

# IN CAMP FOR THE EASTER HOLIDAYS!

(SEE NEW SERIES OF SPECIAL ARTICLES INSIDE.)



No. 740. Vol. XXI.

Week Ending April 16th, 1952.

## The Magnet <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> Library

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED  
THE "GREYFRIARS HERALD."



### BILLY BUNTER IN A PERILOUS PLIGHT!

(An amazing incident from the long complete tale inside.)

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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!**

**"HIS EXCELLENCY COUNT BUNTER!"**  
By Frank Richards.

That is the title of our next story of the chums of Greyfriars, and from it you have rightly guessed that it is a humorous story. Mr. Richards, when he is in the mood, can write a story to bring tears to the eyes—and when in another mood he can write a story which brings pain to the ribs! Certainly, Mr. Richards must have been in the mood for humour when he wrote

**"HIS EXCELLENCY COUNT BUNTER!"**  
for seldom have I read a funnier story in my life.

Billy Bunter, by various means, secures the title of "count." He feels that he is somewhat above such mere persons as Harry Wharton & Co., and, on his dignity, as he is, Bunter becomes exceedingly lunny. But the title of count does not appeal to Bunter very long, and the efforts of the fat junior to avoid two very unpleasant gentlemen from a foreign country help him to make up his mind that plain William George Bunter is much better!

Every reader of the MAGNET LIBRARY must read next week's splendid, long, complete school story of Billy Bunter and Harry Wharton & Co.—and they should see that all their friends who like good, wholesome fun are round at the newagents' shops on Monday morning next for a copy of the MAGNET LIBRARY.

**SPECIAL EASTER NUMBER OF THE "GREYFRIARS HERALD."**

I have great pleasure in announcing that Harry Wharton & Co. have prepared a ripping Easter Number of their supplement for readers of the MAGNET LIBRARY.

Perhaps the funniest story in this issue of the "Herald" will be "Greyfriars in the Stone Age," which will be illustrated

in such a manner as to make the picture worth framing! All the rest of the contents of our next supplement is of special interest in view of the holidays, and once again I advise my chums to make sure of a copy of the MAGNET LIBRARY by ordering it well in advance!

**SPECIAL NOTICE.**  
The Extra "Popular" Plates.

Most of my chums know that it was my intention to present to readers of the "Popular" a magnificent series of ten coloured engine plates. However, mainly owing to the enormous success of these plates, I am preparing to extend the series.

The plates have received a wonderful welcome from boys and girls all over the kingdom, and I feel certain that in the "Popular" I have filled a long-felt want. I have been informed by letter from a railway expert that this is the first occasion upon which accurate plates have been presented with any periodical—and he compliments me on the fact that the plates are both accurate in colour and detail. That certainly points out that hitherto there have not been presented such plates as are being given away every week in the "Popular."

Readers of the MAGNET LIBRARY can, therefore, start collecting the splendid plates now, for with the addition of the extra fine plates there will still be a chance to get together a collection of what will surely become the envied possession of thousands upon thousands of boys and girls in the kingdom.

The "Popular" is on sale every Tuesday morning, and contains no less than twenty-eight pages. The stories are just the ones you want—school stories of Greyfriars, St. Jim's, Rockwood, and the School in the Backwoods, where famous Frank Richards was a junior.

Sidney Drew has written a fine serial for the "Popular," and I am offering FORTY POUNDS in cash prizes in connection with a simple competition. Then there is Billy Bunter's four-page "Weekly," a screamingly funny

production which occupies the centre of the "Popular" every week.

Ask your newagent for a copy of the current issue of the "Popular," and place an order for a copy to be saved for you every week. You will be pleased!

**NOTICES.**

**Correspondence.**

Jack Flanders, 18, Carlyle Road, Kirkcaldy, Scotland, wishes to correspond with readers.

Clarrie Davison, Robert Street, Tasmania, New Zealand, wishes to correspond with readers anywhere.

G. W. Ling, 14, White Road, Stratford, E. 15, wishes to hear from readers willing to join cycling club, ages 18-19.

W. Ryan, 394, Post Office Place, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers in the British Isles, ages 16-19.

William A. McKenzie, Box 18, Renmark, South Australia, wishes to correspond with readers of the Companion Papers anywhere, ages 15-20; also with the editor of an amateur magazine.

William E. Skelton, 25, High Street, Plumstead, S.E. 18, wishes to correspond with readers interested in amateur magazines.

Frank Dobson, 33-36, Tivoli Place, Little Horton Lane, Bradford, Yorks, wants to hear from contributors, agents, and readers for his new amateur weekly for boys.

Archie Kennedy, Clarendon, Trafalgar Parade, Concord, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia, wishes to communicate with readers.

G. Niven, 496, Crown Street, Surry Hills, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia, wishes to correspond with readers anywhere.

Jack Vignes, Kissing Point Road, Emington, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia, wishes to hear from readers, ages 13-15, anywhere. All letters answered.

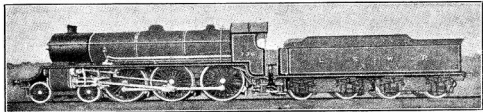
Miss Priscilla Rosalyn Jewells, Floir, 396, Strone Road, Manor Park, Essex, wishes to correspond with readers anywhere.

Thomas V. F. Cormie, 26, Helen Street, Arbroath, Scotland, wishes to correspond with readers, ages 17-20.

(More notices appear on page 20.)

**Your Editor.**

**A WONDERFUL OFFER TO READERS OF THE "POPULAR!"**



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**GIVEN AWAY FREE WITH THIS WEEK'S "POPULAR." - - OUT ON TUESDAY!**



# The Greyfriars Exile!

A Magnificent, Long, Complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co., the Chums of Greyfriars.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

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

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### Muggins' Circus!

POM-TI-OM-POM!

Bang, bang!  
A din resembling a jazz-band gone mad smote the ears of the Famous Five, who were taking a walk in the Close before going in to dinner.

"My hat! Listen to the giddy row, you chaps!"

Wharton & Co. stood still.

The noise, which came from the direction of Friaralee Road, seemed to increase in volume and to draw nearer the school.

Rob-a-dub dab! Rob-a-dub dab!

Boom, zip, crash!

"The ludicrous dimfulness is not of the esteemed soldiers, my worthy chums," purred the Nabob of Bhanipur in his quaint and extraordinary English.

"My hat! No! Let's go and see what it is," suggested Harry Wharton.

And, followed by his four chums, he started off at a run towards the school gates.

Many other juniors, their curiosity aroused by the noise, were streaming towards the gates, too, and when the Famous Five arrived quite a crowd had collected, waiting for the procession, or whatever it was, to appear.

Boom, boom, boom!

"Here they come!"

"My hat! A circus!"

"Hurrah!"

The juniors were right. A few moments after the arrival of Wharton & Co., two elephants, led by men dressed in cotton robes, with their faces coloured to represent Hindus, appeared round the bend in the road.

Bang, bang, bang!

Pom-a-pom, pom!

On the back of each elephant was strapped a bandish, in which were sitting some half-dozen men, who appeared to be vying with each other as to who could produce the greatest noise from the drums and other instruments they imagined they were playing. Behind

the elephants walked a couple of clowns bearing a banner between them, on which was painted the words:

"Signor Muggins' World Famous Circus and Menagerie, as seen by Thousands of Crowned Heads of Europe, will Appear in Friaralee To-night! Roll up! Roll up!"

Then followed a procession of animals ranging from moth-eaten lions to performing dogs. Nearly every person who accompanied the procession was armed with some noise-producing instrument which was being put to the fullest possible use. The roar of the animals combined with the din of the "musicians" was nothing short of dreadful. Signor Muggins was out to attract attention, and without the slightest doubt he was doing it.

"My giddy aunt!" gasped Wharton, when the procession had passed. "What a blessed row!"

"Hear, hear!"

The bell went for dinner, and the Famous Five trooped into the Hall.

"What are we going to do about it, Harry?" whispered Frank Nugent when Mr. Quelch's head was turned. "I suppose we are going to the show to-night?"

"What ho—"

"Got any tin?"

"Dunno. We'll have to have a meeting after dinner and see."

Apparently a number of juniors were asking their pals the same question, for the Remove Form master was kept unusually busy calling to order juniors who were unlucky enough to be detected by him talking at the table.

After dinner the Famous Five repaired to Study No. 1, and the walls of that celebrated apartment witnessed a scene as tragic as it was frequent.

"Fouppence!" announced Wharton, laying his worldly wealth on the study table.

"Nuppence!" groaned Bob Cherry.

"Ditto!" said Nugent.

Johnny Bull and Inky produced the sum of sixpence each, which they added to Wharton's fourpence.

"It's no go, you chaps!" announced Bob Cherry mournfully. "They won't let five chaps in for one-and-fourpence when the price is a bob a nob!"

"Nunno!"

"What are we going to do!"

"I wish—"

What Wharton wished was never known, for at that moment there came a terrific crash at the study door, and a moment later William George Bunter, the Owl of the Remove, and the fattest youth at Greyfriars, appeared in the doorway, blinking at the five chums through his big, ugly spectacles.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Scat!"

"Really, you chaps, that's not the way to treat a chap who's rushed half-way round the school in order to treat you."

Wharton stared.

"I'll give you five minutes to explain," he said, looking rather puzzled. "If you exceed that time you get whalloped."

"Really, Wharton! As a matter of fact I came about the circus."

"Well, what about it?"

"Are you fellows going?"

"Perhaps," said Wharton, eyeing the Owl of the Remove suspiciously.

"Because if you are," went on Bunter, "I'd esteem it a great favour if you'd kindly permit me to pay all expenses and accompany me as my guests—"

"W-what?"

"Yes, Wharton. I'd be pleased if you would come, just for the sake of the old days when we were study-mates," continued the fat junior, blinking at the captain of the Remove. "The invitation applies to the whole lot of you, of course, and if you would like a taxi to the show—well, I won't let it be said that a Bunter was ever mean towards his friends—"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped the five juniors in unison.

"I know you chaps would do as much  
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for me if I ever needed it," said Bunter, with a fat smirk. "And, of course, we shall want a bite of grub when we get back. If you chaps will lend me a hand I'll do the shopping now."

"Well, if this doesn't beat the blessed jazz!" burst out Bob Cherry at last. "Who have you been robbing, Bunt?"

"Really, Cherry—"

"Yes; we'll come, Bunter, and thanks very much," said Wharton slowly. "But I suppose you've got the tin all right?"

"A-hem—," began Bunter, blinking. "That was precisely the little matter I called about. You see, I'm expecting a postal-order—Wow!"

That remark was wrung from William George Bunter as Bob Cherry's big boot suddenly shot out and caught him on a certain part of the anatomy.

"You fat boulder!" shouted Bob, taking aim for another kick. "You grab big toe; I'll—"

The Famous Five rose as one man and seized the fat junior by the arms and legs. Bunter's request had raised their hopes of seeing the circus; but now those hopes were dashed to the ground, their disappointment was all the keener.

"Bump him!" shouted Johnny Bull.

And the Famous Five, finding the exercise of banging the carcass of the Owl of the Remove on the linoleum eased their feelings somewhat, did not desist until they were quite out of breath.

"We'll borrow some tin off Mauly," said Wharton, when Billy Bunter had finally been thrown out of the study and had scuttled with many groans up the Remove passage. "Having had our hopes raised like that we must go now, even if we have to creep in underneath the canvas."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five trooped to Lord Mauleverer's study.

"With pleasure, b' gad," said the schoolboy earl, when Wharton had made known the object of their visit to him. And a ten-shilling note changed hands.

Lessons seemed indefinitely long to the juniors that afternoon; but at last they were over, and the juniors filed out of the Form-room.

When the Famous Five left Greysfriars about half an hour later they discovered that nearly the whole of the Remove were walking down Friardale Road towards the ground where the circus was being held, as well as many seniors.

Courtfield Council School lads, waved a hand to the Removites and grinned.

"What seats have you left?" inquired Wharton, as you have?"

"Bob ones," replied Trumper. "That's all we can afford."

"Same here," grinned Wharton. "I propose we join parties, then."

"Good egg!"

Wharton was able to secure seats in the front row, and when his chums had settled down he took a good look round. There was a good sprinkling of Greysfriars caps to be seen in all seats; but as the tent filled up it soon became apparent that Greysfriars had a monopoly of the shilling part. It was a long time since a circus had visited Friardale, and the chums of the Remove were eagerly looking forward to the show.

After a while the din outside the tent subsided somewhat, and the big arc-lamps, supplied with electric current from a dynamo attached to one of the traction-engines outside, were switched on and spread their brilliance over the ring.

"Not long to go now," said Johnny Bull, as a circus employee gave a final rattle over to the sawdust in the ring.

A moment later the orchestra struck up and coloured limes pecked out and played on half a dozen horses who circled at an increasing speed round the ring. When a considerable speed had been attained, a woman dressed in shimmering blue silks appeared, standing on a white horse, which dropped into stride with the other horses. Without any apparent effort she leaped from horse to horse with the agility of a monkey.

"My hat! That wants some doing!" observed Bob Cherry, in admiration.

A trainer next appeared in the middle of the ring who urged the horses to a still greater speed by cracking a heavy whip. The woman then did all sorts of amazing tricks. She did handspings from the back of one horse to another, and finally finished up by running by the side of a horse and vaulting over its back to the ground the other side.

Although this performance was as old as the hills it did not fail to bring a storm of applause at the end. The horses and rider disappeared amid a clapping of hands through the ring exit underneath the gallery, where the limes were being operated from.

"Not a bad turn!" said Frank Nugent appreciatively.

"No, not at all," said Wharton slowly.

"Why, what's the matter?" asked the Removite, regarding his chum curiously.

"No trouble into it," replied the captain of the Remove. "But it rather appeared to me that those horses were a little too frightened of that merchant with the whip."

The conversation was broken through the appearance of a troupe of monkeys, who tumbled into the ring like a crowd of frolicsome boys. The orchestra stopped playing, and Signor Muggins, as the circus proprietor called himself, appeared with a big whip.

The man was a rather grimy-looking Italian, and his loose underlip and small, closely-set eyes did not improve the juniors favourably. He bowed to the audience, and, turning to the animals, cracked his whip in the air and shouted something in Italian to them.

They immediately formed themselves into a pyramid, with the exception of a small ape perched on his shoulder. The signor gave another crack of his whip, whereupon the monkey made a spring from a shoulder towards the animal at the top of the pyramid. He fell short, however, with the result that the weight of his body striking the others caused them to lose their equilibrium and tumble with a volley of excited chatter to the ground.

The audience, believing this to be part of the show, were loud in their applause, but a close observer would have noticed a malevolent gleam come into the eyes of the Italian.

