions or to give explanations—the attack had been too sudden for that. They had not expected a hostile reception, but having received one, they put up a stout fight in defence. Bob Cherry's attack was prompt and vigorous, and there were loud yells as he got to work among the Rookwooders.

"Collar him!" roared Lovell. "Oh, my hat! Ow! My nose!"

"Yaroooh!"

"Oh crumbs!"

Holding the other four Greyfriars fellows was quite impossible, with Bob Cherry raging right and left. In a minute or less Harry Wharton & Co. were all on their feet, backing up Bob Cherry's attack.

Instead of an easy capture, it had turned out to be a battle-royal.

The Rookwooders were seven to five; but the quintette were five of the very best in the scrapping line.

Jimmy Silver & Co., however, had no idea of retreating. They had intended a rag on the raggers; but they were quite prepared to fight it out before they ragged the invaders.

It was a terrific combat.

Odds began to tell; but the Famous Five drew together in a body, and they held the Rookwooders well at bay. Nugent went down, with Conroy sitting on him; but Newcome was knocked out of the struggle by a right-hander from Wharton, and deposited in the ditch—fortunately dry.

"Come on!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Down them!" yelled Lovell. "Rush the rotters!"

The Rookwooders came on with a determined rush.

Four of the Greyfriars party were driven back to the hedge; Nugent was a struggling prisoner. Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh went over, and Raby sat on him and secured him. But Wharton, Johnny Bull, and Bob, standing together with their back to a big tree, held off the assailants in great style. There were streaming noses on all sides now.

"Down with the rotters!" yelled Lovell.

"Back up, Greyfriars!"

"Come on!"

There was another rush, and this time the odds told more effectively. Wharton and Johnny Bull went down, fighting hard, and were promptly sat upon. Bob Cherry swayed to and fro with Jimmy Silver and Lovell clinging to him, and at last he went down again with a crash.

"My hat!" gasped Lovell. "Sit on his neck, Jimmy! He's the most troublesome beast of the whole gang."

"Ow! Grooogh!"

"Got the rotters!" gasped Mornington. "Now we'll jolly well make an example of them, by gad!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Lemme gerrup, and I'll jolly well make scarecrows of any two of you!" bellowed Bob Cherry.

Jimmy Silver chuckled breathlessly.

"You're safer where you are, old

top!" he replied. "Keep quiet, or I shall have to tap your napper on the road—like that—"

"Ow!"

"Or like that—"

"Whoooooop!"

"Now we've got the bounders," said Jimmy, "we'll make 'em jolly sorry they came over here ragging, what?"

"You silly chump!" gasped Harry Wharton, "what the thump have you started this game for? Is this what you call politeness to visitors?"

"Ha, ha! Yes, when visitors come ragging," chuckled Jimmy Silver. "You're caught out, you see."

"We were coming—"

"Yes, yes, we know all about it," chortled Lovell. "Little bird whispered it to us, you know."

"There's a pond in the field," said Mornington. "We'll duck the bounders to begin with."

"Hear, hear!"

"You silly owls!" roared Wharton, "what on earth are you up to? We were coming—"

"Oh, we know why you were comin', old bean."

"Duck 'em!"

"We were coming—" spluttered Johnny Bull.

"My dear man, we know all about it," said Jimmy Silver. "You haven't exactly caught us napping, you know. The boot was on the other foot, what?"

"But we weren't—we didn't—we—"

"You silly jabberwocks!" howled Johnny Bull.

"No good yolling, old fellow. You're for it," said Jimmy Silver. "Think twice before you come ragging at Rookwood again."

"Will you let me speak?" shrieked Wharton. "What put that silly idea into your silly head? We weren't coming on a rag at all."

"Gammon!"

"You thundering idiots—"

"It's Bunter!" suddenly yelled Bob Cherry. "That fat brute has been pulling their silly legs."

"Oh!" gasped Wharton. "Did Bunter tell you—"

"So you knew Bunter was here?" exclaimed Lovell.

"Yes, ass—we've come to fetch him back—"

"Fetch him back!" repeated Jimmy Silver.

"Yes, you owl. He's run away from school, and we're after him—"

"Great Scott!"

And then it dawned upon Uncle James of Rookwood that there was a slight mistake somewhere.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

A Bumping for Bunter!

"WE—we—we've been spoofed!" stammered Jimmy Silver. And he rose rather hastily from his place of repose on

Bob Cherry's neck.

"But—" began Lovell.

"Bunter was pulling our legs, of course," said Jimmy. "If the fat idiot has run away from school, and these chaps are after him, he would."

"Perhaps it's these bounders who are gammoning us," said Arthur Edward Lovell suspiciously. "Bunter said they'd come—and they've come—"

"He knew we were after him, you born idiot!" hooted Johnny Bull.

"Then you didn't come here on a rag?" demanded Lovell.

"No, ass."

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY...PRICE 2?

NEXT
MONDAY:

"THE GREYFRIARS EXILE!"

A SPLENDID TALE OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYFRIARS.
By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 739.

"You weren't on the war-path at all?"
 "No, idiot."
 "Well, that's all very well," said Lovell. "But I've got a busted nose, and I think we'd better rag the bounders all the same."

"Fathead!" said Jimmy Silver.
 "Look here, Jimmy—"
 "Pax!" said Jimmy. "Let them get on their pins, you fellows. It's all a mistake."

