

STILL THE BEST BOYS' BOOK!

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The **MAGNET**

2^o

EVERY SATURDAY.

*Billy Bunter's
Come Back!*



POCKET KNIVES & LEATHER WALLETS FOR READERS — See inside



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.

I FEEL like bursting into song this week, chums! For I've just discovered that this Tuesday is Shrove Tuesday, and when I was at school we used to sing a little song which ran: "Pancake Tuesday is a happy day, If you don't give us a holiday, we'll all run away!"

We always got the holiday, although I don't know what would have happened if it had been refused to us! I'm afraid I won't get a holiday this year, however, and I shall still be slogging away at my desk this Tuesday, although I shall see to it that I have some pancakes when I drop into my favourite restaurant for lunch!

They have great fun in certain parts of the country on Shrove Tuesday—especially where they play Shrove Tuesday football, which consists of kicking a ball through the streets—yes, and through houses and shops, too, unless the doors are kept securely locked! But the people enjoy themselves even more down in the southern parts of France and Italy, for this is the day when the famous "Battle of Flowers" takes place.

Fifteen years ago this Tuesday the man who invented "Daylight Saving" died. For years he had been trying to get this country to adopt the principal of putting the clock back during the Summer months so as to get an extra hour of daylight. As long ago as 1908 there was a Bill before Parliament to do this, but there was so much opposition to it that it was dropped, and it was not until the War that a Bill was finally passed.

Some people still oppose

DAYLIGHT SAVING,

but there is no doubt that it has come to stay, and I expect you're all glad of the fact, for it gives you an extra hour to play games during the summer. During the War a great friend of mine used to revile daylight saving. You see, he was serving on a warship, and all ships keep Greenwich time. That meant that the ship's clocks had to be altered every time they entered and left port, and whenever the clock was put back, it generally happened to be his watch on deck—so he had an extra hour to serve! And when the clock was put on, somebody else was sure to be on duty—so my friend lost an hour's sleep!

NOW let me see what questions I've got to answer this week. The first concerns

DAVY JONES' LOCKER!

Who was Davy Jones? asks H. T. of Hexham. Davy is supposed to be the evil spirit of the sea, and his "locker" is the bed of the sea. As a matter of fact, his proper name is "Duffy Jonah," and it is derived from the negro word "duffy," which means an evil spirit, and "Jonah" the prophet, of Whale fame.

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What is Caoutchouc? is the question which comes from Allen Temple, of Deal. I asked "Mr. X." and his reply was: "An elastic resinous substance that exudes by incisions from several trees." In other words, Caoutchouc is simply the proper name of India-rubber!

Walter Frane, of Norwich, wants to know

SOMETHING ABOUT THE COSSACKS,

those famous dare-devil riders of Russia. The Cossacks are a separate race of people who have always been warlike. They lived at first by plundering the Turks and the people of Anatolia, but afterwards a Russian formed them into an army and they joined the Russians, fighting with them in several wars. When disturbances broke out in 1905 in Russia, the Cossacks were employed to restore order. Throughout the whole of the year there was bloodshed in every part of Russia, and the Cossacks were constantly engaged in street fighting and rioting. When the famous Buffalo Bill first brought his great show to England, he brought with him a band of Cossacks who amazed everyone by their wonderful riding tricks. Since then bands of Cossacks have toured the world, entertaining people with their horsemanship.

WHAT IS BURGOO?

asks a reader who lives at Leigh-on-Sea. "Burgoo" is a sailor's slang term for porridge. There is also a town called Burgos in Spain, but, so far as I know, it has no connection whatever with porridge.

Now, while I am getting my breath again after answering all those questions, have a chuckle at this yarn, which earns a penknife for M. Stephens, of 444b, Cowbridge Road, Victoria Park, Cardiff.

OVERHEARD IN THE TRAIN!

First man: "Hard lines about young Stribling, isn't it?"

Second Man: "What's happened to him?"

First Man: "Not heard? He's gone deaf."

Second Man: "Deaf?"

First Man: "Yes, 'fact, 'Carnera' word!"



HERE is a selection of other queries that have been put to me by readers:

Who invented fireworks? The Chinese are said to have done so. An

SEND ALONG YOUR JOKE OR YOUR GREYFRIARS LIMERICK—OR BOTH—AND WIN OUR USEFUL PRIZES OF LEATHER POCKET WALLETS AND SHEFFIELD STEEL PENKNIVES. ALL EFFORTS TO BE SENT TO c/o "MAGNET," 6, CARMELITE STREET, LONDON, E.C.4 (COMP.).

Italian; also invented them in the year 1360, and they were first exhibited in this country in 1588.

What are "Greenbacks"? This name is given to notes for a dollar upwards in the United States, because green is the predominating colour in which they are printed.

Did Columbus first discover America? No. It is now believed that the Norsemen discovered America in the tenth century.

Are there any jewels in the British Isles? Yes. Amethysts were discovered at Kerry, in Ireland, as long ago as 1775.

NOW we'll get on with the washing. Peter White, of Richmond, Yorks, wants a little information

CONCERNING GIPSIES.

Who are they, and where do they come from? They are supposed to be the descendants of low-caste Hindoos, who were expelled from India several centuries ago. They were greatly persecuted at one time, and many people were executed merely for associating with gypsies. Spain is the country which is notable for the most gypsies. Although gypsies mix amongst other nations, they still retain their own manners, customs and language. They have their own "royalty," and crown their kings and queens with great ceremony. One of these ceremonies took place in this country, at Blyth, in Northumberland, many years ago.

I wonder how many of you have been puzzled (as G. C., of Huddersfield is) over the fact that the annual statement of the country's finances is called "The Budget"? G. C. wants to know why it is called that, because, according to his dictionary, a "budget" is "a small leather bag." Exactly, and the documents which we now call the Budget were so called because they used to be carried to Parliament in a small leather bag!

Stand by for a laugh! I. R. Davies, of 46, Tynypwll Road, Whitechurch, near Cardiff, gets a pocket wallet for this clever little limerick:

A master by name Richard Steele,
Had habits he tried to conceal;
But through Billy Bunter,
That nousey tuck hunter,
His secret he had to reveal!

It's time to turn up the "Black Book" now and see what there is in store for you next week. As usual, Frank Richards heads the list with a yarn that will make you wish it was twice as long. It's entitled:

"'NAP' OF THE REMOVE!"

and introduces a new boy whose identity will come as a great surprise to you. You'll kick yourself if you miss this look-length school story, so take my advice and order your copy without any delay!

Second on the list comes another enthralling instalment of our serial:

"FOR THE GLORY OF FRANCE!"

followed by a new centre-page feature under the heading of

"MEDIAEVAL GREYFRIARS."

And naturally, our shorter features, the "footer" article, the Greyfriars poem, and your Editor's chat, will also be in evidence. So look out for next week's issue!

YOUR EDITOR.

FEATURING HARRY WHARTON & CO., OF GREYFRIARS !

BILLY BUNTER'S



"COME-BACK"!

Sparkling Complete School Story—By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Pally !

"MAULY!"

"Yaw-aw-aw!"
It was a deep and prolonged yawn, from Study No. 12 in the Greyfriars Remove. Lord Mauleverer seemed tired.

That was not an unusual state of affairs with his noble lordship. Remove fellows declared that Mauly had been born tired.

Bob Cherry, on the other hand, looked anything but tired. He looked as if he had energy enough for two; if not for three or four. He came up the Remove passage with a heavy tramp; he hurled open the door of Mauly's study with a crash; and he bawled into the doorway with a voice that would have done credit to the Bull of Bashan or the Great Huge Bear.

"Mauly!"

"Yaw-aw-aw!"

Lord Mauleverer was reposing very elegantly on his study sofa. No. 12 was the only study in the Remove that had a sofa in it. It was the only study that needed one. When Mauly was tired, he liked to stretch his slim and elegant limbs on that sofa. As he was generally tired, the sofa was his accustomed abiding place.

But he sat up, as Bob looked into the study. There was a slightly apprehensive expression on his noble face. He liked Bob Cherry—nobody could help liking Bob. But he dreaded him a little at close quarters.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob cheerily. "Ready?"

"Yaas! I mean, no!"

"That's lucid!" agreed Bob. "I suppose it's being a jolly old aristocrat that makes you able to put things as clearly as that."

Lord Mauleverer grinned faintly.

"You see—" he began.

"The car's at the gate," said Bob.

"The—the car?"

"Yes; and the fellows are waiting at the end of the passage. Get a move on!"

"You see—"

"It's going to be a lovely afternoon," said Bob. "Cold, if you like—but for once it's not raining on a half-holiday! Just the day for a toy-ride!"

"Yaas. But—"

"Get going, old bean!"

"You see—" murmured Mauly.

"You fellows coming?" called out Harry Wharton's voice from the direction of the Remove staircase.

"Yes. Come on, Mauly."

Greyfriars without Billy Bunter is like bread and jam—without any jam! So back comes Billy as amusing and as entertaining as ever!

"The—the fact is," said Lord Mauleverer, "I'm a bit tired! I think I'd rather rest a bit. You fellows go—"

"Not without you, ass!" said Bob.

"Yaas. On second thoughts, I think I'll give it a miss!" explained Lord Mauleverer. "I don't feel quite up to the exertion this afternoon."

"The exertion of sitting in a motor-car!" asked Bob.

"Yaas!"

Bob Cherry grinned.

It was a half-holiday at Greyfriars that afternoon; and as no football match was on, the Famous Five had agreed, unanimously, that a joy-ride with Mauly was an excellent idea. Lord Mauleverer was standing the car; such luxuries were rather beyond the means of other Remove fellows. Mauly was one of those fortunate individuals blessed with a superfluity of cash. If he wanted a car, he had only to exert him-

self to the extent of telephoning to the garage at Courtfield. They never worried him with accounts from the garage. The accounts went to his guardian. Had Mauly been bothered with the accounts, probably he would have cut off joy-rides as too much trouble. The line of least resistance was the line that Mauly always took, if he could.