There was another crack of the whip, and a moment later the animals had formed themselves up into their former position. Once again the small monkey essayed his spring from the shoulders of the Italian, and once again he fell short. This time we are supposed to the spectators that the failure of the monkey to reach its objective at the top of the pyramid was not part of the show.

With a savage oath the Italian turned on the animal and struck it a cruel blow across the head with his heavy whip. The animal gave a frightened yelp and squatted trembling at his feet.

An angry murmur went up from the audience; but, heedless of this, the Italian struck the whimpering animal still another blow.

Wharton's eyes gleamed.

"The rotten brute!" he growled.

"Hear, hear!"

"Sssss!"

The hiss came from a Removite sitting just behind the captain of the Remove. What happened next occupied exactly three seconds. The circus proprietor, believing the hiss to have come from Wharton, turned and brought his whip down across the captain of the Remove's face.

Crack!

An ugly red welt immediately appeared on the Removite's face, which was accentuated by the pallor which had already taken the place of his usual ruddy complexion.

For a fraction of a second there was a dead silence in that great tent, broken only by the chatter of the apes. Then a sullen roar broke from the crowd.

"Up, Greysfriars!" roared Bob Cherry; and his shout acted like a spark to gunpowder.

The next moment he leapt over the barrier into the ring, followed by the rest of the Famous Five. From all parts of the audience the Greysfriars fellows rose, burning to avenge the insult offered to their school through one of their number.

Leah!

Wow!

The circus proprietor, when he found a splendid tale of the juniors of Greysfriars.

**THE SECOND CHAPTER.**

**A Rough House!**

"H I, hi, hi! Roll hup, roll hup, roll hup!"

A stout gentleman, attired in a fur coat and silk hat, stood on a box outside a big marquee, shouting to the crowd of open-mouthed yokels to "come inside and see the greatest show on earth!"

His exhortations were drowned from time to time by the roars of the animals inside. The ground outside the big marquee was already crowded, and more people were continually arriving. Signor Muggins had done his advertising in a very thorough manner, to judge by results, and if his show proved as good as his publicity it would be good indeed.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared the stentorian voice of Bob Cherry, as the Famous Five pushed their way towards the pay-box. "There's Trumper & Co. over there."

"What ho, Trumper!"

Trumper, the redoubtable leader of the

**NEW MONDAY! "HIS EXCELLENCY COUNT BUNTER!"**

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PUBLISHED YEARLY.

A SPLENDID TALE OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYSFRIARS.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

himself attacked by the five sturdy juniors, did not hesitate to use his whip on them, and in a couple of seconds a free fight was in progress in the middle of the ring.

In response to the shouts of the Italian, a number of circus employees, also armed with heavy whips, appeared from the entrance to the ring, and they, too, set about the juniors. But by now the Removites were being reinforced every moment by the other Greyfriars fellows, who came leaping over the barrier from different parts.

"On the ball, Greyfriars!"

Lash!

"Yeroogh!"

"Rescue, Remove!"

The schoolboys and the circus employees were going it hammer and tongs now, and the whole place was in an uproar. Those of the spectators who were not taking part in the fight were leaving the tent by any exit they could find. The circus people certainly had an advantage by being armed with whips. But the Greyfriars fellows, on the other hand, outnumbered them by about three to one. The troupe of monkeys, who before the fight had been in the ring, had scampered up the poles supporting the huge tent, for safety, where they chattered the fight below with unending chatter.

Diff, wallop, bang!

The Removites were hitting out for all they were worth, and although many of them had retired from the conflict, snoring noises scattered by the heavy whips, sufficient were left to remove any doubt as to who the victors would be. Eventually the weight of superior numbers began to tell against the circus people, who slowly but surely were retreating towards the exit of the ring. Here they seemed to rally for a moment, and several juniors went down before their blows. This gave them a momentary respite, during which they were able to make a successful rush through the exit and slam the big wooden door behind them. Without a moment's hesitation the juniors seized one of the big wooden forms from the auditorium, which they brought into play against the door as a battering-ram.

Crash!

"Hurrahi!"

"And again!"

Crash!

Although the door was built of heavy timber, it could not withstand the attacks of the battering-ram propelled with all the force of a dozen sturdy and angry schoolboys.

Crash!

No sound had the massive door fallen to the ground, completely torn away from its hinges and bolts, then the Removites were pouring over it and rushing to where some of their comrades, who had found a quicker exit by ripping away the canvas sides of the tent, were continuing the fight among the caravans.

But when they arrived there most of the circus people had succeeded in gaining the shelter of their wheeled homes, where they remained, hoping for the best.

"I think they have had enough, you fellows," shouted Wharton, at last. "We can't very well pull them out of their blessed castles."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

NEXT  
MONDAY:

"HIS EXCELLENCY COUNT BUNTER!"

A SPLENDID TALE OF THE JUNIORS OF GREY-FRIARS.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 740.



The circus proprietor, believing the hiss to have come from Harry Wharton, turned and brought his whip down across the face of the captain of the Removite. Crack! An ugly welt immediately appeared on the Removite's face. (See Chapter 2.)

And, feeling that justice had been ably dispensed, and the insult to the school avenged, they left the scene of the battle, and made their way back to the school in a body.

"I guess there will be some trouble over this," said Wingate grimly.

Although the captain of the school had taken no part in the fight, he had not made any attempt to interfere. He felt that after what had happened to Wharton that the juniors were in the right, even if their methods were not quite orthodox. But whether the school authorities would regard it in that light, if it came to their ears, was entirely another matter.

"I shouldn't think they are likely to say too much about it," returned Wharton. "For one thing, it would be a bad advertisement for them, and they would probably be proceeded against by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; and in any case they would be severely censured for assaulting me."

"Perhaps you're right," replied Wingate. And, as it happened, he was.

The matter was never reported to the school authorities. But that did not mean that the matter was either forgotten or forgiven. Back at the circus, Signor Muggins, tenderly nursing a swollen prolocus, was making a solemn vow to get even with the Removites for their night's work, by either fair means or foul. The whole of his staff, who had been severely handled by the Removites, were with him in this desire. But how they were going to get even with their conquerors was a problem which eclipsed anything ever propounded by Euclid.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### Bunter Finds a Friend!

"I SAY, Smithy, lend us a bob!" Billy Bunter made that request of Vernon-Smith half an hour after tea. It was the day following the fight with the circus people, and Vernon-Smith, who had received a black eye in the scrimmage, was not in the humour to lend anybody anything but thick ears. As a matter of fact, he was quite willing—oven anxious—to do that. He felt it would relieve his feelings to a great extent. And the Owl of the Remove, standing blinking at him from his study door, seemed to have been sent by a kind and thoughtful Providence for that express purpose. He rose from his comfortable armchair and advanced towards the fat junior without a word. But Bunter scented danger to his fat person by the glare in the Bounder's eyes, and, without waiting for a reply to his question, gave a startled gasp and fed away down the Remove passage as fast as his fat little legs could waddle. Providence had played Vernon-Smith a dirty trick.

Bunter strolled down to the school gates as Lord Mauleverer, the schoolboy earl, was coming in. He decided to have one last try.

"One moment, your Highness!"

Mauleverer stopped and stared. Bunter was desperate, and had resolved to try shock tactics.

"Your extreme Excellency," he began, "if you will lend my unworthy and dishonourable self a paltry—"

But so soon as Bunter murmured the words, he was cut off by a sharp cry.

the word "lend" than Mauleverer had moved on.

"Yah, mean beast!" growled Bunter. "I don't believe you're a blessed lord at all! Talk about distributing largesse to the proletariat—yah!" And, with another sort of disgust, the fat junior of Greyfriars rolled away towards Friarisle.

When Bunter reached the village he stopped outside the tuckshop kept by Uncle Clegg. Uncle Clegg knew Bunter of old, and was not likely to believe any yarn about the non-arrival of a postal order. In fact, Bunter was not likely to get any credit at all. So he stood outside the shop gazing at the good things in the window, wishing he were a millionaire.

At that moment, unobserved by Bunter, Signor Muggins, the proprietor of the circus, passed by on the other side of the road. Perhaps, even although he was a showman and used to exhibiting fat ladies, etc., he had never seen anything as fat as the Falstaff of Greyfriars roaming around loose.

He stopped and stared. "Sapristi!" he ejaculated. "Eet iss one of da schoolboys—eh?"

The circus proprietor crossed over the road and took a closer look at Bunter. Whenever else the man was, he was a shrewd judge of character, and in moment he had sized Bunter up to a nicety. He looked thoughtful for a moment. Then a cunning grin came across his face. Here, he thought, was the very thing he had been looking for—a means of getting even with the school. Bunter was the means. The circus proprietor had not the slightest doubt that, approached in the proper way, Bunter could be used as a tool against the school. He had heard something of the pride English schoolboys took in the good name of their schools, and he knew that if he could tarnish it in any way it would hurt them all. However, he had no definite idea, so far, as to how he could bring about the desired result.

Bunter was about to turn away from the tuckshop window. Looking at what he could not get when it was food was painful to the fat Removite. As he turned, however, a grimy hand was laid on his shoulder.

"Souai, signor!" purred a voice in his ear.

Bunter raked his interceptor. "Oh, you're the low circus hound!" he muttered politely.

The circus proprietor suppressed a desire to hit the fat Removite, and smiled blandly instead.

"You lika da ginger-pop?" he asked, zoning straight to the point.

Bunter's piggy little eyes glistened. "Now you're talking!" he said, beginning to alter his opinion of the showman.

"You coma longa inside, signor."

Bunter needed no urging and, with a look of keen anticipation on his face, followed the Italian, inside, as requested.

"You 'ava alla you lika," invited Signor Muggins, throwing a crisp five-pound note on the counter.

The sight of the five had the desired effect on the junior, and his respect for his host went up by leaps and bounds.

"You're a real sport, sir!" he said. The "sir" was not lost on the Italian.

When Bunter was well supplied with a pile of tart, he settled himself down at one of the little tables topped with tables and began chatting with his host.

"You 'ave ver' sud 'istory—eh?" said the Italian suddenly, looking straight at Bunter.

"So I have," said Bunter, trying to

look surprised. "But how did you know?"

"Ah, signor, I always can tell!" returned the Italian mysteriously. "You tella me. I 'ava da sympathy."

This was enough for Bunter, who proceeded to describe his hard life at Greyfriars, where he was always kept short of food. The Italian was a good listener, and Bunter did not hesitate to lay it on pretty thick.

"Eet iss a beeg shame," said Signor Muggins sympathetically, as Bunter described the agonies of sitting in a Form-room on an empty stomach. "Da school so mean dey naska you starve—eh?"

"That's it. You've got the idea all right," said Billy Bunter. "And for a chap like myself, with a delicate constitution to support, it's a bit off, I can tell you. Why, I hardly know how to get about sometimes, I feel so faint for the want of grub."

The Italian was not fool, and he knew that every word Bunter was uttering was a falsehood. But, for his own reasons, he pretended to believe it.

"Why you no runna da way?" he asked at last. "A young gentleman lika you 'ava da brain; you getta a lotta da money in a business ver' easy."

"That's a good idea," said Bunter thoughtfully. "I've a jolly good mind to. But where could I go without a recommendation?"

The Italian leaned over the table and lowered his voice.

"I taka da fancy to you," he said impressively. "And I tink eet a beeg shame you no getta da food atta da school. If you starve again, and wanta da job with plenty da money and plenty da food, you come to me."

The Italian then handed to the fat junior a card bearing the name of the circus and the villages they would visit at various dates.

"You no maka da forget," he said, rising. "And you stay atta da school lika da good boy; but if you maka da starve, you coma longa me all right. Buono giorno, signor!"

The Italian, having planted an idea in Bunter's flabby mind without him being aware of it, departed, with a broad grin on his swarthy face, and returned to the circus to supervise the arrangements for moving to the next village.

Signor Muggins chuckled as he thought of what would happen at Greyfriars if one of the boys ran away and joined a circus. The being starved at the school and it became known. It was not a thing altogether calculated to add lustre to their escutcheon.

Billy Bunter, having finally come to the end of the supplies provided by the circus proprietor, rose and left the village tuckshop, with a thoughtful look on his piggy brow. The conversation with the Italian had given him an idea, and he was thinking. His thoughts must have been pleasant, for every now and then he broke into loud chuckles.

"If things don't alter, I'll do it!" he muttered. "I'm fed up with starving!"

And he chuckled again.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### Hungry Bunter!

**W**HAT'S the matter with Bunter lately?"

Bob Cherry asked that question of Harry Wharton the day following Bunter's meeting with the circus proprietor in Friarisle.

"Dunno! Why—what's he been up to?"

"He's walking about telling everybody he's starving."

"That's nothing new."

"No, I suppose not."

The bell went for dinner, and the two juniors made their way to the dining-hall.

Bunter's complaint that he was starving, as Wharton had remarked, was certainly not new. But to Bob Cherry it appeared there was something behind his complaint this time. He suspected the fat junior had some scheme working itself out in his mind, and, knowing what a curious arrangement his mind was, he was a trifle worried.

"Should hardly think Bunter will be hungry after that little lot," observed Wharton, as the Owl of the Remove received his third helping.

But there Wharton was wrong. About a minute after the junior captain had finished speaking Bunter gobbled up the food on his plate, which he sent up again, like Oswald for more.

Mr. Quelch, the Remove Form-master, who always presided at the table of his pupils at meal-times, turned to Bunter with a frown.

"You have already had sufficient for at least half a dozen normal boys!" he snapped. "And I will not allow you to have any more. It's gratuitous prostration of yours must be curbed, boy!"

Afternoon lessons proceeded uneventfully until about three o'clock. Not much notice had been taken of Bunter's hitherto; but, observing he was not paying attention, Mr. Quelch dropped on him with a question.

"In what year was the Battle of Trafalgar fought?" he demanded.

No answer.

Mr. Quelch gripped a cane and strode to where the fat junior was sitting. But Bunter was blissfully unconscious of the impending danger. He was busy chewing at something hidden beneath his desk.

"Bunter!"

"The junior jumped.

"Yes, sir?" he gasped.

"What are you eating, boy? How dare you eat in the Form-room! Show me what you have got."

For once in his life, the fat junior made no effort to hide whatever it was he had been gnawing at. Neither did he attempt, as was his usual wont, to deny what he was doing. Instead, he exhibited in full view of the astonished class the sole of an old football-boot.

"My hat!"

"Great Scott!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, in astonishment. "What is that you are holding, Bunter?"

"The sole of an old football-boot," answered Bunter calmly.

"B-but pray what are you doing with such a thing in the Form-room, Bunter?"

