

**BOYS! HERE'S YOUR FAVOURITE PAPER FOR 1930!**

No. 1,142. Vol. XXXVII. Week Ending January 4th, 1930.

# The MAGNET

EVERY SATURDAY.



There was a sudden movement from the safe, an almost inaudible click, and Billy Bunter found himself blinking in terror in the rays of a torch! (See the thrilling yarn inside.)

Start the New Year well by winning something useful. See Below!



# Come Into the Office, Boys!

Always glad to hear from you, chums, so drop me a line to the following address: The Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

NOTE.—All Jokes and Limericks should be sent to c/o "Magnet," 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.).

**C**HEERIO, chums! You'll be reading these lines just before New Year's Eve, and so, as we stand on the threshold of a New Year, I don't think I can do better than repeat part of the wish I gave you in our Christmas number. Christmas has come and gone, and the thing which we have got to do now is to look forward to the future. I expect you've all got your brand new diaries ready, and you've also drawn up a list of resolutions which you intend to carry out. There's one resolution that you shouldn't find it difficult to keep—and that is to get your MAGNET every Saturday without fail!

I've only made one resolution this year. I think I mentioned it before. It is to keep the old paper well in the forefront of all boys' papers, and, if possible to make it even better. I say "if possible," because the MAGNET is already the best boys' mag. on the market, and it's going to be a big job to improve it. But, as weeks go on, and you learn more about the good things which I have in store for you, I'm sure you'll agree that I'm doing my best to keep my resolution.

The coming of the New Year seems to have affected Master Dicky Nugent. Dicky has "weighed in" with a contribution which he calls:

## DICKY NUGENT'S ALMANAK AND PROFFESAS FOR 1930.

It is written on the style of "Old Moore," and Dicky starts off with the following "predikshuns."

Shortly after the celebrashuns of the New Year festivities, their will be much weeping and wailing and nashing of teeth. This will ko-inside with the beginning of a new term at Greyfriars. Every Saturday in January will be a Red-letter day, for each Saturday will see the publikashun of a grand new kompleto skool story by that famous orther, Dicky Nugent, Eskqwire.

Their will be a lot of "frosts," caused by various japers attempting to skore on the Sekond Form, and faleing to do.

Towards the end of the month their will be a rade on the Skool tuck-shop—the rade ko-insiding with the arrival of the usual monthly allowance of pokit munny.

In the Remove a certain boy will expect the arrival of a postal-order, and will be disappointed. His endevers to cash it in advance will meet with faleure. Early in the term it will be shown that the Sekond Form is determined to maintain its presteej as the prinshipal Form in the skool.

There are reams and reams of such "proffesas" and "predikshuns," but I think the above sample is sufficient to show my readers why I am not inclined to accede to Dicky's request, and publish his "almanak" in full.

**T**HERE is one thing that I must not forget to do this week, and that is to hand on my

### THANKS TO READERS

who have filled my postbag recently with THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 1,142.

their best wishes. I've received a bumper number of Christmas and New Year wishes from you fellows this festive season, and it is impossible for me to thank every one of you personally. So I hope that all of you who have written to me will take this paragraph as expressing my personal thanks to every one of you. I can tell you it makes me feel proud to know that I have so many chums in all parts of the world who appreciate what I try to do for them. And I can assure you that you will always find me willing and ready to extend all the help I can.

Some time ago I mentioned in my chat that the Haitian army consisted of

**MORE GENERALS THAN PRIVATES,** and this reminds me of my readers of an incident which actually happened in that topsy-turvy republic. A certain general ordered a glass eye to be made, but when it was delivered, he complained that its colour resembled the colours of the Spanish flag. This particular general was far too patriotic to sport the colours of another nation, so the eye was promptly sent back to the makers. The makers rose to the occasion and made another eye—this time incorporating the national colours of Haiti. The result was that the general walked around for the rest of his life with a glaring scarlet and green eye!

While we are on the subject of humorous happenings,

### HAVE YOU HEARD THIS?

Donald Robertson, of 55, Warwick Street, Heaton, Newcastle-on-Tyne, gets a useful pocket-knife for sending along this yarn. I hope he'll like his New Year's gift.



Mrs. Jones (who has been watching delivery of coal from window) acidly: "I think, coalman, that there are several pieces of coal in your cart that have dropped from my sack."

Coalman: "Oh, I'll fetch 'em in, mum. And there's a bit in my eye that you can have as well, when I get it out!"



Ted Burden, of Dawlish, asks the first question to be answered in this year's MAGNET. Ted wants to know who owns

### THE LARGEST SUBMARINE IN THE WORLD?

Up to the present the palm goes to the French, who have recently launched the Surcouf, a gigantic submarine battleship of 3,250 tons. She carries four 5.5 inch guns, and six torpedo tubes. On her upper deck she has a special "aerodrome" which contains a seaplane with folding wings. The Surcouf is named after a famous French privateer.

**H**ERE comes a query from  
**A COCKNEY READER,**

who wants to know how Islington received its name. Islington has existed since Roman times, and still contains many Roman remains. It was originally called "Isendone" and "Iseldone," which, I believe has some connection with "Merrie." While we are on this subject, I wonder how many of my London readers know where the following places are: Wibbandune, Encelfelde, Totington, and Adelmiton? They are the ancient names of Wimbledon. Enfield, Teddington, and Edmonton.

I shall pass on the next question to "Mr. X." Arthur Bradley, of Leeds, saw a thought-reading performance recently and wants to know

### CAN YOU READ OTHER PEOPLE'S THOUGHTS?

Well, according to "Mr. X," thought-reading, as performed on the stage, is easy enough for anyone to manage. I expect you know the sort of thing—one of the thought-readers is blindfolded and remains on the stage in full view of the audience, while his companion goes amongst the onlookers who hand him different articles. The "thought-reader" on the stage names all these articles without the slightest hesitation.

Here is Mr. X's "explanation": The man in the audience uses a certain code, where, by asking a question, he can convey the answer to the man who is blindfold. Suppose, for instance, he says: "What is this?" the blindfold man knows by the word used that the object is, say, a watch. Had it been a coin, the confederate would have phrased his question: "What have I here?"

You can **ASTONISH YOUR CHUMS**

by doing the same thing. Here is a simple little code which Mr. X has worked out for you:

"What is this?" means: A watch.  
"What have I here?" means: A coin.

"What have I in my hand?" means: A penknife.

"Can you tell me what this is?!" means: A cigarette card.

"Tell them what I've got!!" means: A pocket-book.

"Do you know what this is?" means: A handkerchief.

"You ought to know what this is!!" means: A copy of the MAGNET.

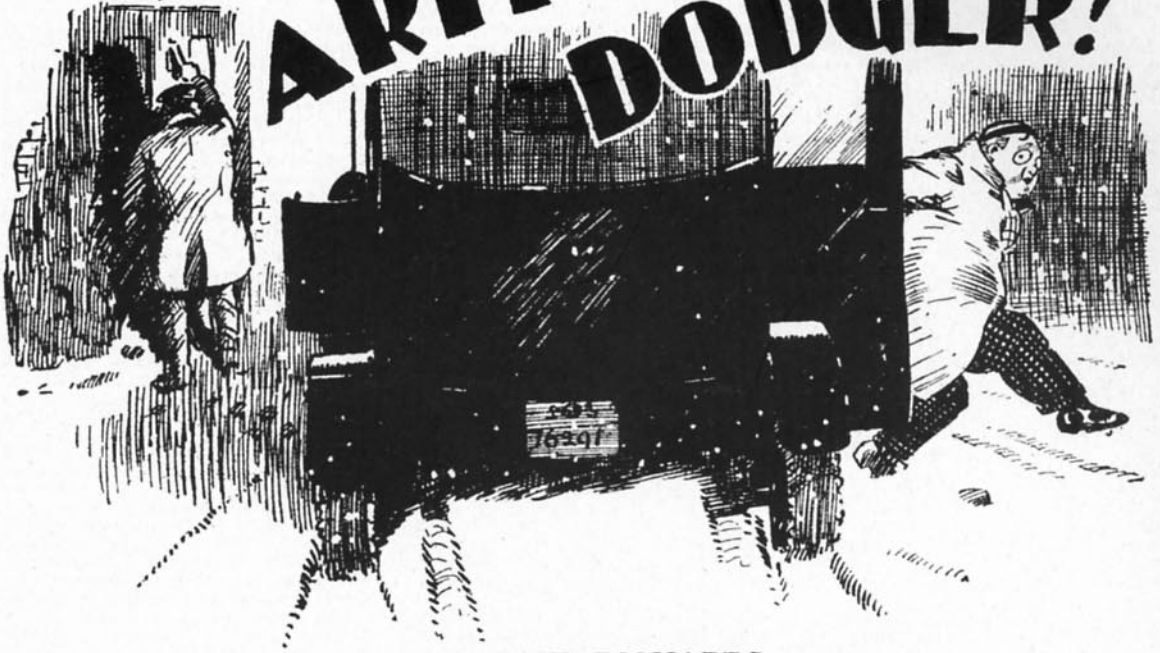
I'll have to give questions a rest, for space is short, and I want to publish this limerick which comes from Percy Sheer, of Tolvaddon, Camborne, Cornwall, and which wins a pocket-wallet this week:

There's a master at Greyfriars named  
Proust,  
Who has shot many lions, no doubt,  
Climbed many a height,  
Fought many a fight.  
At least, so he noises about!

### DETECTIVE-THRILLERS!

Stories with hundreds of thrills. This is an apt description of the extra-long detective tales that are appearing in our grand companion paper, THE POPULAR, every week. "Magnet" readers will be doubly interested in this topping series, for two very old favourites of theirs, none other than Ferrers Locke, the famous Baker Street criminologist, and Jack Drake, his assistant, play the leading roles in these yarns. Buy a copy of the "Popular" this Tuesday, price 2d., and start reading these thrillers. You'll never want to leave them off, I can assure you! Now turn to page 26 for next week's "MAGNET" programme, boys!

# THE ARTFUL DODGER!



By FRANK RICHARDS.

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### Bunter, Too!

"I'M coming!"  
 "Look here, Bunter—"  
 "I'm coming!"  
 "Fathead! I tell you—"  
 "I'm coming!" said William George Bunter, for the third time.

Bunter spoke with increasing emphasis.

He blinked round through his big spectacles at the five juniors who were standing by the fire in the hall of Wharton Lodge.

His blink was expressive of wrath and indignation.

"Now, look here, Bunter," said Harry Wharton patiently. "You can't skate, and you know you can't."

"I fancy I can skate better than any fellow here, and chance it!" said Bunter.

"Oh, my hat!"  
 "What a fertile fancy!" remarked Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry!"  
 "The skatefulness," observed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "is beyond the ridiculous powers of the esteemed Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Inky—"  
 "We're going a jolly long way, old fat man," said Frank Nugent. "The river's frozen for miles—"

"I fancy I can keep up as long as you fellows do."

"Rot!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"  
 "We shall have to walk half a mile to the starting-place, Bunter," said Harry Wharton.

"Let's have the car out!" suggested Bunter.

"My uncle's using the car this morning."

Bunter sniffed.  
 "If I were at home at Bunter Court

I should have the choice of half a dozen cars," he said.

"Then, why not head for Bunter Court?" suggested Bob Cherry. "We'll see you off at the station before we go skating."

"With pleasure!" said Nugent. "The pleasurefulness will be terrific!"

Billy Bunter gave another sniff. The attractions of that magnificent residence Bunter Court did not seem to tempt him to cut short his visit at Wharton Lodge. Everything at Bunter Court—according to Bunter—was done upon an infinitely grander scale. Yet the Owl of Greyfriars seemed to have no desire to make that change for the better.

let you help me. I might have known you'd be clumsy."

"Oh, my hat!"  
 "Besides. I was out of practice," said Bunter. "You fellows know that I'm the best skater at Greyfriars—jealousy apart."

"Oh dear!"  
 "And I've put in some practice since Boxing Day," went on Bunter. "I'm in rather good form. Still, if I need any help, two of you fellows can hold me all the way."

"Can we?" snorted Johnny Bull. "Catch me lugging a podgy porpoise two or three miles along the river!"

"Beast!"  
 "You see, Bunter," urged Harry Wharton.

"I see that you're trying to leave me out—your usual way of treating a guest. I suppose," sneered Bunter, "I was rather an ass to come here for my Christmas holidays. I see that now."

"You mean, Wharton was an ass to let you!" growled Johnny Bull.

"My esteemed fatheaded Bunter—"

"Shut up, Inky! Look here, Wharton, I'm not staying in here on my own, to be bored by your stuffy old aunt—"

"What?" ejaculated Wharton.  
 "Or your stuffy old uncle—"  
 "You fat freak—"

"But I'll tell you what," said Bunter. "It's a jolly cold day, and rather fat-headed to go out of doors. Let's go to the pictures at Wimford, instead."

"Ass!" said Bob Cherry. "It's a splendid day to go out—fine and frosty—"

"That's what you think!" said Bunter. "Well, I don't! I'll stand treat at the pictures—you needn't worry about that."

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Perhaps you've heard of W.G.—  
 Not Grace, but Billy Bunter;  
 A fattish chap (the size of three),  
 An "Invitation" hunter.  
 With ne'er a bean nor sense of shame  
 He rides to Wharton Lodge,  
 And tries the age-old bilking game—  
 What luck attends this dodge?

"Well, if we can't have the car, let's walk," said Bunter. "I'm the best walker here, anyhow."

"But—"  
 "The fact is," said Bunter, "I'm coming! I'm surprised at you thinking of leaving me out, Wharton! That isn't the way I treat a guest at Bunter Court, I can tell you!"

"But you can't skate," urged Wharton. "We're going miles along the river. You went through the ice on the lake when you skated with us on Boxing Day—"

"That was Bob Cherry's fault!"  
 "Mine?" ejaculated Bob.

"Yes, yours! I was rather an ass to

"They wouldn't let in six fellows for one French penny!" said Harry Wharton, with a shake of the head.

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Oh, really, Wharton! I told you that I was expecting a postal-order—"  
"For goodness' sake!" howled Johnny Bull. "Give that postal-order a rest in the holidays. We hear enough of that at Greyfriars!"

"Too much!" remarked Nugent.  
"The too-muchfulness is preposterous!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"The fact is, I've been expecting several remittances," said Bunter. "They haven't come. Your uncle's butler handles the letters, Wharton. I hope he's honest."

"What?" ejaculated Wharton.  
"Well, I don't think much of that man Wells," said Bunter. "He was absolutely disrespectful when I offered to let him lend me a couple of pounds and—"

"You fat villain!"  
"Look here, let's get off," said Johnny Bull. "If we wait till Bunter's done wagging his chin there will be a thaw. The ice won't last for weeks and weeks!"

"I'm coming!" roared Bunter.  
"Oh, come, then!" said Harry Wharton. "You can't skate, and you're too lazy if you could; but have your own way, fathead! Come on, you men—we shan't be back for lunch, if we don't get off."

"Wait for me!" hooted Bunter.  
"Rats!" grunted Johnny Bull.  
"I've got to get my coat and skates. I shan't keep you half an hour."  
"You're right!" said Bob. "You jolly well won't!"

"Look here, Wharton, if you can't be civil to a guest—"  
"We'll give you five minutes!" said Harry resignedly. "If you're not ready in five minutes you can follow on, or you can stay indoors, or you can go to Jericho! Now dry up!"

Billy Bunter snorted and rolled away to the stairs.  
He had disappeared up the staircase.

The Famous Five kept their eyes on the hall clock. The minutes ticked away. When the fifth minute had passed, Johnny Bull picked up his skates and started for the door.

"Bunter!" roared Bob Cherry, at the foot of the staircase. "Hallo, hallo, hallo! Bunter, we're starting!"  
There was no reply from William George Bunter. Evidently he was not ready yet.

"Come on!" called out Johnny Bull.  
Bob followed his comrades to the door. The Famous Five walked out in the fresh frosty morning, swinging their skates, and started cheerily for the frozen river.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### The Square-Jawed Man Again!

**T**HE fresh, keen air was like wine that bright winter's morning, and Harry Wharton & Co. looked merry and bright as they tramped along the lane that led towards the village of Wharton Magnus. The fact that Billy Bunter remained behind did not detract from their high spirits. In any matter that required exertion, Bunter was always a "passenger," and on a skating trip he was likely to be a more troublesome passenger than ever.

They turned from the lane into a footpath that led across the park of Sankey Hall towards the river. Through the leafless trees, the long red-brick building of the Hall was visible.

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and the chums of Greyfriars gave it a curious glance or two, interested in the place on account of the burglary that had taken place there during the Christmas holidays.

But the Hall was lost to sight when they came down the bank to the river and found a magnificent sheet of ice spread before them.

"Ripping!" said Bob Cherry.  
"The ripfulness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, suppressing a shiver. The searching cold of an English winter told more severely upon the Nabob of Bhanipur than upon his comrades.

"We get a clear run for miles," said Harry Wharton. "Down the river and under the bridge, and as far as Wimford. Race you fellows to Wimford?"

"What-ho!" said Bob.  
Bob Cherry was the first on the ice. His comrades joined him, and they started down the river. At a little distance the stone arch of a bridge spanned the frozen stream, and on the bridge a man in tweeds was standing, looking down on the glistening ice.

His glance fell on the five cheery schoolboys, and he seemed interested in them, for he stood leaning on the stone parapet, watching them as they came gliding on.

Bob Cherry shot under the arch of the bridge and vanished. Harry Wharton was following, when he spotted the man looking down from the parapet above.

He uttered a sharp exclamation.  
The face that looked down from the bridge was clear cut, with deep, penetrating grey eyes, and a square chin. Wharton knew that face.

He gave a shout to his comrades.  
"Hold on, you men!"  
But Wharton himself was going too fast to stop, and he shot under the bridge, and the face above vanished from his sight. After him whizzed Johnny Bull and Frank Nugent and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Hold on!" shouted Wharton again, and he slacked down.

"What—" began Nugent.  
"Stop!" gasped Wharton.  
"But what—" demanded Johnny Bull.

"Stop. I tell you! Bob! Stop!" roared Wharton. Bob Cherry was whizzing ahead, but he heard the shout of the captain of the Remove, and circled back.

"What's the game?" he called out.  
"Aren't you racing to Wimford?"  
"That man—" panted Wharton.

"What man?"  
"The man on the bridge."  
"Blest, if I saw a man on the bridge! What about him, anyhow?" asked Bob in astonishment.

"It's the man—"  
"What man, ass?"  
"The man I've told you about a dozen times," said Wharton breathlessly. "The man I believe to be the Courtfield cracksmen."

"Oh, my hat!"  
"You remember," said Wharton hurriedly. "The man Bunter and I saw that night last term at Hogben Grange, near Greyfriars—the night of the burglary there. We saw him at Wimford a day or two after the burglary at Sankey Hall. Now I've seen him again."

"Then he's still hanging about here?" said Bob. "But what are you going to do, old man? We can't collar the man."  
"The collarfulness is not a practical proposition," grinned the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"No; but we can keep him in sight," said Harry Wharton. "I told my uncle about seeing him at Wimford a day or two before Christmas, and he told me to keep him in sight if I could, if I saw him again. He was climbing the park

wall of Hogben Grange on the night of the burglary there, and he turned up here immediately after the burglary at General Sankey's house. It can't be a coincidence. He's connected with the matter. Come back!"

"Oh, all right!" said Bob resignedly.  
"There goes our skating run!"

"Never mind that."  
The juniors glided back swiftly towards the bridge. They stopped at the bank, kicked their skates off, and clambered up the steep bank to reach the bridge.

Wharton's face was keen and eager.  
There was no actual evidence, certainly, that the square-jawed man was the man who was alluded to in the newspapers as the "Courtfield Cracksmen." But suspicion, at least, was very strong.

For more than a month before the end of the term, robbery after robbery had taken place in the neighbourhood of Greyfriars School, and on the night of the burglary at Sir Julius Hogben's house Harry Wharton and Billy Bunter had seen the square-jawed man in the very act of climbing the park wall of Hogben Grange after midnight.

Billy Bunter, probably, had not seen him clearly enough for recognition, but that strong-featured, clear-cut face was indelibly fixed on Wharton's memory.

No clue had been found to the cracksmen who had rifled the safe at Sankey Hall. The thief and his plunder had vanished as if into space. But the presence of the square-jawed man in the neighbourhood was as good as proof to Wharton's mind.

Now that he had seen the man again, he was determined to keep him in sight, if he could. It looked, to Wharton, as if the cracksmen, who had rifled six or seven places in the neighbourhood of Greyfriars School, was breaking fresh country, and that the robbery at Sankey Hall was probably the first of a new series of crimes in a new neighbourhood.

Carrying his skates, Harry Wharton hurried up to the bridge, the other fellows following him.

It was only a few minutes since the juniors had passed, and he expected to find the man still there.

But an exclamation of disappointment broke from the captain of the Greyfriars Remove as he came out on the bridge.

The bridge was vacant.  
"Gone!" said Bob Cherry.

"The gonefulness is terrific!"  
Wharton set his lips.

"It's rotten!" he said. "This is the third time I've seen him since that night at Hogben Grange, and each time he's slipped away. I wonder if he recognised me, and guessed I should be after him?"  
"Likely enough if he's the jolly old cracksmen," said Bob Cherry. "Anyhow, he's gone."

Wharton clambered on the parapet, and from that coign of vantage made a survey of both banks of the river.

But nothing was to be seen of the square-jawed man.