In a moment of unaccustomed energy, Mauly had fixed up that excursion with his friends, phoned to the garage for the car to turn up early on Wednesday afternoon, and left it at that.

Perhaps that effort had exhausted his noble lordship's supply of energy. Now, at all events, he seemed disposed to stick to the study sofa.

"You see," explained Mauly, "it will be all right! You fellows take the car. Go where you like! Have a good time! I'll have a bit of a rest. I found Quelchy very tirin' in the Form-room this mornin'. I'm really tired, old bean."

Bob Cherry came into the study. Apprehensiveness deepened in Lord Mauleverer's aristocratic countenance as Bob towered over him. But the expression on Bob Cherry's rugged, good-humoured face was sympathetic.

"Poor old chap!" he said. "Really tired?"

"Yaas!"

"Feel that you can't walk down to the car?"

"Yaas!"

"And that you'd like to stick on that sofa while we go out alone?"

"Yaas!"

"You don't want to move?"

"No."

"And you're not going to move if you can help it?"

"No."

"Then how jolly lucky for you that you can't help it!" said Bob cheerily.

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"How jolly lucky that you've got a pal ready, and willing, to buck you up, Mauly."

"Look here——"
"Poor old bean!" said Bob. "You can't get off that sofa! I quite understand! But if I shift the sofa——"

"I—I say—— Oh gad!" howled Lord Mauleverer, as Bob Cherry grasped the end of the sofa, and twirled it over.

Bump!
His lordship landed on the carpet. It was a handsome, expensive Persian carpet; everything in Lord Mauleverer's study was handsome and expensive, including his lordship himself. But the carpet, though pleasing to Mauly's eye, was not pleasing to the rest of him, when he landed on it with a sudden concussion. Lord Mauleverer roared.

"There—you can get off the sofa all right," said Bob encouragingly. "You never know what you can do till you try."

"Ow!"
"Now I suppose you're too tired to get up," continued Bob. "But if I take hold of your hair, like this, and tug——"

"Yaroooh!"
Lord Mauleverer, evidently, was not too tired to get up. He got up with remarkable swiftness as Bob helped him with a grip on his hair.

"Ow! Leggo! You silly ass——"
"Too tired to walk down the passage?" continued Bob. "That's where a pal comes in useful—ready and willing to help! With me helping you from behind, you'll manage it all right!"

"Oh gad! Leggo! Yaroooop!" roared Lord Mauleverer, as Bob shifted his grasp to the back of his lordship's collar, and ran him out of the study. "You silly ass—you dangerous ruffian—oh gad!"

Lord Mauleverer did the Remove passage in record time. With the energetic Bob behind him, it was not a matter of choice.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh were waiting on the Remove landing. They chortled as Lord Mauleverer came racing breathlessly up.

"Ready, old bean?" chuckled Nugent. "Poor old Mauly's tired," said Bob. "I'm helping him! Let's all help him—all hands to the mill! You get his hat, Franky—you scout for his coat, Johnny! Wharton, you take his legs, while I keep this end, and we'll carry him down. He's too tired to walk."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Look here!" yelled Lord Mauleverer. "You silly ass, look here——"

"All right, old bean, we'll carry you carefully," said Bob soothingly. "We won't risk dropping you and bashing your brains out—you haven't any to spare. Bag his legs, Wharton."

"Look here——"
Harry Wharton, laughing, bagged his lordship's legs, and, taking them under his arms like the handles of a barrow, he marched down the Remove staircase with them.

As Lord Mauleverer's legs went down the stairs with Wharton, Bob Cherry supported him by the neck. The hapless Mauly wriggled and roared.

"Leggo! I'm not goin'! You silly asses——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here——"
"Quick, march!" said Bob. "Ain't you jolly glad, Mauly, that you've got pals to help you like this?"

"You silly ass——"

"Take hold of his nose, Inky, and help him, too. Be pally!"

"The pallfulness is terrific," chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, as he took possession of Mauly's nose.

"Grooogh! Oooogh!"
Lord Mauleverer was rather breathless and dishevelled when he reached the next landing.

"Ow! Leggo!" he roared. "You silly ass! I'll go! Leggo! I—I'll walk the rest!"

"Sure you feel up to it?" asked Bob. "We'll carry you across the quad like this, if you like."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Yaas! Leggo!"
And Lord Mauleverer, released at last by his loyal pals and stood on his right end, walked the rest.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Note for Que.chy!

MR. QUELCH, the master of the Remove, standing at his open study window looked into the quad, and smiled genially as his eyes rested on half a dozen juniors walking down to the gates. Five of them wore cheery grins, and the sixth seemed to be in a state of rather excited expostulation. Catching sight of the Form master at the study window, Harry Wharton & Co. raised their caps politely, and Mr. Quelch returned the salute with a benignant gesture.

They passed out of his line of vision. Mr. Quelch continued to survey the quad with a benignant countenance.

There was a breath of spring in the March afternoon. Here and there the coming green was perceptible. It was winny, but fine, and there was a deep blue in the sky. Perhaps the fine weather cheered Henry Samuel Quelch; perhaps the circumstance that it was a half-holiday—for him as well as for his Form. Moreover, the Remove master had recently been a long time away from Greyfriars, and he was quite elated at getting back to his old work and his old study. Possibly, too, there was an added satisfaction in the fact that one member of his Form was absent from the school—that member being William George Bunter, the Owl of the Remove.

If anybody at Greyfriars missed Bunter, he gave no sign of it. And certainly Mr. Quelch was not yearning for his appearance.

In the Remove passage fellows declared that life was worth living, since Bunter had been sent home. Bunter, at home, was fixed in the belief that the fellows missed him sorely. He wondered, indeed, how the Remove was getting on without him. But this was only one of Billy Bunter's many little errors. While Bunter was away a fellow could leave his study cupboard unlocked, and still find his cake where he had left it. When Bunter was present, matters were quite different. And a Form master was not likely to miss, unduly, the laziest, densest, and most troublesome member of his Form.

Nevertheless, Mr. Quelch was thinking of Bunter as he gazed out into the old quad of Greyfriars—thinking of him not unkindly.

Bunter's offences had been many, but it was time, Mr. Quelch considered, to allow him to return, and he was considering whether to speak to the Head on the subject. Bunter, undoubtedly, was anxious to return, having indeed made several attempts to butt into the school without permission. And it appeared that his father was still more anxious that he should return.

That was not surprising, for Bunter's presence at home probably did not increase the sum of happiness in the Bunter household.

Buzzzz!
The raucous tones of the telephone bell interrupted Henry Samuel Quelch's reflections.

He turned from the window, and took up the receiver.

"Hallo!"
"That Quelch speaking?" came a voice along the wires that seemed familiar to the ears of the Form master.

"Yes."
"Good-afternoon, sir!"
"Upon my word!" Mr. Quelch recognised the voice now. "Is that Bunter?"

"It's me, sir."
"What?" snapped Mr. Quelch, into the transmitter.

"It's me, sir."
"You should not say it is me, Bunter!" snapped the Remove master. "You should say it is I."

Even on the telephone Mr. Quelch could not forget that he was a school-master.

"Eh? I didn't say it was you, sir."
"What?"

"I said it was me, sir."
"You obtuse boy! I mean, you should say 'it is I,' not 'it is me.' If you were at Greyfriars now, Bunter, I should give you an imposition for using the accusative case instead of the nominative case."

"Oh lor!"
"That will do!"
Mr. Quelch hung up the receiver and frowned.

Bunter, having been sent home by the Head for many and manifold misdeeds, as a warning and a lesson to him, had been forbidden to communicate with the school until word was sent to his father that he might return to Greyfriars.

In these circumstances it was like Bunter's cheek to ring up his Form master on the telephone. Mr. Quelch did not approve of cheek in junior schoolboys, so he cut Bunter off ruthlessly, and frowned, and went back to the window.

Buzzzzzz!
Mr. Quelch uttered an ejaculation, and turned to the telephone again. He could hardly believe that Bunter would have the nerve to ring him a second time, and he could not pass the call unheeded. Indeed, that afternoon he was expecting a call from Sir Hilton Popper, of Popper Court, on the subject of a relative of Sir Hilton whom the baronet was thinking of placing at Greyfriars. So he took up the receiver with some expectation of hearing the crusty voice of the lord of Popper Court.

Instead of which a fat voice came through that was nothing at all like Sir Hilton's.

"Mr. Quelch!"
"Bunter——"
"We seem to have been cut off, sir," said Bunter cheerfully. "These blinking telephones are a worry. I was going to say, sir——"

"Bunter, it is sheer impudence on your part to enter into communication with me!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "Listen to me, you foolish boy! You were sent home for bad conduct, and you will remain at home until your headmaster decides that you may be allowed to return to the school. Until then, Bunter, you will keep your distance from Greyfriars, and you will refrain from calling me, or anyone else here, on the telephone. If you persist in this disrespectful conduct, it will

have to be very seriously considered whether you can be allowed to return at all."

Mr Quelch paused, a little breathless.

"I didn't catch that, sir."

"What?"
"Would you mind saying it over again?"

Henry Samuel Quelch breathed hard.

"The fact is, sir, I'm not at home now," said Bunter. "I'm speaking from quite near Greyfriars. I'm not happy at home, sir. I'm misunderstood. Besides, I'm frightfully worried about missing my lessons, sir. I'm sure, sir, you will remember how keen I always was on Form work."