"Eating it, sir."

Mr. Quelch almost jumped. He wondered for a moment whether the junior had taken leave of his senses.

"Eating it!" he echoed.

Bunter nodded.

"I've been starving for some time," he explained, "and I'm getting desperate. If I'd been told once that I should eat old boots I would have laughed; but since I've been at this school I'm only too glad to. Wow!"

Without wasting time on words, the irate Form-master brought his cane with all the force at his command across the fat shoulders of the Greyfriars Falstaff.

"You wicked, untruthful boy!" he exclaimed.

Whack, whack, whack!  
"Oh dear! Stop it!"

Whack, whack, whack!

Bunter squeaked and yelled, but Mr. Quelch did not desist until his arms ached.

"If I ever hear you complaining of not getting sufficient food in this school again," he snapped, "I will take you immediately to Dr. Locke!"

"Wow! Why don't you do it, then!" spluttered the unhappy Bunter. "That's what I want you to do! I guess the Head doesn't know I'm starving! Wow!"

Mr. Quelch regarded Bunter curiously. He was at a loss to know what was behind the junior's request to be taken to Dr. Locke, when he knew full well his complaint was frivolous and groundless, and would only result in his being still further punished.

As for the Removites, they could only stare and gasp.

"I'm certain the fat toad's got some stunt on," whispered Bob Cherry to Harry Wharton.

The junior captain nodded. "That's looks like it!" he replied.

Mr. Quelch continued to survey Bunter for a few more moments.

"Very well, Bunter!" he said. "Since you wish to see Dr. Locke, you shall. Pray, follow me!"

And the Form-master, with a grim look on his face, strode from the Form room, with Bunter at his heels. Outside, in the passage, behind Mr. Quelch's back, Bunter grinned broadly. Bob Cherry's surmise had been right. Billy Bunter had a scheme in his mind, part of which had been put into practice in the dining-hall.

So far, the scheme was working out very well indeed; in fact, much better than he had expected. If all went well, he would have a royal time at Greyfriars in future, with more grub than he could eat. But if they did not—well, that was another part of Bunter's scheme, which made the present experiment reasonable.

Dr. Locke happened to be in his study when Mr. Quelch and Bunter arrived, and a few minutes later he was in full possession of Bunter's amazing doings in the dining-hall and Form room.

"I understand from Mr. Quelch that you expressed a wish to be brought to me," he said, turning to the junior. "What is it you want me to do?"

"Well, sir, I—I think it would be a jolly good idea if y-you—er—ahem!—that is to say, if you—increased my rations!" blurted out Bunter.

"I shall certainly do nothing of the sort!" said the Head, with a frown. "I think you are a very greedy boy! And if I have any more complaints from you of a like nature, I shall deal very severely with you! You may go!"

And Bunter went. When he had gone, Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch sat with puzzled brows endeavouring to find an explanation for Bunter's curious behaviour. They failed, however, and eventually abandoned the attempt.

For the rest of the day Bunter was very quiet and did not attempt to force his company on any other fellows as he usually did, for which they were extremely thankful. Once when he showed himself in the Cloak, he was greeted with a cry of decision by the fags of the Second Form, headed by Dicky Nugent.

"Boo! I'm starving! Boo!"

"Porpoise!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beasts!" muttered the fat junior to himself. "I'll show 'em!"

And he rolled away.

**NEXT MONDAY: "HIS EXCELLENCY COUNT BUNTER!"**

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### Bunter Gets a Job!

THE Owl of the Remove spent the rest of the evening in making arrangements for the second half of the scheme he had had in mind the past few days. Alone in his study, he took from his vest-pocket the card given him a few days previously in the village tuckshop by Signor Muggins. He carefully scrutinized the writing on it, and then studied the calendar over the mantelpiece.

"H'm!" he murmured. "The giddy circus ought to be in Monksville to-night according to this."

Monkville was a small village about the size of Friar Dale, two or three miles the other side of Pegg. Bunter had been there once or twice, and knowing therefore how far it was he did not relish walking to it. Nevertheless, his mind was made up.

He next took a book from a shelf, and, tearing out the fly-leaf, sat down and incited a letter which he placed in an envelope addressed to the Head. This he placed on the study mantelpiece, where it would not be seen too easily. Bunter did not want his letter discovered before morning.

That was the second time Bunter had done that self-same thing. Only a week or two back he had written a note to the Head and had run away to escape punishment.

Evidently the lesson he had received when he had returned from his wanderings the last time was not sufficient.

"That's the stuff to give 'em!" he

grunted, surveying his handiwork with a grin. "That'll make 'em jump!"

And feeling well satisfied with himself, he repaired to the Remove dormitory with the rest of the Form.

Half an hour after lights out the entire Remove were sleeping the sleep of the just—with the exception of Billy Bunter. He put one fat leg out of bed and called out softly:

"You fellows awake?"

Silence!

"I say, you fellows!"

Snore!

Breathing heavily, the Owl of the Remove jumped out of bed as silently as his fat person would allow and quickly dressed. He succeeded in leaving the dormitory without any mishap and felt his way stealthily along the passage.

Creak!

The junior stopped short and listened.

Creak!

The fat junior felt his heart beat faster. There was no doubt about it; someone else was abroad as well as himself. For a moment he thought he saw a slinker of light moving along the passage which led along the bottom of that leading from the Remove dormitory; but he was not quite sure. For a moment he thought of burglars, but instantly dismissed this idea from his mind.

It was not very late as yet, and more likely than not it was some senior still about, or Loder returning from one of his late night excursions in Friar Dale.

Eventually Bunter reached a casement window which opened out on to a small shed, from which it was comparatively



"What are you eating, boy? How dare you eat in the Form-room! Show me what you have got!" thundered Mr. Quelch. Without a word Billy Bunter exhibited, in full view of the astonished class, the sole of an old football boot!

(See Chapter 4.)

easy to gain the ground. Bunter was surprised at to find the window open, but he did not attach any importance to this. He clambered through and dropped with a heavy thud to the shed below.

"Ugh!" He emitted a fat grunt as he landed heavily on all fours. A second later he was standing up safe and sound on the ground below.

"Now for it!" he muttered. "I'll show 'em!"

Bunter ambled across to the old elm near the school wall, the side of which faced the Friardale Road. After a series of grunts and groans he succeeded in gaining the road and a few moments later had commenced his long walk to Monkville. As he thought of the surprise his disappearance would cause in the morning, especially after his letter was discovered, he grinned broadly.

Bunter eventually reached Pegg without having met a soul. He was already very tired with the unaccustomed exercise of walking; but there was no turning back now, so acting his teeth, he trudged on. He was recalling his conversation with the circus proprietor back in Friardale, which was to the effect that if he ever had to leave the school through starvation, he would be provided with a job at the circus which would have unlimited grub attached to it.

"Well, I have been starved," he thought. "And I jolly well warned thee what would happen if things didn't alter. I've been forced through hunger to run away again!"

Bunter knew in his innermost soul that this was not altogether correct, but he was a little alarmed at the step he had taken, and was trying to reassure himself.

It seemed to the fat Removite that he had walked at least twenty miles before he eventually made Monkville. But at last he was there, and all that remained now was to find the circus. This did not take Bunter very long. Guided by the occasional roar of animals, he soon located it on some waste ground. A light flickered in several caravans, for the night's show had not been over long, and the circus performers were still at supper. No sooner had Bunter reached the group of caravans than his arrival was announced by the loud barking of a number of dogs, without which no caravan-dwellers are ever found.

"Hi, what d'you want, young shaver?" shouted a voice.

"It's all right!" gasped Billy Bunter. "I'm only me!"

"Who's me?"

"I'm Bunter!" said Billy Bunter, you know, from Greystriars!"

A second later other voices were heard, and then a man appeared with a lantern.

"I wish to see the proprietor of this circus at once," said Bunter loftily.

"'Tis him Bunter he called!"

"Sapristi! 'Oo maka da noise?" inquired Signor Muggins, pushing his way through his men.

"It's me!" exclaimed Bunter ungrammatically. "I've come for a job because I'm starving! I've been driven from school through hunger!"

"You maka da starve, eh? Zat is not ver' good of your school. You com' longa inside. You hear what da kettle boy say?" he continued, turning to his employees. "Da boy starve atta da school, and 'e maka da run. Signor

Muggins no turn him away. Ver' bad, ver' bad!"

And he turned and walked to his caravan, followed by the Owl of the Removite.

But Bunter little thought how he was playing into the circus proprietor's hands, and how the Italian's supposed sympathy was merely affected in order to further his deep-laid scheme to bring into disrepute the good name of Greystriars.

Signor Muggins grinned as he led the way to his caravan. Things had turned out exactly as he had planned. Had not Bunter come to him asking for a job, saying he was starving? All his employees were witnesses as to how the fat junior came to join the show. It only remained now for it to be discovered that a boy had run away from Greystriars because he could not get enough to eat, and the Italian's "revenge" for the way the boys of that school had smashed up his grub would be complete. It was a deep and subtle plot, such as only the mind of a Southerner could conceive.

The Italian said nothing to Bunter about the job he was going to give him that night, but he showed him to a bunk in a spare caravan, where he left him. Bunter, after his long walk, slept like a top until the morning.

When he awoke the sun was high in the heavens; it was already well past noon.

"My hat! I'm hungry!" he muttered, and he rolled out of the caravan in search of what he could devour. Instinct took him where several of the circus women were busy preparing the food for the camp. The news of the new arrival had already gone round, and when he appeared they regarded him with curiosity, but made no comment.

"What time do we have breakfast in this place?" asked Bunter.

"The women grinned.

"It's past dinner-time now," one of their informers said.

"But I had nothing to eat since supper at Greystriars last night," protested the Owl of the Removite.

"You had better see the gov'nor."

Bunter rolled away, and eventually located Signor Muggins in his caravan.

"What about some grub?" he demanded.

"Dat all right. You 'ava da feed to-night!" replied the Italian, grinning.

And that was all the satisfaction Bunter got.

The day passed very slowly for the junior, who, having missed two meals, was beginning to realize for the first time what it really meant to be hungry. He thought several times of leaving the show and returning to the school, but whether by accident or design, each time he approached the outer edge of the caravans, one of the circus employees turned up and watched him.

At last the encampment seemed to burst into life. The big traction engines began to roar and thrub, supplying the power for the dynamo which supplied electric current to the big arc lamps.

"Come on, you!" shouted a man, seizing Bunter by the fat shoulders.

"This way!"

And he led the Removite to a small tent at the back of an empty cage.

"Take off your clothes!" he ordered next.

"Whafor?" demanded Bunter angrily.

"I'm hungry!"

"Get into those duds!" ordered the man, pointing to a heap of thin-looking clothes on the ground. "You can have

some grub then—as much as you can eat!"

Bunter peeled off his Etons and struggled into the clothes on the floor.

"Here, what do you mean by this?" he demanded, when, eventually, he had succeeded in getting them on. "I ain't a blessed poppy show!"

"You must well be grinned the man. "Jumping snakes! You do look funny!"

And he trailed into a roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter did indeed look funny. The clothes given him were silk body tights which fitted him in one piece all over the body, like a bathing costume. They were, in fact, tight, usually worn by Strong Men in their various acts. But Bunter's plump form filled them out until he more resembled a bladder on the point of bursting than a public schoolboy.

"See those steps!" asked the man, pointing to the entrance to the back of the cage.

Bunter nodded.

"Inside the cage there's a table piled with grub! When I shout out 'go!' dash into that cage as though your life depends upon it, and tuck in!"

"I'm ready!" announced Bunter, his eyes gleaming at the thought of the food to come.

"Then wait till I shout 'go!'" replied the man.

Bunter waited, but each minute seemed to him an hour.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### Missing!

**B**OOM, boom, boom! The rising bell at Greystriars clanged across the still morning air. The Removites turned uneasily in their sleep. It was a chill morning, and none of them felt like rising until the last minute. At last, however, Bob Cherry, who was one of the most energetic boys in the school, jumped out of bed and dressed himself.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" he roared in a voice besides which that of Stenstor the Greek would have been a whisper.

"Show a leg, you blessed slackers! Show a leg!"

The rest of the Famous Five soon followed the lead of the busy Removite, but most of the Form continued their gentle slumber.

"Show a leg—show a leg!" shouted Bob Cherry again; but, finding his shouting of little avail, he proceeded to awake his Form-fellows by the sure and certain method of pulling the clothes off their beds. In the opinion of the energetic Bob this was the act of a friend.

"Now for Bunter!" he said, warning to his work.

Bunter usually slept with his head under the bedclothes, and it was only by the bulky mass half-way down the bed that it was possible to determine whether he was up or not. Bob Cherry grinned as he noted that that bulk was still there.

"I'll wake the lazy ducker!" he exclaimed, reaching for the water-jug; and a second later he shot the contents in a solid stream over the Owl's bed.

Everybody's surprise nothing happened.

"He's still sleeping!"

"Let's tip his bed over!"

"Good egg!"

A number of volunteers stepped forward, and in less time than it takes Bunter to think of a lie, his iron bed

(Continued on page 13.)





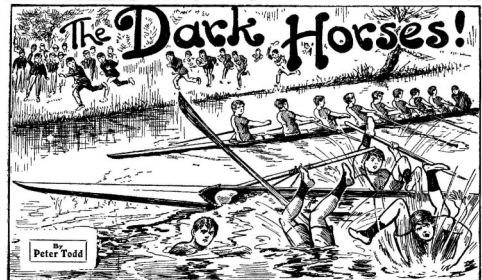
**The GREYFRIARS HERALD**

THE SCHOOL HOUSE

Supplement No. 68.

Harry Wharton Editor

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**THE ROOKWOODERS COME TO GRIEF!** As the first boat came to the bend in the river, the crew tried to pull round too suddenly. A couple of oars came into violent collision, and before they could straighten out the tangle the boat overturned, and Jimmy Silver & Co. found themselves struggling in the water.

"CHAMPIONS of the river!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "How ripping is it able to call ourselves that?"

"Yes, rather!" agreed Harry Wharton. "But we've got a long way to go before we can hope to do that. There will be three crews up against us—three jolly fine crews, too!"

"Two!" corrected Frank Nugent. "Rookwood and St. Jim's will give us a lot of trouble, but Highlife—well, you can leave them out of the reckoning!"

"With perfect safety," said Johnny Bull. "The beggars haven't taken the trouble to practice. Just think of it! All these weeks, while we've been sweating on the river, Highlife has been idle. That's not the way to win boat races, or any other sporting contest, for that matter. An untrained crew will get badly left."

"They won't stand the ghostliness of an esteemed champion!" declared Hurree Singh.