"I think—" began Lovell wrathfully.
 "Shush! Don't you begin to think, old top—it's not in your line. Let them alone," said Jimmy Silver.

Arthur Edward Lovell snorted, not at all convinced. But the word of Uncle James was law, and the Greyfriars juniors were released. They rose to their feet, dusty and dishevelled, and gasping for breath, and greatly inclined to renew the combat.

"Awfully sorry, old scouts!" said Jimmy Silver. "If we'd known, you know— But Bunter told us you were coming over on the war-path—"

"He said we'd believe it when we saw them," said Lovell. "Well, we saw them, didn't we? And I think—"

"I've told you already not to think, old man; your brain isn't used to it," said Jimmy Silver soothingly. "Give it a miss. I'm really sorry, Wharton— We thought you were on the war-path, you know."

"Why didn't you explain?" demanded Raby.

"A lot of time you gave us to explain, didn't you?" gasped Harry, dabbing at his nose with his handkerchief.

"Um—perhaps we didn't," admitted Raby. "Still—"

"Of all the born idiots—" said Bob Cherry.

"Of all the frabjous dummies—" remarked Nugent.

"Can it!" growled Lovell. "I'm not at all sure yet, and I think—"

"You think?" snorted Johnny Bull. "You couldn't—"

"Look here, you Greyfriars chump—"

"Go and eat coke, you Rookwood dummy!"

"I'll jolly well—"

"Shut up!" roared Jimmy Silver. "It's pax, I tell you."

"Well, that silly ass—"
 "That howling idiot—"

"Order!" said Wharton. "For goodness sake don't begin again. We've got to bag Bunter, and get him away yet."

"Has that fat duffer really run away from school, then?" asked Jimmy Silver, in amazement.

"He bolted yesterday," growled Wharton. "We routed him out at St. Jim's, and then followed him here. Our Form-master sent us after him. It's the sack for him if he doesn't come back at once."

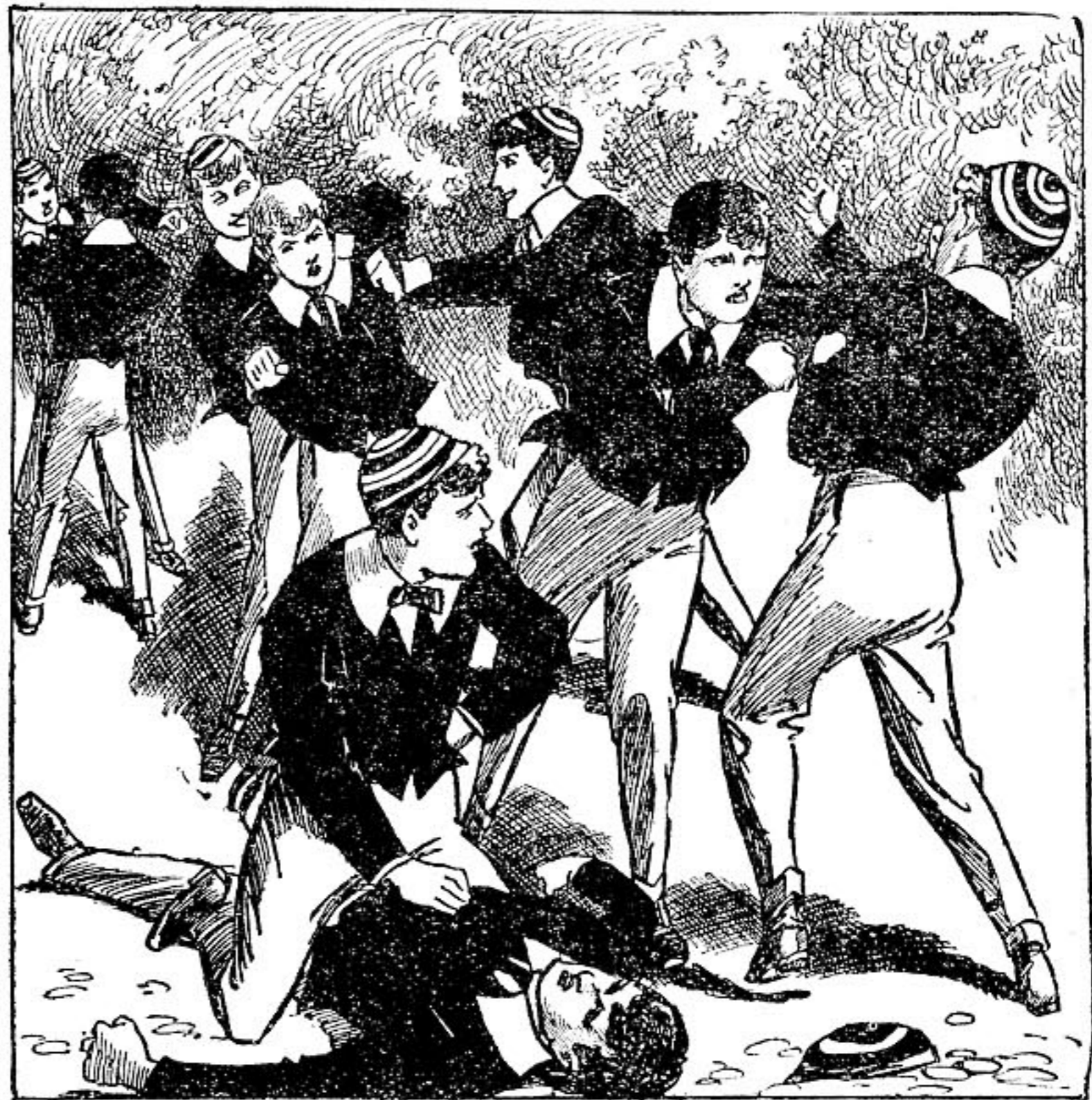
"And he had the neck to come to Rookwood when he's run away from school!" ejaculated Jimmy.