Mr. Quelch had a good memory. But he did not remember that.

"And — and I miss you, sir," went on Bunter. "I—I'm frightfully sad at not seeing you, sir! I—I'm fond of you, sir!"

"You utterly absurd boy—"

"Oh, really, sir! The — the fact is, you—you're so nice sir! I never thought you a beast like the other fellows, sir."

"Bunter!"

"It's true, sir! I—I always thought you so nice, sir! I've often said to the fellows that looks aren't everything in—"

"Upon my word!"

"I mean it, sir! I hope you will speak a word to the Head, sir, and get him to let me come back! I know you've got a lot of influence with the Head, sir! I've heard fellows say that you can twist him round your finger—"

"Bunter!"

"If you put it to him, sir, I'm sure he will let me come back. I never did anything, sir, except cut classes! I hope you will see me righted, sir! Can I come straight on to the school now?"

"If you do, Bunter, I shall administer a severe caning, and put you in the next train for home."

Bang! went the receiver on the hooks.

Mr. Quelch, apparently, had had enough of Bunter's entertaining conversation.

He walked to the window again, and stood looking out—no longer with a benevolent smile, but with a frown. Bunter had irritated him. Bunter often had that effect on people.

Buzzzzzz!

Five minutes had not elapsed, and the telephone bell rang again, loudly, raucously, persistently. Mr. Quelch breathed hard and deep, and his eyes glinted like steel. Really, it was too much for the most patient Form master to endure with patience.

Mr. Quelch rushed across to the telephone, grabbed the receiver and fairly bawled into the mouthpiece.

"You impertinent rascal! How dare you ring me up? Upon my word, if you were in my presence, I would box your ears soundly. I never heard of such unparalleled impudence."

"What? What?" came a startled, crusty voice on the phone. "Is that Mr.

Quelch speaking? What? what? What do you mean? By Jove, I've never been so talked to in my life! What? what?"

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Quelch, as he recognised the voice of Sir Hilton Popper. "Oh, goodness gracious!"

He almost dropped the receiver.

It was not Bunter this time!

"What do you mean?" hooted Sir Hilton Popper. "What? what? Impertinent rascal, eh? By gad, I've never been so insulted! I shall complain to Dr. Locke! By Jove!"

"I—I—I—Sir Hilton—I—I—" stammered Mr. Quelch.

There was a whir on the line. The indignant baronet at Popper Court had rung off, evidently in high dudgeon.

"Oh dear!" said Mr. Quelch faintly.

He replaced the receiver and stood staring at the telephone in dismay.

It was most unfortunate. Sir Hilton was a governor of Greyfriars, and the governor who lived nearest the school, and therefore, the most obnoxious of all the governing body. Form masters could not afford to insult governors of the school. And Sir Hilton was so hasty and irascible an old gentleman, that it would be very difficult to explain matters.

Buzzzzzz!

Once more Mr. Quelch grasped the receiver, hoping that it was Sir Hilton again, and a chance to explain.

"My dear sir," he began—"my dear sir—"

"Oh, good!" It was Bunter's voice. "I'm so glad you're in a good temper, sir! We got cut off again, sir. I say, sir—"

Mr. Quelch glared at the telephone as

if he could have bitten it. He would have given a term's salary for Bunter to be within his reach at that moment. Seldom had the Remove master been so intensely exasperated and enraged. He would have ground his teeth had they not been an expensive set.

"Bunter!" he gasped. "You—you—where are you, Bunter? From where are you speaking?"

"Friardale, sir!"

"Where?" hissed Mr. Quelch.

"Wha-a-at do you want to know for, sir?" asked Bunter, possibly warned by something in Mr. Quelch's tones.

"I am going to chastise you, Bunter."

"Wha—a-at?"

"I am going to bring a cane and administer exemplary punishment—"

"Oh scissors!"

"Bunter, answer me, do you hear?"

But answer there came none! This time it was William George Bunter who had rung off.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Happy Meeting!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"
Bob Cherry uttered the ejaculation, as the car drew up outside Uncle Clegg's tuckshop in Friardale.

It was a good car and a good driver. Lord Mauleverer always had the best that the Courtfield garage could supply. There was plenty of room for the six fellows in it, and the six fellows were making themselves comfortable. By the time the chauffeur toiled the car into the village high street, Lord



With Harry Wharton holding his legs and Bob Cherry supporting him by the waist Lord Mauleverer was trundled down the Remove staircase, wriggling, and roaring!

Mauleverer had recovered his usual placidity, and there was a cheery, if sleepy, smile on his noble face. And it was on Mauly's suggestion that the joy-riders stopped at the village tuck-shop, to take on board a supply of refreshments, liquid and solid, in the shape of ginger beer and buns.

As the car stopped and the Famous Five and their noble pal turned out, a fat figure was sighted, standing in the doorway of Uncle Clegg's establishment.

"Bunter!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "The esteemed and preposterous Bunter!" ejaculated Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "He has turned up again like a ridiculous bad penny."

"That fat idiot!" grunted Johnny Bull. Billy Bunter blinked at them through his big spectacles. Fat satisfaction irradiated his podgy visage.

"I say, you fellows—"
"Oh gad," murmured Lord Mauleverer. "Bunter, by gad! Look here, never mind about the beer and buns! Let's get on."

"Let's," chuckled Nugent. "I say, you fellows, I'm jolly glad to see you!" exclaimed Bunter, and there was no doubt that he was speaking the truth. The arrival of the chums of the Remove, was, to Bunter, like corn in the lean years to the Egyptians, like manna in the desert to the Israelites. His fat face fairly beamed. "I say, I've been sticking here a long time, thinking some Greyfriars men might come along, as it's a half-holiday! I say, isn't this a lucky meeting?"

"The luckfulness is not terrific, my esteemed Bunter."

"Oh, really, Inky—"
"What the thump are you doing here, you fat freak?" demanded Harry Wharton.

"Has the Beak told you you can come back?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Not yet! But I'm coming back, all the same. You see, I can't stand it at home any longer—I simply can't! It's too thick. The pater's like a bear with a sore head! He makes out that I must have done something, or the Head wouldn't have sent me home."

"Go hon!" said Bob Cherry, with deep sarcasm.

"He does!" said Bunter, shaking his head sorrowfully. "You'd hardly expect a fellow's pater to misunderstand him like that, would you? But it's the same everywhere—misunderstanding and injustice! I can tell you, I'm fed up. I say, you fellows, as you are here, come in and have a feed! My treat!"

There was a chuckle from the Famous Five. They knew Bunter's treats of old. When Bunter treated, it came rather expensive to the treated fellows.

"Jolly lucky your coming along like this," said Bunter. "That beast, old Clegg, is making a fuss about trusting a fellow with a mouthful of grub! I've explained to him that I left my purse at home, and that I'll settle by return of post, but he's not satisfied. Can't take a fellow's word, you know! Do come in. We'll have a spread to celebrate this happy meeting, what?"

"You left your purse at home?" asked Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"Yes, old chap!"
"Was there anything in it?"
"Beast!"

How Bunter was going to stand a spread without the necessary wherewithal to satisfy Mr. Clegg, he did not explain. But no explanation was needed; Bunter's methods were known of old.

However, the juniors went into the

little shop. They were quite willing to stand the exile from Greyfriars buns and ginger-beer; as a sort of consolation prize, as it were. It was so nice in the Remove without Bunter that they felt it was up to them to compensate him for having got himself sent home.

Uncle Clegg, who had been eyeing Bunter with an inhospitable eye, looked hospitable enough at the sight of the Famous Five and Lord Mauleverer. And he trotted out his best comestibles; upon which Billy Bunter immediately made an attack, filling his large mouth to capacity before he spoke again.

Bunter, evidently, was hungry after his railway journey. Certainly, it was rather early for tea. But no meal-time ever came too early for William George Bunter.

"I say, you fellows, this is all right!" said Bunter, in a rather muffled voice. "I say, it's a real pleasure to see you men. Are you having that car out for a joy-ride, Mauly?"

"Yaas."
"Good; I'll come."
"Oh, begad!"
"And we'll wind up at Greyfriars, what?" asked Bunter.

"You fat, frabjous freak!" said Bob Cherry. "You jolly well know that you can't come back to Greyfriars till the Head says so."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"
"The best thing you can do, is to make tracks for home," said Harry Wharton.

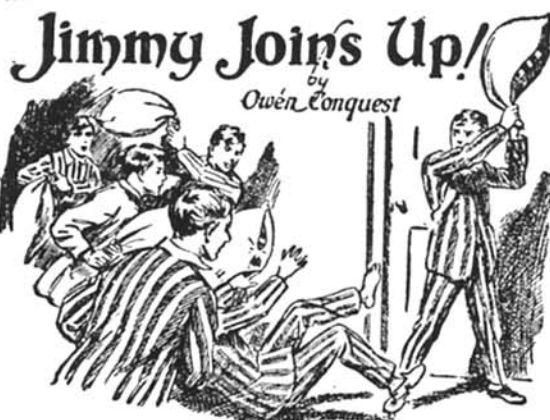
Bunter shook his head. "Can't be done!" he explained. "It's too thick! What do you think the pater's done? Got in a tutor chap to teach me things! And the fellow expects me to work! Worse than school! And every morning the pater expects a letter from the Head to say I can come back. Every morning he snorts like a grampus because it hasn't come! Just as if he didn't like me being at home, you know! Unnatural, isn't it? Even the pater has been cutting up rusty. There was a fuss about a pie yesterday—I never knew what had become of it, and I told the mater so—but the cook made out that I'd been in the kitchen—an untruthful woman! The cook said she'd leave—and the mater had to talk her round, and she was quite snappy to me. Actually snappy! As if I'd had the pie, you know!"