It was the day before the great annual boat race between the four famous schools. The Famous Five were at tea in Study No. 1, discussing the Greyfriars prospects.

By general consent, the race was to be rowed on the Suez, that river being slightly wider than the rivers near St. Jim's and Rookwood.

This meant, of course, a big advantage for Greyfriars, for the Remove crew knew every inch of the river.

It would have been a big advantage for Highlife, too, had they chosen to turn out Supplement 4.]

every day for practice. But during the weeks of training, Harry Wharton & Co. had never once encountered their Highlife rivals.

"I can't think what is the matter with Frank Courtney," said Bob Cherry. "He's generally as keen as mustard to get his crew up to the mark. But this year he doesn't seem to have stirred his little finger."

"F'saps he realised that Highlife didn't stand an earthly, and he isn't taking the race seriously," suggested Nugent.

"In that case," said Wharton, "he's not a good sportsman. No keen sportsman ever regards a thing as a foregone conclusion, and chuckes up the sponge before a race comes off. That sort of thing is awfully feeble!"

It was difficult to account for the lack of interest which Highlife displayed towards the boat race. On previous occasions they had been rowed to a high pitch of keeness.

It really seemed as if Frank Nugent was right—that Highlife, realising they had no chance against the other schools, had not taken the trouble to train. If this were the case, they would be made to look ridiculous on the day of the race.

The Famous Five were still discussing the situation when the door opened without ceremony, and Billy Hunter rolled into the study. Bob Cherry picked up a loaf of bread, and poised it above his head, after the manner of a footballer about to throw-in from the touchline.

Billy Hunter blinked at Bob in alarm.

"Hi, chuck it!" he gasped.

"Certainly!" chuckled Bob Cherry. The loaf came whizzing through space, and Billy Hunter ducked his head in the nick of time. The loaf careered merrily through the open doorway into the passage.

"Boast!" growled Billy Hunter. "You might have brained me!"

"Impossible!" said Bob Cherry. "You can't brain a brainless person, any more than you can skin an already skinned fiddick."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I say, Wharton, I want to know definitely, one way or the other, whether I'm going to row for the Remove."

"The answer," said Wharton, laughing, "is in the negative. My dear old barrel, you'd sink the boat!"

"The sinkfulness would be terrific!"

"Look here," said Billy Hunter, blinking carefully at the captain of the Remove, "I want a place in the crew."

"If you had a place in the crew," said Bob Cherry, "it would be the worst crew in the place!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Hunter insisted upon rowing for the Remove, so insistent did he become that he had to be ejected from the study—and scully, but with one well-thud feet behind him.

There was great excitement at Greyfriars that evening, and it grew to fever pitch next morning, when the rival crews arrived—Tom Merry & Co. from St. Jim's, Jimmy

Silver & Co. from Rookwood, and Frank Courtney & Co. from Highcliffe. A light breeze was partaken of in Hall, and then the company adjourned to the river. The colour scheme of the vests worn by the rival crews was very attractive. The Greys' vests were dark blue, Highcliffe light blue, St. Jim's red and white, and Rookwood all white.

The Remover looked fighting fit. They took their seats in the boat as follows: H. Wharton (stroke), J. Bull, T. Redwing, R. Cherry, H. Vernon-Smith, M. Linley, F. Nugent, Hurree Singh, Dickie Nugent of the Second crew.

The two banks seemed to be one mass of spectators. And as all the on-lookers were their special favourites the result was a roar of applause of course, dark blue predominated.

And what a roar went up as the four boats manoeuvred into position!

"Put your beef into it, you fellows!"

"Hurrah!"

Then a hush, as the starter, Mr. Larry Lascelles, was about to fire the pistol, and despatch the crews on their grim struggle.

"Now they're off!"

"Now! Now! Look at that boat!"

The boat in question was Rookwood's.

It was Jimmy Silver's idea to go like fury at the outset, and gain a sudden commanding lead over the other boats that they would never be able to make up the leeway.

Other and wiser oarsmen than Jimmy Silver had had this policy, which almost always ended in disaster. For a crew which exhausts itself before half the distance is completed is pretty certain to be overhauled, no matter how big a lead it might have established.

Tom Merry of St. Jim's when told by his coxswain that the Rookwood boat was "leaking ahead like wildfire," instantly quickened his stroke, and the "Whites" were in hot pursuit of the "blues."

Harry Wharton kept perfectly cool. He knew that those mighty spurts on the part of Rookwood and St. Jim's could not last. He was content that the Greyfriars boat should remain third for a time.

The Highcliffe boat was last. But, curiously enough, it was the best-managed boat of all. By keeping its stroke steady, and they were going "all out," and the more inexperienced members of the crew could not keep pace with the others. There was no rhythm or harmony about their progress.

St. Jim's, too, were rowing jerkily. And the Greyfriars oarsmen, although neither hurried nor flustered, were not keeping perfect time.

In the Highcliffe boat glided through the water like a well-controlled piece of machinery. There was no jerking or splashing. For a crew which was allowed to be untrained, Frank Courtney & Co. were rowing splendidly.

At the first bend in the river came a calamity.

The Rookwood men tried to pull their boat round too suddenly. A couple of oars came into violent collision. There was general confusion and chaos. And then, before Jimmy had could straighten out the tangle, the boat overturned, and the members of the crew were struggling in the water!

From the bank, prefects with boat-hooks rendered prompt assistance.

The boat was practically submerged, and it was impossible for the Rookwood crew to re-board her. Reluctantly, they were compelled to retire from the race.

Dickie Nugent, the Greyfriars cox, leaned forward excitedly in his seat.

"Rookwood's out of the running!" he exclaimed. "There's only St. Jim's to worry about, you fellows!"

"How far are they in front?" panted Wharton.

"Only a couple of lengths. And they seem pretty well whacked!"

Tom Merry & Co. were paying the penalty for having been too impetuous. They had set off in wild pursuit of the Rookwood boat, and their strenuous efforts had exhausted them. They had no reserves of energy to call upon. Greys' had.

Rowing strongly, the dark blues overhauled their rivals of St. Jim's.

Greyfriars held the lead now, and there was no great chance to go.

Harry Wharton smiled. They could afford to take things easily now, he reflected. The Highcliffe boat didn't count.

But that was where Wharton made the mistake of his life.

The Highcliffe boat did count. Fifty yards from the winning-post, Frank Courtney & Co. put on a magnificent spurt. As it began, but a strong, sustained spurt.

Greyfriars saw the danger, and pulled themselves together. They rowed like Trojans, but for all their energy they could not shake off the Highcliffe boat, which leapt through the water in amazing style, and gained a handsome victory by a quarter of a length!

Defeating theirs broke out from the crowd on the bank.

Harry Wharton & Co., as they stepped out of their boat, looked dazed and stupefied.

They had been beaten at the post, and in the most sensational and unexpected manner!

As he as he had sufficiently recovered from the shock, Harry Wharton shook hands with Frank Courtney, and congratulated him.

"Well rowed!" he said heartily. "But I'm dashed if I know how you managed it without practice!"

"We've had all our practice at night," explained Courtney, with a smile.

"At night?"

"Yes; by moonlight, you know. It was the Caterpillar's idea, and I put it into a really serious form for the past week we've put in an hour's practice."

"My hat!"

Harry Wharton understood now. And when the next boatrace-day comes round there is one crew whose abilities he will not underestimate—the light blues of Highcliffe!

## EDITORIAL!

By Harry Wharton.

THIS is a thrill about boatraces in general, and The Boatrace in particular.

Sportsmen up and down the country are tremendously excited on the day known as "Varsity Boatrace." And every man and boy has his own special favourites. Every lady, too, for that matter.

Many people do not know why they support one particular crew. They become attached either to Oxford or to Cambridge by a sort of instinct, and they stick to their choice year by year.

Others—particularly the ladies—are influenced by the colours of the crews. If light blues happens to be their favourite colour, they become ardent supporters of Cambridge. If dark blue appeals to them more strongly, they back Oxford.

Others—and again it is chiefly the ladies—are impressed by the photographs of the crews which appear in the pictorial newspapers. They select what they consider to be the most handsome crew, and back it accordingly.

Others, again, may have relatives at a certain University, or possibly some of their ancestors have passed through Oxford or Cambridge. If you've a son or a sister, of course, you naturally support the Turk Blues. If your great-grandfather stroked Cambridge to victory in the year eighteen-thirty-some thing, you put a light blue rosette on his Boatrace Day.

But there are others, I regret to say, who support Oxford for the sole reason that the famous University has won more of the annual Boatraces than Cambridge. I can never understand the point of view of such people. The same spirit often occurs at a football match. A fellow goes to see a match, we'll say, between Courtfield and Wapshot. He has no special choice at the start of the game. But as soon as Courtfield gets a couple of goals, and are obviously going to win, he suddenly starts cheering them for all he is worth! If Wapshot should happen to score first, then the boot is on the other foot. The two boys are applauded and encouraged; the weakest can go to the wall.

However, here we are with our Special Boatrace Number. I have no doubt that it will find a warm welcome from the scores of good sportsmen who read the "Greyfriars Herald." And I place it before you with every confidence.

HARRY WHARTON.

## BUNTER THE "BLUE!"

Written by DICK PENFOLD.  
Sung by BILLY BUNTER.

When I go up to Oxford,  
In Nineteen-twenty-eight,  
I'll be a Blue in the Oxford crew,  
I'll be as sure as Fate!  
From Putney down to Mortlake  
I'll pull the blessed boat,  
Loud cheers will rise towards the skies  
From many a husky throat!

When I go up to Oxford,  
The Dons will all exclaim,  
"Say, can this be our 'W.G.'?"  
And I'll reply "The same!"  
Then off will come their mortar-boards  
And they will bend the knee,  
And tremble low before the foe  
Of Bunter, W.G.!

When I go up to Oxford,  
And they inquire my weight,  
I'll simply grin, "I'm sixteen stone,  
Correct and up to date!"  
And when they ask me to be stroked,  
I'll answer "Right you are!"  
And I shall be—just wait and see—  
Their finest man by far!

When I go up to Oxford,  
How all the girls will laugh!  
When on the bank I strut and swank  
They'll seek my autograph.  
I shall adjust my spectacles,  
And boldly sign my name;  
And everyone beneath the sun  
Will glory in my fame.

When I go up to Oxford,  
In Nineteen-twenty-eight,  
The chaps will say, "Hip, hip, hooray!"  
Here's Bunter! Oh, how grand!  
He might have gone to Cambridge  
And left us in a stew;  
But see, he's here; so let us cheer  
Bunter, the Oxford Blue!"

## HOW I SEE OTHER FELLOWS!

By Frank Nugent.



MICKY DESMOND.

[Supplement 4.]

## BOATRACE BREVITIES!

By Bob Cherry.

The annual boatrace between Greyfriars, Highcliffe, St. Jim's, and Rookwood provided plenty of thrills. One of the biggest was when Fatty Wynn stepped into the St. Jim's boat. I thought it was going to sink like a stone, but it just managed to survive Fatty's weight. To be quite fair to Wynn, however, it must be admitted that he is a very vigorous oarsman, and "pulls his weight" with the others. Some weight, too!

In marked contrast to the blues and red of their rivals, Rookwood rowed all in white. "I feel as if this were a gaily decorated cutting," Jimmy Silver was heard to remark. Needless to state, the Rookwooders' vests didn't long remain spotlessly white!

"Why was the Greyfriars boat heavier than the Highcliffe boat?" That is a conundrum which Skinner propounded to me after the race. The answer is fairly obvious. The Greyfriars boat contained a Ball, and the Highcliffe boat merely a Caterpillar!

Who was the practical joker who placed a signboard on the bank, at the head in the river, with the inscription: "Go Easy! Speed not to Exceed Two Knots per Hour"? And aren't Jimmy Silver & Co. wishing that they had followed this injunction?

Is there any truth in the rumour that when the St. Jim's boat had covered half the distance, Monty Lowther suddenly stopped rowing and suggested to his schoolfellows that they should start fishing for minnows? It would be just like Lowther, to jest at such a breathless crisis.

Mr. Front and Mr. Quelch, whilst rushing along the bank, following the progress of the race, allowed their vesicles to drop from their buttonholes on to the towing-path. We have often heard of generous masters "shedding favours"!

At the end of the race, the winning crew was in a state of collapse, and the spectators, judging by the applause which went up, were in a state of "claps"!

NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE OF  
"THE GREYFRIARS HERALD!"  
WILL BE A SPECIAL  
EASTER NUMBER!  
and will be as FAT as  
BILLY BUNTER!  
H. W.

Supplement 1st.]

## A TRAJJICK AFFAIR!

By Billy Bunter.



I AM beginning to believe, dear readers, that I was born under an unlucky star!

I am always in trouble of some sort, and this week I have another tail of woe to relate. I thought it would be a jolly good idea to form a boatrace crew from the staff and contributors of my "Weekly." I spoke to Fatty Wynn and Bazzy Trimble and Tubby Muffin about it, and they all concurred.

Me and my four fat subs formed the backbone of the crew, of course. And it was completed by Belovover major, Grandy of St. Jim's, and Smythe of Rookwood.

Having formed the crew, I immediately sent a challenge to Harry Wharton, requesting him to get together a "Greyfriars Herald" crew, and meet us in mortic combat on the river.

It was arranged that the race should take place on the next half-holiday.

Unfortunately, owing to the fact that several members of my crew were at school many miles away, we were unable to have any preliminary training. To tell the truth, I didn't think we should need it, for I had great faith in my men.

Did they justify that faith and confidence? Alas, no!

When the day of the race came, Fatty Wynn turned up in footer loze, Bazzy Trimble was dressed in his Sunday best, and Tubby Muffin wore a bathing-costume. He was the only one who showed any foresight!

When we got into our boat it jolly nearly collapsed and sank.

Four of us weighed fourteen stone apiece, so you can guess what the boat had to put up with! It rocked dangerously in the water, and I had it on the tip of my tongue to shout for the life-saving apparatus.

However, we contrived to pull the boat into midstream without mishap.

Wharton's crew having declared themselves fit, the starter fired the pistol, and away we went in great style.

We should have had that race in our pockets, so to speak, if it hadn't been for Bazzy Trimble.

Bazzy behaved abominably. He seemed to think he was on the beach at Margate, for he kept catching crabbs.

Presently he dropped his oar, and it went some way downstream. The silly chump leaned over the side of the boat to try and recover it, with the natural result that we capsized without mishap.

Oh, what a trajjick!

Eight of us, and the coxswain, were struggling in the icy water!

Meanwhile, Harry Wharton's boat forced ahead, and completed the course; and the "Greyfriars Herald" were declared the winners.