"And—and he set us on to these chaps, because they were after him!" murmured Mornington. "Jolly deep of Bunter! I'll jolly well kick him when I get back to Rookwood."

"Same here!"

"The samefulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "My esteemed chums, there has been slight mistakefulness, but let bygones be bygones. We have not time now to wallop these esteemed and ludicrous fat-heads."

"It isn't only time you want!" snorted Lovell. "I think—"



The Rookwooders came on with a determined rush, and the Famous Five were driven back to the hedge. "Down with the rotters!" yelled Lovell. "We'll make 'em sorry they came here ragging, what?" "Back up, Greyfriars!" panted Bob Cherry. (See Chapter 8.)

"At it again!" said Jimmy Silver. "You'll burst your brain-box at this rate, Lovell."

"Look here—" bawled Lovell.

"Shush! You fellows will come on to Rookwood, won't you?" said Jimmy Silver. "We'll be glad if you'll come to tea, and we'll hand Bunter over—you're more than welcome to him. There's a pond handy—better have a bit of a wash—we all look a little in want of running repairs."

Jimmy Silver's suggestion was too good not to be acted upon. The juniors adjourned to the pond, where, with the help of their handkerchiefs and plenty of water, they removed so far as possible the traces of the combat. But there were plenty of traces left that could not be removed. That could not be helped, however; and by the time they had finished their ablutions good-humour was restored.

Billy Bunter's little scheme had been quite deep—for Bunter. But it had been a failure; the Bunter-hunters were not barred off. Bunter had been as strategic as the circumstances allowed, but his masterly strategy had fallen short of success.

Harry Wharton & Co. walked on to Rookwood with the Rookwooders, even Arthur Edward Lovell having reached an amicable frame of mind by this time.

The wrath that remained was directed towards William George Bunter. Both parties promised Bunter the kicking of his life when they should see him at Rookwood. As a matter of fact, Bunter saw them first—from the window of the end study—and his round eyes almost bulged through his spectacles as he

beheld the Famous Five crossing the quadrangle with Jimmy Silver & Co.

"Beasts!" he gasped. And the Owl of Greyfriars blinked round wildly for some place of concealment.

Jimmy Silver ushered his guests into the house, the Rookwooders displaying their very best and politest manners now. They could not help feeling that their first reception of their visitors had lacked hospitality.

"Bunter's in our study," said Jimmy Silver. "You'll find him there all right, I think. We'll keep him there while we have tea, and see that he doesn't bolt again. This way!"

The Fistical Four and their five visitors arrived at the end study in the Fourth Form passage. The door was closed, but they could hear a sound of hurried breathing within.

"He's there!" grinned Bob Cherry.

Jimmy Silver threw open the door. The juniors crowded in. But Bunter was not to be seen. The sound of hurried, gasping breathing was still audible, and it came from under the study table. Bunter's place of concealment hardly needed pointing out.

"Bunter!" roared Bob Cherry. Gasp, from under the table.

"If there's anybody under the table," grinned Lovell, "I'll soon rout him out. The kettle's boiling. I'll just chuck some hot water under—"

"Yaroooh!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

A fat figure rolled out from under the table in a great hurry.

"I—I say, you—you fellows!" gasped Bunter. "Fuf-fuf-fancy seeing you here! I—I wasn't hiding, you know!"

"You fat fibber!"
 "Oh, really, Cherry—I didn't see you from the window, and I wasn't hiding under the table—only going to give you a surprise, you know!" gasped Bunter. "I—I'm jolly glad to see you fellows here!"

"You must be!" said Bob. "You look glad!"

"Yes, old chap—j-j-jolly glad, you know!" said Bunter. "I—I say, you fellows, I hope you haven't been scrapping!"

"You hope we haven't—when you set us at it!" roared Arthur Edward Lovell. "You spoofing fat walrus—"

"Oh, really, Lovell—"
 "Look at my nose!" hooted Bob Cherry.

Bunter blinked at it. There was a considerable swelling on Bob's nose, where hard knuckles had landed, and it did not look beautiful—and it felt painful. Bunter grinned.

"Is that a nose?" he asked.

"What?"
 "Looks more like a beetroot to me," said Bunter. "He, he, he!"

"Why, you—you—" spluttered Bob. "Bump him!" growled Johnny Bull.

"I think we ought to scrag him!" said Jimmy Silver, with a nod. "Bump him hard, but mind you don't burst him over our study carpet!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I say, you fellows—" stuttered Bunter. "I—I say, I—I'd rather let the whole matter drop. Let bygones be bygones, you know."

"You told us these fellows were coming here on the war-path, and made us jump on them!" roared Lovell.