"And you hadn't?" said Bob. "No! I'm not the fellow to do a thing of that sort, I hope," said Bunter. "I never even knew there was a pie—and as for watching on the stairs till the cook went out into the garden, I never thought of such a thing. And there was precious little gravy in it, too—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at. Look here, you men—pass those jam-tarts—thanks! Look here, it simply comes to this—I'm going back to Greyfriars. If the Head doesn't like it, he can lump it. But we shall have to be careful."

"We!" repeated Harry Wharton. "Yes, old chap—I take it for granted that you're sticking to me, after all I've done for you. I've been on the telephone to Quelch from the post office—he seemed waxy about something; I don't know what, but he seemed distinctly waxy. I shall have to keep out of his sight till he gets in better temper. But we can fix that. We'll get to the school a little after dark—then you can smuggle me in, see—"

"And get a licking all round?"
"Never mind that, old chap—"



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"We do mind it, a little!" grinned Bob.

"Don't be selfish, old fellow!" urged Bunter. "That's the worst of you fellows—you're selfish. Now, as I was saying, you smuggle me in—"

"And what do you think the Head would say, if he found we'd smuggled you in?" demanded Harry Wharton.

"Never mind what he says—you must chance that! Besides, he won't know! Anyhow, if you get a licking, it will be in a good cause! Pass those cream-puffs, Bob—I've only had seven—don't keep them all to yourself, old chap! Now, when I'm in the school, it will be all right! You can fix me up in the Remove box-room, see? Of course, until the Head comes round, I shall have to stay in the school syrupstitchiously—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Syrupstitchiously," said Bunter, "isn't in my line—plain and open and straightforward—that's me! But what's a fellow to do? I've got to get into the school—and they won't let me! So there's nothing for it but strategy and syrupstitchiously."

"You benighted chump—"

"Oh, really, Wharton! Is it a go?" asked Bunter.

"Not quite!" said the captain of the Remove laughing. "You can't come back to school till the Head lets you, and you'd know that if you had the brains of a bunny rabbit. Now, you men, let's get back to the car."

"Come on," said Bob. "Good-bye, Bunter!"

"You needn't say good-bye, old man—I'm coming!"

"Now, look here, Bunter—"

"Wait till I finish these tarts—"

"Finish 'em after we're gone, old fat ben. Come on, you men," said the captain of the Remove.

Lord Mauleverer settled Uncle Clegg's little bill, and the party returned to the car, carrying ginger beer and buns for refreshment en route.

Billy Bunter blinked after them.

He still had a number of jam tarts to dispose of. He grabbed them up hastily, and rushed after the chums of the Remove.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh dear!" groaned Lord Mauleverer. "You'd like me to come, Mauly, what?"

"Look here—" grunted Johnny Bull.

"You shut up, Bull! I'm talking to Mauly! Don't interrupt me when I'm talking to my old pal! I say, Mauly, old fellow, you'd like me in the car, what? I say, what are you groaning about, Mauly? Got a pain?"

Lord Mauleverer did not answer that question. In dismal silence he climbed into the car. Bunter rolled after him.

"Come in, you fellows," said Bunter, blinking at the Famous Five through his big spectacles. "Plenty of room for you, only don't squeeze! I like a little comfort! Perhaps one of you had better sit outside with the shover! That will make it a bit more comfortable for me."

Regardless of the fact that a reduction in their number would make for Bunter's comfort, the Famous Five entered the car, and it glided away down the old High Street of Priardale. Bunter was booked for the joy-ride; which was, perhaps, not likely to prove so joyful as anticipated. He was also, in his own opinion, booked for Greyfriars, at the end of the joy-ride. Bunter had settled that to his own satisfaction. But on that point, it was probable that William George Bunter was deceived.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Only Way!

"SORRY, old chap!" said Bunter cheerfully.

Lord Mauleverer was more than sorry.

He gazed down at his handsome overcoat, on which lay a chunk of jam from the tart that Billy Bunter was now consuming. It really was not safe to sit next to Bunter when he was eating jam tarts.

Lord Mauleverer was very particular about his clothes. Billy Bunter wasn't. There was generally a smear or two of something sticky about William George Bunter.

"Oh gad!" murmured Mauly.

"I'll rub it off, old chap," said Bunter kindly.

He jerked out a handkerchief—a handkerchief that, to judge by its colour, had seen a lot of service. With that he dabbed at the lump of jam—in the course of his proceedings dropping more jam, and a considerable quantity of crumbs, over the unhappy Mauly.

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STILL THEY COME!

For the following Greyfriars limerick Jack Dudley, of 39, St. Mary's Road, Bearwood, Smethwick, has been awarded one of this week's useful leather pocket wallets:

With a sigh Bunter sat in the chair;
With a yell he leapt high in the air!

For the point of a pin
Sticking in his fat skin
Was the cause of this funny affair.

It may be your turn next, chum.
Pile in with your efforts right away!

"Don't!" said Lord Mauleverer feebly.

"There, that's all right," said Bunter.

"Oh dear!"

"That's the last of the tarts," said Bunter. "Are you fellows keeping those buns for anything?"

"Yes."

"Well, what's the good of keeping them? We can stop somewhere for tea. I think I'll have some of those buns."

"Think again," suggested Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"And give Mauly a bit more room, you fat boulder! You'll flatten him into a pancake."

"Beast! I think one of you fellows had better sit outside," said Bunter.

"We're too crowded in here. You'd better, Cherry. Your feet are too big to go inside anything but a motor-bus."

"Why, you cheeky, fat villain—"

"If you're going to be mean with the buns, I suppose you can let a fellow have a bottle of 'inger-pop," said Bunter.

"For goodness' sake leave off guzzling for a little while!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"And shut up!" added Johnny.

"The esteemed speechfulness is silvery, my absurd Bunter, but the golden silence is the bird in hand that goes longest to the well, as the English proverb remarks," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Ho, he, he! Funny thing that you've never learned English all the time you've been at Greyfriars, Inky."

"My esteemed, idiotic Bunter—"

"I suppose a nigger can't, really," said Bunter thoughtfully. "But the way you talk, old man, is enough to make a donkey cackle."

"I have no objection to the esteemed Bunter cackling," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh mildly.

"Oh, don't be an ass, you know. I say, you fellows, where are we going?"

asked Bunter, blinking from the window. The car was eating up the miles on a wide, country road. "This is the road for Lantham, isn't it?"

"That's it," said Harry. "We're going through Lantham."

"Well, I'll tell you what," said Bunter. "Instead of going through Lantham, and wasting time roaming about the country, let's stop at Lantham, and have tea at the Pagoda there."

"Fathead!"

"You get a jolly good feed at the Pagoda, if you can pay for it," argued Bunter. "I think it's a ripping idea."

"We're out for a joy-ride, fathead, not to stick in a teashop guzzling," grunted Johnny Bull.

"Well, we've got to have tea somewhere," said Bunter. "I suppose you're not thinking of missing tea?"

"We've got some buns, ass."

"If you think I can put up with buns for tea, Bull, you're mistaken. If this is what you call eating a fellow decently, when you ask him to join you in an excursion, I can only say that I don't agree. Look here, Mauly, ain't we stopping somewhere for tea?"

"We can get a jolly good feed at the Pagoda," said Bunter warmly, "and keep the car waiting to take us back to Greyfriars. Much better than buzzing about country roads for hours. What do you think, Mauly?"

"Oh dear!"

"Anything the matter, old chap?" asked Bunter, blinking at him. "You don't seem so cheerful as you were."

"Oh!"

"It's settled, then, we stop at the Pagoda for tea," said Bunter. "You can leave it to me to order the grub—that's a thing I can do better than you fellows. All you'll have to do is to settle the bill."

"Is that all?" asked Bob sarcastically.

"Yes, old chap."

"Look here, Bunter—" began Harry Wharton.

"Don't jaw, old chap! You talk a lot too much," said Bunter. "You always were rather like a sheep's head—nearly all jaw, you know."

The captain of the Remove breathed hard.

"While we're getting to Lantham," continued Bunter, "we may as well settle about what we're going to do when we get back to Greyfriars. It will be necessary to keep it dark at first that I'm in the school. Quelchey seemed very ratty about something when I phoned him. He might cut up rusty if he saw me. In fact, I'm sure he would. I shall have to keep out of Quelchey's sight. I rely on you fellows to back me up."

"Ass!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! After all I've done for you, I think it's the least you can do. Look how I stood by you when you came to Greyfriars—when you were a sulky rotter that nobody would speak to. I remember you had a fight with Nugent the first day. You remember, Franky?"

"You silly owl, shut up!"

"Oh, really, Nugent, I forget whether you licked Wharton, or whether he licked you. Which was it?"

"My esteemed idiotic Bunter—"

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"Don't you butt in, Inky! Blessed if I ever saw such a set of fellows for jaw!" said Bunter. "Jaw, jaw, jaw, all the time, never giving a fellow a chance to get a word in edge-wise. Sickenin', I call it."

"Are you as nice as this at home?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"No wonder your pater wants to land you at Greyfriars again, if you are," said Bob. "But he jolly well isn't getting away with it, if we can help it."

"Look here—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! We're in Lantham!" said Bob, glancing from the window.

"Stop at the Pagoda," said Bunter. "Tell the shover to stop at the Pagoda, Mauly."

"Oh dear!"

The car ran on into Lantham. The bright cheeriness with which the joy-ride had started seemed to have faded away now. All the faces in the car wore glum expressions, except Bunter's.

The fat junior nudged Lord Mauleverer with a fat thumb in his aristocratic ribs. Mauly started convulsively.

"Ow!" he ejaculated.