Myself and my crew suffered a terrible ducking. And if I hadn't gallantly piloted my comrades to the bank, some of them might have been drowned.

I saw Trimble a jolly good bumping after the race for having upset our chances, and the boat into the bargain.

No more boatraces for me! Not for another year, at any rate! They are much too damp!

## BOATRACE LIMERICKS!

By S. Q. I. Field.

There is an old lady of Barnes,  
Who won't listen to Boatrace yarns.  
She won't bubble and burst  
On April the First—  
She just sits indoors and darns!

I know two young ladies of Twickenham,  
And nothing can sadden or sicken 'em.  
All the Boatrace thrills  
They announce on bills,  
And on every hoarding they're stiekin' 'em!

There's a merry young schoolboy of  
Kew,  
Who's the son of a Cambridge Blue,  
Who he will he choose  
To back the Light Blues,  
And I'd do the same—wouldn't you?

An Oxford supporter from Wapping  
Will not see the start or the stopping.  
I'm not sure he says  
That on Boatrace Day  
In the gardens of Kent he'll be  
"hopping"!

I know a poor beggar at Merion  
Who won't see the race, that is certain,  
In pawn are his clothes,  
And sad is he gone,  
He'll doubtless be wrapp'd in a curtain!

There was an old fellow of Pinner,  
Who hurriedly bolted his dinner  
Of chicken and chutney,  
Then dashed down to Putney,  
Too late to discover the winner!

There was an old miser of Harrow,  
With a nature so mean and so narrow,  
It was not his desire  
A taxi to hire,  
So he went to the race on a barrow!

There was a fair maiden of Chelsea,  
Who went with her cousin, named Elsie.  
They found such a crowd  
On the bank, they were cowed,  
And murmured, "We never, never shall see!"

## THINGS WE WANT TO KNOW!

BY "SQUIFF"

Why is it necessary for Leder of the Sixth to carry an asp whilst when seeing lights-out in the Bismarck dormitory? If it comes to that, why is it necessary for him to carry an asp whilst at all?

When did Tubb have his last tub? Is it a fact that his neck was in such a state that his Form-master asked why he was wearing a brown collar?

Why are the Greyfriars Police Court proceedings never reported these days? Has Mr. Justice Wharton grown weary of his magisterial duties?

Is there any truth in the report that Billy Bunter is an excellent pastrycook, and can make a Jam roll? We have often seen him make a cake walk!

Who is Mr. Wally Bunter's tailor? And how many rolls of cloth does he require to make him one suit?

When, oh, when, will the Upper Fourth manage to lick the Remove at footer?

When is Tom Brown going to write something serious for the "Greyfriars Herald"?

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 744.

## THE MADNESS OF SKINNER!

By Percy Bolsover.

I BELIEVE it was the poet Shelley who in his youth used to float mimic navies in the Serpentine in Hyde Park.

It is on record that Shelley used to make paper boats out of banknotes, and then sail them in the water.

Madness, of course. But, then, all poets are mad. The only really sane people in this world are prizefighters and pugilists.

I was reminded very forcibly of the Shelley anecdote when I strolled along the towing-path of the River Sark the other afternoon.

On the bank I saw Skinner, throwing his arms about like a windmill in a gale, and yelling with excitement.

"Go it, Oxford! Now, Cambridge, pull yourselves together!"

I half expected to see the Varsity boats come speeding through the water. But, of course, there were no boats there.

I could only conclude that Skinner had bats in his belfry—that he had suddenly taken leave of his senses.

"Man alive!" I exclaimed, going up to him. "Why are you carrying on like this?"



On the bank I saw Skinner, throwing his arms about like a windmill, and yelling, "Go it, Oxford!"

"Can't you see?" said Skinner excitedly. "The Boatrace is in progress!"

"Eh? What boatrace?"

"The Varsity race—the battle of the Blues! Look! Oxford's leading by four inches, as the crow flies!"

I gazed out into midstream, and then, for the first time, I became aware of the cause of Skinner's excitement. The silly chump had got hold of the two halves of a walnut-shell. He had painted one of the halves light blue, and the other dark blue, to represent Oxford and Cambridge.

The two miniature boats were being carried away by the current.

"The one that gets to the bridge first is the winner," declared my companion.

"Great Scott! What a jolly queer way of amusing yourself!"

"It's great fun!" said Skinner.

Then he broke off, to address the imaginary crews.

"Buck up, Cambridge! Oxford's forging ahead. There's six inches between you now! Put a spurt on!"

As the two "boats" drew near to the bridge Skinner's excitement rose to fever-heat.

He leaned forward in order to follow the progress of the two pieces of walnut-shell, and then the inevitable happened.

Skinner lost his balance and toppled with a mighty splash into the water!

"Gug-gug-pug!" he spluttered wildly. And then the waters closed over his head.

Fortunately there was a punt-pole handy. I picked it up and extended it towards the hapless Skinner as soon as he came to the surface.

With some difficulty I succeeded in getting him out of terra firma. He resembled a drowned rat.

"Serres you jolly well right!" I said, without sympathy. "A fellow who indulges in such mad pranks deserves all he gets!"

"How did the race go?" gasped Skinner.

"Oxford won by a short neck," I replied.

And this news seemed to afford the drenched Skinner some little consolation.

## THE FEED THAT FAILED!

By TOM BROWN.

BOATRACE DAY always revives unpleasant memories, so far as I am concerned.

Two years ago, on the day of the famous race, I received a letter from my Uncle Percival.

"My dear Tom," it ran—"If my Varsity should happen to win the Boatrace, I shall, in my exuberance of spirits, instantly put on rail to you a magnificent hamper of tuck. Directly the Boatrace is over I shall take a taxi to the West End to obtain the hamper from one of the big stores, and send it to you forthwith, so that you will get it that evening. Of course, if my Varsity doesn't happen to win, I shall be too sick at heart to send you anything. It will be such a crushing disappointment!"

I showed the letter to Harry Wharton & Co.

"Queer sort of merchant, Browney, this uncle of yours," said Bob Cherry. "Which Varsity was he at?"

"Let me see—er—Cambridge."

"Bob made a very nice," he said, "but I fancy Cambridge will lose. They've done awfully well in the trials, but Oxford is the nipper crew."

"Harry Wharton nodded.

"I fancy the Dark Blues will get the verdict," he said.

"Well, you're a nice, cheery set of gentlemen!" I said scathingly. "A snarain on your dismal prophecies! May they prove entirely wrong!"

"We shall know the result soon after the race," said Nugent. "Wingate's going to see it, and he's promised to wire the result."

"Good!"

All that day I was in a state of almost nerve-racking suspense.

Every hour seemed like an eternity!

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 740.

I simply didn't know what to do with myself. Couldn't concentrate on a thing. If you've ever been in that state yourself, gentle reader, you will appreciate my feelings.

It was fairly late in the afternoon when Wingate's wire arrived. It was addressed to Harry Wharton, and the captain of the Remove stuck it up on the notice-board.

I was one of the first to dash up and see the result. And then my heart gave a mighty bound.

Never was telegram so simply, yet so exquisitely, worded!

"Wharton, Greyfriars, Friesland—Cambridge won by four lengths.—WINGATE."

I dashed a hornpipe in my delight! Uncle Percival's University had won! And I could picture Uncle Percival at that moment at some big emporium, directing that a large tuck-hamper should be placed on rail forthwith and instanter!

"So much for your gloomy prophecies!" I exclaimed, snapping my fingers at the Famous Five. Your Dark Blues have been thrashed by four lengths! Bit of a stunner for you, isn't it? Never mind. You shall have a share in the tuck-hamper when it comes.

I shall go down to the station about half-past seven. The hamper ought to arrive on the seven-thirty-five.

"We'll come with you, Browney," said Bob Cherry.

"Splendid!"

At the appointed time we set out for the station.

The seven-thirty-five brought George Wingate back from Mortlake; but there was no sign of a tuck-hamper.

There was one more train that evening. We decided to wait for it, at the risk of

getting into hot water for staying out after locking-up time.

The last train crawled into the station in due course, and a number of crates and parcels were dumped from the goods-van on to the platform. But there was still no sign of Uncle Percival's tuck-hamper.

"No go!" I said gloomily.

"To-morrow's Sunday," said Johnny Bull, "so the hamper can't arrive till Monday."

I was bitterly disappointed. And I spent a wretched week-end.

On Monday I again went down to the station. There was in the morning. There was nothing doing.

I went down again in the afternoon. Still nothing doing.

In the evening, wrathful and exasperated, I paid a further visit to the station. A grinning porter, whom I could cheerfully have kicked, informed me that no hamper had come to hand.

I tramped savagely back to Greyfriars, and wrote a strong letter to Uncle Percival, taking pains to ask for not having kept his promise.

It was not until Wednesday morning that there were developments. Then a letter came from Uncle Percival.

It was a terrific bombshell.

"My dear Tom," it ran—"You are evidently labouring under a misapprehension. It is true that Cambridge won the Boatrace by four lengths. But my University happens to be Oxford!"

So it was my wretched memory that was to blame. I had forgotten the fact that Uncle Percival, on his visits to Greyfriars, had always worn a dark blue tie. And I had forgotten all his anecdotes about Oxford.

"Hallo, Browney!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Heard from your uncle?"

"Yes."

"When's the hamper coming along?"

"Never!"

"Eh?"

"I made a mistake. Uncle Percival was never at Cambridge. He's a giddy Oxonian!"

"Oh, my hat!"

The Famous Five were decidedly ungratified. They called me a dolt and an imbecile, and lots of other uncomplimentary things.

And now you can understand why Boatrace Day revives unpleasant memories!

(Supplement to

## THE GREYFRARS EXILE!

Continued from page 8.

bedstead was turned upside-down on the floor.

"Crash! Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Removites, who by now were all awake.

They waited expecting to see the fat form of Billy Bunter crawl out from underneath. They waited in vain, however, for still nothing happened.

"My hat!" gasped Wharton, somewhat alarmed. "Perhaps the beggar was ill when you soured him, Bob. We had better turn the bed over, and see what's the matter."

The bed was righted again, leaving the clothes on the floor; but when Wharton pulled them over there was no sign of Bunter.

"Great Scott!"

The juniors stared.

Instead of finding the slumbering form of Bunter, as they had expected, they found a couple of bolsters tied together, and arranged in such a position as to appear like Bunter in a recumbent position.

"My hat!"

"Where's Bunter?" gasped Frank Nugent, surveying the two bolsters in a puzzled manner. "Surely the fat bouncer hasn't got up early for once!"

"I expect he has," said Wharton, laughing. "He's probably gone to raid the studies before breakfast."

"Yes, that's about it."

And thus dismissing the matter from their minds, the juniors trooped down to breakfast.

But at the breakfast-table there was still no sign of William George Bunter. This fact did not escape the eagle eye of Mr. Quelch.

"Has Bunter not got up yet?" he demanded of Wharton.

The captain of the Remove hesitated.

"Well, sir, he was not in bed when I left the dormitory."

Breakfast passed off without the fat junior putting in an appearance. Bunter had never been known to miss a meal before, and speculation was rife as to why he had done so this morning.

There was no sign of Bunter anywhere after breakfast, and when the Remove had taken their places in the Form-room, that usually occupied by him was empty.

Mr. Quelch's eye travelled to where Bunter should have been immediately he entered the room.

"Bunter has not yet appeared?" he asked.

"No, sir."

"Very well, I must report the matter to the Head."

And the Form-master left the room again.

"Very extraordinary!" murmured Dr. Locke, when he had heard the Form-master's story. "This is the second time Bunter has disappeared this month. I will send Wingate to look for him."

Mr. Quelch remained in Dr. Locke's study for twenty minutes while the Sixth-Former made a round of the school. When he returned, however, he came alone.

"I cannot find Bunter anywhere, sir," he said. "But I found this in his study."

And the captain of Greyfriars placed an envelope addressed to the Head on his desk.

"This was on the mantelpiece in his study," he added, "and was apparently unnoticed by his study-mates this morning."

"Thank you, Wingate! That is all."

When the senior had left the room, Dr. Locke ripped open the envelope, scanned the piece of paper covered with Bunter's ugly writing, and turned pale.

"Bless my soul!" he ejaculated, sinking into a chair, and placing his hand to his brow.

He handed the paper to Mr. Quelch, who read the following alarming message:

"Dere Sir,—I have been starved ever since I have been at Greyfriars, and can stand it no longer. I have been compelled to suffer shocking agonies through malnutrition, and have at last put an end to it all.

"Good-bye, dere sir!

"Yours sorrowfully, and without malice,

"(Signed) W. G. BUNTER."

"This is most extraordinary!" murmured Mr. Quelch, when he had read the badly-written and mis-spelt letter. "The boy deserves a sound thrashing for playing such a prank on us again."

"I only hope it is nothing more serious than a prank," returned the old Head of Greyfriars agitatedly. "But Bunter is such an extraordinary boy, there's no accounting for anything he may take it into his head to do."

"I think it is merely a trick of Bunter's to frighten us into allowing him more food," said Mr. Quelch, who knew the Owl of the Remove better than Dr. Locke did. "I expect he will turn up at dinner-time, in any case. I think the casing he received last week he attempted this trick has taught him a lesson."

At that moment there came a tap on the door, and in response to Dr. Locke's invitation to enter, Wingate opened the door, with a look of suppressed excitement on his handsome face.

"What is the matter, Wingate?" asked the Head, observing at once that something untoward had happened. "Is there any news of Bunter?"

"No sir," said Wingate. "It's the cup!"

At that moment there came a tap on the door, and in response to Dr. Locke's invitation to enter, Wingate opened the door, with a look of suppressed excitement on his handsome face.

"What is the matter, Wingate?" asked the Head, observing at once that something untoward had happened. "Is there any news of Bunter?"

"No sir," said Wingate. "It's the cup!"

The Head started.

"The cup?" he echoed. "Explain yourself, pray."

"It's the silver football cup which used to stand in the library, sir—it's missing!"

"Missing?"

"Yes, sir—gone!"

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch together.

It seemed to these two worthy gentlemen that everything had gone wrong at once. That Bunter should disappear, leaving behind him such an extraordinary message, was in itself bad enough, but that the silver cup, the football trophy belonging to the Remove, should disappear at the same time, only made the matter ten times worse. The thoughts passing through the minds of the two masters and the senior were painful to all.

"Good heavens!" groaned Dr. Locke, placing his hand to his brow again.

"Surely the boy has not been so misguided—No; there must be some horrible mistake! I do not think that even Bunter would be foolish enough to do a thing like that."

Dr. Locke then informed Wingate of the contents of the letter left by Bunter.

"It is certainly curious that Bunter and the cup should disappear together," he observed. "But I cannot bring myself to believe the boy is guilty of theft."