"Only—only pulling your legs, you know," murmured Bunter feebly. "I—I— Can't you take a joke, you chaps? I never really meant you to scrag with them. I didn't really think that you'd wallop them and make them clear off, you know. Nothing of that kind! Never thought of anything of the sort! Don't be suspicious, you know."

"Bump him!"
 "Look here! Oh—ah—ow! Help!"

Bump, bump, bump!

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Homeward Bound!

JIMMY SILVER & CO. were soon busy preparing the spread for their guests. Billy Bunter was busy at the same time—sitting on the carpet, gasping and spluttering, in search of his second wind.

The Greyfriars fugitive was not really enjoying his visit to Rookwood, after all.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were bestowing plenty of hospitality on the Famous Five, and they seemed to have none left over for Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove had recovered himself a little, however, by the time the spread was on the table, and he joined the tea-party. But even the spread, though it was an ample one, failed wholly to comfort Bunter. The wandering Owl had been run to earth again, and this time he could not help feeling that the Bunter-hunters would take good care that he did not escape them.

Indeed, even escape from the hunters was not wholly an attractive prospect, as Bunter was "stony," and had not yet succeeded in raising a loan at Rookwood. Raising a loan was evidently out of the question now; staying at Rookwood was equally impossible. Not only was it clear that Jimmy Silver & Co. intended to hand him over, but it was equally

clear that they would be immensely pleased to see the last of him. Somehow, with all his striking qualities, Bunter lacked the gift of making himself popular. Whenever he paid a visit, he could always confer pleasure on his hosts—by taking his departure!

Bunter's reflections were gloomy; but, fortunately, they did not impair his excellent appetite. He did remarkably well at tea.

The Greyfriars fellows and the Rookwooders kept up a cheery buzz of talk over tea, while Bunter devoted his attention to more solid considerations. By mutual consent the scrap in Coombe Lane was forgotten on both sides, and harmony reigned.

After tea, when Harry Wharton & Co. rose to leave, Billy Bunter bestowed a dismal blink upon Jimmy Silver.

Jimmy gave him a cheery smile. "Ready, old top?" he asked.

"I—I suppose you couldn't fix it with your headmaster for me to stay here a few days, Silver?" murmured Bunter.

"Right on the wicket!" said Jimmy. "I couldn't!"

"Do you mean to say you don't want to?" snapped Bunter.

"Well, I wasn't going to say so," said Jimmy, laughing. "But since you're so pressing, I will! I don't want to."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!"

"Thanks!"

"You fat duffer!" said Bob Cherry. "If you don't walk out, you're going to be carried!"

"Yah!"

"Ready!" said Harry Wharton. "Come on, Bunter!"

"I've got something to say to Silver before—"

"Go it!" said Jimmy.

"About that pound—"

"Which?"

"Oh, really, Silver— Yarcob! Leggo, Bob Cherry, you beast!"

Bob's grasp closed on Bunter's collar. "Kim on!" he said tersely.

Bunter accompanied Bob into the passage, and the crowd of juniors followed. Putty Grace was in the Fourth Form passage, and he smiled as he glanced at Bunter.

"Like the dates?" he asked.

"Beast!"

"You've been giving Bunter dates?" asked Jimmy.

"Three hundred and sixty-five," answered Putty, "and that's the way he thanks me."

"Has that fat jabberwock got outside three hundred and sixty-five dates?" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"Yah! It was a rotten calendar the beast gave me!" hooted Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Famous Five.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I call it a rotten joke!" growled Bunter. "I don't think much of Rookwood manners! Never saw such a lot of rotters! Even you fellows ain't such rotters as— Yow-ow! Leggo my neck, Bob Cherry, you beast—you're the worst rotter of the lot!"

"Kim on!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. walked down to Coombe with the Greyfriars crowd. They saw the Famous Five—and Bunter—into the train for Rookham, and waved adieu to them on the platform.

Billy Bunter did not trouble to say good-bye. He gave Jimmy Silver & Co. a glare from the carriage window, and that was all. His feeling towards Rookwood and all Rookwooders was one of utter disgust.

"Jolly glad to get shut of that crowd!" he remarked, when the train started. "Awful lot of rotters! I say, you fellows, I've got an idea!"

"Boil it!" said Bob Cherry.

"It was like your cheek to come after me," said Bunter. "But I'm an easy-going chap. I forgive you!"

"We could have managed to worry along somehow, even if you didn't!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"It was like Quelchy's cheek to send you after me, too!" continued Bunter. "If I go back to Greyfriars, I'm not going to stand much of Quelchy's rot, I can tell you!"

"No 'if' about it," said Bob.

"You're going straight back, you fat owl, and just in time to save the sack."

"I tell you I've got an idea," said Bunter. "You fellows ain't very keen on getting back to lessons, are you?"

"Not exactly."

"Well, then," said Bunter, "suppose we don't go back at all? You can wire to Quelchy, or telephone, that you missed me at Rookwood—"

"What?"

"Tell him I've gone to—to Devonshire," said Bunter brightly. "Tell him you're still after me, see?"

"My hat!"

"You get a long holiday that way, and so do I," said Bunter. "We'll travel together. I shall stand the whole expenses of the trip."

"What with?"

"Later. You fellows would have to find the cash just at the moment," said Bunter. "I should settle later. You could keep on wiring to Quelchy, say, once a day, that you were still on the track, and keep him quiet while we had a jolly long holiday, you know. What?"