Evidently he had left the bridge hurriedly, and the trees and thickets on either bank would have concealed him, even had he been only a short distance away.

"Sister Anne—Sister Anno, do you see a giddy cracksmen coming?" sang out Bob Cherry, and the juniors grinned. Harry Wharton grunted and jumped down from the stone parapet.

"Nothing doing," he said. "But he's deliberately got out of sight, and that looks to me as if he's the man the police want at Courtfield. He knows me as well as I know him. I'm sure of that, and he guessed I should be after him. Bother him!"

"May as well get on," said Bob.  
"Let's," assented Wharton.

And the Famous Five returned to the

bank, donned their skates once more, and resumed their run down the frozen river.

From a clump of leafless trees on the bank the man with the square jaw watched them depart, a curious smile on his face. He had been standing there, out of sight, within a score of yards of the schoolboys when they were on the bridge.

The faint smile hovered on his face as he watched them till they disappeared in the direction of Wimford.

Then he left the clump and walked away along the bank, in the opposite direction.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### Beastly for Bunter.

"WELLS!"  
"Sir?"  
"Where are those beasts?"

The Wharton Lodge butler coughed.

Possibly he did not recognise his master's nephew and that young gentleman's friends under the description given by Billy Bunter.

Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles, with an angry and impatient blink. Bunter was ready to start now.

A fellow couldn't get ready in five minutes. At least, Bunter couldn't. To expect Billy Bunter to shove on a coat and a cap, and pick up a pair of skates and get going like any other fellow was unreasonable. Bunter's notions resembled those of a very old and very tired tortoise.

Besides, Bunter had to have a snack before he started. The other fellows could fast between breakfast and lunch if they chose. Bunter didn't choose.

Bunter required several snacks to bridge over the awful gulf that separated one meal from another.

Still, Bunter had really hurried. He had stayed only to scoff a box of chocolates, that he happened to know were in Bob Cherry's room. He stayed to finish the box, for it was very probable that if he left any Bob might eat them himself before Bunter had another chance. In matters of this kind Bunter was a thoughtful fellow, and looked ahead.

The chocolates finished, some sticky smears were left on Bunter's fat countenance; but he did not expend further time in removing these. He came downstairs, in coat and scarf, with a pair of Wharton's skates on his arm, only a quarter of an hour after he had gone up to get ready. That really was good speed for Bunter.

But the hall was deserted when he came down.

Accustomed as he was to the selfishness of these fellows, Bunter could hardly believe that they had started and left him in the lurch. True, they had told him that they would wait five minutes, and the fat junior had taken fifteen. Nevertheless, they ought to have waited. Bunter had told them to wait. What more did they want?

"Have those beasts gone out, Wells?" demanded Bunter.

Only the portly figure of Wells met Bunter's eyes as he blinked round for Harry Wharton & Co.



Wharton knew the face that looked down from the bridge, and he gave a shout to his comrades ahead.

"Excuse me, sir, I do not quite follow," said Wells politely. "To whom, sir, do you allude?"

"That beast, Wharton—"

Wells coughed again.

"And the other beasts!" hooted Bunter. "Have they gone out? Don't stand there blinking like an owl, Wells. Answer me! What are you grinning at, I'd like to know?"

Bunter, as a matter of fact, bore a much stronger resemblance to a blinking owl than the Wharton Lodge butler did. Perhaps Wells was thinking so.

"Where are they?" hooted Bunter.

"Master Harry and his friends have gone out, sir, about ten minutes ago," answered Wells.

"Beasts!"

Billy Bunter rolled out of the house. He rolled out into the lane and blinked along it in search of the Famous Five.

They were not in sight, and the Owl of the Remove gave an angry snort and rolled on in the direction of the river.

There was no sign of the juniors there when Bunter reached it. The glistening ice stretched away, between frosty banks, in the direction of Wimford, but nobody was on it. Billy Bunter blinked up the river and snorted again.

It was just like the beasts to leave him behind; they disliked being outdone by a better skater than themselves. At

least, Bunter had no doubt that that was their reason. Anyhow, he would soon catch them up—if he could be quite certain in which direction they had gone. Up the river to Wimford, they had said; but it would, Bunter reflected bitterly, be just like the beasts to go the other way, leaving him to seek them in the wrong direction. Fascinating as Billy Bunter's company was, he knew that there were many Greyfriars fellows who did not yearn for it.

He blinked at a man who was sauntering along the frosty bank—a man of athletic frame, dressed in tweeds.

"Hi!" Bunter called out.

The man glanced round.

Bunter blinked at him more closely. It seemed to him that there was something familiar about that clear-cut face and square jaw.

"Did you call on me, my boy?" asked the stranger, his keen grey eyes resting curiously on Bunter.

"Yes. Have you seen some fellows about here, on skates—five fellows? I'm looking for them."

The man smiled.

"Yes. Five schoolboys—"

"That's the lot. Which way did they go?"

"Towards Wimford, a few minutes ago."

"Oh, good!" said Bunter. He added, THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 1,142.

as an afterthought: "Thanks!" and sat down to put on his skates.

"Beasts," murmured Bunter, "leaving a fellow behind; I'll jolly soon catch them up and beat them to Wimford. Making out that a fellow can't skate! This sort of jealousy gets a bit sickening."

And Bunter sniffed with contempt. Not all his misadventures on the ice could convince William George Bunter that he was not a past-master in the art of skating. It was true that when Bunter got on skates something always seemed to happen. But that was always some other fellow's fault.

Bunter got his skates on and helped himself out on the ice by a horizontal branch of a tree, close to the river's margin.

Once on the ice, he was going to start with a swing. He was going along the frozen river with a breathless rush that would soon overtake the Greyfriars party and leave them hopelessly behind. After that even those envious fellows would admit that Bunter could skate.

That was the programme. But the first item in the programme was to get going. The first item, however, presented difficulties.

Bunter, holding to the horizontal branch, felt his way cautiously out on the ice. Why his right foot suddenly flew away, as if of its own volition, Bunter did not know, any more than he knew why his left foot followed the unruly example of his right. But he knew that both his feet suddenly and basely deserted him, and that he sat down on the ice with an unexpected crash.

Crash! Crack!

Bunter was through.

Dark water welled up, encircling Bunter as he squattered through the hole in the ice. His desperate clutch

grasped at the jagged edges of the gap, and he hung on for dear life and yelled:

"Help! Yarooogh! Murder! Fire! Help!"

The terrified yells of the Owl of the Remove rang far and wide over the frozen river and the frosty banks.

"Wow-ow-ow! Help! Help! Oh crickey! Help!"

The water, rushing under the ice, had captured Bunter's fat legs, and was seeking to sweep them away, and drag the rest of Bunter after them.

Frantically he clung to the ragged ice-edge, and yelled.

"Ow! Help! Help! Ow! Help!"

There was a sound of running footsteps on the bank. The man with the square jaw had turned back, at a little distance, as he heard Bunter's frantic howls.

He came running back, with the speed of a deer.

"Hold on!" he shouted.

Bunter did not need that injunction. He was holding on as hard as he could. But the freezing water below was clutching him away, and the chill of it went to the very marrow of his bones.

The man in tweeds reached the bank. Bunter's crash on the ice and the breaking of the gap had sent long cracks in all directions over the frozen surface. Before Bunter's arrival, the ice had been perfectly safe. But certainly it was no longer safe, especially for a man of full weight. But the man with the square jaw did not hesitate a moment.

He slid out on the frozen river, unheeding the ominous cracking under him as he went. He reached the gap and grasped Bunter's coat-collar in a grasp that was strong as steel.

With a tremendous exertion of strength he heaved Billy Bunter out of the gap.

There was a loud, sharp crack from the ice on which he stood.

He slid back towards the bank, dragging Bunter after him.

Crack, crack, crack!

The ice was breaking right and left now. Black water welled and bubbled, with fragments of ice dancing in it.

Bunter, his fat brain in a whirl with terror, hardly knew what was happening.

He plunged into freezing water again, as the ice cracked and broke under his weight; but the grasp on his fat hands dragged him on towards the bank.

He felt himself landed in frozen rushes.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter. "Ow! Grooogh!"

He sprawled in the rushes, drenched and dripping. He spluttered water from his mouth, gasped for breath, and puffed and blew. His rescuer looked down on him with a faint smile, breathing hard after his exertions.

"Safe now," he said.

Bunter's reply was perhaps unexpected.

"Groogh! Ow! Beast!"

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

### Treating a Cold!

"B EAST!" gasped Bunter. That the stranger had saved him from danger, in all probability saved his life, did not occur just then to Billy Bunter's fat brain. But it occurred to him that he was drenched with icy water, that he had been dragged roughly along like a sack of coke, and dumped down in the rushes with a heavy bump. A strong feeling of gratitude for services rendered had never been one of Bunter's characteristics.

"Eh?" ejaculated the man in tweeds.

He stared at Bunter.

"Ow! Beast! Ow!"

"Well, by gad!" said the stranger, evidently astonished.

He did not know William George Bunter yet.

"Ow! I'm soaked!" gasped Bunter.

"Drenched! Ow! Those beasts said the ice was safe! Ow!"

"It was safe enough till you landed on it like a hundred of bricks," said the rescuer.

"Beast! I'm dripping! Ow! Where's my specs? Ow!"

"Here they are."

Bunter grabbed the specs, and jammed them on his fat little nose. They were wet and his vision through them was very blurred. He blinked at the stranger, who loomed like a man in a mist before the blurred spectacles.

"Where's my cap?"

"Your cap, I think, is gone," said the man in tweeds, glancing out over the cracked ice. "It is probably half-way to Wimford by this time. You are rather fortunate, my boy, not to be going with it—under the ice!"

"Ow! Why couldn't you get it for me?"

"What?"

"Now I've got to get home bare-headed, in this beastly wind," growled Bunter. "You might have got my cap."

"Indeed!"

"Ow! I'm soaked—drenched—dripping! Ow! Wow! All the fault of those beasts clearing off and leaving a fellow in the lurch. Rotters! Ow!"

"You had better get up and run home. You will freeze if you don't get into motion."

"Ow! I know that. Ow!"

Bunter fumbled with the skates. The square-jawed gentleman took



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them off for him. He seemed to be, from his patience with Bunter, a very good-natured sort of man. Having taken off the skates, he grasped Bunter and lifted him to his feet.

"Ow! Leggo!" howled Bunter.  
"You had better start. Run all the way home as fast as you can, and you may not catch a cold."

"Oh dear! I've had one cold, and now I shall have another," groaned Bunter. "Grooogh! All the fault of those rotters! Ow! They like me to be laid up with a cold. Ow! It gives them pleasure. Wow! They enjoy it, the rotters! Grooogh!"

"Better get going."  
"I know that. I wish I'd gone to the pictures now. Ow! You might get my cap."

"Come, come! You had better be off. You will catch cold, for a certainty, if you hang about in wet clothes."

"Think I don't know that!" snarled Bunter. "Oh dear! Beasts! All their fault! After this, I shall refuse to stay a day longer with Wharton. I shall turn him down. Ooooh! Ow!"  
"Be off, you young donkey!"  
"Beast!"

With that last ejaculation, perhaps by way of thanks, Bunter started, the man with the square jaw looking after him very curiously as he went. Probably William George Bunter was a new experience to him.

The Owl of the Remove rolled away as fast as he could.

Exertion in any shape or form had never appealed to Bunter. He disliked running, and when he walked he preferred to walk slowly. But on the present occasion he realised the need for haste.

His ducking in the lake on Boxing Day had given him one cold, and Bunter did not want another. His clothes were drenched with water, his boots squelched it as he went, and he left a wet trail behind him. Only by keeping warm could he hope to escape a cold, and there was only one way of keeping warm—by getting into rapid motion.

So Bunter ran.  
He trotted as fast as his fat little legs could carry him. Long before he reached Wharton Lodge he was gasping for breath, and feeling quite warm, in spite of cold water and a cold wind. He puffed and blew as he rolled laboriously along.

"Ow! Beasts! Wow! Rotters! Ow!"

He reached the lodge at last. The car was on the drive, and Colonel Wharton was coming out to it, when the Owl of the Remove came gasping up to the steps.

The colonel stared at the drenched and gasping Owl.

"Bunter! What has happened?"  
"Ow! I've been drowned!"  
"What?"

"I mean, nearly drowned! Ow!"  
"Get indoors," said the colonel; and he took Bunter's shoulder and hurried him in. "Wells!"

The butler appeared.  
"This boy has been in the water again," said the colonel. "Get him to his room, Wells, and see that he has all he needs."

"Certainly, sir."  
Colonel Wharton went out to the car and drove away. Billy Bunter gave a snort.

"Lot he cares ff a fellow perishes of pneumonia or plumbago!" he said bitterly. "Precious way to treat a guest! Ow! Of all the beasts—"

"Better get changed, sir," said Wells.  
"I'm going to bed. I'm ill! I can feel pneumonia coming on!" snorted

Bunter. "I've got it all over me, from head to heel. Ow!"

Wells helped Bunter to his room. He provided a hot-water bottle, and Bunter whipped off his wet clothes, plunged into bed, and hugged the hot-water bottle.

"Anything more, sir?" asked Wells.  
Bunter blinked at him over the blankets.

"Yes. I'm hungry."  
"Oh!" said Wells.

GREYFRIARS CELEBRITIES.

Here's another clever poem dealing with the popular schoolboy characters of Greyfriars.

No. 4.—BILLY BUNTER.



**I** TELL of Bunter (William George),  
The fattest boy in history;  
How he contrives to sit and gorge  
To surfeit, is a mystery.

Although no genius, he'll display  
An infinite capacity  
For tucking tarts and buns away  
With relish and rapacity!

He talks of tuck, he thinks of tuck,  
He dreams of tuck nocturnally;  
And often longs to have the luck  
To feast on tuck eternally.  
For tuck is Bunter's very creed,  
Filling his whole horizon;  
He's ever yearning for a feed  
To feast his eager eyes on!

"Eat not to live, but live to eat!"  
Is Bunter's cheery maxim;  
No dinner, savoury, or sweet  
Could ever overtax him.  
Straight to the tuckshop he'll repair,  
And drive Dame Mimble frantic  
By "clearing" all her choicest fare  
With appetite gigantic!

When not engaged in eating pies,  
Then Bunter plays the pirate,  
By raiding other chaps' supplies,  
Making them somewhat irate!  
And when they catch him in the act  
A five-hat comes in action,  
And William George is soundly  
whacked,  
Much to their satisfaction!

To study doors he glues his ear,  
In quest of information;  
And many stories, strange and queer,  
He puts in circulation.  
"I say, you fellows," he will bawl,  
"I've staggering news—oh, rather!  
And if you'd like to hear it all—"  
Biff! Bunter gets no farther!

Owing to pressure on my space  
(As Bunter says when swelling!),  
I fear that I can find no place  
His exploits to be telling.  
His deeds and feeds, his smiles and  
smirks,  
His fatuous hanky-panky  
Are not written in the works  
Of Richards—genial Franky!

"There's one way to treat a cold," said Bunter—"feed it! I've always found it successful to feed a cold. When you've got a cold you can't do better than feed it."

"You do not seem to have caught a cold, sir."

"You can keep a cold off by feeding it," explained Bunter. "It's the safest way. Send me up something—nothing much. I don't want to spoil my lunch. A cold chicken will do, and some beef. A few vegetables, some poached eggs, and a pie or two—nothing much!"

"Oh!" gasped Wells.  
Bunter sat up in bed and fed.  
Fortunately, he was not catching a cold. Perhaps he was keeping it off by feeding it. If a cold could be kept off by feeding, there was no doubt that Bunter was taking ample precautions.

He was busy for a happy hour.  
Then he laid his head on the pillow to rest. He needed rest, after his gastro-nomic exertions.

"Anything more, sir?" asked Wells, with irony.

Snore!  
Wells quitted the room.  
Billy Bunter's snore followed him as he went.

"My word!" said Wells, as he closed the door.

Billy Bunter snored on merrily; and he was still snoring when Harry Wharton & Co., cheery and ruddy after their run on the ice, came in for lunch.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Interesting Invalid!

**B**UNTER!"  
"Beast!"  
"Feeling fit?"  
"No."

"What's the matter?"  
"I'm ill!"

Harry Wharton stood by Bunter's bedside, and looked down on him with a smile.

Bunter did not look ill. Still, if Bunter had a fancy for keeping his room, the captain of the Remove was not the fellow to say him nay. The more Billy Bunter kept his room, in fact, the better the rest of the party at Wharton Lodge were likely to enjoy life.

Bunter blinked reproachfully at Wharton over the blankets.

"Leaving a fellow to drown!" he said bitterly. "Just like you, I must say! Exactly what I might have expected."

"My dear ass—"  
"I dare say you'd like me to be drowned," said Bunter. "Well, I'm not going to be drowned to please you, see?"

"But we never knew you came down to the river at all, old fat man. Wells says you came in wet. Did you fall in?"

"The ice broke," said Bunter. "You told me it was safe. I dare say you knew it wasn't safe all the time."

"Fathead! The ice was safe enough! You must have hit it pretty hard to break it through."

"Well, it broke," said Bunter. "I was drenched! Dripping! I believe I've got pneumonia in my legs! They were in the water—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"You can cackle," said Bunter bitterly. "Funny, ain't it? You'd like me to be crippled with pneumonia—"

"But a chap doesn't have pneumonia in the legs, old fat man! You get it above the belt."

"I mean plumbago," said Bunter. "I can feel plumbago creeping all over me! From head to foot."

"Oh, my hat! Staying in bed?" asked Harry.

"Of course I'm staying in bed!" hooted Bunter. "Think I'm going to drag my dying body downstairs to please you?"

"But it wouldn't please me," chuckled Wharton. "Stay in bed as long as you like, old fat bean. Missing your lunch?"

"I don't expect hospitality here, of course," sneered Bunter. "But I expect even here to have a little lunch brought up to me. It's not much I eat, as you know."

"Oh crikey!"

"Leave me to starve, if you like," said Bunter. "I feel so ill that I don't care much! Leave me to die!"

"My dear ass, you shall have your lunch in bed," said Wharton. "I'll speak to Wells. But really, you'll make yourself ill frowning in bed all day."

"I'm ill already! I've got a feeling in my shoulder like tuberculosis," said Bunter. "I may keep it off by taking care of myself. If I die, Wharton, I forgive you."

"Thanks, old fat bean. What about a doctor?"

"I don't believe in doctors. They're all fools, and ignorant," said Bunter. "When I was ill last Christmas the doctor said it was overacting! That's the kind of rot you get from a doctor."

"But if you've got pneumonia, tuberculosis, and lumbago, you ought to see a medical wallah," said Wharton.

"Well, I won't! He would want to stop my grub at once. I know 'em! Ignorant asses! I hope there's something decent for lunch, Wharton. The grub here isn't like what I'm used to at Bunter Court. It comes rather rough on a fellow used to a wealthy home. Still, I can rough it. I knew I should have to rough it when I came here. But just for once, as I'm ill, you might see that they give me something decent."

"You wouldn't like to go back to Bunter Court?" suggested Wharton. "I'd ask my uncle to let Brown run you all the way in the car——"

"Yes; that's what I should like——"

"Good!"

"Only I'm too ill to be moved——"

"Oh!"

"So there's no choice about the matter. If you find my illness a lot of trouble in the house, I'm sorry; but it's your own fault, as you know. I might have been drowned if that man hadn't been there."

"What man?" asked Harry. "Did somebody pull you out?"

"Yes, the beast! Dragged me about like a sack of coke," growled Bunter; "and never even took the trouble to get my cap! That cap's lost! Luckily it was one of yours."

"How lucky!" said Wharton, with deep sarcasm.

"Yes, wasn't it? It might have been my own. I say, it's past lunch-time. I'm hungry."

"I'll see that they feed you, fatty. You'll turn out later, I suppose. Or do you want your tea in bed?"

"I refuse to turn out while I'm ill, Wharton! It's heartless to suggest it, and I refuse to risk my life to please you. I shall have my tea up here. And my supper! I shall keep my bed till I'm well. I don't expect sympathy. But I've got to take care of myself, as nobody else will take care of me."

"Stay in bed till we go back to Greyfriars for the new term, if you like," said Harry.

And he left Bunter.

At lunch there was no perceptible diminution of cheerfulness owing to the absence of William George Bunter

from the board. Rather there was an increase.

Bunter lunched in bed. As his room was up two flights of stairs, there was no doubt that Bunter's "illness" was giving trouble to the household staff. It was agreeable enough to the Famous Five for the fat Owl to be off the scene. But John, who had to carry well-laden trays up to Bunter's room, had a gloomy expression after a time. The bell in Bunter's room was handy to the bed, and Bunter performed an almost continuous solo on that bell.

Bunter's wants were many and various.

How much trouble he gave was a matter that did not worry William George Bunter in the least. Legs might be fatigued by incessant clambering upstairs; but so long as they were not Bunter's legs, it was immaterial.

Whether Bunter really fancied that he was ill, or that he was keeping off an illness by these ample precautions, it was hard to say.

Certainly there was no doubt that he liked slacking and frowning, and was glad of an excuse to slack and frowat.

At tea-time he was still too ill to come down.

In consequence, Wharton Lodge was a much more attractive and desirable residence downstairs. But the incessant

#### OTHERS CAN DO IT— WHY NOT YOU?

The following laughable story, sent in by Lionel Saurin, of 53, Waltham Street, Landport, Portsmouth, carries off one of this week's useful pocket-knives.