"No, sir; I don't think Bunter would do that," interjected Wingate.

Mr. Quelch coughed.

"We must not let the matter travel outside the school until we are in possession of some more facts," he said.

"Perhaps, after all, it is not as bad as it appears to be on the surface."

But Mr. Quelch did not look very optimistic, nevertheless.

"I admit I do not know what to do, my dear Quelch," confessed the Head, looking worried. "I suppose since the football cup has disappeared we ought to inform the police, but if we did that, we should have to tell them of Bunter's disappearance as well; and then, I suppose, they would jump to the conclusion right away—that the foolish lad had stolen it."

"And if they saw the letter Bunter had left, and its contents became public, people, not knowing Bunter, would no doubt think his statements were true!" put in Wingate.

"If I may suggest it," said Mr. Quelch quietly. "I think the best thing to do would be to leave the police out of the matter altogether and call in Ferrers Locke. He would certainly be able to do as much as the police could, if not more, and without the risk of the matter becoming public."

The Head looked relieved.

"Thank you, Quelch!" he said. "That is a very good idea, and I think I will act on it."

Ferrers Locke, the famous detective, was cousin to the Head of Greyfriars, and his assistant, Jack Drake, was an old Greyfriars boy. Therefore, there was little doubt that, having an interest in the school, they would do their very best to clear the matter up as quietly as possible.

Dr. Locke reached out and picked up the telephone. He gave a number, and a moment later he was talking to the celebrated detective.

The Head described briefly what had happened, and to his relief, Ferrers Locke stated that he had no case on at the moment, and that he would come at once to Greyfriars and get to work.

The Head described briefly what had happened, and to his relief, Ferrers Locke stated that he had no case on at the moment, and that he would come at once to Greyfriars and get to work.

A SPLENDID TALE OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYFRIARS.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 740.



**£50**  
For Colouring  
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**BLUE BOY**

Buy MY MAGAZINE for May, and colour the outline tracing of Gainsborough's BLUE BOY which is given inside every copy. The cover shows this 1 mouse picture in full colours, and £50 will be awarded for the best attempt at copying it made by anyone under 17. Fifty consolation prizes of £1 each also offered. For full particulars see

**My Magazine**

On Thursday, April 13th, 1934

"I think that is all we can do at the moment," said Dr. Love, turning to the Remove Farm master and Wingle again, and intimating at the same time that the interview was closed.

Wingle returned to the Sixth Form room, and Mr. Quelch to the Remove. Mr. Quelch, of course, said nothing to his pupils about what had happened, but by the time they were dismissed from morning school the news of the disappearance of Billy Bunter and the silver cup had spread all over the school, and had become the one all-absorbing topic.

"I thought the fat clam had some deep stunts on!" said Bob Cherry to Harry Wharton when they were in the latter's study. "But at the same time I don't think he has had anything to do with the theft of the cup."

And Bob Cherry's opinion was shared by the school generally. They all knew Bunter was a hopeless fool, and a very untruthful boy, but they did not believe he was a rogue. Where Bunter and the cup had gone to was a problem they could not solve.

### THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

#### The Star Turn!

**B**ANG, crash, bang!  
"Roll up, roll up, roll up!"  
The front of Muggins' Circus was all roar and bustle. A large crowd had collected which was being added to every moment. Signor Muggins himself stood in front of the tents attired in a silk hat and fur coat, smoking a fat cigar with a band on it. As he surveyed the crowd he rubbed his hands together delightedly.

"V' make da good business to-night!" he exclaimed, rubbing them at an increasing speed, as the crowd continued to swell. "Dey all wants to see da big pig eat, is it not?"

The crowd which had assembled on the waste ground where the show was being held was no ordinary circus crowd. All sorts and conditions of people were there, who had been attracted by the new show the wily signor had advertised. And that show, which was housed in a tent nearly as big as the one containing the sawdust ring was described as "The Boy with the Biggest Appetite on Earth in His Great Non-stop Eating Act."

Across the front of the tent was stretched a huge sheet of canvas, on which was painted in lurid colours:

"Come Inside and See the Boy with the Biggest Appetite on Earth in His Non-stop Eating Act! Fritzen Stone, and the Fighting The Eighth Wonder of the World Appearing for the First Time in this Country! Specially Imported from Timbuctoo, and May Never Be Seen Again! Watch Him Eat! Watch Him Grow!"

Beneath this notice, on an inverted soap-box, stood a man attired in a uniform similar to that worn by the keepers at the Zoo. In one hand he held a brass trumpet, on which he blew from time to time a series of terrific blasts, while in the other he held a long pointer, with which he rapped to further attract attention. He rested for short intervals from this labour in order to address the crowd.

The pay-box outside the tent containing the actual circus was certainly crowded; but nothing like that of the smaller one.

Eventually a man appeared from the next Monday:  
**"HIS EXCELLENCY COUNT BUNTER!"**  
THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 740.

inside and whispered a few words to the one on the box, who immediately turned round and hung a card across the pay-box bearing the legend:

"HOUSE FULL!"

Inside the tent, at the far end, was a big cage with gold-painted bars, behind which was a heavy curtain shutting out of view the inmate.

The audience crowded around the cage were gazing at the curtain with eager looks of expectation on their faces. Evidently, judging by the impatient way they stamped their feet and called upon the showmen to "get a move on," the old adage that anticipation is better than realisation did not apply in their case.

The gentleman of the trumpet, having successfully concluded his vocal labours at the front of the "house," now made his appearance inside, bringing his improvised platform with him. He placed it down by the front of the cage and mounted it to address the assembly.

"Ladies and gentlemen!" he commenced. "I have great pleasure in presenting to you what scientists have described as the Human Gourmand. This specimen wot I have here is probably the only one in the world. In a sense he is no different to you or I, beyond the fact that he is treble our size."

"Get a move on!" shouted one of the audience impatiently. "We want to see it, not hear its natural history!"

The orator ignored the interruption.

"He's treble our size," he went on, "but otherwise he's quite natural. Reared in the jungle of Timbuctoo, from his earliest days he proved himself a born eater. In fact, ladies and gentlemen, it's a gift with him. It's as easy for him to go on eating for two or three hours as it is for us to sleep—as you will see for yourselves when the curtain goes up. In conclusion, ladies and gentlemen, he is worthy ferocious and it is able to keep him under control—"

"Get a move on!"  
"We want to see the show!"  
"Where is he?"

And, as though in answer to the loud-voiced demands of the audience, a voice could be faintly heard coming from somewhere behind the cage.

"Gimme some grub, you rotters! I'm starving!"

A moment later the curtain was rung up, revealing a table and chair. The table was laden with a variety of food-stuffs of the light and sticky order. A dish of jam-tarts formed the centrepiece, and was flanked on either side by cream-tarts.

The sight of so much sticky food was in itself sufficient to give the average person a feeling of surfeitization. It did so to the people around the cage, making them keener than ever to see the boy, who, according to reports, would demolish every crumb and then ask for more.

"The Boy with the Biggest Appetite on Earth will now commence his non-stop eating act!" announced a showman in a raucous voice. "He will eat continuously before spectators until the end of the show, commencing when I shout 'Go!'"

The showman took a deep breath, while the audience waited expectantly.

"Go!"  
There was the sound of a scuffle at the back of the cage, and a moment later an extremely fat youth dressed in skin-tight garments bounced through the aperture, and fell upon the good things on the table like a famished lion upon a lamb.

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
The audience shrieked.  
"Oh, my hat!"  
"Haw, haw, haw!"  
"Look at him!"

But the Human Gourmand was far too busy shoving the pile of pastries from his plates to his fat person to notice their cries. No Siberian wolf after a hard winter ever consumed an unfortunate peasant with more speed or avidity than did the fat youth those tarts. He literally swallowed them whole.

"Go it!" shouted the crowd.  
"File in!"  
"O the ball!"  
"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fat youth's appearance was funny enough, but the way he was causing the pile of food before him to disappear was, in their estimation, funnier still. But had any boys from Greyfriars been there, it is doubtful whether they would have seen the funny side of it, for the "Boy with the Biggest Appetite in the World" was no other than William George Bunter, the Owl of the Remove!

By now Bunter's face was smothered with jam, as were his fingers. Only about half a dozen tarts now remained out of that once lordly pile. These soon followed their predecessors down the capacious throat of the Removeite, until he had made up for his twenty-four hours involuntary fast; but of this his audience knew nothing.

Before the last morsel had properly arrived at its happy hunting-ground, the junior turned to the aperture through the back of the cage from whence he had come.

"More!" he hoisted. "Back up, you fellows! I'm starving! Gimme some grub—quick! I feel faint—"

Almost before he had finished speaking the man the audience recognised as the soap-box orator, appeared at the back of the cage with a small barrow, not much bigger than a child's toy, laden with fresh supplies.

At the sight of this method of food transport the yokels and others in the tent doubled themselves up with mirth. Never, in all their simple lives, had they ever witnessed a show of this kind.

Bunter did not wait for the barrow to be unloaded; the effects of the long fast he had endured had not yet worn off. He scrambled over, and grabbed a mass of sticky tart in each fat fist to be going on with.

Munch, munch, munch!  
Bunter's jaw was working overtime. Never before had the fat junior had such an excellent opportunity to indulge his favourite passion; never before had he been so long without a meal; never before had his wolfish efforts been applauded; and now, when it seemed to him Fate had looked upon his plump person kindly, he was making the most of it.

Munch, munch, munch!  
Bunter continued his frenzied attack on the fresh pile of tarts with unabated vigour; in fact, the acute edge having been taken off his appetite by now, he was getting into stride, so to speak, and was settling down to enjoy himself. All his past trials and troubles were forgotten.

**ANSWERS**

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forgoten in this moment of jummy bliss. In his subconscious mind—his conscious one was too intent on the task of simulation before him—he felt that in Signor Mugger he had found a true friend!

As time went on Bunter's audience changed, but those who left only spread his fame abroad, and their places were quickly filled by newcomers. An hour from the start the Remoive was still doing his duty nobly, if a little slower.

The floor of the cage was strewn with empty ginger-beer bottles and crumbs. Billy Bunter had succeeded in making Lucullus in all his glory appear like a hunger-striker by comparison. And still he was going strong.

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

### Dr. Locke is Alarmed!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry burst into Study No. 1, with a worried look on his usually sunny countenance. "Any news of Bunter yet, Henry?" Wharton looked up from his peep and shook his head.

Mr. Quelch's surmise that Bunter would turn up at dinner-time had proved to be wrong. Neither had he turned up that night, and, despite the efforts of Ferrers Locke and his assistant, Jack Drake, no clue had been obtained of his whereabouts.

"It beats me where he could have got to without somebody having seen something of him," returned Larry. "He's big enough to be seen, anyhow!"

They both laughed; but their mirth had not the usual hearty ring. Both the juniors disliked Bunter in many ways; they could not tolerate his glibulous propensities, neither could they stand his untruthfulness; but, for all that, they had known him a long time, and knew there was no real harm in him. His mysterious disappearance from Greyfriars was worrying them more than they cared to admit.

"I don't know," groaned Bob. "The fat tulip's a blessed worry to us while he's here, and just as big a worry when he's not!"

"Hear, hear!" "There was a knock on the study door. "Come in!" sang out Wharton cheerfully.

"Johnny Bull put his head round the door.

"Any news of the Owl yet?"

"None!"

"I hear from Wingate that a chap answering to Bunter's description has been arrested in London for walking out of a restaurant without paying his bill."

"Ha, ha, ha! That sounds like Billy."

"The Head's trying to get through on the 'phone to Scotland Yard," added Johnny Bull. "He looks worried to death, too!"

"My hat! No wonder!" The three juniors were joined a few moments later by Frank Nugent and Hurree Jarnet Ram Singh, the dusky Nabob of Bhasipur.

"The esteemed chiefdom of the twifal merchant resembling our worthy chum Bunter is a washout," the latter announced in his dreadful English, as taught by the alleged best native teachers in India. "The respected Nabob Locke has just 'phonically heard."

At that moment there was a rap on the door, and, in response to an invitation to enter given by five boys at once, Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, put his head round the door.



There was the sound of a scuffle at the back of the cage, and a moment later Billy Bunter, dressed in skin-tight garments, bounced through an aperture and fell upon the good things on the table. The audience shrieked with laughter. "Ha, ha, ha! Look at 'im!" (See Chapter 7.)

"Any volunteers for search-parties?" he asked.

"What-ho!"

"All of us!"

"Go and report to Mr. Quelch in his study, then."

"Right-ho, Wingate!"

And the Famous Five left their study and made their way to the study of their Form-master. Mr. Quelch smiled kindly when he saw the Famous Five.

"Ah, Wharton!" he said. "So you have volunteered to see whether you can get any news of Bunter—eh?"

"Yes, sir!" "Very well, then. I will give you a pass to stay out late, and that will enable you to visit the district round about Friar-dale on your bicycles and see whether anything has been seen of your misguided Form-fellow. I myself intend to go out with Wingate later on. If you try Courtfield way, we will try the other way. But no staying away for the night as you did when Bunter ran away a week or so ago."

The Famous Five returned to Study No. 1, where they made a lusty tea, and, taking with them a supply of sandwiches, they set out on their quest.

If they returned some hours later tired and dispirited; they had made exhaustive inquiries all around Courtfield, but no one had either seen or heard anything of their fat Form-fellow.

The Form-master's search for news was equally unproductive of results.

Mr. Quelch reported the evening's happenings to Dr. Locke.

"If we do not get any news of the lad within the next twenty-four hours," he said, "I shall have to communicate with

his father and tell him what has happened."

Mr. Quelch nodded. "There seems nothing but that left to do," he returned.

"I'll tell you what it is, you chaps," sneered Skinner, addressing his cronies in the dormitory that night, "Bunter has collared the blessed cup, and is living on the proceeds; that's about the size of it!"

"Hear, hear!" sniggered Snoop and Stott, his two precious pals.

"And what's more," added Skinner, "I reckon that if the Head made inquiries round the local pawnshops, he'd be dead certain to find the blessed cup!"

"Oh, Bunter could tell us all about it if he were here!" chimed in Percy Bolsover. "I always knew the fat bouncer was a blessed criminal!" "Stow it!" said Wharton, who had overheard the last remark. "I don't think Bunter would know anything outside grub; certainly he wouldn't take a thing like the cup."

But Wharton's generous views were not shared by the rest of the Form. They were unanimously of the opinion that William George Bunter had converted the missing football cup into hard cash, and was having a good time on the proceeds.