Bunter blinked inquiringly at the Famous Five as he propounded that astute scheme. They blinked at him.

"We—we're to tell Quelchy a string of lies daily for the pleasure of your company on a holiday and the joy of watching you feed!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Try again!" suggested Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"If you beasts think you're going to take me back to Greyfriars, you're jolly well mistaken!" hooted Bunter. "I'd rather go home, if it comes to that!"

"But it isn't a matter of choice," said Harry.

"The pater would be waxy, but very likely I could get round him," said Bunter thoughtfully. "The mater would put in a word for me, too. On the whole, I'd rather face the pater than that Hun Quelchy. Even if he trots out the strap, it's better than the Head's birch. On the whole, you fellows, when we change at Rookham, I'll take the train for home."

"I don't think!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Beast!"

At Rookham Bob linked his arm in Bunter's, and Bunter did not change for home. He changed for Greyfriars.

There was another change, and another, before the juniors were in the express for Courtfield. At each change Billy Bunter found his fat arm locked in Bob Cherry's, and there was no dodging for him. He was in a state of simmering fury when he found himself at last in the express, and gliding swiftly through the landscape of Kent.

"Courtfield!"

"Here we are again!" said Bob Cherry cheerily. "Roll out, Bunter—only a walk home now!"

Billy Bunter rolled dismally out of the

train and out of the station. His fat face was more dismal than ever as he started to walk to Greyfriars School.

"I say, you fellows!" mumbled Bunter, when the school came in sight. "Don't be rotten beasts, you know! You know that awful rotter Quelch is going to give me a flogging—"

"Better than the sack, fathead!"

"I don't think so. I suppose I can decide whether I'd rather be sacked or not!" howled Bunter.

"Not a bit! If you don't know what's good for you, you must leave it to wiser heads," said Bob kindly.

"Yah!"

The gates were in sight now. Billy Bunter made one more effort.

"I say, hold on a minute!" he gasped. "Listen to me, you fellows! Don't let's go in! Let's all run away together."

"What?"

"And—and become pirates!" said Bunter breathlessly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A yell of laughter greeted that dramatic suggestion.

"Look here, you rotters—"

"Oh dear!" gasped Bob Cherry, wiping his eyes. "Bunter will be the death of me yet! Come on, you giddy fat pirate—come on, you bloodthirsty barrel! Ha, ha, ha!"

And a chuckling crowd of juniors marched William George Bunter in at the gates of Greyfriars.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

More Tantrums!

"TODD!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Have you written your lines?"

"Oh dear!" murmured Peter Todd.

Mr. Quelch raised a commanding hand.

"You will bring your imposition to my study at once, Todd!"

The Remove master walked on before Peter could answer. And Peter Todd grunted dismally.

Mr. Quelch's "tantrums" seemed to be lasting. There was no doubt that the Form-master was in a state of great annoyance. Bunter's bolt, and the prolonged absence of the Famous Five, worried him, and all that day his temper had had an edge to it.

Peter Todd had hoped that the Form-master might forget the imposition of the morning. Peter argued that Mr. Quelch had plenty of other matters to think about now.

But evidently Mr. Quelch had found time to think of Peter, too. Fifty lines had been imposed on Peter for talking slang in the Form-room, and the fifty lines were wanted. Unfortunately, none of them had been written out so far. So it was difficult—indeed, impossible—to take them to Mr. Quelch's study at once; and to keep Mr. Quelch waiting, in his present mood, was dangerous. Peter rubbed his hands with dismal anticipation.

"He's still got 'em, hasn't he?" remarked Skinner of the Remove, with a grin. "If that fat oyster doesn't come home, Quelch will take it all out of us one after another."

"All your fault!" grunted Peter.

Skinner raised his eyebrows.

"How do you make that out?" he inquired.

"You made Bunter swamp Quelch in mistake for Coker—Bunter said so, at least. You agreed to whistle when Coker was coming, and you gave him the signal when Quelch came along."

"What a yarn!" yawned Skinner.

"If you had any decency you'd own

up, as that fat duffer is going to be flogged for it," said Peter tartly.

"And get a flogging myself?" grinned Skinner. "Dear old man, you're simply bursting with good ideas to-day!"

Peter sniffed, and walked away to his study. He had fifty lines to take to Mr. Quelch, and he sat down pen in hand. But he paused. Fifty lines was a task requiring time, and he simply could not venture to keep Mr. Quelch waiting while he wrote them out. The alternative was to present himself in Mr. Quelch's study without them. It was not an attractive alternative.

Suddenly Peter's eyes glimmered. He had an idea.

"It's risky," he murmured. "But—but it might work!"

He wrote a single line, blotted it, and hurried downstairs. With the sheet of foolscap in his hands, and his very meekest expression on his face, he presented himself in his Form-master's study.

Mr. Quelch's gimlet-eye turned on him.

"Your lines, Todd?"

"My line, sir!" murmured Peter respectfully.

"What? I do not understand you, Todd."

Mr. Quelch held out his hand for the paper, and Peter passed it to him, and stood waiting, with downcast eyes.

The Remove master glanced at the paper. His expression became extraordinary as he read:

"Slang must not be spoken in the Form-room fifty times."

Mr. Quelch gazed at that line, and then he gazed at Peter. His gimlet-eye seemed to be boring a hole in Todd.

"What does this mean, Todd?" he asked, with the rumble of thunder in his voice.