#### A QUESTION OF PRICE!

"It's pretty tough," said the mother of a large family, "when one has to pay two shillings a pound for beef."  
"It's tougher," replied the butcher dreamily, "when one only pays one shilling per pound!"

Get busy with pen and paper now, chum, and let me have your effort as soon as possible.

tinkling of Bunter's bell, and the continuous mounting and descending of stairs, were the cause of growing dissatisfaction among the household staff.

"Is Bunter really ill, Harry?" Colonel Wharton asked, in a rather gruff voice after tea.

"He says he is, uncle."

"Well, if he does not come down to supper he must see a doctor. You had better tell him so."

"I'll tell him."

Wharton went to Bunter's room with the news. He found the Owl of the Remove out of bed. Bunter had apparently exerted himself a little, for he was clad in a warm dressing-gown that he had annexed from Wharton's room. Wrapped in Wharton's dressing-gown, with Hurree Singh's fur-lined slippers on his feet, and Nugent's muffler round his neck, Bunter sat in an easy-chair before the fire. He blinked at the captain of the Remove as he came in.

"You might touch the bell, Wharton," he said.

"What do you want now?"

"A servant."

"What for, ass?"

"To put some logs on the fire."

"You're too ill to put a few logs on the fire?" asked Wharton.

"Yes."

"Luckily, I'm well enough to do it," said Harry, and he tossed wood on the fire.

"You can do servants' work, if you like," said Bunter, "I daresay you're used to it. At Bunter Court I never lift a finger."

"Fathead!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! Ring the bell, all the same."

"What else do you want?"

"I think a hot lemonade would do me good."

"John was up here five minutes ago. Why the thump couldn't you tell him then, instead of fetching him up again?"

"That's you all over, Wharton! You're too jolly easy with servants. Make 'em work; that's my system."

"Well you'd better keep your system for Bunter Court," said Harry. "We shall have the servants going on strike if you give them much more trouble."

Bunter sniffed.

"Well, are you coming down to supper?" asked Harry.

"No!" hooted Bunter.

"Then you'll have to see a doctor."

"I won't see a doctor."

"My uncle says you must if you're too ill to come down to supper."

"Blow your uncle."

"Look here, Bunter——"

"Bless your uncle. Tell him from me to go and mind his own business."

"But, you fat ass, can't you see that he's doing it for your own good?"

"Tell him to go and eat coke."

"You can tell him that yourself, Bunter. He will telephone for the doctor if you don't come down to supper. If you're spoofing, as I suppose you are, the medical johnny will bowl you out. Better chuck it."

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Well, that's that!" said Harry; and he went to the door.

"Ring the bell for me before you go, Wharton! Don't give me the trouble of getting out of this armchair. Don't be selfish."

Wharton did not seem to hear. He left the room, and Bunter was given the trouble of rising from the armchair. John came up in answer to the bell, as Wharton went down. The expression on John's face was distinctly gloomy. Harry Wharton joined his chums in the hall.

"How's the interesting invalid?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Still malingering," said Harry. "Blessed if I know what to do with him. It's ripping for us for the fat bouncer to be tucked out of the way——"

"Yes, rather," chuckled Bob Cherry. "The ratherfulness is terrific."

"But it's too thick," said Harry. "I suppose the doctor will make him chuck it when he comes, though. Bother him."

Bob Cherry's eyes glimmered.

"Bunter ought to see a doctor!" he said. "But it's rather a shame to give the Wimford doctor the trouble of coming out in this weather. I think we might save him that trouble."

"There's no doctor nearer than Wimford," said Harry.

"Yes, there is, old man—there's one in the house now, who will be delighted to give Bunter the medical attention he needs."

"Eh?"

"Dr. Cherry!" explained Bob. "With a few of the things from your theatrical box——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Five heads were put together in the ruddy glow of the firelight in the hall, and there was a discussion. After which, the chums of the Remove adjourned to Harry Wharton's den.



THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Medical Man!

**G**ROAN! Billy Bunter omitted that dolorous sound as his door opened, and Harry Wharton came in.

Bunter, in point of fact, was very comfortable, and had nothing to groan for. But the groan was intended to intimate that he was not well enough to come down to supper.

The fat junior rather enjoyed the role of invalid.

A bright fire burned in his room, and a shaded electric lamp cast an agreeable light on the pages of the "Holiday Annual," which was open on Bunter's fat knees, as he sat in the easiest of easy chairs.

Beside him was a little table laden with good things, from which Bunter helped himself from time to time.

Wharton's dressing-gown was a little long for him but quite cosy.

Bunter hesitated a moment. Apparently he had not decided precisely where he felt the red-hot dagger.

"In my lungs," he said, at last.

"Both of them?"

"Yes."

"That's rather like pneumonia, isn't it?" asked Harry gravely.

"I think so! The pain is awful! But don't fancy I'm complaining. I can bear it!"

"You don't want to come down to supper?"

"I'd like to, but I can't!"

"You'll be a bit lonely up here," suggested the captain of the Remove.

"I shall be rather lonely if my friends are selfish enough to desert me while I'm ill," said Bunter. "My idea is for you fellows to take it in turn to sit with me in case I want to talk or anything."

"If you're really ill, old fat bean, we'll sit with you," said Harry. "We're not the fellows to desert an invalid."

"That's right," said Bunter. "I'm

a doctor would understand that I'm ill at all."

"He's come——"

"What?"

"He's ready to see you——"

"I won't see a doctor!" howled Bunter in alarm. "I tell you they're no good. I've never been understood by doctors. As for that old ass, your family doctor, who came to dinner the other day, he's absolutely useless. A born idiot, and frightfully old."

"It isn't that doctor who's come to see you, Bunter—it's a younger one——"

"I prefer an 'old doctor,'" said Bunter. "I utterly refuse to see a young doctor who's had no experience."

There was a tap at the door.

"Here's Dr. Robert!" said Harry.

"I tell you——" hooted Bunter.

"Hush!"

"Here's the doctor, Harry," said Nugent, at the door.

"Come in Dr. Robert, please," said Wharton.

Billy Bunter twisted round in the



As the man heaved Bunter from the water, there was a loud, sharp crack from the ice on which he stood!

The early winter darkness had closed in, and the wintry wind whirled snowflakes against the windows. But the windows were thickly curtained, and within, all was cheery, and warm, and bright.

Bunter was feeling very comfortable, indeed—and he saw no reason why he should recover for quite a long time. He felt no urge for the out-door life; frowning in an armchair before a fire was Bunter's idea of happiness, so long as there was plenty to eat and servants at his beck and call.

So when Wharton came in, Bunter greeted him with a deep groan, to make it quite plain that he was ill.

Wharton came over to him.

"Feeling better, Bunter?" he asked.

"No; worse."

"What's the trouble now?"

"Pain!" said Bunter. "I'm not complaining, mind—I can bear pain! I'm not soft—like some fellows! I can bear it! But it's like a red-hot dagger."

"Where?" asked Harry.

really ill, old chap! I think it may last some time—over the beginning of term, in fact. I may not be able to go back to school for the first day unless I get better. I may have to miss the first week or two. That will be all right, if your uncle writes to Dr. Locke and explains how ill I am."

"Oh, my hat!"

Bunter had evidently been thinking out all the uses to which an illness could be put.

"I'm sorry to be landed on you, like this, old fellow, in this state," said Bunter. "It's rather hard on me, too; for, of course, I should have better attention at Bunter Court—plenty of servants to wait on me, and the fat of the land to feed on, and all that. Your servants aren't quite what I'm used to, you know, and the grub is hardly what I should get at home. But what's a fellow to do? I'm too ill to move."

"The doctor——"

"I don't want to see a doctor. All doctors are silly asses! I don't suppose

armchair and blinked at the medical man through his big spectacles.

The gentleman who entered was dressed in a black frock-coat, with a black tie, and a pair of horn-rimmed spectacles. He had bushy grey eyebrows, and a bushy grey beard. If he was a "young" doctor, he did not look it; he looked fifty at least.

He came across the room with a jerky step, as if he were troubled with corns.

"This is Bunter, doctor," said Harry. "Bunter, this is Dr. Robert, who has kindly called to see you——"

"So this is the invalid?" said Dr. Robert, in a husky, wheezy voice.

"Dear me! Dear me! Fat! Very fat! Too fat! Much too fat!"

"Look here——" said Bunter indignantly.

"The fatfulness is terrific, honoured medical sahib," said Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh, who had followed the doctor in, with Nugent and Johnny

Bull. "But the esteemed Bunter has always been preposterously fat and flabby."

"Oh, really, Inky—"

"May we remain, sir?" asked Wharton. "We're rather anxious about Bunter."

"Certainly, certainly!" said the medical man, in the same husky voice, setting down a little black bag on the rug. "If there is any hope, I shall be glad to relieve your fears at once."

Bunter jumped.

"Wha-a-at did you say?" he ejaculated.

"A serious case—a serious case!" said the medical man, shaking his head. "The most serious case of over-feeding that I have had to attend this Christmas. But while there is life there is hope."

"Ow!" gasped Bunter.

Bunter had been afraid that the doctor would discover that he was not ill. It had not occurred to him that the medical gentleman might discover that he was ill.

"Let me feel your pulse," said Dr. Robert.

"Ow! Don't pinch my arm like that!" howled Bunter.

"My esteemed Bunter, you must give the medicinal gentleman his esteemed head," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "Two hundred and forty," said Dr. Robert. "This will never do! Now, tell me exactly how you feel, my poor, unfortunate boy!"

"Look here—"

"I must know the symptoms, my poor, poor, poor suffering lad," said Dr. Robert. "If human skill can save you I will save you! Tell me exactly what you feel like."

"I—I've got a—a—a pain—"

"Like a red-hot dagger?" asked Dr. Robert.

"Ye-es."

"Double—probably treble—pneumonia," said the medical man. "Indeed, it may turn out to be a quadruple, or even quintuple!"

"Ow!" gasped Bunter. "But—but I—I say, now I come to think of it, it—it ain't like a red-hot dagger. In—in fact, it's quite different."

"Is that where you feel it?" asked the medical man, giving Bunter a thump on the chest.

"Yaroooh!"

"Is that where you feel the pain?"

"Ow! Of course I do, now you've punched me there!" roared Bunter. "There wasn't any pain till you punched me."

"Perhaps it is there!" suggested the doctor, jamming his knuckles on Bunter's fat ribs.

"Whoooop!"

"Is that the spot?"

"Ow! Stop hitting me, you beast!" gasped Bunter. "I haven't got any pain. I never had! I was only pulling Wharton's leg. Ow!"

"Then what is the matter with you?" inquired Dr. Robert.

"I'm ill!" growled Bunter. "Just ill! It isn't exactly a pain—just illness—sort of ill all over."

"A very peculiar case," said the doctor, shaking his head. "Now, tell me exactly how you feel. Do you feel a pain if I thump you on the chest—like that?"

"Yarooooop!"

Apparently Bunter did!

"Bless my soul! This is more serious than I thought! It is, however, largely a question of diet," said the doctor, blinking round at the grave faces of Bunter's anxious friends. "We must go into that. Now, my poor boy, do you feel as if you could eat a good

supper if it were brought up to your room?"

"Yes, rather!" gasped Bunter.

"Could you eat turkey?"

"Yes."

"And Christmas pudding?"

"What-ho!"

"You feel as if you could manage a few mince-pies?"

"Certainly!"

"And a quantity of sweetmeats?"

"Yes; a large quantity."

"I thought so," said the doctor, shaking his head sorrowfully. "Just the symptoms I expected. Now, you must not touch a single one of the things I have enumerated?"

"Eh?"

"I see that you have cake, and oranges, and nuts, and mince-pies here," said the doctor, glancing at Bunter's table. "All these must be taken away."

"Look here—"

"I will draw up a diet sheet for you," said the doctor. "For supper to-night one small slice of brown bread, preferably stale—"

"Eh?"

"With a glass of cold water—"

"Oh!"

"For breakfast, the same—"

"Wow!"

"Lunch, to-morrow, the same—"

"Look here—"

"No meats, no game, no fruits or puddings or sweetmeats of any sort," said the medical man. "For three days the diet I have specified. After the third day there may be a small addition—say, half an egg at lunch—"

"Oh dear!"

"But I shall see you again before then. We must be very careful how we increase the diet—very careful indeed. I can trust your friends to see that you keep strictly to this diet?"

"Certainly," said Harry Wharton.

"Yes, rather, sir!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific!"

Dr. Robert rose from his chair.

"I rely upon you for that," he said. "Remember, a small slice of brown bread and a glass of cold water. Nothing else. If anything more is taken, I decline to answer for the consequences. Nothing else for three days."

"We shall see to it, sir," said Harry.

"Will you?" hissed Bunter.

The look that William George Bunter gave his medical attendant was quite homicidal.

"I will send some medicine," went on Dr. Robert. "You must not mind its nasty taste—"

"I jolly well—"

"You will take a wineglassful every half-hour—"

"Look here—"

"That is all," said Dr. Robert. "See that my instructions are carried out. Good-bye! I will call again to-morrow at the same hour. See that all this food is taken away. The effect of it on the patient would be deplorable. The diet must be strictly adhered to."

"Look here!" howled Bunter. "I'm not going to stand it—see? I ain't ill! I'm not going to be starved. Bread and water! Groogh! I tell you I ain't ill! I haven't got any pains! It was only a joke! Just pulling these fellows' legs—see? I ain't ill!"

"Feverish," said Dr. Robert; "the poor boy is wandering a little. He must not be left alone. The intellect is affected."

"Poor old Bunter!" said Nugent sadly.

"I ain't ill!" yelled Bunter. "I keep on telling you it was only a joke; I ain't ill at all! I won't be starved!"

"Hush!" said Wharton.

"You beast, you know I ain't ill!"

wailed Bunter. "You jolly well knew all the time that I wasn't ill!"

"This excitement," said the medical man, "is a very bad symptom. If he should become violent he may be placed horizontally on the floor, and sat upon till quiet."

"Very good, sir!"

"The same treatment is to be followed if he should make any attempt to get at food beyond the specified diet. I think that is all."

Wharton opened the door for the medical gentleman, and Dr. Robert passed out of the room.

The captain of the Remove closed the door after him, and the four juniors gathered round Bunter. Their faces were grave and sad, Bunter's was red with rage.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Be calm, old chap," urged Wharton. "If you think you're going to starve me—"

"The diet must be adhered to," said Johnny Bull solemnly. "We're responsible for your health, Bunter—perhaps for your life."

"I ain't ill!" yelled Bunter.

"My dear chap, when a doctor says you're ill, you're ill, whether you're ill or not," said Nugent.

"You silly ass! I keep on telling you I ain't ill," wailed Bunter. "I never felt better in my life. I'm only hungry."

"I'll get you a slice of stale brown bread—"

said Wharton.

"Beast!"

"And a glass of cold water."

"Rotter!"

"Lucky the doctor came," remarked Johnny Bull. "Just in time to stop Bunter from having any supper. We'll see that none is sent up, and as he's too ill to come down—"

"I'm not too ill to come down!" shrieked Bunter. "I'm jolly well coming down to supper—see!"

"Impossible!" said Wharton.

"Beast! I'm going down!"

Bunter made a rush for the door.

"Collar him!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Bunter was promptly collared. He struggled wildly, and was immediately placed in a horizontal position on the floor, as the medical man had instructed, and sat upon. Four juniors sat upon him, and the wild yells that emanated from Bunter showed that his lungs, at least, were not affected.

"Ow! Beasts! Gerroff! Yarooop! Help! You're squashing me! Ow! Wow!"

"You know what the doctor said—"

"Ow! Gerroff my neck! Gerroff my waistcoat! Ow!"

"We're bound to carry out doctor's instructions—"

"Beast! He's a silly idiot! I ain't ill. I tell you I ain't ill, and never was ill. I never felt better. I'm going down to supper. Ow!"

The door opened, and Dr. Robert blinked in through his horn-rimmed spectacles.

"I heard the poor boy's cries," he explained. "It is fortunate—most fortunate—that I was not out of hearing. Keep him secure. It will be necessary to operate—"

"Yarooooogh!"

"Fortunately, I brought my instruments—"

"Help!"

"The operation will be painful, but not necessarily fatal—"

"Keep him off!" shrieked Bunter.

"I answer for nothing, but there is a distinct chance that the patient may survive—"

"Help! Murder! Fire!"

(Continued on page 12.)

Send Your Football Queries to "Old Ref."

# INSIDE INFORMATION



By  
The "OLD  
REF."

How would YOU like to play for your country? Here "Old Ref" puts you wise to the qualifications necessary for International games.

**N**OT for a long time has there been so much talk, in a single season, on the subject of International matches. Knowing something of the inside working of the minds of the officials, I even go so far as to say that from time to time there has been real danger of a row.

The trouble, stated briefly, is this. The English clubs have a decided objection to releasing their best men for International games when they have an important League match on their programme for the same day. The clubs say that all International matches should be played in mid-week, which would remove the hardship now imposed on the clubs which have to release players.

But the authorities of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, have decided objections to playing International matches in mid-week. They say that the games would lose their importance, and that the revenue from mid-week International matches would not be sufficient to enable the various associations to pay their way. And so the "squabble" or perhaps argument would be a better word, goes on.

I hope that as the result of all the argument there won't be a complete scrapping of International matches. It is—or should be—the dream of every lad who is developing as a footballer to play for his country: to wear one of the coveted caps which are presented to International match players. If these "cap" incentives were taken away, I don't think football as a whole would be so good.

Probably the fact that there has been so much talk about International games this season is responsible for one or two questions having reached me from readers on this point. One reader asks this question:

**"Can you explain what is the qualification for International games? What decides which country a footballer shall play for in International games?"**

Roughly, and as a general reply to that question, the International qualification is decided by birth. In replying that way, don't think I am trying to be funny, though you may say it is obvious that a lad must be born before he can think of playing for a country at soccer.

What I mean is that a player is qualified, so far as soccer Internationals are concerned, to play for the country in which he happens to be born. The nationality of his parents doesn't matter. If he is born in England he is qualified to play for England.

In this connection there is just an interesting possibility—that of two brothers playing against each other in an International soccer match. During the present season, Dick Rowley has played for Ireland. He was born in that country when his parents were on a trip there, and consequently has an Irish qualification, though he has spent nearly all his life in England.

Now, Dick Rowley has a brother who is a very good footballer. He is in the R.A.F. at present, but if it should happen that he develops into a really great player, then he might play for England while his brother Dick is playing for Ireland, because this second brother was born in England.

**M**ANY a footballer has played for a country at football other than that to which he really belongs by everything save birth. Jock Simpson was a case in point. His parents were Scottish to the backbone, but young Jock happened to be born in Lancashire. He was taken to Scotland when he was a fortnight old, and learnt all

his football there, but he could not play for Scotland. He played for England instead.

Just on one other point about International qualification, before I pass on to deal with other questions.

***If a player is born outside the British Isles, and then comes to live here, he can play for the country in which he is "domiciled."***

There are instances of men playing for England who were born far away from the homeland. Frank Osborne, the Tottenham Hotspur player, was born in South Africa, but coming to England and playing all his football here, he was fully qualified to play for England. And he has played.

At the present time the Liverpool club has two players on the staff who definitely came to England to play football—they were grown up when they arrived here. Those men—goalkeeper Riley and forward Hodgson, may both play for England one day, and there would be no objections. Indeed Hodgson has already played in an England trial match, which shows that he has received consideration for a "cap."

**A**N unusual incident is reported to me from Middlesbrough district, and I am asked to give my verdict as to what the decision of the referee should have been.

During a match not long ago the goalkeeper of one side ran out almost to the touch-line with a view to stopping an opponent who had the ball. Just as the goalkeeper got near to the opponent, however, the latter accidentally kicked the ball over the line for a throw-in. The goalkeeper being on the spot, and thinking to gain an advantage for his side, immediately rushed to the ball and threw it in.

According to my correspondent the referee in charge of the match thereupon gave a free kick against the goalkeeper for handling the ball outside the penalty area. As you know, goalkeepers are not, in the ordinary course of events, allowed to handle the ball outside the penalty area, and the referee declared that when the goalkeeper picked up the ball to throw it in quickly he was guilty of a breach of the rules.

This is one of those funny cases which are not actually provided for in the rules, but in my opinion the referee who gave a free kick for handling against the goalkeeper in the circumstances mentioned was wrong. When the ball passed over the touch-line it was dead, and did not come to "life" until it was actually thrown in.

***A goalkeeper—or any other player for that matter—should not be penalised for handling the ball when it is "dead."***

My argument—which I think is sound—is this. When the goalkeeper gets outside his penalty area he is an ordinary player. Now an ordinary player is allowed to pick up the ball when it has passed over the touch-line for the purpose of throwing it in. He is not penalised, nor should the goalkeeper have been penalised on this occasion.

The problem looked rather a tricky one when I read about it at first, and I can excuse a referee being caught napping by such a circumstance. But I think he was wrong. If he sees this reference to the incident, and can send me a note showing that I am wrong and he is right, I shall be very much obliged.

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## THE ARTFUL DODGER!

(Continued from page 10.)

"But his friends and relatives had better be communicated with, in case of the worst—"

"Beast! Go away! Beast! I ain't ill at all."

"Hold him securely, please, while I make a deep incision—"

"Keep off!"

"In his neck—"

"Help!"

The door opened again, and Colonel Wharton stepped in, with a puzzled frown on his brow.

"My dear boys, what is the matter? You can be heard all over the house. What—what—Who is this? What—what—"

Four juniors, who were sitting on Bunter, jumped up as suddenly as if the Owl of the Remove had become red-hot.