## THE NINTH CHAPTER.

### Bunter's Discovery!

YAW-AW-AW! Billy Bunter awoke with a start and sat up in his bunk. For a moment he thought he was back in the Remoive dormitory at Greyfriars. A pale moonbeam stealing

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"HIS EXCELLENCY COUNT BUNTER!"

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through the caravan window illuminated the interior of his new quarters, and recalled to him the happenings of the past few days.

He wondered vaguely what was happening at the school, and the novelty having worn off his adventures, he resolved for the first time the seriousness of the step he had taken when he had run away.

Bunter was not without his good points, and a wave of remorse passed over him as he thought of the worry he was causing the kind old Head. He sought to soothe his conscience by reflecting that he had really been driven to doing what he had done by Dr. Locke's refusal to allow him increased rations. But somehow, to-night, his conscience refused to be soothed.

"By Jove! I feel peckish!" he muttered to himself. "I wonder whether I can get some grub anywhere?"

Bunter was not really hungry, for only a few hours before he had finished his non-stop eating act. True, when he had finished, he mentally swore off jam-tarts and cream-puffs for ever. But then again, that was several hours ago. He looked at his watch, and was surprised to see that it was nearly half-past three in the morning.

"I'll go and scout around for some grub," he decided, more from instinct than the actual desire to eat.

He slipped out of the bunk and quickly dressed. A moment later he was stealing from his caravan towards that side of the camp where the provisions were kept.

Bunter was not a brave youth, and the swishing of the trees in the night wind caused him to think he was being followed. Once the roar of one of the animals in a van caused him to jump with fright.

Eventually he gained his objective on the further side of the encampment, and passed. Instinct or second sense came to his rescue again, and led him to a big van standing apart from the others. It was the fish-van.

During his stay with the circus people their dogs had got to know the Remove, and consequently he felt no apprehension of being betrayed by them.

Bunter climbed the small wooden steps leading to the door of the van; but to his dismay he found it securely packed.

"Moon rotters!" he grunted. "I wonder whether they think I want to wolf their blessed grub? Yah!"

And he sniped away to continue his search for food elsewhere.

Then he had a bright idea. He suddenly remembered the food they fed some of the animals on. That, at least, he thought, would not be locked up. For instance, there was the fish they threw to the seals when they were performing in the ring. Bunter's mouth watered. After the feed he had had of potatoes the previous night, the idea of a herring grilled over the stove in his caravan rather appealed to him.

"Lemme see," murmured Bunter; "I believe the blessed fish-van is around here somewhere. Anyhow, I'll try all of them until I find the right one."

Bunter tried several vans when the seals' fish was likely to be stored; but in each case he was unlucky. He was about to return to his caravan when he caught sight of an empty cage, the iron door of which was open. With sundry grunts he clambered inside. His eyes fell on a heap in a corner covered with sacking, and he chuckled to himself.

"Now for it!" he muttered.

Bunter lifted the edging of the sacking and peered beneath. But not a solitary fish met his disappointed gaze. Beneath the sacking was a bulky brown-paper parcel. The top of the Remove's curiosity was developed beyond the average, and a second later he whipped a pocket-knife from his pocket and cut the string. A metallic glint caught his eye. Bunter felt his pulse beat faster as a wave of excitement swept over him. Here was something decidedly more interesting than fish.

Evidently he tore the remainder of the paper away from the metal object. As he did so he started.

"My hat!" he ejaculated.

He took another look, hardly able to believe his eyes.

"The football cup!" he gasped in astonishment. "How the thump did that get here?"

He struck a match the better to examine his find. He bent down to read the engraving, and emitted a long whistle.

"How!"

There was no doubt about it; the cup at his feet was the silver football cup missing from Greyfriars. Of the disappearance of the cup from the school library, he had known nothing hitherto.

Bunter leaned against the wall of the cage and mopped his brow with a handkerchief. Then a horrible thought struck him. Suppose he was discovered by one of the circus people in the cage with the stolen cup? Even Bunter's fat mind was logical enough to know how the cup came to be there. He trembled to think what would happen to him.

"It's that rotten Italian!" muttered Bunter. "The dirty thief!"

Grak!

Bunter held his breath; the wind coming up from the sea caused the iron door of the cage to sway. But Billy Bunter was too frightened to realize what was happening.

Crash!

The iron door closed with a slam.

Bunter turned deathly pale, and almost dropped with fright.

"Ooowee!" he gasped.

The hour of the morning, the place, and his recent discovery of the Greyfriars football trophy had completely unnerved Bunter, and he was in a state bordering on panic.

Crash!

The last crash was more than Bunter could stand. With a wild shriek, he dashed to the iron gate, and, heedless of the wooden steps, jumped to the ground.

Bunter's shriek had set some of the dogs a-barking, and this only added to his terror. Heedless of everything but an overwhelming desire to put as great a distance between himself and the circus as possible, he dashed blindly on. Once he tripped over the guide-rope of a tent and crashed headily to the ground. He did not feel the pain caused by the fall. The noise he made set every dog in the encampment barking, and very soon lights began to flicker in the caravans. Bunter ran blindly hither and thither, seeking a way of escape.

Presently, on the far side of the camp, a lantern appeared, swinging a lighted lantern. He was soon joined by two other men.

In Bunter's terror the grinning face of the swarthy Italian was constantly before him. Several times he imagined he could feel the grimy hand of the Italian on his shoulder.

"There he goes!" shouted a voice. "After him!"

Terror lent the fat junior wings, and he ran as he had never run before. Suddenly, from the side of the caravan, a man in a striped shirt appeared. Bunter let off another wild shriek.

"Ooooweeer! Lemme go! I haven't seen the cup! Oooweeer!"

The Italian made a grab at Bunter, but missed him by the fraction of an inch. Bunter sped on, dodging this way and that, until a big mass loomed up in the dark sky before him.

It was the captive balloon in the show. Bunter saw his only chance of escape, and took it. He made a wild dive for the wicker-work basket, and, in a manner he could not have explained, landed inside. Acting mechanically, he whipped out his pocket-knife and succeeded in severing the rope.

The big gas-bag rocked in the breeze, and slowly moved upwards.

Bunter crouched at the bottom of the basket.

"Hi! Vot you do? You make de get killed!" roared the Italian, coming up. "Come down! Come down!"

Had Bunter wanted to come down at the moment he could not have done so, for, carried by the breeze from the sea, the balloon was already some distance from the ground, and drifting inland.

Bunter remained at the bottom of the basket, with his eyes closed.

He had fainted!

A group of men had collected on the ground below, and were gazing, fascinated, at the moving gas-bag.

The balloon gave a lurch upwards. But even as he did so the Italian made a grab at the trail rope a few seconds after it left the ground. A moment later he was being dragged up into the sky with Billy Bunter.

"Let go! You'll be killed!" shouted his employees. But the Italian took no heed of their shouts. Knowing the type of boy in the balloon better than anyone else there, he realised his peril better than they did. He clung on to the rope like grim death.

Up, up went the giant gas-bag, and slowly disappeared from the view of the watchers below. The Italian, clinging to the swaying rope many feet above the earth, gritted his teeth. An occasional oath escaped his lips, but otherwise he said nothing. He was reserving his breath for other things. Slowly, hands over hands, he made his way up the swaying rope. A gust of wind coming from the direction of the circus wafted faintly to his ears the cheers of the score or so of men who had witnessed his action.

After half an hour's hard work the Italian succeeded in reaching the basket, having nearly lost his life in the attempt. He managed to clamber safely in, however, and sank to the bottom alongside Bunter for a few minutes, almost overcome by his exertions.

"Wake up, boy!" he shouted, shaking the Owl of the Remove by the shoulder. But if Bunter heard him he was too frightened to reply. He opened his eyes for a few minutes and blinked, then he closed them again.

The Italian stood up in the basket and peered over the side. He could just make out a thin silvery thread, below which he assumed to be the Sark, and was comforted to a certain extent as he realised that the balloon was keeping to an inland course instead of drifting out to sea. It was cold enough on the ground below, but in the air above, the



wind, coming across from the North Sea, was icy. The Italian shivered, and turned up his coat collar.

The balloon drifted higher and entered the clouds, drenching both occupants of the basket with a cold, wet vapour.

Bunter opened his eyes and blinked. Then he saw the Italian looking at him, and promptly fainted again.

"You beeg fool!" growled the circus proprietor. And he turned his attention to the rope connected with the valve at the top of the balloon. He gave several tugs, and the giant gas-bag suddenly stopped its ascent and rocked along at a level. A few seconds later it came down to the clouds again, rocked a bit more, and continued very slowly to descend.

Some time had elapsed since Bunter awoke in his bunk in the caravan, and already the first flush of a cold grey dawn was beginning to steal across the sky from the east.

The balloon continued to descend and drift towards the earth below, and the Italian, feeling that the worst danger was now past, although he was far from being warm, took a handkerchief from his pocket and mopped his brow. It had been a trying time.

## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### Jack Drake Explains!

"U GH, it's cold!"  
Frank Nugent made that remark as he hurriedly dressed himself.

"The coldfulness is terrific, my ludicrous chums!"

The rising-bell had not yet gone, but the Famous Five were getting up early in order to have a sprint round the Close before breakfast. They were in training for the coming school sports.

Many other juniors were rising early for the same purpose. They looked across at Bunter's empty bed, and grinned.

"It's a pity Bunter is not here to sling out!" observed Tom Brown, the New Zealand junior.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Led by the famous Five, the majority of the Removites were soon dressed and in the Close.

"Now for a sharp sprint!" said Bob Cherry.

"Yes, I—"

The speaker stopped short and stared up at the sky. The other juniors followed his gaze.

"My hat!"

"A giddy balloon!"

"Coming down, too!"

The balloon was still some distance from the school, and appeared to be passing over Finsdale, and, as one of the juniors had remarked, it was slowly but surely descending.

The sprint round the Close was for the time being forgotten.

The balloon drifted lower and lower and nearer and nearer to the school. Headed by Harry Wharton, the Removites started off at a run towards the school gates.

"By Jove! I can see some Johnny standing in the basket!" gasped Percy Holroyd excitedly.

"Yes, there he is."

The man in the balloon was waving his arms excitedly.

"I think he's trying to signal to us to grab the blessed trail rope," exclaimed Bob Cherry, as the balloon passed over the school wall above the Close.

The Removites turned away from the gates and made for the gas-bag, which was now only twenty feet from the ground. Bob Cherry was the first on the scene, and he caught hold of the rope, and was dragged along the ground several yards. The rest of the Removites, coming up, lent their assistance, and the balloon was slowly hauled to the ground.

Bump!

"Hold tight!"

The Removites caught hold of the edge of the wickerwork basket, and looked curiously at the swarthy passenger. There was something about him they seemed to recognise. His features were distinctly familiar to them, but for a moment they could not place him.

"My hat! I've got it!" suddenly burst out Frank Nugent. "It's the giddy circus proprietor!"

"My hat, yes!"

The Italian looked at the boys and swore softly under his breath.

"Sapristi!" he gasped. "Da school-boys!"

The juniors helped the man to climb out of the basket, and as he did so they observed a figure still lying at the bottom, who had hitherto escaped their notice. They leaned over to drag whoever it was out, too.

"I say, you fellows!"

The Removites fell back, astounded.

"My hat!"

"Bunter!"

The fat junior rose to his feet and blinked at his Form-fellows.

"I'm hungry!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

In spite of the sudden and dramatic reappearance of the Owl of the Remove, they could not help laughing.

"Same old Owl!"

"Here, hold him!"

In the general excitement occasioned by the sudden discovery of the fat Removite, the circus proprietor had endeavoured to break away. But even as he did so, a dozen pair of hands stretched out and hauled him back.

"Not so fast, my pippin!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove. "I think this little matter requires some sort of an explanation. Come on, chaps! Let's run him in to the Head!"

"Oh, rather!"

And with Bunter following up in the rear, between Buistrode and Mark Linley, the procession moved off across the Close on their way to Dr. Locke's study. By now many boys from other Forms, having heard of the descent of a balloon in the Close, had come out to investigate. With many exclamations of surprise they, too, followed up.

It was quite by chance that the Head of Greyfriars happened to be in his study so early.

"Bless my soul! What ever has happened?" he ejaculated in surprise, as he surveyed the Italian, surrounded by the Famous Five standing in the doorway.

Wharton quickly explained what had happened.

"We thought we would bring this man up to you for an explanation, sir!" he said, when he had concluded his story.

"Quite right, Wharton!" said the Head, still looking bewildered. "One of you boys had better go and fetch



The balloon gave a lurch upwards, but even as it did so the Italian made a grab at the trail-rope a few seconds after it left the ground. A moment later he was dragged up into the air with Billy Bunter. (See Chapter 9.)

Mr. Quelch, and the remainder of you got down to breakfast. You may stay, Wharton?"

"Very good, sir!"

Mr. Quelch soon appeared on the scene, looking as bewildered as the Head.

"I think we will start with Bunter," said Dr. Locke. "Kindly explain what has been happening."

"The Italian sat on a chair, grinding his teeth. Greyfriars, above all places, was the last spot he wished to land on."

"We are waiting, Bunter!"

The Owl of the Remove licked his lips, faintly thinking meanwhile of a plausible yarn to spin.

"I was kidnapped!" he managed at last.

"Kidnapped, sir?"

"Yes, sir. I—I was disturbed one night by a horrible noise. I quickly dressed myself in order to investigate, and—"

"—Bunter thought rapidly, and suddenly remembered his discovery of the cup at the circus—" and I found this man stealing the football cup from the library—"

"Not so fast!" gasped the Italian, darting a puzzled look at the fat junior.

"Needless to say, I closed with him,"

went on Bunter, "but, taking a revolver or a rifle or something from his pocket, he struck me on the head. And then he kidnapped me! That's all I remember!"

"My hat!"

"Sapristi!" roared the Italian, rising from his seat. "You tells da big lie! I 'ave never seen da cup! Carama! You tink I tells da lie, when I 'ava da witness 'oo you comes to me—"

"I tell you the cup is at the circus, sir!" asserted the Owl. "I saw it with my own eyes last night!"

"Bless my soul!" murmured Dr. Locke, placing his hand to his brow.

"Am I to understand, Bunter, that this man stole the football cup from the school, and after having overpowered you, kidnapped you and took you with him to his circus?"

"That's it!" exclaimed Bunter.

"You'll find the cup is still there?"

"Oh, apart from that," interrupted Dr. Locke. "I would be pleased if you will explain how you came to return

to Greyfriars in a balloon, and how since you were overpowered your name came to leave this note on your mantelpiece."

Bunter gasped. He had forgotten all about the note.

"I didn't write any note!" he exclaimed desperately.

The Head opened a drawer in his desk, and placed the note in question on the table.

"I hope you are not going to deny writing that, Bunter," he said grimly.