"My—my impot, sir!" murmured Todd.

"I gave you fifty lines, Todd, for speaking slang in the Form-room."

"D-d-don't you remember, sir—"

"What?"

"You said, 'You will write out, 'Slang must not be spoken in the Form-room fifty times,' sir!' murmured Peter.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch.

He still gazed at Peter. Certainly, his words might have borne the construction Todd had put upon them.

"You appear to have misapprehended my meaning, Todd."

"Oh, sir!"

"My intention was that you should write out, 'Slang must not be spoken in the Form-room,' fifty times."

"Yes, sir. That's what I've done, sir."

Mr. Quelch laid down the paper. Peter hoped that his next remark was going to be: "You may go."

Peter's hope was ill-founded. Mr. Quelch's next remark was: "Hold out your hand, Todd!"

He picked up his cane.

"This misapprehension on your part, my boy, is very remarkable," said Mr. Quelch. "Were it genuine, I should consider you a very stupid boy, Todd. You are not, I think, a very stupid boy; but I fear you are a very impertinent one. I shall cane you, Todd, for leaving your imposition unwritten."

Swish!

"And I shall cane you for impertinence."

Swish!

"And I shall cane you once more to



"Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch, "you will not be flogged. I shall, however, cane you very severely, as I have Skinner, for your defiance of authority in running away from school. Hold out your hand!" The rhythmic sound of swishing recommenced. (See Chapter 13.)

impress upon your mind that your very peculiar sense of humour should not be exercised at the expense of your Form-master."

Swish!

"You may go, Todd. I trust you will remember this."

Peter Todd squeezed his hands in anguish as he went down the passage. There was no doubt that he would remember it—for some time, at least. Peter wandered disconsolately in the dusky quad, rubbing his palms, and he was still mumbling when he heard the ringing of the porter's bell, and half a dozen juniors came tramping in in the dusk.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" sang out Bob Cherry's cheery voice. "That you, Toddy? We've got our prize porker!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Quelchy's just in a humour for him!" grunted Peter. "I've had some of his gruel on account. Ow! But I think there's plenty left for Bunter."

"Is the beast waxy?" asked Billy Bunter anxiously.

"Frightfully!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"He's been rampaging all day," continued Peter cheerily. "I think he may let you fellows off, as you've brought the porker home. But Bunter—better make your will, Bunter!"

"Oh dear! I—I say, you fellows, I'm not going to see Quelchy! I—I'll hide in a box-room till morning!" gasped Bunter. "You—you can tell Quelchy I—I fell out of the train before coming home. Say I've broken both my legs! That will touch his heart, perhaps."

"Fathead!"

"I say, Toddy, old man," groaned Bunter, "can't you help me prove my innocence? Even Quelchy wouldn't want to flog an innocent chap."

"I've been thinking it over," said Peter Todd. "There's no doubt that Skinner helped that fat idiot into this scrape. Skinner ought to own up, and take his share of the medicine."

"Catch Skinner!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"The catchfulness will not be terrific," remarked Hurree Singh, with a shake of his dusky head.

"Might be persuaded," said Peter Todd. "Bring Bunter to the Remove passage first. Quelchy doesn't know he's here yet. We may persuade Skinner to do the right thing, and he can go along with Bunter to see Quelchy."

"We'll try," said Harry Wharton doubtfully.

And the recaptured Owl was hurried into the Remove quarters, where the returned travellers called upon Skinner in Study No. 11, to see what could be done with that youth before making their report to Mr. Quelch.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Skinner Yields to Persuasion!

SKINNER was at prep with his study-mates, Snoop and Stott, when his study door was hurled open, and a crowd of juniors marched in. Skinner grinned at the sight of William George Bunter.

"So you've got him!" he remarked.

"The gotfulness is terrific!"

"You're for it, Bunt, old bun!" said Skinner comfortingly. "Quelchy is like a wild Hun, raging for gore!"

"Oh dear!" groaned Bunter.

"But what have you brought him here for?" asked Skinner politely. "Awfully glad to see you, of course, you're all so nice to look at, especially you with that nose you've found on your travels, Cherry! But I'm at prep, if you don't mind my mentioning it."

"You're in this, too," explained Harry Wharton.

"Don't quite see it."

"You spoofed Bunter into chucking his silly mixture over Quelch when he was in ambush for the Coker animal," said Bob Cherry.

"You know you did!" hooted Bunter. "I was waiting in the dark for him, and you said you'd whistle 'Rule Britannia' when Coker came up the stairs, and you whistled, and Quelchy got it!"

"Did I?" yawned Skinner.

"You know you did!" howled Bunter. "What I know isn't evidence, old bean," said Skinner cheerily. "Shut the door after you, won't you?"

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged glances.

"It's up to you to own up, Skinner," said the captain of the Remove.

"Dear man!" murmured Skinner.

"Bunter's for it, and it's your fault. You ought to take your share."

"This ablative absolute is a regular twister," remarked Skinner, apparently referring to his prep. "Bit difficult to work it out with so many chaps talking in the study. Would you fellows mind travelling along?"

Snoop and Stott grinned. But the visitors to the study all looked quite serious.

"We're not travelling yet," said Peter Todd. "Bunter's my study-mate, and I'm seeing fair play for him. The fact that he's a silly ass and a fat rotter doesn't make any difference."