Bunter sat up and roared.

"Ow! Help! Keep him off! I won't be operated on! I ain't ill. I'm quite well. Help! Keep that villain off! I won't be operated on! Ow!"

"Good gad!" ejaculated the colonel. "What does this mean?" He stared at Dr. Robert. "Harry, who is this man? What is he doing here?"

"It's all right, uncle!" gasped Wharton. "Bunter being ill, we called in a doctor, and he's well again now."

"A doctor!" exclaimed Colonel Wharton.

"Dr. Robert," explained Wharton. "He's cured Bunter. His full name is Robert Cherry."

Billy Bunter jumped.

"What?" he howled.

"Robert Cherry?" repeated the colonel blankly, staring at the medical gentleman. "I—I don't understand."

"Bunter's cured now, sir," said the medical man. "So I may as well take off these fixings."

Dr. Robert proceeded to remove the horn-rimmed spectacles, the beard, and the bushy eyebrows. Quite a youthful countenance was revealed when those adornments were taken away, recognizable as that of Bob Cherry.

"Good gad!" ejaculated the colonel. "This—is this a sort of practical joke, I presume?"

"Sort of, sir," agreed Bob cheerily. "Being anxious about Bunter's illness, we thought he ought to have medical attention."

"Beast!" roared Bunter.

The colonel burst into a laugh.

"Well, Bunter seems to be cured, at all events," he said; and he walked away, and his chuckle could be heard as he descended the stairs.

"You—you—you beasts!" gasped Bunter. "Spooing a fellow who's seriously ill."

"What! Still ill?" demanded Wharton.

"Yes," hooted Bunter. "Frightfully ill! Awfully ill! Just like you rotters to be larking with a chap practically lying at death's door."

"Lying, at any rate," remarked Johnny Bull.

"Beast! I knew it was Cherry all the time, of course. You can't take me in. And I'm ill. I've got a pain—"

"You mean, you're going to have one," said Bob Cherry.

"Eh?"

"Bump him!"

"Yaroooh! Stop it!" roared Bunter, as the chums of the Remove collared him, and he sat hard on the floor. "Ow! I'm well! I was only j-j-joking. I'm quite well. Yow-ow! Leggo!"

"Sure you're quite well?" said Bob.

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We're going on bumping you till you're completely recovered. Say when!"

"Ow! Yes. Quite. Leggo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five left Bunter sitting on the floor, gasping. He sat and glared after them with a glare that almost cracked his spectacles.

Bunter came down to supper. He had decided not to be ill any more. Illness meant medical attention, and Bunter had had enough medical attention.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Left in the Lurch!

"LIKE the jolly old Arabs!" said Bob Cherry.

"What?"

"The Arabs fold their tents and steal silently away," explained Bob. There was a chuckle.

It was some days later, and the time had come for the Famous Five to get a move on. Bob Cherry was going home, and his comrades were going with him. The Christmas party at Wharton Lodge was coming to an end, but the chums of the Remove were going together. Five fellows were to go, and they felt very strongly indeed that the number should be five, not six.

The fascinating society of William George Bunter had palled.

But it was useless to tell Bunter so.

Any statement of that sort would only have been taken as a jest by Billy Bunter, and nothing less hefty than a boot would have separated him from his old pals, if he could have helped it.

Booting Bunter was a last resource. All the juniors agreed that some less drastic method was desirable, if practicable.

"We needn't mention it to Bunter," went on Bob. "We catch an early train to-morrow—well, Bunter never gets up early. He won't even know we're gone till he comes down hours later."

"Bet you he'll get up early, if he smells a rat," said Johnny Bull.

"The earlyfulness, in that case, would be terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Not a word to him—not a whisper," said Bob. "We fold our tent and steal silently away, like the jolly old Arabs. Bunter can go home to Bunter Court, or go to Jericho, or any old thing he likes. As your uncle and aunt are going to Bournemouth to-morrow, Harry, Bunter won't be able to get out of them where we're gone, and you can give Wells the tip to keep it dark."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Good egg!" he said.

"The goodness of the egg is preposterous," agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The esteemed and stickful Bunter will be left lurchfully, and he can depart to Bunter Lodge and enjoy the honorific company of the nobility and princes of whom he has told us."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And so it was settled.

"Shush!" murmured Bob, as the Owl of the Remove rolled up, a suspicious gleam in his little round eyes behind his big spectacles.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"About to-morrow—"

"Oh! What—"

"I understand that Colonel Wharton and Miss Wharton are going off to Bournemouth early in the morning," said Bunter. "Well, a fellow wants to be civil, of course. But I don't see turning out of bed early to say good-bye. You fellows turning out?"

"We shall be up pretty early," said Harry.

"Well, I shan't be," said Bunter. "I

can say good-bye to them overnight. See? That will be all right."

"Right as rain!" agreed Wharton.

"Still, it would be better form to turn out early for once, Bunter," said Bob Cherry, gravely. "We shall all be up."

"I decline to do anything of the kind, Cherry."

"But just think—"

"You needn't jaw, Cherry. I'm not turning out to-morrow till ten, at the earliest. That's settled!" said Bunter.

"But look here, Wharton, are you carrying on here after your uncle and aunt are gone, or what?" Bunter blinked at the captain of the Greyfriars Remove. "I've no objection, of course. I should like it better without the old fossils, in fact."

"The what?"

"Old fossils. But if you fellows are thinking of moving on somewhere else I'll come."

"Will you, really?" gasped Wharton.

"Yes, old chap. Rely on me. I've had a very pressing letter from Lord Mauleverer, to join him at the Towers. But I'm leaving Mauly alone this vac. I'll see what I can do for him in the Easter hols. I'm sticking to you this vacation, old fellow."

"Why not give Mauly a turn?" asked Bob. "It's rather a shame to disappoint old Mauly, especially as he's written. He never takes the trouble to write to any other fellow."

"He's written several times," said Bunter calmly, "but I'm turning him down. Smithy's written, too; he wants me to join him in a run abroad. But I can't stand that pal of his—Redwing. A fellow has to draw the line somewhere. On the whole, I've decided to stick to you, Wharton. If you move on I'll move on. But mind, none of your early trains, or anything of that sort. I travel in the afternoon, if I travel at all."

"I'll remember that," said Wharton meekly.

"Do!" said Bunter. "You may as well bear in mind, too, that I prefer to travel by car. I'm used to it, you see."

"I'll bear it in mind."

After supper that evening Billy Bunter said his good-byes to Colonel Wharton and Miss Wharton, explaining that he might not be up in the morning before they left.

Bunter rolled cheerily off to bed.

"Is Bunter going on with you to Major Cherry's place, Harry?" the colonel asked, when he said good-night to his nephew.

"N-no. I think he's going home," answered Harry.

"But as you are leaving before I do—"

"That's all right. Bunter doesn't like travelling in the morning. Wells will see that he gets off all right."

"Oh, quite so!" assented the colonel. Bright and early in the morning Harry Wharton & Co. were up and busy. Bags were packed and carried down. The juniors tiptoed when they passed Bunter's door. But caution was not really needed. The deep snore that echoed from that room showed that William George Bunter was still safe in the embrace of Morpheus.

Bunter snored on contentedly, while the colonel drove the Famous Five to Wimford Station in his car and saw them into their train.

He was still snoring when Colonel Wharton drove back to the Lodge. He snored on cheerily while the old military gentleman and his sister departed in the car for Bournemouth.

The juniors' train and the colonel's car were both far on their way when

Bunter's snore ceased and he sat up in bed and rang.

He blinked at John, who came in answer to the bell.

"Breakfast" said Bunter.

"Yes, sir."

"Is the old josser gone?" asked Bunter.

"Eh?"

"Deaf?" snapped Bunter. "Is Colonel Wharton gone?"

"Yes, sir."

"Good!" said Bunter. "What's the time?"

"Eleven o'clock, sir."

"My friends gone out?" asked Bunter.

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I shan't be down much before lunch. I suppose they'll be back to lunch?"

"No, sir."

"Beasts! Making a day of it with-

station, sir, when you desire to go home, sir."

"Home?" repeated Bunter.

"Yes, sir."

"Did those beasts tell Wells I was going home?"

"I think Master Harry told Mr. Wells so, sir."

"Beast!"

Bunter did not breakfast in bed that morning. He was too anxious for that. He bounded out of bed. It did not take him long to dress; and washing never occupied much of Bunter's time. He was down a few minutes after John.

When he rolled down the stairs Wells and John were in the hall. John was grinning, and there was a sdate smile on Wells' face.

"Wells!" hooted Bunter.

"Sir!" said the butler.

"See that my breakfast is served

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Only Way!

"O H crikey!" said Bunter. Really, it was quite unpleasant.

Bunter felt better, fortified by a substantial breakfast. But he was at a loss. He was very much at a loss.

Colonel Wharton and Miss Amy Wharton were gone, and Bunter did not even know their address at Bourne-mouth. It was impossible to telephone and ask where the beasts had gone.

Wells knew, but seemed indisposed to tell Bunter. He had said that he had no instructions to mention Master Harry's destination. Bunter was able to guess that he had instructions not to mention it.

If the other servants knew, they took their cue from Wells. Bunter asked questions right and left, but received no satisfactory answers.

Where had the beasts gone?

The secret had been well kept; and they might have gone almost anywhere. It really looked as if Bunter would have to go home.



The door opened, and Colonel Wharton stepped in, to see the four juniors holding Bunter down!

out saying a word to a fellow," said Bunter, with a sniff. "Where are they gone?"

"Master Harry did not tell me, sir." "Rotten bad form, leaving a guest on his own for the day," sneered Bunter. "Just what a chap might have expected of them, though. Aren't they coming in till evening?"

"I don't think they're coming in at all, sir."

Bunter jumped.

"What?"

"I think they're gone for good, sir."

"Gone?" yelled Bunter.

"I think so, sir."

"They—they're not coming back to the Lodge at all?" howled Bunter.

"No, sir."

"Where are they gone?"

"Master Harry did not tell me, sir."

"Leaving a fellow in the lurch!" gasped Bunter. "The cheek of it! I suppose they've left a message with Wells. Just like them not to, though! What arrangements have they made for me?"

"Mr. Wells told me to tell you, sir, that he is ready to take you to the

quickly. I've got to get after my friends. I'm catching a later train. You know where they've gone, of course?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, where?" asked Bunter.

"Master Harry did not instruct me to mention his destination, sir."

"I'm instructing you!" hooted Bunter. "I don't want any cheek from you, now your master's away. Where are they gone?"

"But Master Harry said—"

"I can't help what Wharton said, he's a beast!"

"I have no instructions to mention where—"

"Ain't my instructions good enough for you?" hooted Bunter.

"No, sir."

"Wha-a-t?"

"Not at all, sir," said Wells urbanly, and he departed from the hall, leaving Bunter blinking.

"Well, my hat!" said Bunter. "Cheek!"

William George Bunter found comfort in a substantial breakfast. It was all the comfort that was left him.

Bunter was not an observant fellow; but he was able to detect a certain derisive amusement in the looks of the household staff at Wharton Lodge.

He really could not stay on at the Lodge all by himself. Indeed, Wells was growing rather pressing on the subject of Bunter's train.

He had inquired several times whether he should ring a taxi to take Bunter to the station. Bunter stood by the fire in the hall, thinking it out. Wells was in charge of the house now, and Bunter could not help feeling that if he stayed on all by himself, the servants would make themselves obnoxious. Indeed, he had discovered that his room was already being turned out; Wells taking it for granted that he would not spend another night at the Lodge.

The butler came up as Bunter was ruminating. His face was grave and impassive as usual, but there was a twinkle in his eyes that Bunter did not like.

"Will you be staying to lunch, sir?" asked Wells.

"Yes!" snapped Bunter.

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(Continued from page 13.)

"Very good, sir! Shall I order your taxi after lunch?"

Bunter breathed hard.

"The fact is, Wells, that I've spent all my money treating my friends generously during the holidays. I haven't my fare home."

"That need not trouble you, sir. Master Harry has instructed me to take your ticket for you, if you desire it."

"You needn't trouble about taking the ticket," said Bunter. "Give me the money, Wells."

Wells shook his head.

"I have no instructions to hand you the money, sir, only to take your ticket home if you desire it."

"That's cheek, Wells!"

"Indeed, sir?" said Wells.

Bunter lunched at Wharton Lodge. It was a cold lunch, and John, who waited on him, was careless. Having served Bunter, he left him to his own devices, and Bunter rang for him in vain. Then he rang for Wells, and again in vain. The household staff of Wharton Lodge seemed afflicted by deaf-

Bunter, perhaps, had not made himself popular below stairs. This was a hint of what he might expect, if he remained at the Lodge on his own.

But Bunter was not thinking of remaining. He was thinking of getting after the Famous Five, and rejoining his old pals. It was that, or Bunter Court; and Bunter Court still failed to attract William George Bunter.

Shortly after lunch, Wells appeared without being rung for.

"Your taxi, sir!" he said.

"My—my taxi?" breathed Bunter.

"Yes, sir! It is waiting at the door."

Bunter gave him a devastating blink through his big spectacles. But Wells bore it impassively.

"If you desire me to come with you and take your ticket, sir—" suggested Wells.

"I'm quite able to take my own ticket," said Bunter.

"My instructions, sir—"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" snapped Bunter.

He rolled out to the taxi.

Bunter did not want a ticket home; and as that was the only sort of ticket he could have obtained from Wells, he did not want Wells.

He rolled into the taxi and drove away for the station. Wells watched him depart with a smile. Never had the butler of Wharton Lodge been so glad to speed the parting guest.

The taxi covered the distance swiftly to Wimford Station. Bunter dismissed it there, Wells having paid the taximan. He rolled into the station.

At the booking-office he proceeded to make inquiries.

Five friends of his, he explained, one of them a nigger, had left by train that morning; did the booking-clerk remember them? The booking-clerk, who knew Harry Wharton well by sight,

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naturally remembered. The young gentlemen had taken tickets for Dorchester.

Bunter's eyes gleamed behind his spectacles.

If the beasts had taken tickets for Dorchester, it was ten to one that they had gone to Major Cherry's place, which was in Dorsetshire.

Bunter's next proceeding would have been to ask for a ticket to the same place; but there was, so to speak, a lion in the path. The railway company did not give tickets away gratis.

It was useless for Bunter to inquire the amount of the fare. His financial resources were limited to a French penny; and the cheapest railway fare was not so cheap as that.

He rolled away ruminating. Outside the station he spotted the taximan who had driven him from Wharton Lodge to Wimford.

Bunter rolled up to him.

"I've lost my train," he said. "I'm thinking of taking a taxi instead of waiting for the next. Yours a good car?"

"The best on the stand, sir," said the chauffeur. "Take you anywhere you like."

"Good for a hundred miles?" asked Bunter.

"Five hundred if you like, sir," said the taximan cheerfully. "Jest let me fill up with juice, and I'll take you anywhere."

"Well, I want to get to Dorchester as soon as possible," said Bunter thoughtfully. "What about the fare?"

That was a deeply astute question.

As Bunter had neither the intention nor the means of paying the fare, he could have afforded to be careless about it. But carelessness might have made the taximan suspicious. It was necessary that the taximan should not be suspicious—very necessary.

"What about a tenner, sir?" asked the man.

Bunter shook his head.

"You can do it for less than that," he argued. "I'm not throwing money away. What's the lowest?"

The taximan reflected. Business was not brisk at Wimford at that time of the year; and a good order like this was not to be lost. Had Bunter left it at a tenner, unquestioningly, the taximan might have wondered whether he could afford a tenner, and might have wanted something down. But the fat junior's astuteness had its reward.

"Well, say seven-ten, sir," said the taximan, "that's cutting it fine, sir."

Bunter assumed a thoughtful expression. It would not do to seem keen on closing with the offer.

Of course, Bunter did not intend the taximan to remain unpaid. He was no bilk! Somebody at Major Cherry's house could pay him when Bunter arrived there. If somebody didn't doubtless the taximan would lose his money, and in that case, he had Bunter's sympathy.

But explaining all this to the taximan would hardly have done. So Bunter ruminated over the man's offer.

"Is there a garage in this town?" he asked.

"You won't get a car cheaper at the garage, sir," said the taximan. "You can take that from me!"

"Well, make it seven-ten," said Bunter at last. "I can go to that."

"Right, sir!" said the taximan cheerfully.

And after a little necessary delay to fill up with "juice," the taxi whizzed out of Wimford with Billy Bunter inside.

It was quite a good car, and Bunter settled down to enjoy the drive. For some time he watched the wintry landscape flitting past him, then he curled up and went to sleep. As mile on mile fled under the wheels, Bunter's snore accompanied the buzz of the engine and the whirr of the wheels.

When he woke up, the winter dusk was settling thick, and the lights were on, gleaming through the gloom as the taxi sped onwards.

Bunter was rather cold and getting hungry.

But he was drawing swiftly nearer and nearer to his destination—to the dear old pals who had so unfortunately left him behind.

He was not, perhaps, wholly easy in his mind.

Seven pounds ten shillings was a large sum to pay, even for the delights of Bunter's company. And if the man was not paid, there would be a sordid argument about money—perhaps something more unpleasant than even a sordid argument.

Still, that could not be helped.

Bunter had to get to Cherry Place, and it was useless to meet troubles halfway.

The taxi whizzed on through the wintry gloom, and Bunter's thoughts concentrated on supper.

## THE NINTH CHAPTER.

### The Alarm!

"REMINDS me," said Johnny Bull thoughtfully, "of the Legend of Hamilton Tighe." "Who the dickens was Hamilton Tighe?" asked Frank Nugent. "Chap in the Ingoldsby Legends."

"What about him?"

Four members of the Famous Five regarded Johnny Bull inquiringly. The chums of the Remove were at Cherry Place, in Dorset, going in after a ramble in "Thomas Hardy" country in the falling dusk.

Bob Cherry had just mentioned that there was to be a distinguished guest to dinner that night. No less a person than Dr. Locke, the Head of Greyfriars School. The Head was coming a great distance in his car to dine with Major and Mrs. Cherry, and the major had remarked that the Remove fellows would be pleased to see him, in speaking of the matter to his son. Bob had doubted whether their pleasure would be irrepresible.

Wharton and Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh had already seen the Head during the holidays, as he had visited Wharton Lodge for a few days before Christmas. The other fellows had missed him there, and had not mourned over the loss.

Much as they respected their headmaster, the juniors were undoubtedly of opinion that a little of him went a long way.

"After all, it's only one evening," said Bob. "You had the dear old beak for three or four days at your uncle's show, Harry."

"And it wasn't really bad," said Harry.

"The badfulness was not terrific," agreed Hurree Singh. "Besidefully, what cannot be cured by a stitch in time must go longest to the well, as the English proverb declares."

It was then that Johnny Bull remarked that it reminded him of the Legend of Hamilton Tighe in "Ingoldsby."

"There was a chap in that poem," explained Johnny Bull, "who was haunted by a Head."

The juniors chuckled.

"It was a jolly old sea captain, who had young Tighe's head shot off, and was haunted by the head for the rest of his days," said Johnny. "We're rather in the same fix. Haunted by a Head."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We shall have to sit up and be good," said Frank Nugent. "Still, that won't be much trouble for nice fellows like us."

"We can take our choice about having supper on our own or dining with the Head," said Bob. "The pater thinks it will be rather a treat for us to dine with the jolly old Beak."

"It's a long time since your pater was a schoolboy, Bob," remarked Johnny Bull. "Still, let's play up. After all, we're clear of Bunter."

"That's a consolation for all things," remarked Harry Wharton. "I'd rather have the Head, and Quelch thrown in."

"Yes, rather!"

When the juniors came up to the house a car was driving round to the garage. They recognised Dr. Locke's car, and Barnes, the Head's chauffeur.

Barnes saluted the juniors in his quiet, civil way.

"The Head's here, Barnes?" called out Bob.

"Yes, sir," answered Barnes. "Dr. Locke and Mrs. Locke, sir."

"Best bibs and tuckers and best manners this evening," murmured Bob, as they went on to the house. "Never mind, what's the odds so long as you're 'appy?'"

The juniors went to pay their respects to their headmaster. They found him in the library.

Dr. Locke greeted them very affably, and Mrs. Locke gave them a gracious smile.

"I am very glad to see you, Wharton," added the Head. "There is a matter on which I hope you may be able to give me news."

"Indeed, sir!" said Harry, wondering what that matter was.

"I was very shocked and pained," went on the Head, "when I heard that a burglary had taken place on the last night of my stay at your uncle's house, Wharton. I did not hear of it till after I had left, of course."

"A burglary!" exclaimed Major Cherry. "Not at Jim Wharton's house?"

"No, at Sankey Hall, near Wharton Lodge," said the Head. "While I was Colonel Wharton's guest at the Lodge I visited Sankey Hall, and saw a wonderful collection of Indian jewels, which General Sankey had brought home with him from the East. The whole collection, as I heard, was rifled on the last night of my stay at Wharton Lodge. I left the next day in ignorance of what had happened." He turned to Wharton again. "Has any discovery been made, my boy?"

"None that I have heard of, sir," answered Harry.

"The jewels have not been recovered, then?"

"No, sir."

"Or the thieves arrested?"

"No, sir. The police do not seem to have been able to do anything," said Harry. "Nothing has come out so far."