"We shall be passing the Pagoda in a few minutes, Mauly," said Bunter. "Sneak to the chauffeur, old chap."

"Shut up, Bunter!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Shan't! I say, Mauly—"

"Oh, yaas!" said Mauleverer.

He spoke through the tube to the driver. The car came to a halt opposite the entrance of the Pagoda.

"Good!" said Bunter.

"Look here—" growled Johnny Bull.

"Let Bunter have his way," said Lord Mauleverer mildly. "He wants to stop at the Pagoda. Let him stop."

"But look here—"

"It's all right!"

The Famous Five looked glummer than before. Billy Bunter, on the other hand, smiled genially.

"That's right, Mauly, old bean!" he said. "Never mind those grouching fellows; let 'em grouse. In fact, I think they might as well take the train back from here. I'm sure you're as fed-up with them as I am. I can't say I like their company. Come on, Mauly!"

Billy Bunter stepped out of the car. He started briskly across the pavement towards the teashop.

Lord Mauleverer spoke to the chauffeur again.

"Drive on!"

"Yes, sir."

"Quick as you can."

"Yes, sir."

"Oh!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The car leaped into motion. Lord Mauleverer drew the door shut, and sank back in his seat with a sigh of relief.

Half-way across the pavement to the Pagoda Billy Bunter blinked round.

"Come on, Mauly, old chap! Why, what—where— Oh, my hat! I say, Mauly—I say, you fellows— Beasts!" roared Bunter.

He rushed back to the edge of the pavement.

But it was too late.

The car was already a dozen yards away and going strong. Under Billy Bunter's astonished and exasperated gaze it vanished into the traffic of Lantham High Street.

Bunter gazed after it.

"Oh crickey!" he ejaculated.

It was gone—gone from his gaze like a beautiful dream! And Bunter's feelings, as he gazed stonily after the

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vanished car, could not have been expressed in words.

On the other side of Lantham the car ate up the miles on country roads, and all the faces in it were merry and bright. The joy-ride was a joyful one after all.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

All Right!

"WILLIAM!"

"Oh dear!"

"William!" repeated Mr. Bunter, with severity.

Billy Bunter blinked at his parent.

It was a couple of days later.

Bunter was home once more.

There really had been no choice in the matter for Bunter.

Harry Wharton & Co., with the selfishness and base ingratitude to which Bunter was sorrowfully accustomed, had refused to smuggle him into Greyfriars, and had left him on his own at Lantham. So what was a fellow to do?

There was only one thing for Bunter to do—to head for home, and he did it. He did it morosely and discontentedly, but he did it.

But there was no charm in home, sweet home, for Bunter.

Even in holiday-time his father was a little restive if Bunter was too much about the house. In term-time, Mr. Bunter, naturally, felt that it was too

"thick."

The plump stockbroker had finished his breakfast, during which he had worn a frown.

Bunter had not finished yet, but his gastronomic operations were interrupted by the stern voice of his parent.

He groaned inwardly.

He could see that "jaw" was coming. Bunter, misunderstood everywhere, was misunderstood as much at home as abroad.

Every morning Bunter yearned to hear that a letter had arrived from his headmaster, giving permission for him to return to school. Probably Mr. Bunter's yearning was as deep as his son's.

But no such letter, so far, had arrived. It was a severe daily disappointment to both.

"William," said Mr. Bunter, for the third time, "this cannot continue."

"Oh dear!"

"You have been sent home from school during the term," said Mr. Bunter; "a most unprecedented proceeding on the part of your headmaster."

"You see, he's a beast!" explained Bunter.

"I am not surprised at his action, considering the description he gave of your conduct, William."

"I never—"

"I should not have been surprised if Dr. Locke had expelled you."

"Oh crumbs!"

"He adopted the milder method of sending you home for a time, as a warning to you. I am grateful to him, as far as that goes."

"Oh!"

"But this cannot continue," said Mr. Bunter. "You are wasting your time. I have gone to the expense of engaging a tutor for you. Have you done any work with him?"

"You—you see—"

"I cannot trust you to work in my absence, William. But this cannot continue. I am therefore making new arrangements," said Mr. Bunter.

Billy Bunter brightened up a little.

"I'd like to have a holiday, father, if that's what you mean."

"That is not what I mean."

"Oh!"

"I shall make arrangements to-day," said Mr. Bunter, "for you to be placed temporarily in my office in the City."

"Eh?"

"There you will work under my own eye—"

"Oh lor'!"

"You will be placed under the orders of a man who will see that you do not slack—"

"Oh crumbs!"

"I shall authorise him to administer any chastisement that may be necessary—"

"Ow!"

"Now you understand," said Mr. Bunter. "I shall make all arrangements to-day. To-morrow morning you will accompany me to the City."

"I—I say—"

"Enough!"

Mr. Bunter rose from the table.

Bunter groaned.

When the Ford car carried Mr. Bunter away to the station, Billy Bunter blinked after it in dismay.

Only one more day!

Then work!

Billy Bunter had a constitutional dislike for work. That dislike had shown itself quite early in Bunter's career; it had grown with his growth and strengthened with his strength. The mere thought of work made Bunter feel that tired feeling. Actual work was too awful for words.

But the hat had gone forth! On the morrow Bunter was to work—real work—the genuine article!

Naturally, the prospect produced a feeling of desperation in the podgy breast of William George Bunter.

Something had to be done.

A long course of misunderstanding and injustice had culminated in this.

"I've got to get back to Greyfriars," said Bunter determinedly. "I've got to manage it somehow—I've got to."

It was evidently the only way. There was work, of a sort, at Greyfriars, but it was not like real work. Anything, even prep, and class with Queech, was better than real work. With the awful prospect of actual exertion before him, Greyfriars seemed a haven of refuge to Billy Bunter.

Somehow—anyhow—he was going to get back into the school. If he could not go openly, he must go surreptitiously. Anyhow, he had to go! That was now settled beyond doubt. The dread alternative was—work!

Bunter had tried it on several times already! Each time it had been a failure. Now he had to succeed. If he was at home on the following morning he was to be taken up to the City, to work! Obviously, he must not be at home on the following morning!

When Mr. Bunter returned from the City that evening he did not see his hopeful son.

But he found two letters.

One was in the hand of the headmaster of Greyfriars, the other in the scrawling fist of William George.

Mr. Bunter opened the headmaster's letter first.

It was a brief communication from Dr. Locke. It stated that, after consultation with Bunter's Form master, the Head had decided that Bunter might now return to the school, and expressed a hope that the lesson he had received would cause Bunter to amend.

"Good!" said Mr. Bunter.

It was a much-needed relief to Mr. Bunter.

He opened the second note and read:

"Dear Father,—I am going back to Greyfriars to-day, as it is all fixed up and it is all rite. So no more from your affeckshunat Sun,

WILLIAM."

"I shall arrange for you to be placed temporarily in my office in the City," said Mr. Bunter, "under the orders of a man who will see that you do not slack!" "Ow!" groaned Bunter.



"Dear me!" said Mr. Bunter. Billy Bunter certainly had not seen the contents of the Head's letter. It was rather puzzling, therefore, how he knew that it was all fixed up and all right. He must, indeed, have left home in ignorance of the fact that the Head had given him permission to return.

However, that mattered little. Evidently he had gone back to Greyfriars—and that was all that mattered. Mr. Bunter was satisfied.

His son, apparently, had gone back to the school, hoping that it was all right. When he got there he would find that it was all right. So that was that!

Mr. Bunter dismissed the matter from his mind. It was all right!

As a matter of fact, it was far from all right. The peculiar adventures of Billy Bunter were not at an end. They were only beginning!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Sammy is Not Taking Any!

"SAMMY, old chap!" Sammy Bunter of the Second Form at Greyfriars jumped.

Bunter minor had very good reason to jump.

The sound of a brotherly voice in his ears, when he supposed his elder brother to be nearly a hundred miles away, was startling.

The fat fag spun round.

His fat face, adorned with the big spectacles that made him look so remarkably like his brother Billy, registered amazement.

"You!" he ejaculated.

"Me!" said Billy Bunter.

He crept out cautiously from behind a stone pillar in the old Cloisters of Greyfriars.

Dusk was falling on the Cloisters; it was close on time for all fellows to be in the House.

But Sammy Bunter had reasons of his own for seeking the solitude of the old Cloisters.

Sammy had a large packet of toffee. It was not only in looks that Samuel Bunter resembled William George. In ways they were alike.

When Sammy had tuck Sammy preferred solitude. He disliked the idea of whacking out. He had a still more powerful reason, in this instance, for seeking shady solitude till the toffee was consumed. The toffee, as it happened, belonged to Gatty of the Second. At that very moment Gatty and his friend, Myers, were hunting for that toffee, wondering where it could be, and how it had mysteriously vanished from the spot where George Gatty had laid it down while he showed Myers a wrestling trick.

Sammy Bunter could have enlightened him, but did not. Sammy had retired, like a beast of prey, to solitary places to devour his kill. That was how William George happened on him in the dusky old Cloisters.

"You!" repeated Sammy.

His clutch closed harder on the toffee, and he assumed a rather defensive attitude.

Bunter blinked at the toffee.

"I'm hungry, Sammy!" he said pathetically.

"Are you?" said Sammy.

"Yes."

"Fancy that!" said Sammy.

"You're not going to offer me that toffee, Sammy?"

"No fear!"

"You greedy little beast!"

"Rats!"

"I've a jolly good mind—" said Billy Bunter, breathing hard and approaching a step nearer his minor.

"Anybody know you're here?" asked Sammy.

"Not! Keep it dark."

"Keep your distance, then," said Bunter minor cheerily. He took a bite

at the toffee and blinked warily at his major. "What have you come back here, for Billy? You know you ain't allowed here till the Head lets you come back. You'll get into a row!"