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"He's got to go to Quelchy now, Skinner," continued Peter. "I ask you, as a decent chap, to go along with him and take your share. You can go halves with Bunter."

"I—I say, you fellows, I think Skinner ought to take the lot!"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Beast!"

"Well, what do you say, Skinner?" asked Harry Wharton.

Skinner yawned.

"This ablative absolute—"

"Never mind the ablative absolute now."

"But I must," smiled Skinner. "My kind Form-master will be annoyed if I don't! Don't you want me to be a good boy?"

"Are you going with Bunter?" demanded Peter Todd.

"I rather think not. Bunter's company isn't attractive; and I'm not yearning for Quelchy's. I'm denying myself both pleasures. This is my self-denial week!" explained Skinner blandly.

"Then we're going to persuade you to do the decent thing," said Peter Todd grimly. "Keep that door shut, somebody. Hand over that fives-bat to me, will you, Snoopey?"

"Here you are!" grinned Snoop.

Skinner jumped up.

"Look here, you rotters—"

"Lay him over the armchair," said Peter. "A batting isn't so bad as a flogging, but I'll do my best to make it so. After about a hundred swipes Skinner may decide to go to Quelchy with Bunter!"

"He, he, he!" chortled Bunter.

"Stand by me, you chaps!" exclaimed Skinner.

Snoop and Stott shook their heads. They were not likely to scrap with the Famous Five on Skinner's account.

"It's up to you!" said Snoop.

"That's so," agreed Stott. "You've had your little joke, Skinner! Now's the time to pay! Rather rotten to leave Bunter in the lurch like this!"

"Look here," howled Skinner, "I'll yell for a prefect—"

"Yell away," said Bob Cherry. "If Wingate comes up and hears what's the matter he will take you to Quelchy fast enough!"

"Oh, you rotter—"

"Collar him!"

Skinner made a desperate rush for the door. But he was promptly collared and stretched across the armchair. Peter Todd wielded the fives-bat.

Whack!

A fiendish yell from Skinner followed the whack.

"That's a sample," said Peter. "If

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you want any more, say so! The rest of the goods will be up to sample!"

"Yow! Leggo!"

"Are you going to Quelchy?"

"No!" howled Skinner.

Whack!

"Oh! Oh! Ow!"

"I'll make it fifty, and then ask him again," said Peter Todd.

"Leggo!" roared Skinner. "I—I—I'll go to Quelch, if you like, you rotters! Chuck it!"

Fifty with the fives-bat from Peter's sinewy arm would probably have been more severe than anything to be expected from Mr. Quelch. The hapless Skinner made up his mind to the inevitable.

"Honest Injun?" demanded Peter.

"Ow, you rotter! Yes!" groaned Skinner.

"If you don't play up when you get to Quelch, you're going to have fifty, and fifty more! Mind that!"

"Hang you!"

Skinner was released, and he rolled off the chair. His light persiflage had quite disappeared now. Skinner was no longer humorous; he was, indeed, the most serious fellow in the study!

"Come on," said Bob Cherry genially. "You'll be glad afterwards that you've done the decent thing, Skinner."

"Rats!" growled Skinner.

But he came on; there was no help for that. With Skinner and Bunter the Famous Five went downstairs, and made their way to Mr. Quelch's study. The Owl of the Remove was looking rather more hopeful now; that dreaded flogging was a little less of an awful certainty. The cloud that had left his brow seemed to have settled on Skinner's.

Tap!

"Come in!" said Mr. Quelch's deep voice.

Harry Wharton & Co. marched in with their two prisoners. Mr. Quelch's eyes glittered at the party.

"Oh, you have returned!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, sir!"

"You have very greatly exceeded my instructions, Wharton, in remaining away from school so long."

"Oh, sir!"

"As you have brought Bunter back with you, however, I will say nothing more on that point," said Mr. Quelch.

"You may go!"

"Very well, sir!"

"But what is Skinner doing here?" added Mr. Quelch. "Skinner has nothing to do with the matter, I presume?"

"It turns out that he has, sir," said Harry Wharton. "He wants—I mean, he is going to make a confession, sir!"

"Indeed! Very well, you may go. Skinner and Bunter will remain."

And the Famous Five faded out of the study, hoping for the best for Billy Bunter, if not for Skinner.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Manly of Skinner!

MR. QUELCH fixed his eyes upon William George Bunter. It seemed to the recaptured runaway that they were burning holes in him.

"Bunter!"

"Ow! I mean, yes, sir! I—I hope I find you well, sir!" stammered Bunter.

"Boy!"

"I—I've been thinking a lot about you while I've been away, sir!" ventured Bunter. "I—I'm very glad to see you looking so well, sir, and—and so young and—and blooming, sir!"

"Silence, Bunter!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, ah! Yes, sir!"

"You have dared to run away from school, defying the authority of your Form-master and your headmaster!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch in a terrifying voice.

"Not at all, sir! I—I wouldn't do it for anything!" gasped Bunter.

"But you did so!"

"Oh, no, sir! I—I— The fact is, sir—the real fact is, that I was—was sleep-walking, sir!"

"You were what?"

"Sleep-walking, sir," gasped Bunter. "I—I walked in my sleep, sir! Suddenly I woke up—"

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch dazedly.