"Well, we must hope for the best," said the Head. He turned to Major Cherry again. "These daring burglaries seem to be on the increase. During the last month before Christmas there were quite a number in the neighbourhood of Greyfriars School. Six or seven at least. Indeed, an attempt was made on the school itself, which was fortunately defeated by the alarm being given by a boy who happened to go down from his

dormitory. I have had the school valuables placed in the bank at Courtfield as a precaution. Really, it seems scarcely safe to keep valuables in one's own house."

Major Cherry smiled.

"I don't think a cracksmen would find his task easy in this house," he remarked. "My safe is in this room. I would defy anyone to find it without a difficult search."

"In this room?" repeated the Head.

He glanced round at the book-lined walls.

Major Cherry rose and crossed to a bookcase and touched a concealed spring.

A section of the bookcase moved from the wall on well-oiled hinges, disclosing an iron door set in the wall.

At the same moment an electric bell rang loudly in the hall.

Buzzzzzz!

The library door opened, and a startled face looked in.

"It is all right, Jarvis," said the major, with a smile. "I am showing Dr. Locke the burglar alarm."

The door closed again. The loud, raucous buzzing in the hall continued, filling the house with discordant sound.

"That goes on so long as this bookcase is out of place," said the major. "The connection is carefully concealed, and I would defy any cracksmen to discover it and cut it off without a long search."

He closed the bookcase again to the wall, and the buzzing in the hall ceased.

"Very good," said the Head. "Certainly I fail to see how even the Courtfield cracksmen could rifle your safe without giving the alarm to the whole household."

"In which case I should drop in on him with my old Army revolver," said

(Continued on next page.)

## BOYS, BUILD BIGGER AND BETTER MODELS!



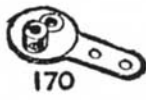
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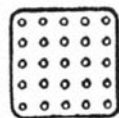
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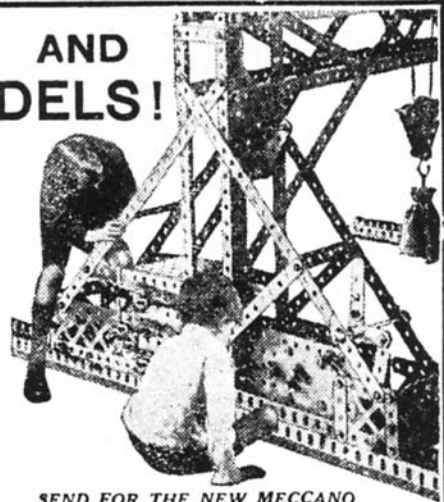


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the major. "I fancy he would be sorry he had called," said the Head, smiling.

"No doubt," said the Head, smiling.

"But—" said Mrs. Locke.

The major glanced at her.

"Do you think I am leaving an enterprising burglar any chance at my bonds?" he asked.

"Of course, the Courtfield crackman is not likely to visit Dorsetshire, I suppose?" said Mrs. Locke, with a smile. "But he is said to have obtained very accurate information as to the places he has robbed in the vicinity of Greyfriars—apparently from servants. Such a man might learn from your household that your safe is hidden behind a bookcase."

"Possibly," assented the major. "But I would defy him to shut off the burglar alarm. And once the alarm is sounding, what chance would he have of getting away with his plunder? None, I think."

"Very little, I suppose," agreed Mrs. Locke.

"He is welcome to any chance he may have," said the major, laughing. "It is a far cry from Kent to Dorsetshire, but the Courtfield crackman is welcome to try his luck in this direction if he likes."

And the conversation turned to other matters, though it was destined to be recalled to the minds of all present before long.

Harry Wharton & Co., in their best bibs and tuckers, as Bob expressed it, dined with the distinguished guests.

They were, of course, on their very best behaviour; and had Henry Samuel Quelch, the master of the Remove, been present, he would hardly have recognised the five most unruly young rascals in his Form.

During dinner, in fact, the Famous Five looked as if butter would not have melted in their mouths.

Hurree Janset Ram Singh remarked that it was preposterously honorific to dine with the esteemed and ridiculous headmaster, and the juniors agreed that it was; but at the same time, they rather looked forward to the end of the function. Such distinguished company was a trifle oppressive.

But that dinner was destined to be interrupted.

Suddenly, breaking in upon the hum of conversation in the dining-room, came a loud and raucous buzzing from the hall.

Major Cherry started.

"The burglar alarm!" he ejaculated. "My hat!" murmured Bob. "There can't be a jolly old burglar in the library at eight o'clock in the evening!"

The major rose quickly.

"You will excuse me!" he exclaimed. "I will come with you," said the Head.

"No, no! Pray remain with the ladies. It cannot be anything. It is really impossible—but I had better see—"

The major hurried from the room.

"Jarvis—"

Jarvis was already at the door of the library, which opened from the hall. He was wrenching at the door-handle.

"The door is locked, sir."

"Locked! On the inside! Then someone—"

There was a sound of a movement within the locked room. All the time the burglar-alarm was buzzing raucously.

Buzzzzzzzz!

"There is someone in the room, sir!" gasped Jarvis.

"Follow me."

Major Cherry caught up a golf-club from the hall, and rushed out of the door, to dash round to the french windows of the library. After him ran

Jarvis, and after Jarvis rushed the Famous Five of Greyfriars, in an excited crowd. Behind them the electric-bell went on buzzing.

## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### Strategy!

**B**ILLY BUNTER was feeling worried.

As a matter of fact, he had cause for worry.

It was not like Bunter to consider consequences when he decided on a course of action. Having decided what was best in the interests of that important personage, William George Bunter, it was the fat Owl's way to go ahead, regardless of consequences.

But the trouble about consequences was that they were there, and had to be faced some time.

As the taxi ran on the last lap of its journey, even Billy Bunter had to give a little thought to what was coming.

He was tired, cold, and hungry. These were serious things. More serious still, was the fare he had run up on the taxi.

There had been no other way of getting to Cherry Place; and when there was no other way, what was a fellow to do? In his cheery, happy-go-lucky way, Bunter had decided that somebody at Cherry Place would pay the taximan on his arrival.

But the nearer he drew to his destination the more he was worried by doubts.

That Bob Cherry would be pleased to see him arrive was by no means certain—even to Bunter. Bunter might regard his being left in the lurch as a "lark"; but—there was a "but." He had landed himself at Wharton Lodge for the holidays by sheer "neck." But Bob was quite liable to be more rough-and-ready in his reception of the uninvited guest than Harry Wharton had been. And his father, the major, was a tough old stick. Bunter had been at Cherry Place before, more than once, and he remembered a way the major had had of glaring at him.

And even Bunter realised that it was awkward to have to announce, in the very moment of his arrival, that somebody was expected to pay a taximan the considerable sum of seven pounds ten shillings. Had it been seven-and-six, it would have been a different matter. But seven pounds ten shillings was really a lot of money.

Suppose—Bunter did not like supposing it, but as he drew nearer and nearer to Cherry Place he could not help the supposition coming into his fat mind—suppose the beasts wouldn't pay the taximan?

They were capable of it!

From long experience at Greyfriars, Bunter knew how selfish they were. They might!

The taximan was certain to cut up rusty. Bunter's peculiar manners and customs had given him some insight into the ways of taxi-drivers. He had always found them extremely disagreeable when they were not paid.

It was sordid. Bunter had a mind above these miserable considerations of money. But taximen hadn't. He knew that.

Trouble—serious trouble—would accrue if nobody paid the taximan. The juniors might not even be able to meet such a bill, if they wanted to. Major Cherry might—probably would—refuse, as likely as not in a very gruff and unpleasant way.

Visions of a policeman floated before Bunter's worried mind. He did not know whether he could be "run in" for bilking a taximan. But it was an awful

possibility. Suppose the beast drove him straight to the nearest police station to settle the matter?

Bunter shuddered.

The case required strategy. The man should be paid—in the long run. It must be said for Bunter that he was by no means dishonest. Gladly he would have paid the taximan out of his own resources, had a French penny been sufficient to satisfy the man.

Obviously, it wasn't. The bill had to stand over until Bunter had realised the amount as a loan from his dear old pals, or alternatively, as the lawyers say, until he received some of the postal-orders he had long been expecting.

The man's money would be quite safe. But it would be difficult to convince him that it was safe if Bunter explained the matter to him. He decided not to explain. Least said, soonest mended.

So, as the taxi ate up the last miles of the long journey, the Owl of the Remove ceased to think even of supper—much as he needed his supper—and devoted his fat thoughts to considerations of strategy.

Now that the journey was over, or nearly over, Bunter really had no use for the taximan from Surrey. He was superfluous—in fact, a nuisance. The sooner he drove his cab back to Surrey the better Bunter would like it.

While the fat Owl, realising that he had landed himself in a position of unusual difficulty, was pondering over it, the taximan leaned round, opened the door a few inches, and spoke.

"We're close on ten miles out of Dorchester, sir. What's the address?"

Bunter started, and blinked from the frosty window. If they were ten miles out of Dorchester, they could not be far from Cherry Place, which lay close by the main road.

It was time for Bunter's strategy to come into play.

"The—the address?" he stammered.

"Yes, sir. We must be getting close there if it's ten miles out of Dorchester, as you said."

Bunter breathed hard.

"Mauleverer Towers," he said, giving the first address that came into his mind. That was the address of Lord Mauleverer's dwelling in Hampshire, and the taximan was certainly not likely to find it anywhere in Dorset.

"Well, I'm a stranger in these parts, sir," said the taximan. "Ain't been so fur afield before. I'll 'ave to inquire."

"Anybody will tell you," said Bunter cheerily.

The driver closed the door again and drove on. The road was very dark; the winter evening had set in blankly. The lights of other cars flashed by continually on the road. The taxi was passing Cherry Place.

Bunter's fat heart beat a little faster.

It was all right about the taximan's money—quite all right! Yet Bunter had a guilty feeling—just the feeling a bilk might have had. It was absurd, of course, but there it was!

The fact was that that taximan certainly would have thought Bunter a bilk had he known of his intentions. Appearances, at least, would have been against Bunter. He could not help realising that.

A quarter of a mile on the taxi was passing a row of cottages. Bunter tapped on the window, and the taximan leaned round and opened the door again.

"We're quite close now," said Bunter. "Better ask at one of those cottages. Be as quick as you can. I'm getting jolly cold."

"Right, sir!"

The taximan halted the car, and dismounted. Leaving the engine running





With a grim look on his face Major Cherry came swiftly across the room, a golf club in his hand, to where the fat form of Bunter lay on the floor.

he crossed over to the cottages, to knock at a door and make his inquiry.

Bunter cautiously stepped out on the other side of the taxi.

The vehicle was between him and the unsuspecting driver, and the noise of the engine drowned any noise Bunter made.

Bunter was not accustomed to moving quickly. But he moved across the wide road to the opposite side at a remarkable speed.

Haste was essential.

On the farther side of the road the winter blackness wrapped Bunter like a garment.

He started back towards Cherry Place as fast as his fat little legs would carry him.

He vanished into the night.

What the taximan said when he came back from his futile inquiry and found the cab empty, Bunter never knew. It was probably something very emphatic.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter and the Burglar!

**B**ILLY BUNTER opened the wide wooden gate over which the lamp burned, and let it close behind him.

He had dodged the taximan; that worry was off his fat mind, for the present at least. Lighted windows were before him, the windows of Cherry Place, where Harry Wharton & Co. were in happy unconsciousness of Bunter's proximity.

The fat junior peered at a window that gave him a view of a long, lighted room; and blinked in through his big spectacles.

The beasts were at dinner; it was the dining-room he was blinking into; and, to his surprise, he recognised the Head of Greyfriars and his wife among the guests at the festive board.

Bunter gave a sniff. He had had enough of the Beak at Wharton Lodge, and it was really sickening to find that he was a guest of Cherry Place. Still, it was a relief to see the Famous Five there, beasts as they were. He had been right in his conclusion that the chums of the Remove had headed for

Bob Cherry's home when they left Wharton Lodge.

There they were, looking sedate and demure in the presence of their headmaster, and evidently not thinking of Bunter—still less imagining that the Owl of the Remove was blinking in at the window at them.

Bunter moved round towards the door.

Then he paused.

Bunter had plenty of cheek. It was his chief asset. But Major Cherry did not like him—he remembered clearly that Major Cherry had never liked him. Why, he did not know. There were quite a lot of people who did not like Bunter; but Bunter never knew why they didn't.

Strategy was still required. He did not want to face the major first of all. Bob's good nature might stand the strain—the major's mightn't.

Instead of going up to the door, therefore, Bunter turned back, and went along towards the library.

The library, he remembered, had french windows. A fellow could get in that way.

Once in the house, he knew his way about.

While the dinner was going on the servants would be busy. It would be easy for Bunter to nip up to Bob's room.

There he could wait till Bob came up.

Bob, though a beast like all the Co., was a good-natured beast. Finding Bunter in the house late at night he could hardly turn him out. He would have to put it to his father, and make it all right for Bunter to stay the night, at least.

After that, Bunter's wonderful sticking powers would do the rest. At least, Bunter hoped that they would.

The library was dark.

Bunter tiptoed to the french window. If it was fastened he had to find some other entrance.

To his relief, he found one of the glass doors ajar.

Quietly he pushed it open.

Within, as without, the darkness was deep. Bunter blinked into the deep gloom, and, to his surprise, caught a

spot of light in the darkness across the spacious room.

He blinked at it in amazement.

Someone was in the large, unlighted room, with a tiny electric torch in his hand—someone quite invisible to Bunter.

It really was surprising.

There was a faint sound in the gloomy room; and it was followed by the sudden raucous buzzing of an electric bell in the hall beyond.

That sudden sound, in the silence, made Bunter jump.

Buzzzzzzzzzz!

The spot of light by the library wall moved a little. Bunter heard a click, as if a lock had opened.

There was a sound of rummaging.

Crash!

The crash was caused by Bunter, as, groping in the gloom, he butted into a little table, on which a reading-lamp stood.

The table rocked, and the lamp went to the floor with a crash; and the crash was followed by a startled exclamation.

The light flashed round from the wall at Bunter.

For an instant, as it whirled round, Bunter had a view of a section of a bookcase standing open, of an iron door in the wall that stood open also, and of shelves on which were stacked bundles of papers and other articles.

It was an instant's glimpse, blotted out by darkness the next moment, as the flash of the electric torch blazed fairly into Bunter's face, blinding him with its glare.

Buzzzzzzzz!

The electric bell was still buzzing steadily in the hall. From the same direction came the sound of voices and footsteps.

Bunter heard a voice:

"You!"

It seemed as if the unseen man who held the electric torch had recognised him. The voice was a low hiss, full of fury.

"I—I say—" gasped Bunter.

What was happening he did not know. Bunter's brain did not work quickly. He was surprised, startled, bewildered; but it did not dawn on his

fat brain that he had butted in on a cracksmen who was at work in the library while the family were at dinner. "I—I say— Yarooogh!" gasped Bunter. "Ow! Oh! Help!"

The light was shut off. An unseen figure brushed past Bunter in the darkness, and struck him in passing.

The fat junior went with a crash to the floor.

Half stunned by the blow, Bunter lay gasping on the floor, not even conscious that the man who had struck him down was springing in hot haste out of the open french window into the darkness of the night.

"Ow! Wow!" gasped Bunter.

He sat up dizzily.

There was a sound of wrenching at the library door. Somebody was trying to open it from the side of the hall.

Bunter put his hand to his head. There was a big bruise there, where the heavy blow had fallen. His fat senses were swimming. He tried to get on his feet, rolled over again, and sank into unconsciousness.

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

### Only Bunter!

**M**AJOR CHERRY came with a rush up to the french windows, the golf-club gripped in his hand. A dark figure flitted away in the darkness, vanishing among dim shrubberies before the major reached the spot.

The buzzing of the alarm bell showed that the bookcase section was still open; and there was a sound in the library as the major reached the open french windows, showing that someone was there.

"We've got him!" panted the major. He blocked the open portion of the french window with his rather portly person.

If the cracksmen had been still within his escape would have been cut off; there was no other way out, save by the door on the hall, where several startled servants had gathered.

And the major, who had heard a

sound in the library as he arrived, did not doubt that the thief was still there.

"He's there, sir?" panted Jarvis. "Someone is there. Get a light, Jarvis, while I guard the doorway."

The major stepped within, peering about him in the gloom, the golf club lifted, ready for a blow if a rush came.

Jarvis pressed in behind him, felt for the electric switch near the window, and flashed on the lights.

The library was flooded with sudden illumination.

Harry Wharton & Co. arrived at the same moment, and crowded in at the french window.

There were plenty on the spot now to deal with the cracksmen, if he was still there. But no cracksmen was to be seen in the glare of the electric light.

The major strode across the room towards the safe.

The bookcase section stood back from the wall, the electric alarm still buzzing continuously in the hall. The iron door in the wall stood open, revealing the interior of the safe.

On the floor lay several bundles of papers, and littered here and there were scattered documents, evidently dropped by the cracksmen in his haste.

"He is gone!" said Major Cherry. "The alarm must have scared him off. But—"

He stared round him, puzzled.

The attempt on the safe had been a daring one, almost a desperate one, yet from its very daring, had been likely to succeed.

With the family at dinner, the servants occupied elsewhere, the library in darkness, the unknown rogue had had a chance of making a swift and sudden coup.

The french windows had been locked at dark, but evidently the man had forced an opening there—not a difficult task for a cracksmen. Somehow—by some cunning spying—the man knew where the safe was located, and probably knew of the electric alarm, but he had counted, after locking the library door, on a couple of minutes at least—and a couple of minutes should have been enough for a swift robbery and a swift flight.

He had had two or three minutes since the alarm had started to buzz, before the major had got round to the library windows. He had made his escape—but obviously the intended robbery had not been carried out. The thief had fled, leaving his plunder, or most of it, still in the safe, or scattered on the floor. It looked as if he had been suddenly scared into flight with his work undone.

The major remembered the sound he had heard within as he reached the open french window. Someone had been within.

"Guard the door, Jarvis! He may not be gone!" rapped out the major. "Watch the door while I search the room."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" shouted Bob.

"What?"

"Look—"

"Great pip!"

Close by a big armchair, which partly hid it, a figure lay on the floor—motionless.

The major came swiftly across the room, the golf club in his hand, a grim look on his face.

"Hold on!" gasped Bob. "That isn't a cracksmen—"

"My only hat!"

"Bunter!"

"Billy Bunter!"

"Oh crikey!"

Bob Cherry dropped beside the still form, and raised the head and shoulders from the floor.

A fat face was revealed in the glare of the light.

The eyes opened.

Billy Bunter blinked round him.

"Ow! Grooogh! Beast! Ow!" he gasped.

"Bunter!" said Major Cherry dazedly. "A Greyfriars boy! How did this boy get here?"

"Ow! I say, you fellows, keep him off!"

"This—this boy cannot have opened the safe!" stuttered the major. "What does this mean?"

"It's Bunter—"

"Did you know Bunter was in the house, Bob?"

"No; we left him in Surrey this morning!" gasped Bob. "I—I—suppose he came after us—"

"But how—why—"

"He's had a knock," said Bob.

"There's a bump on his head. He must have found the library open and come in that way instead of going to the front door, goodness knows why."

Then the major understood.

"And the cracksmen was here—Bunter's coming in interrupted him—that must be the explanation. The boy's actions seem to have been very extraordinary but the result is very fortunate. Little, if anything has been taken."

"Ow! I say, you fellows—ow! My head aches! Keep that beast off! I say, I've been knocked over."

"Did you see anyone here, Bunter!" asked the major.

"Ow! No! Some beast jumped at me in the dark and hit me! I've got a pain in my napper! Where's my specs? I've dropped my specs. Mind you don't tread on my specs, you fellows! If you break them, you'll have to pay for them! Ow!"

"Here's your specs, old fat man," said Harry Wharton.

Bunter grabbed the spectacles from the captain of the Remove, and jammed them on his nose.

He blinked round him dizzily.

"I say, you fellows, who was it hit me? If it was one of you fellows larking, I don't call it a lark."

"It was a burglar," said Bob. "You

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must have butted in just when he got the safe open, and startled him."

"Oh crumbs! Keep him off!" yelled Bunter.

"He's gone!" said Bob soothingly.

"Oh! All right! I'm not afraid of a burglar, of course. You know how I handled that burglar at Greyfriars—"

"Fathead!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! The—the fact is, I knew there was a burglar here, and—and came in to stop him—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I say, you fellows, I've got a frightful pain in my head! And—and I'm hungry!"

Billy Bunter was on his feet now. He leaned heavily on Bob Cherry, and Johnny Bull lent Bob his aid in supporting the weight of the fat junior. Bunter blinked from face to face.

"How did you get here, Bunter?" demanded the major.

"I—I came in, you know—"

"Why did you enter the house in this surreptitious way, instead of knocking at the door?"

"I—I—I was going to give Bob a pleasant surprise!" gasped Bunter.

"Knowing how glad he would be to see me, after leaving me behind by accident, I—I meant to go to his room, and—and give him a joyful surprise when he came up—"

"You young donkey."

"Oh, really, sir—"

"Whatever Bunter's reasons may have been, his entrance at that particular moment seems to have been very fortunate," said Major Cherry. "Take him to your room, Bob, while I get the police here."

"Come on, fatty."

The library door was unlocked now, and Bob led the Owl of the Remove out into the hall. There the Head of Greyfriars was waiting, in alarm and anxiety. He stared at Bunter.

"What has happened—what—" he ejaculated.

"It was a burglar, sir," said Bob, "and Bunter seems to have butted in and interrupted him."

"Bless my soul!"

"Come on, Bunter."