Billy Bunter blinked and looked helplessly round the room.

"There is evidently still some mystery here that needs clearing up," the Head said. "I think—"

"Tap!"

Dr. Locke started.

"Will you kindly say who is at the door, Mr. Quelch?" he asked.

Mr. Quelch opened the door, and the Head heard him invite somebody inside.

"Jack Drake!" exclaimed Wharton in surprise.

Jack Drake, the old Greyfriars boy, greeted the Head, and sat down on a chair.

"I have just returned from Monksville," he announced, looking in terror at the circus proprietor and Bunter.

"And had it not been for this gentleman here," he said, indicating the Italian, "I doubt whether we should have ever seen Bunter again. Mr. Locke thought I had better come along at once and see you, but, apparently, you know what has happened already."

Dr. Locke shook his head.

"No, Drake," he said. "I have just been told two entirely different stories, and I do not know what to believe!"

And the Head related to Drake how Bunter and the Italian had arrived at Greyfriars and the story they had each told.

"Well, I think I can clear the whole matter up," said Drake, and he proceeded to inform the astonished Head of all that had happened, from the time Bunter met the circus proprietor in the village tuck-shop.

"But why should this man want Bunter to run away from school?" asked Dr. Locke, still mystified.

"You see, after his show had been

smashed up by Greyfriars fellows, he felt sure about it, and wanted to get his own back. His idea was that if Bunter ran away and gave as his reason for doing so the short rations given at the school, it would be a lasting disgrace to Greyfriars as soon as it became known."

"My hat!" ejaculated Wharton involuntarily. "What a jolly deep scheme!"

"And when it became known, in addition, the sort of job Bunter performed at the circus, that would have added to it—"

"But what about the cup?" asked Mr. Quelch. "You have not explained how that disappeared."

"Ah," said Drake, "that's another point. Mr. Ferrers Locke and myself succeeded in tracing the missing cup to the circus, where a man has since confessed to stealing it, and is at this moment under arrest. We arrived at the circus early this morning, about the time Bunter went up in the balloon."

Drake then went on to describe Bunter's flight from the van containing the cup to the balloon, and the circus proprietor's gallant act in clinging to the trail rope, and climbing to the basket in order to open the safety-valve, and so rescue the fat junior from his perilous position.

"I may add," he said, "that Signor Muggins knew nothing about the cup being hidden at his circus until he was informed in this room by Bunter a few minutes ago. The cup is now at the police-station waiting to be fetched away."

They are all the facts of the case, Dr. Locke," concluded Jack Drake.

The Head and Mr. Quelch looked at each other in amazement at the conclusion of this extraordinary story.

"Bless my soul!"

"Great Scott!"

Billy Bunter had turned white when Drake had exposed his share in the business, and sat licking his dry lips, almost on the point of tears.

"I—I—I—" he gasped.

"Silence, wretched and misguided boy!" exclaimed the old Head sternly.

"As for you, sir," he said, turning to the Italian, "you appear to have put wrong ideas in the mind of this boy, and have been the cause of all the trouble. If I did my duty I should hand you over to the police; but since I have heard how you saved the life of Bunter by climbing into the balloon at the risk of your own, I can hardly do that. You appear to be a brave man, sir, and it is a great pity, therefore, that you have not covered us all in honour. That is all I have to say. Wharton will show you to the school gates."

The Italian was silent. Perhaps for the first time in his life he realized his shortcomings. Nodding to the Head, he rose and left the room, followed by the captain of the Remove.

When the Italian had gone Dr. Locke turned to Mr. Quelch.

"Kindly look this boy in the punishment-room until after breakfast," he said. "We will deal with him later."

Billy Bunter groaned as he was led away, and continued groaning until after breakfast. Then, as commended on Gosling's shoulders, he shrieked. He was receiving the public flogging which he well deserved.

THE END.

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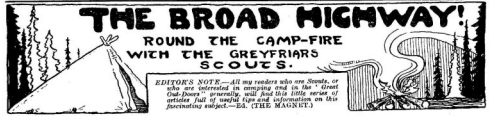
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**EDITOR'S NOTE.**—All my readers who are Scouts, or who are interested in camping and in the "Great Out-Door" generally, will find this little series of articles full of useful tips and ideas on this fascinating subject.—Ed. (THE MAGNET.)

**"THE CAMPING TONIC!"**

By HARRY WHARTON (Patrol Leader, The Lions).

If anyone were to ask me to name two of my favourite summer pastimes or sports, I should at once reply, "Cricket and scouting." Cricket is, as you know, the most popular sport at Greyfriars, but scouting and camping have become very prominent in the Lower School of late, and when not at cricket it is then that the Greyfriars Scout's assemble and make tracks into the country, either on rambles or for week-end camps.

Up to the present there has been little time for reorganising the patrols, for during the winter scouting and camping have been put aside for the great winter games. But now winter has left us, and everywhere there are signs of the return of spring, we are beginning to think very seriously of

recommencing the Greyfriars Scouts, and to make certain plans and enlargements.

Easter is almost upon us, and I consider Easter to be the commencement of the camping season, although I have heard of some hardy campers who haven't left off from last year—who have camped right through the winter months, and thoroughly enjoyed it.

The weather is beginning to get much milder and warmer, and the spirit of spring is in everyone's bones.

Of course, the Lion Patrol, of whom I have the great honour of being Leader, has decided to hold an Easter camp this year, as we have done in previous years; and since our special meeting in Rag, where the scheme was put forward, and talked about, it is

reminded that the camping craze is well over the school. Even the high and mighty lords of the Sixth are thinking of starting a camping club.

Have you ever been to camp yourself? If you haven't, then you've missed one of the greatest treats there is.

I have been to many camps since my career at Greyfriars, and I intend to go to many more before I leave, if possible. There is no better tonic in the whole wide world than this camping and scouting, as any fellow will tell you who has experienced its joys. So take my advice, and don't lose another second, but go and get your traps ready for a run into the country this Easter holiday.

In the accompanying article Bob Cherry has described a camp which we held last year. It was a wander-camp, and for a short holiday you can't do better. Bob has also given some advice and hints in his article which may be of some little help to those of you who have not yet been on a wander-camp; and to those of you who have there may be some little hint which will still prove of some value to you.

**AN EASTER WANDER-CAMP!**

By BOB CHERRY (of the Lion Patrol).

It was very early in the morning, just as the sun appeared, that I awoke, feeling very fresh and energetic. For the moment I was at a loss as to the reason of this sudden waking of mine, then, in a flash, I remembered. The day previous I had arranged an Easter wander-camp with the Lion Patrol, and a start was to be made that morning.

A night half an hour of getting out of bed we had most of our traps packed and the rucksacks ready for starting.

It was still fairly early when we left the school. The sun had risen above the old elms in the Close, and was making the sprinkling of dewdrops on the ground sparkle like so many diamonds. The sharp, keen air braced me like tonic, filling me with the keen appreciation of the awakening spring. Everywhere around was full of waking life. This was indeed an ideal day to commence a wander-camp. We had decided that a wander-camp would be the best and most profitable way of spending the first part of our Easter holidays.

I have been on many wander-camps, or tours, and every moment of the time has been delightfully filled up; never a moment has lagged or been a bore. You can do so many things on tour; see so much and learn a great deal. For myself, I prefer a wander-camp to a standing one, and most of my chums are of the same opinion.

A friend of mine once said that if you stay in one place for a week-end, you can see and do more than in four days' tour, and that tourism is not popular with fellows who can only get away for week-ends; for if they want to camp, they want it for a complete rest, and being on your feet all the time, or best part of it, is, in no rest. But my friend is wrong. At least he has not got the right idea of a wander-camp.

In touring, I do not mean hard tramping for twenty to thirty miles a day. The idea of a wander-camp almost suggests itself in the name. Just wander, and do a little way, and have a rest. Walk for the pleasure of it, not with the fixed idea of doing so many miles per day. Stop where and when you feel like it. Eat when you are really

hungry, and camp down at sundown. That's the way we fellows did it, and it's really the only way.

You have strapped on your back a rucksack and a small tent. A fair-size ruck will accommodate all your personal necessities, such as towel, soap, toothbrush, sleeping-suit, bootbrushes and polish, camping equipment, and a small tent rolled up tightly. The jointed tent-poles can be fixed under the strap of the ruck. Travel light.

There are five of us in the patrol, and on the last trip out we divided the baggage amongst ourselves, each carrying a ruck. We each rolled a blanket in a ground-sheet, and wore it bandolier fashion. One rucksack contained the tent and pegs and mallet. Another was filled with a couple of billy-cans and foodstuffs to last us the journey out. And the other three had the personal belongings of the whole five of us packed together, and the medicine-chest and map.

Before starting out it was decided that we should attire ourselves in scouting garb, and so leave our legs free for walking. Bare knees are best for walking. Trousers are uncomfortable, and breeches and puttees are bad for the circulation.

When on tour there are one or two little things to take note of which count so much for the success of the trip.

The way you walk counts a great deal. Keep your feet straight, and walk with comfortable stride. Your head should never hang loose on your chest; keep it up, and look well ahead, and breathe in and out regularly, not in short gasps.

To set back to the tale of our trip. At the close of the first day we found ourselves about seventeen miles west of Greyfriars, a mile or so from the end of a road which had been marked on the map we carried. On the edge of a common we discovered a splendid dell in the horse and heather, and we pitched our tent there, well sheltered from the wind. The fire was lit, and we took particular care to make a small, shallow hollow in the turf to hold it in. Lighting fires is an art which requires careful thinking, and as it is such an important subject in the art

of camping, I shall probably devote a whole article to it later on.

After a hot evening meal we seated ourselves round the camp-fire and watched the deep shadows of the trees lengthen, and listened to the cries of the night-birds and animals of the woods. Far away on the hill the shrill shriek of a disturbed owl awakened the silence of the woods, and the "Chit chit!" of the stone-chat broke out now and then just behind the trees. At the end of the night, jawing Johnny Bull and Frans Nugent went off together into the dark woods behind for the little prow! before bed.

By ten we had turned in, and were in the arms of Morpheus.

Turn in fairly early at night. That's the golden rule of the successful hiker. "Early to bed, early to rise," you know the rest. Stick to that proverb, and you won't go far wrong.

The next day, having washed in a small stream and "grounded" we struck camp, and resumed our tramping, after giving a final glance round to see that the pitch was clean, and not littered with bits of paper and food. Nugent, being the official fire-lighter of the expedition, replaced the square of grass he had cut for the fire, and made it neat and tidy all round, whilst we took bearings from the camp.

On the map we had marked a route from Greyfriars to Wharton Lodge, in Hampshire, which is a distance of about one hundred miles. We had arranged to spend the last part of the Easter at the Lodge, but the first five days of the hols. were to be devoted to the wander-camp.

Doing an average of ten miles a day, we covered the small fifty miles on the way to Wharton Lodge, going through the most beautiful parts of England. At Windon we took the train the rest of the way to the Lodge.

There will, no doubt, be many of you who will only have a short holiday, and this being so, I suggest that you make your wander-camp in the first five days, and do an average of eight to ten miles a day, and make it on a more or less circular route from your starting-place.

Start the small scale first, and don't try to rush too far round, or you will knock yourself up, and you won't get any benefit from the trip.

(Next week: "Tents and Tent-Making." By Vernon-Smith.)

## READERS' NOTICES!

(Continued from page 2.)

Albert F. Revell, 7, Cleveland Row, St. James's Street, S.W. 1, wishes to correspond with readers, ages 16-19; London readers in particular. All letters answered.

Junior Reporter invites friendly correspondence from anyone, anywhere. Dramas, opera, music, trade, or general knowledge. Smattering of French. Ages 18-25. Frank C. Atkin, 150, Russell Street, Alexandra Park, Manchester.

F. E. Wretham, Upton Lodge, Halling, Kent, wishes to correspond with readers interested in stamp-collecting, either at home or overseas.

Jack Robertson, Barea, 11, Carlton Street, Granville, N.S.W., Australia, wishes to correspond with readers, ages 14-16, interested in stamps, coins, drawing, sports, and photography, anywhere.

E. T. Warren, 96a, Queen's Road, Watford, Herts, wishes to correspond with readers who are interested in stamp-collecting.

Miss Olive Head, Ellerslie, Clannwilliam Street, Chatwood, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia, wishes to hear from

readers, ages 15-16, in any part of the world. All letters answered.

Samuel George Inglis, 503, Hay Street, Perth, Western Australia, wishes to correspond with readers anywhere, especially England and America.

Ernest C. Ford, 176, Essex Road, London, N. 1, will be pleased to send copies of his amateur magazine free to readers, upon receipt of their request for same.

Ernest C. Ford, 176, Essex Road, London, N. 1, would like to correspond with readers in America and other places abroad. All letters answered.

C. P. Cheong, Methodist Boys' School, Kuala Lumpur, Federated Malay States, wishes to hear from secretaries of MAGNET and "Gem" clubs.

Miss Kathleen Charlwood, Culparato, 122, Church Street, Middle Beighton, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, wishes to hear from a girl reader, aged about 14, outside Australia.

J. Humphris, High Street, Kynston, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond and exchange stamps with readers.

Miss Enalike Soltan, 16, Abercrombie Street, City, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia, wishes to correspond with readers anywhere.

F. L. Barfoot, 135, Algernon Road, Lewisham, S.E. 13, wishes to hear from readers who publish amateur magazines.

Samuel F. Lynn, Glenlynn, Treod Road, Bridgetown, Western Australia, wishes to correspond with readers in all parts of the world.

G. Butler, 20, Britannia Row, London, N. 1, asks for correspondence from readers keen on football, also those interested in amateur magazines.

F. E. Kiersch, 8, Ninth Street, La Rochelle, Johannesburg, Transvaal, South Africa, wishes to correspond with readers in Nigeria, Nyassaland, Borneo, Gold Coast, Siberia, and Ivory Coast, interested in stamp collecting.

Arthur Sapwell, 25, Smedley Street, Clapham Junction, London, S.W., asks for more members for the Universal Friendly Club. The club has members in New Zealand, South Africa, Straits Settlements, and Canada.

H. Winkle, 11, Walter Street, Newells, Birmingham, wishes to hear from readers, ages 15-20.

W. A. Mackie, Craigs, Montrose, N.B., wishes to hear from readers.

Francis Stojchura, 41, Wellington Road, Bethnal Green, London, E., wishes to hear from readers interested in Russian dancing, as he wishes to form an amateur company for practising the art.

Frank Dobson, 56, Tivoli Place, Little Horton Lane, Bradford, Yorks, wishes to hear from readers willing to assist him with his amateur magazine, the "Boys' Companion."

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