"It—it was awful, sir! I—I woke suddenly, and found myself at St. Jim's. I—I couldn't imagine how I got there, sir! Sleep-walking runs in our family. I remember my great-grandfather—"

"How dare you tell me such falsehoods, Bunter? You ran away from school to escape a just punishment. You drenched me, sir—drenched me with a vile concoction of various disagreeable fluids! You would have been expelled, but for the fact that you intended this outrage for a Fifth Form boy, and assaulted me, sir, by mistake! But—"

"It was Skinner, sir!" groaned Bunter.

"Nonsense! Do you know anything about this affair, Skinner? I do not quite see why you are present."

Skinner licked his dry lips. He had to go through it, or there was a still more painful alternative to be faced afterwards.

"The fact is, sir, I—I was partly to blame," stammered Skinner. "I—I'm awfully sorry, sir—"

"You were wholly to blame!" hooted Bunter. "You—"

"Silence, Bunter! You may continue, Skinner!"

"I—I feel that I ought to confess, sir," said Skinner, more confidently. "It's been weighing on my mind a lot, sir, and I felt that I ought to tell you the whole truth, sir, to—make you go easier with Bunter. I—I only want to see justice done. My conscience—"

"What have you to tell me, Skinner?"

"I—I was going to give Bunter the signal when Coker came up the staircase, sir!" faltered Skinner. "And—and I happened to whistle when you came up, sir, so—"

"Bless my soul! You deliberately tricked this foolish boy into throwing the vile concoction over me, Skinner!"

"I—I—"

"You are much more to blame than Bunter!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"I—I felt that I ought to come here with Bunter and confess, sir!" said Skinner meekly.

Mr. Quelch fixed him with his eyes.

"Upon my word, Skinner! It appears that this wretched, stupid boy was to some extent a victim in the matter, as well as myself. I shall not request the Head to flog Bunter!"

"Oh, good!" gasped Bunter involuntarily.

"I shall cane him," said Mr. Quelch, "and I should cane you also, very severely, Skinner, but I feel bound, after your very frank and manly confession, to deal more leniently with you. But for that, I should give you such a lesson, Skinner, as you would be unlikely ever to forget."

Skinner's knees knocked together.

"I was only pulling his leg, sir. I—I didn't really think he would be ass enough to chuck the mixture over you—"

"I hope that statement is correct, Skinner. Certainly you have acted in a manly way in coming forward now," said Mr. Quelch. "Bunter, you will not be flogged! I shall, however, cane you very severely, both for the outrage and for your defiance of authority in running away from school."

"I—I say, sir, c-c-couldn't you cane Skinner instead—"

"I am going to make an example of you, Bunter."

"If—if you don't mind, sir, I—I'd rather you made an example of Skinner—"

"Silence!"

"You see, sir, it was all his fault—"

"Silence, Bunter! You should be ashamed, sir, to attempt to throw the blame on Skinner, when he has owned up to the truth in this manly way—"

"Only because Toddy was whacking him with a fives-bat!" hooted Bunter. "Catch Skinner owning up—"

"What—what—"

Mr. Quelch understood a little more clearly now.

His eyes glinted.

He rose to his feet, and selected his stoutest cane.

"You first, Skinner!" he said. "I fear that you have attempted to deceive me. I fear that it will be necessary for me to be very severe with you, Skinner."

Skinner feared it, too; and his fears were justified. For several minutes there was a rhythmical sound of swishing in Mr. Quelch's study, and a series of fearful howls from Skinner. Never had a humorist so deeply repented of mis-directed humour, as Skinner did just then. When he had finished, Mr. Quelch looked a little breathless, and Skinner looked as if he found life a weary burden on his shoulders.

"You may go, Skinner."

The hapless Skinner crawled away.

"Now, Bunter—"

"I—I say, sir—"

"You need say nothing, Bunter! You are escaping very cheaply, considering your offence. Hold out your hand!"

The rhythmic sound of swishing recommenced.

William George Bunter crawled into Study No. 7 in the Remove, and collapsed into the armchair. Peter Todd gave him a sympathising nod.

"Bad?" he asked.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"You were lucky to get off the flogging!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"You've got off pretty cheaply, old chap, considering."

(Continued on page 20.)

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BAGGING BUNTER!

(Continued from page 19.)

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"You'll feel better presently."

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"You're making a thundering row, old chap. But keep it up, if it relieves your feelings," said Peter generously.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Harry Wharton looked in at the doorway, with Bob Cherry. Bunter gazed at them with deep woe.

"Feeling the draught, old bird?" asked Bob.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Better than the sack!" said Wharton.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Bunter's vocabulary seemed limited. But his remarks, such as they were, were expressive, and full of deep feeling.

"We're standing a little supper in Study No. 1," said the captain of the Remove.

Bunter pricked up his ears.

"Eggs on toast, and a big plum cake," said Bob Cherry, "and three pounds of strawberry jam."

"Yow-ow! Good!"

"You're coming, Toddy," said Wharton. "I was going to ask you to bring Bunter, but if he feels too bad to come—"

"I don't!" said Bunter promptly.

"Sure?" asked Harry.

"Yow-ow! Quite!"

And Bunter came!

It is said that after the feast comes the reckoning; but in this case after the reckoning came the feast; and life was once more bright to William George Bunter.

THE END.

(Another splendid, long, complete story of the Remove chums next week, entitled "The Greyfriars' Exile," by Frank Richards. Order your copy now.)

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