Bunter was taken up to Bob's room. He collapsed on Bob's bed and groaned. For once, Billy Bunter was not wholly malingering; he really had a bump on his head, and a pain. It was like Bunter to make the most of it. His deep groan would have done credit to an Indian's victim at the stake.

"D-d-don't leave me, old chap!" gasped Bunter, as Bob Cherry went to the door.

"I'm going to help look for the giddy burglar, old fat bean—"

"I'm hungry!"

The door closed.

"Beast!"

Bunter was left alone. He sat up on the bed, rubbed his head, and groaned again. Then, realising that groaning was superfluous, now that he was alone, he ceased that sound of anguish. And he grinned.

He grinned expansively.

Luck had befriended Billy Bunter once more. He had planned to instal himself within Cherry Place and trust to his fat wits not to be kicked out. But the outcome had been doubtful. Now it was all right! Apparently he had interrupted, and perhaps prevented, a burglary. He had been knocked down by the burglar he had interrupted. After that, they could scarcely do less than make him a welcome guest. There was such a thing as gratitude, Bunter reflected. Such a thing as acknowledging a great service rendered by a fellow at the risk of his life!

Billy Bunter felt that he was safely landed now for the rest of the vacation. And he grinned.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Sticks to His Old Pals!

"BARNES! Seen anybody?"

"No, sir," said Barnes. "Has something happened at the house?"

"Yes, rather—a burglary—"

Barnes stared.

Harry Wharton & Co. were joining in the search of the grounds, with Major Cherry and several of the servants. The Head's chauffeur, coming from the direction of the garage, met them.

"A burglary, sir?" repeated Barnes blankly. "At this early hour—"

"The rotter got into the library while we were at dinner," said Bob. "By sheer luck Bunter butted in unexpectedly and interrupted him, or he might have got away with a bagful of plunder."

"Indeed, sir! I did not know that Master Bunter was here."

"Neither did we," chuckled Bob. "He turned up, like a bad penny! But it was lucky he did, as it happens."

NOTTS DOES IT AGAIN!

The following clever Greyfriars limerick, sent in by Bertie Butler, of 32, King Street, Work-sop, Notts, has earned for its author one of this week's useful pocket wallets:

No wonder the MAGNET has caught on With fellows like Cherry and Wharton. And while there's a stunter Like fat Billy Bunter, You can always be sure of some sport on.

Look lively with your attempt, chum. You'd like one of these wallets, wouldn't you?

"The man was seen, then?" asked Barnes.

"No; he knocked Bunter over in the dark, and bolted. Of course, he's got away before this, but we're looking round."

"I will help you, sir, with your permission."

"Yes, rather! Join up, Barnes!" Barnes took an industrious part in the search of the grounds, but nothing was discovered.

The cracksman had had ample time to get clear, and it was evident that he had got clear. The search, however, went on till a police-inspector arrived from Dorchester in response to the major's prompt telephone call.

The official gentleman examined the safe in the library. Owing to the interruption, nothing was missing. But the major had had a narrow escape of a heavy loss. Among the documents in the safe were a number of bearer bonds; and these were the documents that were found scattered on the floor. Obviously, the cracksman had had the bonds in his hand when Bunter's sudden and unexpected entrance in the dark library interrupted and scared him. Six bonds, each of the value of two hundred pounds, had been dropped and scattered.

Bunter's unexpected arrival had certainly turned out fortunate for Major

Cherry. Probably for the first time in his fat career, Bunter's arrival gave satisfaction.

Billy Bunter was questioned by the inspector from Dorchester. As the only person who had come into actual contact with the cracksman, Bunter had jumped into sudden—though temporary—importance.

Bunter had been provided with supper. He was doing justice—full justice—to a well-laden tray of comestibles, in Bob's room, in an armchair, before a blazing fire, when the inspector was brought in by Major Cherry.

Bunter did not mind answering questions—in fact, he liked the importance he had suddenly achieved—but he did not suspend his gastronomic operations. He answered with his mouth full, with frequent pauses for a bite.

The keen-eyed official gentleman eyed him, and did not seem particularly impressed by Bunter. Fortunately, under the cold, keen eyes of the police-inspector, he did not venture to depart from the truth.

The inspector drew from him how he had entered the library in the dark, blundered into a table and knocked over a lamp, and startled the cracksman, whose thievish hands were in the safe. The Owl of the Remove refrained from drawing the long bow, so long as the inspector was present.

By way of compensation, he drew it to an inordinate length when the official gentleman was gone and the Famous Five remained with him.

"I say, you fellows! Pass the salt, will you? I say, jolly lucky I came along, wasn't it? You fellows made out that I was in a funk that time I got hold of a burglar at Greyfriars. What do you think now?"

"Just the same," said Harry Wharton.

"The samefulness is terrific."

"Oh, really, you fellows! Which of you would have butted into a room in the dark, I'd like to know, to baffle a desperate burglar—"

"You fat villain! You didn't know he was there."

"I expect you fellows to belittle a chap!" said Bunter bitterly. "I say, this is a good chicken! Not like what I get at Bunter Court, but quite good! I say, you oughtn't to run a fellow down when he's risked his life to baffle a burglar. The fact is—"

"Gammon!"

"The fact is, finding that desperate villain in the library, I rushed on him," said Bunter. "Seizing him by the throat, I bore him—"

"You weren't with him long enough to bore him," said Bob. "You bore everybody else. But—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I bore him to the earth!" roared Bunter. "I mean, to the floor! But for his revolver I should have had him—"

"Did you tell the bobby about his revolver?"

"I—I forgot. Clubbing his revolver, he dealt me a sickening thud on the head. Might have knocked my brains out—"

"If any!" said Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Lucky there weren't any to knock out," said Bob Cherry.

"Beast! I fell senseless to the floor and—"

"Right!" agreed Johnny Bull. "That's the frozen truth! And you're still senseless."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beasts!" roared Bunter.

"Now you've done telling crammers," THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 1,142.

said Bob, "tell us how you got here. Who let out where we had gone?"

"I say, this pudding is all right! Lucky you had some Christmas pudding left! I've always liked Christmas pudding. Of course, I knew you fellows had only left me behind for a lark—"

"The larkfulness was not terrific, my dear Bunter."

"I knew you wanted me to follow on," said Bunter. "I may have been a bit annoyed at first. But I forgave you, and came."

"The trouble with Bunter is that he's too forgiving," remarked Nugent.

"Jolly to see me here, old chaps. isn't it?" said Bunter.

"Oh, fearfully!" said Bob.

"But how the thump—" asked Nugent.

"You see, I found out at the railway station that you'd taken tickets for Dorchester," explained Bunter. "That's how I knew."

"And how did you get here?" demanded Wharton. "They didn't give you a ticket from Surrey to Dorset for a French penny, I suppose?"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Did you bilk the railway?" asked Nugent.

"I hired a car," said Bunter, with dignity.

"You hired a car for a hundred-mile run?" exclaimed Bob.

"I'm accustomed to travelling in cars, old chap. I prefer them to the railway," said Bunter. "Money's nothing to me, as you know. Why shouldn't a wealthy fellow spend his money on comforts?"

The Famous Five stared at Bunter.

"You see, I didn't care to wait for the next train," said Bunter. "Shove those mince-pies this way! So I took a taxi."

"And how did you bilk the taxi-man?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Did you give him your French penny?"

"Beast! I say, I'd like some more mince-pies," said Bunter. "I hope the grub's going to be good here, Cherry. I can rough it—you know I roughed it all right at Wharton's place—but a chap expects enough to eat. If you want me to stay with you—"

"I don't," said Bob.

"He, he, he! You must have your little joke, old chap," said Bunter cheerfully. "I know you don't mean it, old boy."

"You know more than I do, then."

"Of course, if I'm not welcome here I shall take the train to Bunter Court as soon as—"

"Good!"

"As soon as I've recovered from the terrible injuries I've received in protecting your father's property from burglars—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Let's go down," said Harry. "The Beak will be going soon. You coming down to see the Beak off, Bunter?"

"No jolly fear!"

Billy Bunter continued his supper, while the Famous Five went down to see Dr. Locke off.

The attempted burglary, and the excitement and disturbance that followed it, had rather spoiled Dr. Locke's visit to Cherry Place, and he left rather earlier than he had intended.

Barnes drove the car away, with the Head and Mrs. Locke. Harry Wharton watched it disappear into the winter's night, with a thoughtful expression on his face.

Johnny was saying that we're haunted these hols by the Head," he remarked. "But the jolly old Head

seems to be haunted by giddy burglars, doesn't he? There were half a dozen burglaries round about Greyfriars in the last half of the term; then one at Sankey Hall, while the Beak was at my uncle's house; and now another here, when the Head comes to dine. Queer, isn't it?"

"The queerfulness is terrific."

When the juniors went up to their rooms they were greeted by the sound of the deep and resonant snore that was so familiar in the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars.

Bunter had turned into Bob Cherry's bed, after supper, and was sleeping the sleep of the just.

Bob looked on him, and grinned ruefully.

"Bunter seems to have come to stay!" he remarked.

"There was no doubt on that point. Bunter had come, and he had come to stay."

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## THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Bilk!

"I SAY, you fellows, it's windy!" "The windyfulness is terrific," agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, mulling up his coat-collar round his dusky neck.

"Too jolly windy and cold for a motor-bus!" said Bunter.

"Stand us a taxi," suggested Johnny Bull, with withering sarcasm.

It was windy, and it was cold, and the group of schoolboys standing outside the gate of Cherry Place got the full benefit of the wind.

Still, as it couldn't be helped, there was no disposition to grouse, except on the part of Billy Bunter. Grousing was Bunter's special privilege.

It was the day following Bunter's arrival, and the juniors were going to Dorchester, and waiting for the motor-bus that passed Cherry Place to pick them up. Bunter had elected to go with them. He did not want to stay in on his own, and he had some shopping to do. How he was going to do his shopping with a French penny he did not explain, but perhaps he expected to raise a loan among his pals.

"A taxi!" repeated Bunter. "Jolly good idea, old bean. I'll stand you fellows a taxi with pleasure. Cut in and phone for one, Bob."

"I don't think!" said Bob.

"I'm expecting a postal-order to come on that I missed by leaving Wharton Lodge so suddenly—"

"We'll take the taxi when the postal-order comes," remarked Bob Cherry.

"To-day we'll take the bus."

"Well, it's jolly cold and windy," growled Bunter. "Cut in and get me a muffler, Bob."

"Bow-wow!"

"Look here, I'm not going to perish with cold on the beastly bus to please you!" hooted Bunter. "If you're too selfish to fetch me a muffler, I'll fetch it myself. Wait for me."

"We shall miss the bus, fathead!"

"Blow the bus!"

Bunter rolled away to the house. In the distance, the motor-bus was already in sight.

"It's coming, Bunter!" shouted Bob. Bunter did not heed. He vanished into the house, and the juniors at the gate looked at one another expressively.

"Take the bus, and leave him to stew in his own juice," grunted Johnny Bull.

"Well—" murmured Bob, hesitating.

"We don't want to wait for the next."

"I know, But—"

"Oh, wait if you like," said Johnny resignedly.

The motor-bus rolled by and disappeared in the distance in the direction of Dorchester.

After it, an empty taxi appeared on the road, moving along at a crawling pace.

The driver was looking about him incessantly, as he drove slowly along, as if deeply interested in the scenery, or in hope of seeing someone he desired to meet.

He glanced at the group of schoolboys outside the gate, his glance running over them quickly and searchingly. But evidently he did not see among them the person he sought.

Harry Wharton's glance fell on him rather curiously.

"I've seen that chap before," he remarked. "He drives a taxi at Wimford; he's driven me more than once. He's a long way from home."

The taximan's glance lingered on Wharton as he slowly passed. He drew the car suddenly to a halt, and jumped down, touching his hat to the Greyfriars fellows.

"Ain't that Master Wharton?" he asked.

"Right!" said Harry.

"I shouldn't wonder if you could 'elp me put my finger on the bloke I'm looking for, sir," said the driver.

"Looking for somebody here?" asked Wharton, puzzled.

"Yes—a fat party in specs."

"Oh!" ejaculated Wharton.

The juniors exchanged quick glances. They were acquainted with a fellow to whom that description would have applied.

"I've been done, sir—done something cruel," said the driver; "and, seeing as the bloke come from your house, sir, back in Surrey, I dessay you know something about him. You see, sir, I was rung up to take him to the station at Wimford yesterday, and he lost his train—or so he let on—and hired my taxi to bring him on to these parts."

"Oh!" repeated Wharton.

"Seven pound ten was the figure, sir, and you'll admit it was reasonable for the distance."

"Quite," said Harry.

"Ten miles out of Dorchester he told me," said the driver, "and 'ere we come! Then he gives me the address, tells me to inquire at a cottage, and while I'm doing it he nips out of the taxi on the other side and mizzles. A reg'lar bilk!"

"Oh!"

"I've been hanging about the roads all this morning, looking for him," said the driver. "I can't get to hear of the place he mentioned—false address, I fancy it was. Nobody's heard of it in these parts, anyhow. Fair diddled me, sir—a reg'lar bilk! If I get a sight of him—"

The juniors were silent.

They knew now how Bunter had performed the journey from Surrey to Dorsetshire.

"I was going to inquire at your house about the bloke when I got back to Surrey, sir," said the driver. "But I'd rather see him personal. I got something to say to the fat bloke when I see him!"

"I say, you fellows!"

A fat figure rolled out at the gate.

The Wimford taximan gave an almost convulsive start.

His eyes fairly goggled in his head as he stared at the fat and fatuous face of the Owl of Greyfriars.

Bunter did not observe him closely for the moment. All he noticed was that a taxi and a taximan stood there.

"Lost the bus?" he asked.

"Yes, ass!"

"Well, if you've picked up a taxi, all the better," said Bunter. "I prefer a

taxi. I'll stand the fare, if that's what you're afraid of. Let's get in; it's jolly windy here. Why, what—who—"

"Bilk!" hissed the taximan.

"Eh?"

"Bilk!" roared the taximan.

"Oh, really, you know—"

"Lemme get at him!"

Bunter gave the taximan from Surrey a horrified blink. He recognised him now.

"I—I say, you fellows—" gasped Bunter. He dodged hastily behind Harry Wharton. "Keep him off! I've never seen him before."

"Hold on!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, interposing, as the taximan, with an expression on his face that was absolutely ferocious, started for Bunter. "Hold on! Is this the fellow you drove yesterday?"

"That's him! That's the fat party! That's the blinking bilk!"

"You fat villain, Bunter—"

"Keep him off!" roared Bunter. "I don't know him! I've never seen him before! He's drunk! Or mad! Keep him off! Besides, I was going to pay him. I suppose you fellows don't think I would swindle a cabman! I was going to send him the money out of my next remittance—"

"Lemme gerrat him!" roared the driver.

"Yaroooh! Keep him off! I say, you fellows— Yaroooh! Help!"

The driver shoved Bob Cherry one way and Wharton another, and his grasp fell on William George Bunter.

Bunter roared with apprehension.

His apprehensions were well founded. The taximan from Wimford wanted his fare; but he seemed to want vengeance even more.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

"Whoop! Help!"

It wasn't me!"

yelled Bunter.

"Yaroooh! You're making a silly mistake! It was another chap—not like me at all! Yaroooh! I was going to send you the money, too—just going to post it!"

Thump! Thump! Thump!

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

Billy Bunter rolled over in a heap of snow that was banked up by the gateway. The enraged taximan rolled him in the snow, bumped him in it, and then, extending the fat junior face downward across a sinewy knee, smacked.

Smack! Smack! Smack! Smack! The smacks rang like pistol-shots.

"Yaroooh! Help!" roared Bunter. "I say, you fellows, help! Draggimoff! Ow! Help! Murder! Fire! Whoop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beasts! Help! Rescue!"

Smack! Smack! Smack!

The juniors rushed to Bunter's aid at last. There was no doubt that he deserved a thrashing, but he looked like getting even more than he deserved at the hands of the enraged taximan.

"Hold on!" gasped Bob Cherry, grasping the man by the shoulders and dragging him off. "That will do—"

"That's enough!" gasped Wharton.

"Tain't!" roared the taximan

"Tain't! Not half!"

"Yaroooh! Help! Gerrimoff! Ow!"

The taximan was dragged off. Bunter sat in the snow and roared. But the taximan, unconvinced that Bunter had had enough, was anxious to get at him again, and the fat junior scrambled up, dodged in at the gates, and ran for the house.

"Bilk!" The taximan was held back by main force from pursuit, but his voice followed Bunter. "Blooming bilk! I've spotted you! I'm going for a peeler. I'll have you run in! You 'ear me! Bilk!"

Bunter vanished into the house. There, he scuttled up the stairs, locked himself in his room, and palpitated.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.  
Unstuck!

**T**AP! Bunter shivered. He had been in his room an hour, in a state of palpitating funk. The trip to Dorchester that morning

"How should we know what he's going to do?" he answered.

"Has—has—has he gone for a bobby?" "He said he would," answered Bob Cherry. "But, of course, he may have changed his mind."

"Oh dear! I—I was going to pay him, of course!" gasped Bunter. "I was going to borrow the money of you fellows, you know."

"Thanks!" "The thankfulness is terrific."

"You—you can lend me a small sum like that, you know," urged Bunter.

"Look here, is he coming back?" "Well, what do you expect him to do?"

"I—I say, you fellows, lend me seven pounds-ten, and I—I'll pay him the minute he comes back!"

"I've got twopence," said Bob. "I'll put that towards it, if you like."

"Oh dear! I say, ask your pater."

"If the pater knew you had bilked a



The enraged taximan rolled Bunter across his knee, face downward, and the smacks that followed rang out like pistol shots!

was off. Bunter felt safer behind a locked door. Wild horses would not have dragged him out of doors while that taximan from Wimford was in the offing.

The tap at his door made him shiver. Visions floated before his fat mind of a policeman.

Tap! "Ow! I—I'm not here!" gasped Bunter.

"Let me in, fathead!"

It was Bob Cherry's voice. "Oh!" gasped Bunter. "Is—is—is he gone?"

"He's gone."

"Oh dear!"

Bunter unlocked the door. Bob Cherry came in, followed by his comrades.

The Famous Five were looking grave. As a matter of fact, they had reason for gravity. They had paid the Wimford taximan, and the sum of seven pounds ten shillings—so small a matter to Bunter—had cleared the five of them completely out of pocket-money.

Billy Bunter eyed them uneasily. "He—he's really gone?" he gasped.

"He's gone!" said Harry.

"What—what is he going to do?"

taximan to get here, Bunter, he would go right off at the deep end. Better not tell the pater."

"You can tell him it's for something else—tell him you want the money to help a poor man who's starving."

"What?" "Or—or to give to a hospital—"

"You fat villain!" "Oh, really, Cherry! Tell him—"

"Shut up, you fat fraud! The fact is, you've landed yourself now," said Bob.

"I don't know what the sentence is for bilking a taximan, but you're too young to go to hard labour—"

"Ow!" "Borstal, most likely," said Frank Nugent.

"After all, I've heard that juvenile offenders are treated very decently at Borstal."

"Yaroooh!"

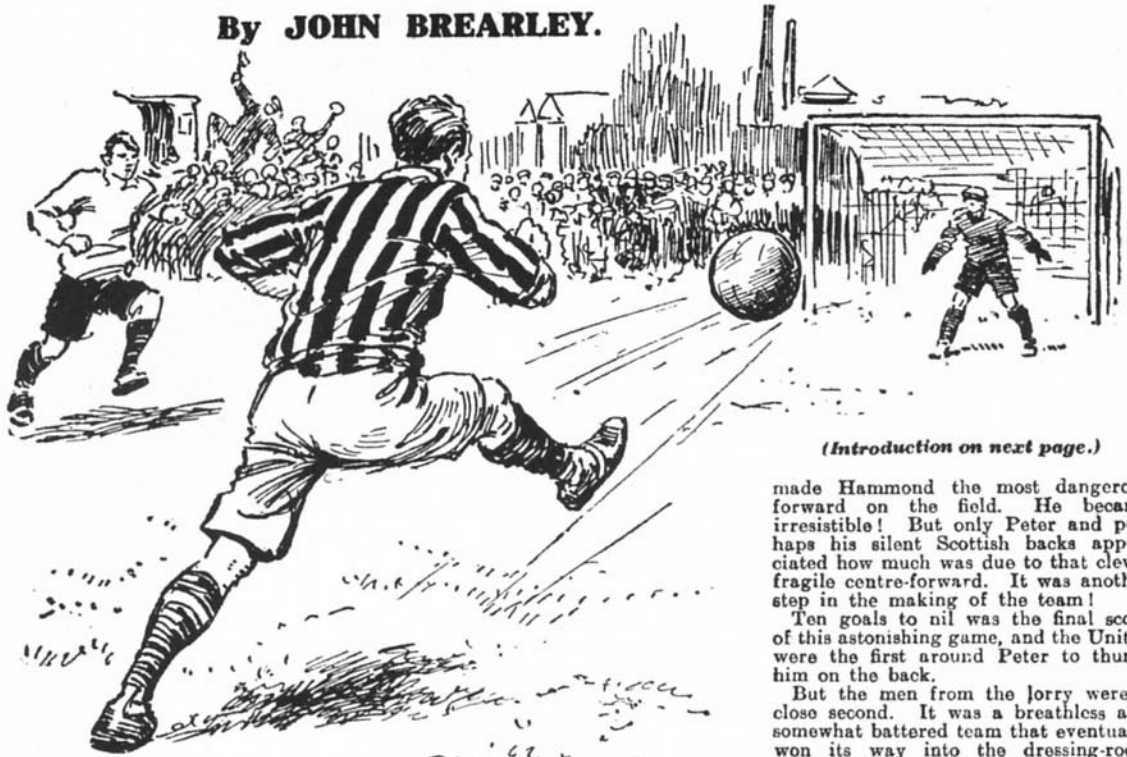
"Well, Bunter's not anxious to go back to school next term," said Wharton. "If he's at Borstal he won't have to go back to Greyfriars."