"I've come back slyly," explained Bunter. "It's grown simply unbearable at home, Sammy!"

"For the pater, do you mean?"

"No. you little beast; for me! The pater says I'm to squat on a stool in his office in the City and work until the Head lets me come back. Of course, that did it!"

"It would!" grinned Sammy. "Fancy you working! You'd just as soon wash your neck, wouldn't you?"

"You cheeky little fat sweep!" hissed Bunter.

"Fat! I like that!" grinned Sammy. "Talk about a pot and a kettle! What price you?"

Bunter controlled his just wrath. "Of course, I wouldn't punch you, Sammy. I've always been a kind and affectionate brother to you, as you know."

"Have you?" asked Sammy, in surprise. "I hadn't noticed it."

"I lent you sixpence last term—"

"I remember—it was a bad one. I wondered why you lent it to me till I tried to pass it on Mrs. Mimble."

"I gave you a doughnut the day before I was sent home—"

"Yes. Whose was it?" asked Sammy.

Evidently it was useless to appeal to the softer nature of this ungrateful young scamp. Brotherly love was not highly developed in the tribe of Bunter.

"I've just got here," went on Billy Bunter.

"I've had a long journey, Sammy, and I had only just enough money to pay my fare. I simply didn't dare to stop at home over-to-morrow. I've had nothing to eat since lunch, except a pie I bagged before I started and a cake and a few chocolates. If

you don't want all that toffee, Sammy, you—

"I do!" said Sammy briefly.

"Is that what you call brotherly?" asked Billy Bunter, more in sorrow than in anger. "Guzzling toffee, while your dear brother perishes of hunger under your eyes!"

"Oh, you won't perish yet!" said Sammy, taking another bite at the toffee. "You can live on your fat, like a polar bear in the winter, you know. It would last you for years."

Billy Bunter clenched a pair of fat fists. Sammy opened his mouth ready for a yell, and Bunter unclenched them again. He dared not risk the alarm being given.

The poet has declared that where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise. But in the case of William George Bunter ignorance was far from being bliss.

Had he been aware of the contents of the Head's letter to his father all would have been plain sailing. Instead of skulking in shady corners, dodging out of sight, and eyeing Sammy's toffee hungrily, he might have walked boldly into the House and presented himself at tea in full.

But he did not know.

Had he risked that awful prospect of work for one day longer it would have been well for Bunter; then he would have learned from his father all about the Head's letter.

But the awful prospect had been too awful to be risked. It was more than flesh and blood could bear—Bunter's flesh and blood, at all events.

So Bunter was surreptitiously butting into Greyfriars, in complete ignorance of the fact that the headmaster's permission for his return had been given, and that there was nothing whatever to prevent him from walking boldly into the House if he liked.

In such circumstances ignorance was not bliss. Bunter was feeling far from blissful.

Naturally, no announcement had been made of the Head's decision; nobody at Greyfriars took any interest in the matter, or wanted to know anything about it. Only the Head and Mr. Quelch were aware that Bunter's sentence was rescinded. Sammy Bunter had no idea of it any more than the rest.

So, unless Billy Bunter came out into the open, he was not likely to learn how matters stood. And Bunter was very careful not to come out into the open. He expected to be severely caned and sent home if he was discovered. Coming out into the open was the very last thought in Billy Bunter's fat mind.

Sammy began to move away towards the quadrangle. He was getting to the end of the toffee, and no yearning for his brother's society seemed to be afflicting him.

Bunter, blinking round cautiously, followed him.

"Hold on, Sammy, old chap!" he whispered.

"Look here, you'll get me into a row!" said Sammy. "You jolly well know that you ain't allowed here. A fellow found talking to you might be licked!"

"You speak as if you weren't glad to see me back, Sammy!" said Bunter major sorrowfully.

"I'd be jolly glad to see your back!" answered Sammy.

"I've a jolly good mind—"

Again Billy Bunter controlled his feelings. The satisfaction of collaring his affectionate brother and banging his bullet head against one of the old stone pillars was not for him—not at present, at all events.

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"Well, look here, Sammy, you can do me a good turn," he said. "I've got to get into the House—see?"

Sammy shook his head.

"Better hook it!" he said.

"I can't book it, you young ass! I can't go home—that means being taken up to the City in the morning—working in a stuffy office!" said Bunter. "And I can't go anywhere else, as I've no money. I suppose you haven't any to lend me?"

"Right on the wicket."

"Well, I've got to get into the House! Any port in a storm, you know. If I can be low for a time it will be all right. Sooner or later the Beak will come round. You're going to help me, Sammy?"

"Am I?" said Sammy, very doubtfully.

"I shall have to get in surreptitiously, of course. If I'm seen, the game's up. I want you to open a window for me."

"Think again!"

"You can open the window of the Remove box-room. I can get in over the leads after dark. See?"

"I can't go up to the Remove passage. They kick Second Form men who go there."

"You can risk it for my sake."

"I don't think!" said Sammy.

"Look here, Sammy, I'll lend you half-a-crown to do it!" said Billy Bunter desperately.

Sammy held out a fat palm.

"I'm stony now, old chap; but later—"

"Then I'll open that box-room window later," said Sammy cheerfully. "Ta-ta, old bean; I'm going!"

"Sammy, old chap—"

"Good-bye!"

Sammy Bunter had finished the toffee now. He turned and rolled away. Billy Bunter gazed after him. Wrath was in his face—righteous wrath. Evidently there was nothing doing with Sammy. Sammy of the Second was liable to be kicked by any Remove man who found him rooting about the Remove quarters; he was liable to be caned if he opened a window and left it open after dark and he was found out.

From Billy Bunter's point of view, Sammy should have been only too glad to run these risks. Sammy's point of view, it appeared, was quite different.

Bunter breathed hard and deep.

"Sammy!" he called out.

Sammy Bunter did not heed. Like the deep and dark blue ocean in the poem, he rolled on.

Billy Bunter forgot caution at that moment. Caution was overcome by wrath and indignation. He rushed after Sammy, and let out his boot.

Crash!

"Yaroooop!" roared Sammy.

He spun headlong.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow!" roared Sammy, as he sprawled on the flags. "Ow! Wow! Yarooop! Whoooooop!"

Sammy's yells rang far and wide.

"Shut up, you little beast!" gasped Billy Bunter recalled to caution as the Cloisters rang and echoed with the sound of Sammy's lamentation.

Bunter blinked round in alarm. But the fellows were all going into the House by that time, and the Cloisters were far from the House. Nobody seemed to have noticed Sammy's yells, stentorian as they were. Feeling that he was secure, Bunter considered that he might as well take another kick.

There was a fiendish howl from Sammy as he took it.

The fat fag leaped up and fled.

He vanished from the Cloisters, still yelling; and Bunter was left gasping, but feeling a little better.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Helping Gosling!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry genially. Gosling grunted.

That cheery greeting did not seem to cheer the ancient porter of Greyfriars School.

Gosling was not a cheery character. He generally took a pessimistic view of life. Often and often Gosling wondered, as he sipped his gin and water in his lodge, what had induced him to take up a place at a school. Boys, in Gosling's opinion, were dratted impa. There was occasional satisfaction in shutting out a fellow who arrived a second too late at the gates, and reporting him; but, generally speaking, Gosling's view of the rising generation was that they all, or almost all, ought to be "drownded." Thrashings and detentions were good, in their way, but "drownding" was what Gosling really would have recommended.

At the present moment Gosling, the crusty, was unusually crusty.

He was carrying a ladder on his shoulder. It was a long ladder. Gosling had been tacking up ivy that had come loose in the Murch wind on an old wall. Now, his task done, Gosling had to carry the ladder back to the shed. It did not please him in the very least to fall in with the Famous Five of the Remove on his way; and Bob Cherry's greeting only made him grunt.

"Been working, Gosling?" asked Bob. "Which," grunted Gosling, "I 'ave!"

"Great Scott!" Gosling glared. There really was no need for Bob to express so much astonishment at the news that Gosling had been doing some work.

"Gather round, my infants!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, in great excitement. "Gosling's been doing some work! Let's ask him about it!"

"How does it feel, Gosling?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Look 'ere—"

"What made you take to it, after all these years, Gosling?" asked Harry Wharton, with interest.

"Look 'ere—" roared Gosling. "Wot I says is this 'ere—"

"Hush!" said Bob. "Don't excite yourself, old bean—a man has to be careful at a hundred."

"I'll report yer! I'll—"

Gosling spluttered with wrath. Gosling was an ancient gentleman; but he was not a hundred years old, by any means. He owned up to sixty years, and preferred to forget the rest. But all together they did not amount to a hundred.

"Let's lend Gosling a hand with that ladder, you men," said Bob. "It's a heavy ladder—much to heavy for a centenarian. And if Gosling's been doing some work, he's tired—he must be tired. These sudden changes at his age must be exhausting."

"The exhaustfulness must be terrific," agreed Hurree Jameet Ram Singh. "Let us assistfully help the ancient and ridiculous Gosling."

"You let that there ladder alone!" hooted Gosling. "I don't want any of your 'elp, you young limbs! I know yer!"

"My dear man, we're going to help," said Frank Nugent. "It will show that we forgive you for reporting us yesterday. We're forgiving chaps."

"The forgivefulness is preposterous, my absurd Gosling!"

"Look 'ere—"

"All hands on deck!" said Bob Cherry. "It's all right, Gosling; we

(Continued on page 12.)

INSIDE INFORMATION!



By
The "OLD
REF."

Each week our Soccer expert disposes of perplexing problems. Write to him, chums, and see if you can catch him "offside."