"Beast! Lend me seven pounds ten—"

"We've got about three bob left among the lot of us," said Bob Cherry. (Continued on page 28.)

# PETER FRAZER—IRONMASTER!

By JOHN BREARLEY.



(Introduction on next page.)

## The Killer!

CAMBER kicked off, and the inside men burst through Frazers' forwards. Peter, however, nipped in, robbed their centre prettily, swerved, drew a half-back, and then pushed the ball to Osborne. Off went Tim and nicked it to Hammond, who flashed away, passed back again, and Tim, getting the left-back on his wrong foot, put the ball across to Haggerty. The outside-right centred without hesitation slap in front of Milligan, the inside-left, who simply let fly, beating the Camber goalkeeper all ends up. The thundering crash of the puddling hammers on the poor old lorry must have been heard for a mile.

A goal in the first minute! The United kicked off again, and worked down as far as Elspeth McDonald, where their clumsy attack broke up. Back went Osborne & Co., and for the next fifteen minutes they were swarming round the Camber goal. Desperately the printers pulled themselves together, their backs working like heroes amid heart-rending appeals from the crowd. The attack was beaten off, but just as it seemed their turn for a raid, a terrific drive, from forty yards out, by Peter Frazer, left the 'keeper standing bewildered!

Jenkins fell out of the lorry in his excitement.

At half-time the Works were three up, Tim scoring after a long dribble. The United had been run off their feet.

"Well done, chaps!" said Peter, as they sucked their lemons and listened to the appalling noise from the lorry. "Keep it going!"

The players grinned at him, but The MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 1,142.

Baker, the flying left-winger, had a grouse, as usual.

"Wot about a pass for me, young Osborne?" he growled. "Want it all yourself?"

Tim cocked a level eye at him.

"Plenty of time to use you, old chap," he said quietly yet so decisively that Peter again found himself studying the lad curiously.

In the second half Osborne proceeded to show how great a footballer he was. The match was as good as over. The United, knowing themselves hopelessly beaten for pace and science, settled down to dogged defence. Sparrow, in goal, had nothing to do but pose magni-

**It's goals you want to win matches and, by Jingo, with Peter to inspire them, Frazers find their shooting boots with a vengeance!**

ficently against one of the posts, while the McDonalds scarcely touched the ball. And, to Peter's astonishment, Osborne disregarded all their carefully-worked-out plans and experimented with new ones.

At first it looked as though he was selfish, for securing the ball, he dribbled and swayed his way deep into the enemy's half, but on each occasion he parted with the ball to Hammond exactly at the right second, when the inside-right could flash past the bewildered backs and score with a running drive.

Hammond was flashy. He loved playing to the gallery. He was fast, could swerve and shoot, and a little bit of gallery-play brought out these qualities marvellously. Before the game had gone ten minutes Osborne's brain had

made Hammond the most dangerous forward on the field. He became irresistible! But only Peter and perhaps his silent Scottish backs appreciated how much was due to that clever fragile centre-forward. It was another step in the making of the team!

Ten goals to nil was the final score of this astonishing game, and the United were the first around Peter to thump him on the back.

But the men from the lorry were a close second. It was a breathless and somewhat battered team that eventually won its way into the dressing-room where, with delighted grins and sore shoulders, they sat listening to the din outside.

When at last Peter Frazer did get his breath back—it had been finally knocked out of him by a last terrific thump from a fat-furnace-stoker—he could only beam and chuckle at the team by way of thanks. Everyone was shaking hands with everyone else, even though Sparrow bewailed the fact that he had had nothing to do—until Baker kicked him. But Peter managed a special word of thanks for Tim Osborne, who was dressing quietly in a corner.

Somehow or other, room was made for the players on the lorry. The ride back, right through Marport was made in one continuous cheer that heralded

Frazers' victory throughout the city, and eventually brought out the inhabitants anxious to know what all the excitement was about. Perhaps it was as well for Peter's peace of mind that he did not notice two pairs of evil eyes that glared at him through the nilarious foundry-men.

At last the celebration was over! The men dispersed in little knots round each member of the team, and Peter, grabbing Sparrow and Osborne, carried them off to tea, which they thoroughly enjoyed, and where they "played" the match over again.

After tea Frazer suggested a visit to the cinema, which proposition Master Sparrow hailed with enthusiasm. Thus it was late when at last he and Osborne, bidding good-night to the youthful goalkeeper, sauntered up the lane that led to the works.

At the gate of his house Peter held out his hand.

"A great game to-day, Tim—and much obliged! Hammond is going to

be a fine forward, thanks to you, after this match! We'll have that cup yet."

"I hope so—good-night!"

And quietly and shyly as usual, the youngster slipped off into the darkness. Peter grinned after him, and still thinking of the game and his queer centre-forward, stepped into the garden path.

Glancing up at the house, he saw it was in darkness, and felt mildly surprised until he remembered hearing Mr. Dimmock make an appointment for the theatre that night. Apparently he was not home yet, and old Anna had gone to bed.

He sauntered absently towards the front door, feeling for his key. Then, with his hand in his pocket, he stopped dead. Something had moved in one of the bushes bordering the path.

Peter's jaw hardened. For the last day or two he had almost forgotten the existence of his enemies. Was this another of their little efforts?

"Who's there?" he challenged. There was no reply, and with arms bent, chin tucked in, Peter advanced cautiously.

Was someone there, or were his nerves playing tricks? It was a lonely spot, here on the border of the field. At his second step an enormous black bulk, arms held low, came out of the bush and slid silently towards him.

It was a thrilling moment. Peter stood his ground, not unwilling to have another tussle with one of Granger's gang as he supposed this shadowy menace to be.

The man drew closer, silently, ominously, and the young ironmaster tensed himself for a spring. Another second and he meant to leap at the man, fighting in his usual whirlwind style, when from the darkness of the football field beyond the gate came a thin stab of lurid red followed by a dull flat thud! Then came a curious whistle, the horrid sound of a bullet's impact, and the snap of a bone.

For the first time the figure before Peter on the path broke the silence with a grunt of pain.

Came again that thin flash, followed by a report and another impact, and now a terrible bellow of mingled rage and agony.

Rigid with astonishment, Peter could only stand stiffly, while the bullets whistled safely past him.

Then the huge man, both arms hanging shattered, charged towards him.

As the mighty figure towered over him Frazer let go a slashing left. But it only slithered off the man's head, and the next instant Peter was lying helpless and half-stunned in the bushes as Luigi Facceti, powerless though he was, swept over him like a wounded buffalo.

With the same panic-stricken, headlong rush, the Milanese went through the gate, smashing it to matchwood, and was off into the darkness, his soul livid with terror, whimpering as he ran.

Breathless, bruised, and utterly bewildered, Peter gradually pulled himself out of the bushes. He tottered dizzily to the smashed gate and looked out. It was beginning to dawn on him that he would have stood a thin chance indeed with such a monster. And where was the man with the gun?

He limped forward through the gate and into the field, hoping to see someone. But whoever had been there had now gone.

From far down the lane came suddenly the sound of a motor. It hummed, swelled out, then died gradually into the distance.

Tim Osborne missed it by a second. Back in his room, a few minutes later, he began stolidly to clean his gun.

#### Peter's Bold Stroke!

PETER Frazer pushed back his chair and glared across the table at the puckered face of Mr. Dimmock.

"Now, who the dickens can they be?" he demanded heatedly. "There's two people in this city, both so jolly interested in me they never seem to leave me! One's trying his little best to put me out of action, and the other's elected himself my nursemaid! An' all I know about 'em is that one has got a nasty, scarred head, and the other's a wonderful shot!"

It was Sunday morning, and he had just finished the details of the previous night's episode.

"Peter, this continual menace hanging over you is just driving me crazy!" cried Mr. Dimmock. "It was bad enough with your uncle, but, upon my soul, since you've been here the danger has grown every day! I've thought, and thought, and searched my mind for everyone who might harbour a terrible grudge against you both—"

His voice trailed away despairingly. "I can't think. I oughtn't to have gone to the theatre last night—"

"Oh, rot, sir!" broke in Peter impatiently. "What could you have done? Whoever that fellow was last night, he could have handled you and I, and ten more like us. I thought the house had fallen on me when he rushed me. Both arms helpless, too! By gad, though, my nursemaid's a wonderful shot!"

"And you've no idea who he was?" asked Mr. Dimmock eagerly.

"Not the foggiest!" declared Peter. "Nor where he went to. He must have had some sort of silencer on his gun, because the reports I heard were flat and dull. Also, he must have crept up right behind me, to fire over me like he did. I've been down to young Osborne, to see if he heard anything, but apparently he didn't. I've spoken to the inspector on the phone, too, but he's in the dark."

The manager rose and paced the room moodily.

"Well, anyhow, Peter," he said, "thank goodness someone's looking after you. I wish we could find who he was. Give up prowling round the docks,

#### INTRODUCTION.

Head and sole owner of Frazer's Iron Foundry, it is a strange prospect that lies before Peter Frazer, a cheery, strapping youngster of eighteen, when he arrives in the squalid industrial city of Maxport, to take over the great business left to him by his dead uncle. Peter soon realises that his legacy has brought danger with it, for he is kidnapped on his way to his new home. Luckily he escapes, but with only one clue to the identity of his unknown enemy; the man is completely bald, with a terrible jagged scar running across the top of his head. At the works, Peter learns from his manager, Mr. Dimmock, that Frazer's Foundry is on the brink of ruin owing to the activities of a man named Granger and his gang.

Undismayed at the task before him, Peter begins a relentless campaign against his enemies. Slowly but surely the gang find themselves being driven to the wall, and at length, when Peter has won his men completely over to his side and matters are growing desperate, the scarred man and his lieutenant decide to enlist the aid of Luigi Facceti—"The Throtter"—to dispose of the young foundry owner. On the following afternoon Frazer's football team is due to play Camber in the first round of the Works' Cup, and the eleven catch an early train for their opponents' ground.

Arriving there, they find a lorry load of supporters from Frazer's, whose enthusiasm takes the form of terrific cheering and the smashing of hammers on the sides of the old lorry. "Pheep!" goes the whistle and the match starts. (Now read on.)

my boy. Really, I could almost wish you were out of Maxport altogether, although I should miss you."

Peter's eyes had narrowed grimly, but he smiled at Dimmock's kindly words.

"I don't think!" he cried. "And even if I left Maxport, perhaps they'd switch their loving attentions on to you. You never know!"—as the manager shook his head. "Anyway, I've had all the luck, so far, and I'm going to stick. And as for giving up looking for the Scarred Man myself—no thundering fear! One day I'll get him to myself, and spread him all over Maxport!"

His wide grin and cheery words did something to restore Mr. Dimmock's spirits, apparently, for, although the manager shook his head, he walked away presently, and Peter went to the phone for another chat with Maxport's burly inspector.

No trace of last night's assailant or the car had been found. As usual, the Scarred Man's plans of retreat had worked smoothly, and, save for a heated exhortation to watch his step, Peter got no farther.

The following morning the news of Frazer's huge victory in the first round of the Cup was enthusiastically reported in the local paper, and accordingly, the lads were jubilant.

When on the Wednesday they played a mid-week "friendly" against a big stores team, and won a brisk game by two goals, their captain had hard work afterwards to prevent them getting thoroughly out of hand.

"Wait till you meet some real sides!" he growled to his men in the changing-room. "Fellows who can play football. Shut up, you noisy blighters! You've only won games, so far, by weight and pace. Wait till the railway men and the miners come along and knock the stuffing out of you!"

But the players overwhelmed him in a storm of protests and laughter.

Although Peter tried to throttle down their high spirits a little, in case the side became over-confident and slack, secretly he was beside himself with delight.

He had wrought a great revolution. Not many weeks ago they had been a sulky, ill-conditioned mob. Now they were a team. Success had made them respect themselves and the game they played.

If things went well, before the season was over they would be in the front rank of Maxport's amateur sides. For one thing, they were so big and hard—the hottest soccer team he had ever known. Of course, he had been marvellously lucky to find a centre like Osborne, and two backs like the McDonalds, but the rest of the team was practically his own handiwork.

Where previously he had had to restrain them, now he had hard work to keep them from bubbling over!

The next two or three matches passed uneventfully, except that in the last the side had a narrow squeak, and only managed to win with the very last kick of the game.

The fight did them good, however, and when the second round of the Works Cup came along, they played a fine, steady game against a rough side of brewers, and won well by three goals to 1.

The poor old lorry had by now become famous. Mr. Dimmock, at a hint from Peter, had offered to hire a charabanc for each away fixture, but the suggestion had nearly caused a small riot.

Everywhere Frazer's team went the lorry followed, grunting, wheezing and rolling, smothered with men and green-and-white ribbon. While every time a goal was scored, down thundered

the hammers on its shaky old sides, to the huge delight of the team and the confusion of their opponents.

Once more, as the days sped by, the menace of the Scarred Man and Granger's gang was crowded out of Peter's thoughts by other events.

A picked body of the inspector's men were living unobtrusive lives in all Maxport's rough districts, following every little clue and whisper. Since the latest attempt on the young ironmaster they had redoubled their efforts. But whoever the Scarred Man was he was a powerful and clever foe, and somewhere in the rough quarters he had hidden his men like a wizard.

Time and again one of the inspector's men would follow a faint trail, only to have it peter out in thin air, while Tim Osborne, flitting through the crooked ways like a shadow, grew tight-lipped with annoyance after each fruitless expedition.

However, the tireless watching forced Peter's enemies to call a truce.

Moller had recovered, and was back again at work, hard and dour as ever. He had assured Peter and Mr. Dimmock that he knew nothing of the raid on the galvanising-room, and since his story had been proven to the hilt, they had no option but to believe him.

If he was unpopular, he was capable. Things ran smoothly under his direction. His action in trying to stop the fleeing gang that night showed that he was loyal.

Most important of all, however, was that business for the foundry began to improve. Peter's exploits had drawn his firm into the limelight. In trade circles the news began to be noised around that Frazer's could be trusted once more to complete orders, that the men stuck to their jobs, and the work was as good as of old.

All this made Peter Frazer chaff his manager cheerfully. Yet the progress was not sufficient to satisfy him yet!

He was beginning to sit up later these nights, intent on learning every bit of the business, poring over technical works on metal and machines, or sitting deep in conference with Mr. Dimmock and the staff.

The result of all this only made him keener than ever to force Frazer's Foundry to the top of the tree. He wanted it big! Small orders kept the furnaces going, but big contracts would add more chimney-stacks and more men!

An idea came to him one morning, as he was doing a training trot round the ground before work commenced. He wrestled with it in silence during breakfast, and afterwards, instead of clambering into dungarees, went upstairs and changed into his smartest clothes.

After watching his manager leave the gate and walk over to the foundry, Peter slipped out and took a cab into the business quarter of the city.

There had lately arisen in Maxport a new mayor, Sir James Fossett.

By profession he was a lawyer, but it was well-known that he was a moving figure in some of Maxport's greatest industries. He was a man who had lived all his life in the city and had rendered great services. His motto was, "By Maxport for Maxport!" and the fostering of the city's trade was his hobby.

So it was with a feeling of some confidence and hope that Peter, slightly flushed and grim about the jaw, after a busy morning, presented himself at Sir James' offices, and, after some

delay, found himself facing a handsome, shrewd-faced man across the gleaming top of a palatial desk.

A pair of keen eyes looked up and seemed to go right through Peter. Even as he looked, however, the keenness softened in them, and a lean hand was outstretched towards him.

He reached across the desk and shook it hard and nervously. Sir James waved him to a chair.

"And now Mr. Frazer, what can I do for you?"

Peter drew a deep breath. "Give me some work, sir!" he blurted.

The mayor's eyes gleamed slightly. "Short and sweet!" he murmured, whereat Peter grinned. And, grinning, managed to collect himself.

"Go on, lad!" Without further hesitation, Peter plunged into his business with curt bluntness.

"The city's going to build new gasometers out Wickham way, Sir James. Let me make the sheets! Then I can handle the rails for that branch-line Faulder's are going to build. And I can turn out galvanised sheets by the million feet, if Maxport wants them, as—"

"As you know Maxport does!" murmured Sir James softly.

Peter chuckled, but became serious again instantly, however.

"Sir James, you could influence these contracts for me!" he cried. "And I can handle them! That's not a boast, sir. We're a different proposition now than we were a few months back! We—we're a team now, you know. And—and it's not for myself I want them, either. Frazer's is the only foundry here in the city, and if I can make it big—"

And, simply and seriously, he told the mayor of Maxport his aims and ambitions for Frazer's Foundry and Frazer's workmen.

It was the longest speech he had ever made, and he was breathing hard at the end of it. For a full half-minute after he had finished neither spoke, the mayor studying him silently over his finger-tips.

When at last he broke the silence his voice had a ring in it.

"That's the pluckiest bit of work I've heard for some time!" he said quietly, and Peter gripped his hand tight. "Now go home, and I'll see what I can do!"

Peter betook himself back to his foundry with whirling thoughts, and forced himself to wait patiently some-how.

Two full days dragged past without a word from Sir James. Then on the third morning came a curt telephone message.

Scarcely daring to breathe, Frazer bundled the bewildered Mr. Dimmock into a cab, and twenty minutes later they were shown into Sir James' office.

The mayor was not alone this time. With him were three other men, at sight of whom Mr. Dimmock's brows went up and Peter clamped his big jaw hard to hide a yell of delight.

And that afternoon Maxport's papers had something to shout about, and out they came with splashing headlines:

"Huge contract for local firm!"

"Fortune for Frazer's Foundry!"

and went on to shriek aloud that the city authorities had decided to place a large contract with the local foundry for gasometers, rails, and thousands of feet of galvanised sheets.

There followed a brief account of Frazer's Foundry, together with a photograph, and a long column of praise for Sir James Fossett. Then a significant line:

"We are given to understand other contracts may follow!"

Peter had made his coup!

## NEXT WEEK'S BUMPER BILL O' FARE!

I'VE got a brand new diary on my desk, and the first entry in it is the list of next week's attractions. I am sure you'll say that we're starting off the New Year well when you glance down this list of features:

First of all—  
"THE FORM-MASTER'S FAVOURITE!"  
By Frank Richards.

It's a tip-top school yarn of Greyfriars featuring all your old favourites. You find plenty of fun in it, and you'll find excitement, too! Take my tip and don't miss it, chums.

"PETER FRAZER—IRONMASTER," is still going strong, and those of you who like a really first-class yarn with a strong football flavour certainly haven't been disappointed in this serial. Next week's instalment is as good as any that have yet appeared—and I can't say more than that, can I?

As for Master Dicky Nugent—well, get ready for a laugh when you read "THE INVISIBLE HEADMASTER!" which appears next week. Dicky certainly can write a funny yarn—and he's funniest when he tries to be serious! There will also be another "footer" article and a jolly poem. Show this week's issue to your chums! They'll thank you for doing so—and the odds are that they'll become regular readers, too!

See you again next week, chums.  
YOUR EDITOR.

## A Wonderful Game!

HERE they come, lads!" Peter Frazer, lounging against the door of the changing-hut, his hands deep in the pockets of his blazer, straightened suddenly as a bus rolled up the lane and turned into the foundry gates.

A buzz went round among the men inside, for to-day was the return match with Maxport Hornets, and Frazer's were on their toes. Every man jack of them remembered the last match, Frazer's first game, and how near to disaster they had come. To-day they meant to make amends by giving the Hornets the game of the season!

The whole foundry was seething with excitement over the new contracts the master had made. They had not started on them yet—Mr. Dimmock and the staff were up to their eyes in the preliminary figures—but when they did it meant prosperity all round!

It was a beaming and enthusiastic crowd that stood round the touchlines, eyes turned towards the Hornets' car, as they watched Peter stride across to greet the visitors.

He had decided to rest the two McDonalds, his big Scottish backs, in view of the fourth round of the Cup that was only two matches away. Hector and Elspeth were still tough, hard men, but they were a bit past their prime as footballers, so that it was a wise move to nurse them. Also, it gave his reserve backs a chance.

But when he saw the men who were



stepping out of the Hornets' car, he gasped with astonishment.

Maxport Hornets had no big match on that day, so the secretary had sent down a specially selected team to play the foundry. Peter's eyes fairly goggled as he saw who the "special selections" were!

As one in a dream, he saw Cunningham, the Hornets International 'keeper, step out, followed by McWilson, Scotland's centre-half, and, then, after a few more players, a small, jovial, wrinkled little man, Maxport's most famous footballer of all time!

"Jimmy Nesbit!" gasped Peter. "Oh, Hector and Elspeth, where are you?"

The Hornets' skipper, the same veteran whose sporting action in the first game had saved the day, stepped towards him. He grinned cheerfully at Peter's face, and gripped the young ironmaster's hand warmly.

"Thought we'd have to give you a licking this time!" he explained jovially. "Th-thanks!" muttered Peter, and turned to greet the rest of the side.

The news spread around, and the thick crowd round the touchlines nearly cracked their throats as the famous Hornets ran on to the ground. Even little Jimmy Nesbit jumped in astonishment as the first thunderous bellow burst from the celebrated lorry parked at half-way.

Nervous as cats, Frazers lined up, and Tim Osborne kicked off. Automatically they swept down on the Hornets' goal in one of their speedy raids, but they were up against real football.

Nipping in neatly, McWilson robbed Tim of the ball and pushed it forward to Nesbit. The little centre hung on just long enough to draw both Peter and Mullins on to him, then cracked it out to his right wing, who raced away towards Sparrow.

Over came a lovely square centre, and into the picture came Peter, his black

head meeting the ball a split second before Jimmy's. Under the impact the little man went down heartily, but he was up again in a flash, his leathery face split by a cheery grin.

"This is going to be a game!" he said, and he was right!

Still nervy, but doggedly determined, the Works returned to the attack. A brilliant swaying dribble by Tim made the Hornets' backs look significantly at one another, and a couple of minutes later the great Cunningham went full length in a startled dive to save a red-hot swerver from Hammond.

Up came the Hornets, and Peter & Co. had to fight like demons in defence. The Hornets' forwards were not quite together yet; but, after a little midfield play, Nesbit began to gather them up.

In continuous waves they poured over Frazers' defence. Under their persistent dribbling and heavy charging, Mullins began to get rattled, but a word from Peter steadied him down.

Peter himself was everywhere, all legs and head, devoutly wishing he had the McDonalds behind him, but doing everything he knew to keep the Hornets' inside men on the jump.

Thus twenty minutes went by without either side scoring, twenty heart-breaking minutes at top speed.

But the pace was too good to last, for there came a slacking-off, and class began to tell.

Five minutes from half-time, a clock-like run by the whole Hornets' forward line found Frazers' defence wide open and standing still. Five yards outside the penalty area, little Nesbit swept up with the ball, danced round Hull, the right-back, and left poor Sparrow not a hope with a low drive into the corner of the net.

Followed immediately another raid, and a dazzling swerve put the ball at Nesbit's feet, unmarked in front of goal! For the second time Nesbit made no

mistake. Thus the Works were two down at half-time!

"And jolly good, too, chaps!" chortled Peter, as they sucked their lemons breathlessly. "Now some of you know what football's like, I reckon!"

"By gum, ye're right!" gasped Baker. "Yon right-back's like a blessed wall to get past!"

"McWilson's got me locked up!" murmured Tim Osborne deprecatingly. "Still—"

"And that goalkeeper—" wailed Hammond bitterly.

"Has kept for England, my son!" grinned Peter. "Never mind, we'll beat him yet!"

Over in the other camp, Jimmy Nesbit cocked a bright eye at his skipper.

"Who's that boy Frazer, Alec?" he asked. "And why isn't he playing for the Hornets? He's good!"

"He's the mainspring of this lot," explained the captain. "Fast, aren't they?"

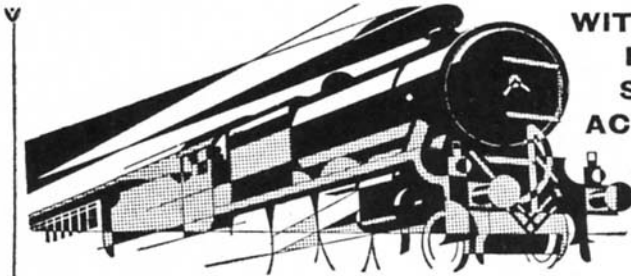
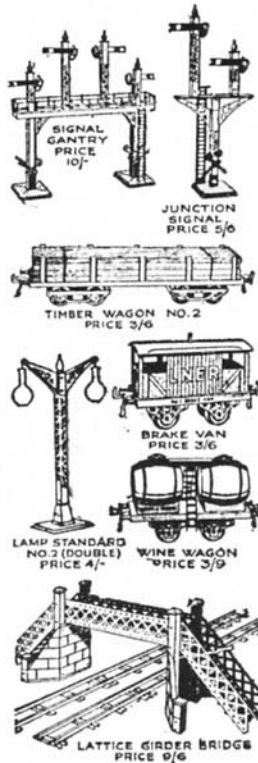
"Fast!" snorted Jimmy. "We haven't won yet. If we slack up at all they'll run all over us! You see!"

And the experienced little man trotted off to his place as the whistle sounded for the resumption.

Now the Works were out for blood! The Hornets started off like a sand-storm, and went all out to make things as speedy as possible. Peter smiled inwardly. This sort of thing was the best that could happen. If the Hornets reckoned they could win by sheer pace and charging, then they were making a bloomer!

*(Two goals down! Frazers will have to play as they've never played before if they're going to pull through against the famous Hornets. Will they do it? If you want a feast of thrills you'll get it in next week's gripping instalment of this sporting serial. Make no mistake about ordering your copy of the MAGNET early!)*

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# HORNBY TRAINS

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# THE ARTFUL DODGER!

(Continued from page 23.)

"If you think that will satisfy the man—"

"Oh dear! Wha-a-at's a fellow to do?" gasped Bunter. "Of course, I was going to pay him. I was going to give him a jolly good tip extra. He would only have had to wait till I got some postal-orders I've been expecting for some time—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I—I say, you fellows, if he comes back—oh dear!" gasped Bunter. "If he brings a policeman with him—oh errikey! I—I say, lend me my fare home! Don't tell him where I live! That's important! I say, when's the next train? Oh dear."

"Too late, I'm afraid!" said Bob, shaking his head. "Better face it out now—"

"Beast! I won't stay here to be run in!" yelled Bunter. "I'm going to take the next train! I'm going home! Mind you don't tell him where I live! Oh dear!"

The juniors exchanged solemn glances. "There may be a chance!" said Bob soberly. "As it happens, the pater's going into Dorchester in the Ford. He would give Bunter a lift to the railway station—"

"Not if he knew—" said Nugent, shaking his head.

"You needn't tell him!" gasped Bunter. "Don't tell him anything. Just tell him I've got to get home quick because—because my father's dangerously ill, or—the house is on fire, or—something—"

"The pater would take Bunter's ticket, if I asked him," said Bob. "But—"

"Are we justified in helping Bunter to escape?" asked Harry Wharton, with owl-like gravity. "You see, doesn't it amount to compounding a felony, or something—"

"We can't risk it!" said Johnny Bull.

"The esteemed riskfulness would be too terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But on the other hand, can we see the worthy and disgusting Bunter marched off, like esteemed Eugene Aram, with gyves upon his wrists?"

"Yarooogh!"

"Let's risk it," said Bob. "After all, Bunter's a Greyfriars man, though he does the school no credit, we can't see a Greyfriars man taken up before the magistrates—"

"Ow!"

"And sentenced—"

"Wow!"

"After all, the taximan may have changed his mind since he told Bunter he would fetch a policeman!" said Wharton. "Let Bunter stay on and chance it—"

"Beast! I won't!" roared Bunter. "I'm going home! Mind you don't give the beast my address—"

"But—"

"I'm going!"

"Better—"

"I'm going!" yelled Bunter.

"Well, if Bunter thinks he'd better go, it's up to us to help him escape!" said Bob. "There's no time to lose, though—the car's at the door, and the pater will be starting—"

"I'm ready!" gasped Bunter.

"If you're sure you'd rather not stay and chance it—"

"Beast! I'm going!"

Bunter almost flew down the stairs.

The Famous Five exchanged a cheery grin. But their faces were solemn and serious when they followed Bunter down.

Bunter fairly bolted into the Ford. Major Cherry, who drove his own car, stared at him.

"What—?" he began.

"Bunter wants to get home, father!" explained Bob. "He's in a hurry—you wouldn't mind giving him a lift to the station—"

"Pleased!" said the major.

"And—and if you'd take his ticket, dad, and stop it out of my allowance—"

"I'll take his ticket without stopping it out of your allowance, my boy," said the major, with a smile.

Major Cherry drove away. Billy Bunter made himself as small as possible in the car, lest the eyes of a vengeful taximan should spot him on his way to the railway station. The Winford taximan, certainly, was not likely to spot him, as that gentleman, having been paid his just due, was long ago on his way back to Surrey. Fortunately, Billy Bunter was unaware of that.

"He's gone!" said Johnny Bull, as the Ford disappeared in the distance.

"Really gone!" said Frank Nugent.

"The goodfulness, it terrific!"

"It seems too good to be true!" chuckled Wharton. "It was worth the money!"

"Yes, rather!"

"I wonder," said Bob Cherry thoughtfully. "I wonder what that pernicious porpoise would think if he knew we'd paid the taximan, and that he had cleared off for good an hour ago?"

"I wonder!" chuckled Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter; sticker as he was, had, at long last, come unstuck. It seemed too good to be true, but for once, good as it was, it was true!

Harry Wharton & Co. finished the Christmas holidays without the fascinating company of William George Bunter.

THE END.

(There will be another superb long complete school story of Harry Wharton & Co. in next week's MAGNET, entitled: "THE FORM MASTER'S FAVOURITE!" The commencement of the new term at Greyfriars opens with the greatest sensation ever. Make sure you read all about it by ordering your copy WELL IN ADVANCE!)

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# AMAZING The SCHOOL!

By **DICKY NUGENT**



**Stuck for tuck!**  
That's the unfortunate plight of Jack Jolly & Co.—until Clevercove comes along with his Ultra-purple Ray Resister. Then the sparks begin to fly!

I must be suffering from a Lousy Nations! I can feel you're there and yet I can't see you! Oor! Call a doctor at once!

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Fourth, who were all in the secret.

"How can you be so cruel as to laugh at my misfortunes, boys?" roared the master of the Fourth. "I tell you I've got 'em badly. Look! I held you so! There's that ruler on Clevercove's desk jumping up and coming for me now!"

"Crack!"

"Oor-woow! Help! Fire! Perlice!" yelled Mr. Lickham, as the ruler caught him a smart whack on the napper.

"He, ha, ha!"

"It's all right, sir! I was only showing you that I really am here!" came Clevercove's voice out of thin air. "Are you convinced now, sir?"

"I'm convinced that there must be something the matter with me if that's anything to do with it!" gasped Mr. Lickham. "Sit down, boys, I will endeavor to forget my tils by proceeding with the lesson!"

And Mr. Lickham nobly tried to carry on, though without much success.

Before the afternoon was over, the unhappy master of the Fourth hardly knew whether he was on his head or his heels. The most eggstrange things happened. Once, the blackboard was whirled into the air and dashed to the ground. Another time, an inkwell rose mysteriously from his desk and emptied itself over his head. Again, his high stool jumped away from him just as he was about to sit on it, with the result that Mr. Lickham sat down with a fearful concussion on the hard, unamperthetic floor. All the strange happenings, of course, were caused by the invisible Clevercove. Naturally, Mr. Lickham didn't tumble to that.

At the conclusion of afternoon lessons, Clevercove looked pity on the bewildered master and eggspined his new invention. Mr. Lickham was deified to get a reasonable eggspination of the afternoon's strange happenings, though he was fairly dabbegasted by the weirdness of his pupil's invention.

"My only hat!" he muttered, when Clevercove had finished. "This beats the head, and no mistake! Of course, you have given me a succession of shocks this afternoon, but in view of the remarkable nature of your invention, I shall overlook the matter."

"Thank you, sir!" said Clevercove, with an invisible grin.

"I am sure the Head will be most interested in the invention," continued Mr. Lickham. "I wonder, my boy, if

you would care to trot along with me to his study now and tell him all about it? He'll be awfully pleased with you. I know."

"Pleazzz urrro, sir!" said Clevercove.

With that, the invisible skookboy linked arms with his Form master and the two strolled off together. They were followed by an eggspelled crowd of Fourth Formers.

**W**HAT the merry dickens—!"

Burleigh, the kaplin of St. Sam's, broke off in sheer astonishment.

He was standing at the foot of the stairs talking to Talloby of the Sixth, when there was a clatter of hob-nailed boots, and Mr. Lickham cantered down.

As a rule, there was nothing surprising in Mr. Lickham's behavior. He was a somewhat eggcentric-looking gentleman; but for a skoomaster to look eggcentric was, of course, not at all surprising.

On this occasion, however, the behavior of the Fourth Form master was more than eggcentric. It was completely potty—or so it seemed to Burleigh, anyway.

Mr. Lickham was holding up his arm as though he was linked up with somebody else. Yet nobody else was to be seen!

Worse than that, he was conversing in a loud voice as though somebody was beside him listening to his words of wisdom. Yet it seemed that there was only thin air to listen to him!

"My hat!" cried Talloby, aggrast.

"Lickham's gone off his rocker!"

"Bats in the belfry, completely!" agreed Burleigh. "No time must be lost; we must overpover the poor fellow and lock him up in a box-room until the mental authorities have time to prepare a padded cell. Come on, Talloby!"

The two mifty men of the Sixth sprang forward together and fell on Mr. Lickham like wolves on their pray.

The unforchunite master of the Fourth let out a yell.

"Yarooo!" What are you doing of—yooooooo!

But protests were in vain. In a brace of shakes, Burleigh and Talloby were carrying off Mr. Lickham to the nearest box-room, while the invisible Clevercove stood by, fairly roaring with laughter.

"Oh, my giddy aunt! Poor old Lickham!" he gasped, as Jack Jolly & Co. came on the scene.

"We saw it all from the landing!" laughed Jack Jolly. "And now that Lickham has gone, you chaps, I've thought of a bright wheeze whereby we can earn ourselves a free feed."

"Off it up, old bean!" said Frank Fearless, eagerly.

"No need to. If you follow your uncle, you'll see the orecle worked. Mind if I borrow your apparatus, Clevercove?"

"Not at all, old chap!"

"Then we'll go and fetch it. After that, we'll call on the Head and you'll see what happens!"

In a very curious frame of mind, Clevercove and the rest of the Co. followed their leader.

Having scented the electric chair, Jack Jolly led the way to the Head's study and wrapped on the door respectively.

"Took in, fathered!" bellowed Dr. Birehmall in his refined tones.

They trotted in, Jack carefully consulting the chart behind him.

"Hope we're not intruding, sir?" murmured the kaplin of the Fourth.

"Certainly not," answered the Head, helping himself to a lollipop from the box on his desk. "What's the merry trouble, boys?"

"It's just a little problem of arithmetic, sir!" eggspined Jack Jolly. "Knowing how awfully good you are at arithmetic—"

Dr. Birehmall smacked.

"Well, you're quite right there, Jolly!" he admitted. "You'd have to go a long way before you found a fellow who knew his twice-times table as well as I do!"

Egggestly, what I thought, sir!" said Jack Jolly, flatteringly. "Now the problem is this, sir: How many visitors have you in this room?"

"Eh?"

Jack Jolly repeated his question, and the Head looked surprised.

"Four, of course!" he said evenly. "You and Merry and Bright and Fearless—that makes four!"

"Certain?"

"Absolutely!"

"Suppose I said there were five of us, sir?"

"Then you'd be talking out of the back of your neck, my dear Jolly!"

"In that case, I'll say it! There are five of us!" said Jack Jolly solemnly.

"You say there are four and I say there are five!"

"My hat! You must be potty!"

grinned the Head. "I wouldn't mind laying ten to one in donmuts that I'm right, anyway!"

Jack Jolly grinned.

"Now you're talking, sir! Suppose we have a little sporting wanger or a feel-astle on it?"

"Dr. Birehmall's eyes gleamed greedily. "Pleazzz!" he said. "If you can prove to me that you're right, I'll stand the lot of you a big feed. On the other hand, if I'm right, you buy me a whopping grade feed instead. That the idea?"

"That's it!" grinned Jack. "All serene?"

"Yes, rather!"

As soon as the Head said that, Jack brought to light the electric chair and waited. An instant later, there was a click as the knob marked "OFF" shot into its socket.

Immediately after, the Head jumped to his feet with a cry of amazement. Sitting in the chair as large as life and twice as mitchonous was Clevercove of the Fourth!

"G-r-g-r-grating jumping crackers!" ejaculated the Head. "Clevercove!"

"At your service!" grinned Clevercove. "What do you think of my invisibility machine, sir?"

"Bravo!" "Invention, isn't it, sir?" chuckled Jack Jolly. "You see, sir, as it happens, there were five of us after all. May we have the feed now?"

Dr. Birehmall gulped.

"Disbeld, dabled and done!" he said thickly. "Very well, Jolly. I am a man of honor. Give my compliments to the cook and tell her to give you a whopping grade feed!"

"Thank you, sir!" connosed Jack Jolly & Co., and, grinning all over their dices, they huzzel-doff!

On their way to the kitchen they spotted Mr. Lickham making tracks for the Head's study, having evidently been able to convince Burleigh and Talloby of his senility. But our heroes had no time for Mr. Lickham just then. They scooted along to the kitchen without giving him a second glance, and over jushous stek-and-kidney pies they toasted success to the invention by which Clevercove had succeeded in amazing the School!

THE END.

(Whatever you do, chums, don't miss the next amusing story in this series, entitled: "THE INVISIBLE HEADMASTER!" by Dicky Nugent. It's a real cooker!)

The MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 1,142.

**I** WISH we could raise the price of a feed from somebody!

Form at St. Sam's, spoke his chinna united response of:

"What-ho!"

The new term at St. Sam's was only a week old, but already there was a famine in the hand so far as Jack Jolly & Co. were concerned. Our heroes wore jonnous, barted leads, and when they got back to St. Sam's with pockets fairly bulging with oat they let the fur fly—so much so that they were now in the condition known as stony—or to put it in more classiche language, hats of oak!

"There's another hour to go before dinner-time, and I could just do with a smack in the tuck-shop," said Frank Fearless delectably. "Nothing much, of course. Just a duzzen donmuts and a few jam-tarts would do me nicely."

"I suppose this will mean tea in Hall tonight," murmured Jack Jolly, with a throe. "Come in!"

The last remark was unnecessary. A powerful kick on the study door had already been followed by the arrival of an eggspelled-looking janitor.

"Hallo! It's old Clevercove!" eggspined Bright. "How are all your inventions going nowadays, old chap?"

Clarence Clevercove, the inventor of the Fourth, did not reply to that question. Instead, he grabbed Jack Jolly's arm.

"Erecha!" he shouted.

"Erecha?" what?" asked Jack Jolly, misunderstanding.

"I mean the Greek 'erecha,' as I eggspined Clevercove impatiently. "In other words, 'I have found it!'"

"You've found the half-crown I lost the other day?" grinned Jack Jolly thickly. "Thanks very much!"

Clevercove frowned.

"Blow your half-crown! This is more important than blessed half-crowns! I

have just invented the most amazing machine in all history!"

"Grate pip! What is it?" asked Merry, who was of an inkwriting turn of mind.

"It is what I call the Ultra-purple Ray Resister. The effect of it is to render anybody who uses it, invisible."

"What?"

"Fact! Just you come along and see!"

Our heroes forgot their financial troubles and followed Clarence Clevercove out of the study. It must be confessed that there were skeptical grins on their dices as they did so.

But, strange to say, Clevercove's claim was not a bit eggspelled. Immediately he arrived back at his own study, he sat down in a chair which was loaded with better, alkumulators, jam-jars, and other electrical equipment, and pulled a lever marked "ON."

What happened next caused Jack Jolly & Co. to rub their eyes with astonishment. Clevercove simply vanished!

"Well, my hat!" gasped Jack Jolly. "Where the dickens has he gone?"

"Nowhere!" came Clevercove's voice from the chair. "I'm still here, but you can't see me. See?"

"No, that's just what we can't do!" said Frank Fearless humorously.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But despite their laughter, Jack Jolly & Co. were staggered by Clevercove's latest. It really was an amazing invention. By pulling the lever marked "ON" one became invisible. And by pressing a knob marked "OFF" one became visible again. It worked so simply that you wondered why nobody had thought of it before.

"Well, this really is the giddy hant!" eggspined Jack Jolly, when he had got the hang of the thing. "I can foresee some fun in the future out of this little gadget, Clevercove!"

"So can I!" grinned the youthful inventor. "For eggssample, this afternoon,

I'm going to turn up in class in an invisible condition and pull old Lickham's leg!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors fairly roared at the idea of the shock the Fourth Form master would get when Clevercove turned up in a state of invisibility. They looked forward to the afternoon in keen anticipation of seeing some fun. And they were not disappointed.

Prompt to the minute, Mr. Lickham russed into the Form-room. He was wearing rather a grim look on his skolelly fazz. Dinner that day had consisted of fish and chips, and Mr. Lickham much preferred boiled beef and carrots. Any junior who trifled with Mr. Lickham on this particular afternoon looked like being landed in the soup.

His eagle eye roamed over the ranks of the Fourth with hawk-like intensity, and when his glance rested on Clevercove's desk, he looked awfully ruffled.

"Grate pip!" he eggspined, with majestic dignity. "Do my peppers deceive me in their giddy old egg, or is Clevercove missing?"

Silence from the Fourth. Mr. Lickham's brow grew thunderous.

"I insist on knowing why Clevercove is not here!" he barked doggedly.

Silence for a minute, then Clevercove's voice spoke up:

"Do you want me, sir?"

Mr. Lickham leaped into the air in utter astonishment.

"Where there are you, Clevercove?" he stutered.

"Here, sir; sitting in my desk!"

"But I am, sir! Come and touch me and you'll have to admit that it's true!"

Mr. Lickham walked across to Clevercove's desk and gingerly stretched fourth his hand. Then he gave a roar.

"Yarooooo! I've got the jim-jams

on my hands!"

"I wonder, my boy, if you would care to trot along with me to his study now and tell him all about it? He'll be awfully pleased with you. I know."

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