JUST recently," writes one of my readers who lives at Manchester, "I have been taken about rather a lot to watch Manchester City on opponent's grounds, and one of the things which has struck me is the obviously different sizes of the pitches on which first-class matches are played. I should have thought they would all be the same size, but they are not."

In writing me on those lines my observant Manchester reader has touched on one of what might be called the strange points about big football. His powers of observation have not led him astray; there is a very real difference in the size of the actual playing pitches on which the big matches are played. One would have thought, naturally, that there would have been a fixed size for all first-class pitches, but such is not the case. The laws of the game allow quite a considerable margin between the largest and the smallest grounds.

Perhaps it would be as well if I put down the permitted sizes. The authorities have fixed minimum and maximum measurements of the field of play.

The actual playing-pitch must not be more than one hundred and thirty yards in length, and not less than one hundred yards. In width the maximum allowed is one hundred yards, and the minimum fifty yards.

I have never seen a pitch which had the maximum length and the minimum width, have you? This would indeed look funny. But there is nothing to prevent a football ground being made absolutely square—one hundred yards in length and one hundred yards in width.

There cannot be the slightest doubt that these variations in the size of the pitches on which football matches are played do affect the result, and indeed the varying sizes may go some way to explaining how it is that home teams win the majority of football matches between League clubs. In the Cup contest there is a fairly general opinion that it is worth a goal to a team to have the game played on its own ground. I cannot say for certain, of course, but it is quite on the cards that the difference in the pitch—or possibly in the surroundings—may have accounted for such freak results as those in the recent Cup-tie between Swindon and Manchester City.

My Manchester reader will certainly recall the affair. Manchester City went to Swindon to play a Cup-tie in the Fourth Round of the present season. The result was a draw of one goal each, and the one Manchester City goal which gave them the right to replay on their own ground was scored by a half-back. But when Swindon appeared on the Manchester City ground they were "swamped" to the extent of ten goals to one. The forwards who hadn't been able to score a goal on the Swindon ground scored ten on the pitch with which they were familiar.

Mind you, I am not suggesting that the difference in the size and the surroundings of a football pitch are the sole explanation of why home teams win so frequently. There are other reasons:

the enthusiasm and applause of a home crowd for the home players help them beyond a doubt.

Then, the team which is playing at home has additional confidence, and confidence goes a long way on the football field.

HARPING back, however, to this matter of the difference in size of the playing pitches of the various first-class clubs up and down the country, I would point out that things are not always what they seem in this connection. The impression given to spectators of the size of a pitch may be affected considerably by the general surroundings.

Let me illustrate by giving two examples of London grounds. I guarantee that if I took a dozen readers first to the West Ham United ground, and then to the Chelsea ground, they would all say: "What a difference in the size of the pitch. The Chelsea pitch looks almost twice as big."

As a matter of fact, however, there is scarcely any difference—a mere matter of a yard or two—between the size of the playing-pitch at Upton Park and Stamford Bridge. The impression of vastness given by the Stamford Bridge ground is due to the fact that the nearest spectators are quite a long way from the lines surrounding the field. All round the Stamford Bridge pitch there is a wide running track, and also a wide cycling track. You will probably remember, if you have ever been to Stamford Bridge, that in order to keep the game going small boys are posted at various parts of the Chelsea ground—outside the lines, of course—and their job is to kick the ball back when it goes out of play. No boys for this nice little job are necessary at West Ham, because the rails round the pitch are only a yard or so away from the touch-lines.

BY the way, mention of the touch-lines reminds me of an interesting point raised by a reader from North Wales. He went to see a Cup-tie between Liverpool and Cardiff City. In the course of the game the ball went over the touch-line for a throw. The man who had kicked it over the line got the ball, and until he had got into what he considered his proper position he would not give it to his opponent who was waiting to throw it in. My correspondent wants to know whether the player was justified in thus retaining the ball, or whether the referee should have taken notice of the incident.

I have seen the same thing happen repeatedly, and so long as there is no undue delay in giving the ball to the player whose throw it is, I don't think there can be any objection.

nor do I think that the player responsible for the action can be accused of lack of sportsmanship. He is merely gaining time to get into position to counteract the effects of the throw, and is entitled to do this within reasonable limits.

If, however, the player whose throw it was had picked up the ball and his opponent had knocked it out of his hand to prevent a quick throw, I should say that this would come under the heading of "ungentlemanly conduct."

ERNEST JONES also tells of a local match in which one side was so much superior to the other side that even the goalkeeper of the superior side took part in the bombardment of the other team's goal. And the goalkeeper actually scored with a fine shot.

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BILLY BUNTER'S "COME-BACK"!

(Continued from page 10.)

simply can't let a man of a hundred and ten carry that heavy ladder. Lay hold, you fellows!"

As a matter of fact, the ladder, though long, was not heavy. But the chums of the Remove were determined to help Gosling. Which really was very kind of them, considering that only the day before they had received lines, having arrived at the gates just in time to see a grinning Gosling lock them in their faces.

Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull took hold of one end of the ladder. Nugent and Hurree Singh took the other end.

The middle of the ladder was resting on Gosling's shoulder. His helpers were, therefore, out of his reach.

Bob, at the front end, led the way round in a circle. Gosling turned like the hub of a wheel.

"Let go that there ladder!" roared Gosling.

"But we're helping you——"

"Let go, I keep on telling yer——"

"The helpfulness is the proper caper, my esteemed and ludicrous Gosling."

"I'll report yer——"

"Report us for helping you!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Is that what you call grateful, Gosling?"

"I—I—I'll——" spluttered the hapless Gosling.

He was turning round and round, as the ladder turned. With both ends of it in possession of the juniors, they walked round in a circle, and Gosling had to turn with it.

"Here we go round the mulberry-bush!" sang Bob Cherry cheerily.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let go that there ladder, you dratted imps!" roared Gosling.

"Accelerate, you fellows!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors accelerated. The long ladder fairly spun round. Gosling spun round with it like a humming-top.

The dusk was falling deeply in the quad. It really was high time for the Famous Five to be in the House; almost everybody else was indoors now. But the pleasure of helping Gosling was too attractive. They lingered, and continued to help him, till Gosling was almost foaming at the mouth.

"If you young humps don't let go that there ladder, I'll report yer immejit!" yelled Gosling.

"Here we go round the mulberry-bush——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you leggo that there ladder, you limbs?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Evidently, there was no getting rid of his helpers. The juniors seemed to be enjoying the game, if Gosling was not. Gosling was getting quite giddy.

He slid the ladder from his shoulder at last. The expression on Gosling's face indicated what he was going to do now that his hands were free. So the Famous Five promptly released the ladder also, and it went to the ground with a crash.

The next moment a terrific yell awoke the echoes of the dusty quad. Gosling had not, apparently, expected that. Had he expected it, certainly he would have got his foot out of the way of the ladder.

As it was, his foot was in the way! The ladder dropped on it.

"Ooooooh!" roared Gosling.

On one of Gosling's toes was a favourite corn—a corn that had been Gosling's constant companion for years and years.

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Gosling was accustomed to treating that corn tenderly. The ladder did not treat it tenderly.

"Ow! Ow! Wow!" roared Gosling.

He hopped on one leg, raving.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Anything the matter, Gosling?" asked Bob Cherry. "I say, he looks cross, you fellows—I don't think we'll help him any more. He's not grateful. Come on."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five faded away in the dusk towards the House.

"You young limbs!" roared Gosling. "Wot I says is this ere—I'll report yer! You 'ear me!"

And Gosling, still hopping, followed the juniors to the House, with the full intention of reporting his wrongs and grievances to their Form master.

The Famous Five vanished into the House. Gosling vanished into the House after them. The ladder was left lying where it had fallen.

Five minutes later, a fat figure, stealing across the darkened quad, encountered the ladder. In the deep gloom, he naturally did not see it till he had established contact.

There was a howl as Billy Bunter sprawled over the ladder.

Bump!

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

Gosling, in Mr. Quelch's study, had to wait some minutes, while the Remove master finished some papers, before he could tell his tale of woe. After which, Gosling returned to the open air, and blinked round in the darkness for the ladder. He found the spot where it had lain; but to his surprise, the ladder was no longer there.

"My eye!" said Gosling.

The ladder was gone. Whether somebody had noticed it and taken it away to where it belonged, or what else might have happened to it, Gosling did not know, and did not care. He stumped away to his lodge, grunting—to an accompaniment of twinges from his favourite corn.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Lad and a Ladder!

COKER, of the Fifth, looked at the spread on his study table, and saw that it was good.

Potter and Greene, Coker's chums in the Fifth, looked at it, and smiled.

There was general satisfaction in Coker's study.

Coker's aunt Judy—a lady who, for some reason inexplicable to Coker's friends, was fond of Coker—had weighed in with a hamper that day.

Aunt Judy's hampers were well-known in the Fifth. Potter and Greene, as Coker's special chums, had the free run of Aunt Judy's hampers. Indeed, there were carping fellows who hinted that that was the reason why they were Coker's special chums.

Horace Coker did not think so. Coker was not a suspicious fellow. Besides, Coker knew what a splendid fellow he was, obviously designed by Nature to inspire feelings of affectionate friendship.

Besides, Coker really was a nice fellow in his way. There was nothing mean about Coker. Everything he had was at the service of his friends. So long as Coker had his own way, and was always given his head, and never contradicted, a fellow could get on with Coker. And as Coker always knew best, on all imaginable subjects, there was no reason why he shouldn't always have his way, uncontradicted.

Anyhow, Coker was a pal worth having, on hamper days. Looking at that gorgeous spread on the study table, Potter and Greene felt quite fond of Coker. They would have been deeply pained, had anything occurred to cause a rift in their friendship, that evening.

And they were anxious to begin. Coker had taken tea out that day; and Potter and Greene had had rather a thin tea in consequence. A thin tea made an ample supper all the more enjoyable. Potter and Greene were feeling their mouths water. They couldn't very well begin till Coker gave the signal. But they were anxious.

"Looks a decent spread!" said Coker complacently.

"What-ho!" said Potter. "Your aunt Jane is a jewel, Coker——"

"My aunt Judith!" said Coker coldly.

"I—I mean Judith! If you ever want to part with her, old bean, I've got three uncles I'll swop for her."

"She's a good sort," said Coker.

"She's fond of me, you know."

"Yes; funny, ain't it——"

"Eh?"

"I—I—I mean——" Potter realised that his remark was thoughtless and unfortunate. "I mean, there's no accounting for tastes—that is to say——"

"If you're trying to be funny, George Potter——"

"My dear chap, I mean——"

"Better shut the window," said Greene, hoping to turn the unfortunate topic. A fellow had to be careful with Coker. "It's getting a bit chilly——"

"Leave the window alone!" said Coker.

"But it's rather——"

"Stuffy! Quite so! Leave the window open."

Had Greene proposed to leave the window open, no doubt Coker would have insisted upon having it shut. That was one of Coker's delightful little ways; and it made his friends feel, at times, that they fully earned their share in Aunt Judy's hampers.

"Oh, all right old chap," said Greene. "You know best."

"I fancy so!" assented Coker.

He looked rather grimly at Potter.

"You were saying, George Potter——"

"Nothing, old fellow," said Potter hastily. "I mean, I was going to ask you whether you're asking any other fellows."

"Yes. Not Blundell—I'm fed up with Blundell. Did you hear what he was saying in the games study about my football——"

"Blundell's an ass!" said Potter.

"Why they made him captain of the Fifth I don't know. Do you, Greemey?"

"Can't guess!" said Greene, shaking his head.

"We might have Fitzgerald," said Coker. "I rather like old Fitz. He said only to-day that if Wingate put me into the first eleven, it would make the St. Jim's men sit on and take notice next time they came over."

"And it would!" said Potter.

"No doubt about that!" added Greene.

"And Hilton and Price," said Coker, "and old Tomlinson. Let's go and see if they're in the games study."

Coker moved to the door.

Potter and Greene moved reluctantly after him. They would have preferred Coker to go on his own to call the guests while they made a beginning in the study. Still, they could not very well say so. But as they followed Coker from the study, they cast, what the poet calls, a longing, lingering look behind.

The three Fifth-Formers went along

to the games study at the end of the passage.

Coker's study was left untenanted. The fire burned brightly, the light gleamed on the well-spread table, all was calm and bright.

Two minutes after Coker & Co. had gone, a head rose above the level of the window-sill, and a pair of little round eyes blinked into the study through a pair of big round spectacles.

Had Coker & Co. been present, they would certainly have been astonished to see a face looking in at the open window, over a sheer wall that dropped twenty feet to the ground.

But really there was nothing mysterious about it.

Billy Bunter was not without visible means of support. Gosling's ladder was under him.

That ladder had come to Bunter like corn in Egypt.

Sammy Bunter having, in the most unbrotherly way, refused aid, the Owl of the Remove had been at a loss—until he stumbled over the ladder.

He had to get into the House—that was settled. He could not venture to show himself at a door, so a window was the only resource. Coker's window was open, so Bunter naturally chose Coker's window. He hoped to find the study empty, and to scuttle out by the Fifth Form passage undiscovered.

Fortune favoured Bunter. He arrived at the window-sill after Coker & Co. had left the study.

He blinked in. The way was clear! With a gasp of relief, Billy Bunter clambered in at the window and dropped into Coker's study.

He was in the House at last! That was so much to the good. All he had to do now was to sneak away quietly and make his way to the Remove quarters. There he hoped to find aid. Peter Todd, his old study-mate, was bound to stand by him. Peter was sure to be glad to see him. Even those beasts, Harry Wharton & Co. were bound to play up, after all that Bunter had done for them. In fact, most of the Remove would rally round—they must have missed Bunter a lot, and his unexpected return would surely cause general rejoicing in the Form. Once he was safe in the Remove passage, Bunter felt that he could breathe freely.

But as he was stealing across Coker's study to the door, Bunter was suddenly arrested. It was the sight of that gorgeous feed on the study table that arrested his progress.

"Oh crickey!" gasped Bunter. Bunter was hungry.

Except for a pie and a cake and a bag of chocolates, he had eaten nothing for hours.

His little round eyes almost bulged through his big round spectacles at the sight of Coker's spread.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter. "Cold chicken—jelly—pie—cake! Oh crickey!"

He stopped at the table. To tear himself away from Coker's study at that moment, was a practical impossibility. Had the House been on fire, Bunter could hardly have done it.

To take a snack, at least, before he scuttled away, was an irresistible temptation. He paused for a snack! The cold chicken fairly melted in his mouth. There was a sound of busily champing jaws in Coker's study. Bunter's fat face beamed.

He forgot time and space—he forgot everything except that gorgeous spread. That he was in forbidden precincts—that discovery meant a caning and a boot—that it behoved him to seek safety in concealment in the shortest space of time—all those considerations vanished from Bunter's mind as that

was bringing a party of friends to that spread, never dreaming that the spread had been started on already. Bunter quaked.

It was too late to scuttle out of the study. He would have to run into the crowd of Fifth-Form men. It was too late even to scramble out of the window and escape; the footsteps and voices were too near.

There was time to jump at the door and lock it! Bunter's fat brain, as a rule, worked slowly, but self-preservation is the first law of nature, and under the spur of that primary law, Bunter acted with prompt decision. Almost before he knew what he was doing, he had turned the key in the lock.

Then, with his mouth full of chicken, he stood and quaked, as Horace Coker reached the study door and turned the handle.



"Ooooooooooh!" A terrific yell awoke the echoes of the dusky quad as the ladder dropped on Gosling's pet corn.

delicious chicken melted in Bunter's mouth. He forgot everything but the chicken. He had intended to vanish promptly out of sight. Instead of which, it was the chicken that was vanishing.

There was a tramp of feet in the Fifth-Form passage, from the direction of the games study.

Bunter jumped. Half-a-dozen fellows, at least, were coming along the passage towards Coker's study.

The chicken was so delicious that Bunter had forgotten, among other things, that he was liable to interruption at any moment.

He remembered it now! Coker was not the fellow to take kindly to anybody who "sampled" his tuck. Coker was a beast, and had no consideration for a fellow who had had, except for a cake and a pie and a bag of chocolates, nothing to eat for hours.

That was how Bunter thought about it, something had to be done.

If Coker came in— "Yes, a hamper from my aunt—" He heard Horace Coker's booming voice in the passage.

Coker was coming! Obviously, he

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

A Mysterious Disappearance!

"YURRRRRGGGHH!" Horace Coker uttered that peculiar ejaculation in tones of mingled rage, anguish, and astonishment.

Coker had ample reason for all three emotions.

Reaching his study door, and naturally, never suspecting that anyone in the study had locked it on the inside, Coker expected the door to open as soon as he turned the handle and pushed.

It didn't! Coker turned the handle, pushed, and strode on to enter the study at the same moment, and had the door opened before him in the ordinary way, all would have been well.

As the door did not open, Coker, striding on, came in contact with the immovable door.

It was Coker's prominent nose that established contact—with a bang!

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(Continued from page 13.)

"Yurrrgggh!"

"Hallo!" exclaimed Potter. "What the—"

"Goooh!" gasped Coker. "Ooooh! Moooh! Ooooh!" He tottered back from the door, clasping his nose in anguish. "Ow! Wow! Wooooh!" "The door's locked," said Greene, in surprise.

"Woooh! Oh, my nose! Ooooh!" Potter tried the door—more carefully than Coker. Obviously, it was locked. It did not yield a quarter of an inch. Potter rattled the handle.

"Somebody's in there," he said. "Must be, it's locked on the inside. Can't make it out!"

"Woo-oo-oh!" came from Coker, as he caressed his nose. Like Marian's in the ballad, it was red and raw.

"Somebody larking, I suppose," said Greene. He knocked on the panels. "Here you in there—open this door."

Billy Bunter heard, but he heeded not. The door was strong, of solid oak, the lock was a stout one. Bunter felt safe, for the present at least. He turned his attention to the spread again. "Do you hear?" shouted Greene.

A faint sound was audible from the study. It was the sound of the steady, industrious champing of jaws.

"My hat!" exclaimed Potter. "Somebody's feeding in there! It sounds like a horse champing oats."

"Moooh!" said Coker. "Ooooh! My nose! I'll smash him! Ooooh! Locking himself in my study! Ooooh!"

"Well, what about gettin' in?" asked Hilton of the Fifth, one of the guests. "Who the dickens can it be?" asked Price.

"One of the fellows larking," said Tomlinson. "But we can't wait here. Here!" He banged on the door. "Let us in, you ass!"

No reply.

"Do you hear?" shouted Fitzgerald of the Fifth.

Champ, champ, champ! came from the study. Otherwise there was no answer. Only that steady sound of busy jaws.

Coker's eyes gleamed with wrath. The pain in his nose was subsiding; but his temper was rising to white heat.

"He's bagging the spread!" ejaculated Coker. "Some cheeky rotter's sneaked into my study to bag the spread! My hat! I'll smash him into little pieces!"

Coker banged on the door. "Here, you rotter!" he roared. "Open this door! You hear me? I'm going to smash you as soon as I get in! Open the door!"

"That's the way to make him open it, what?" remarked Fitzgerald.

"Oh, don't be an ass! I'll smash him! I'll spiccate him! I'll pulverise him! I'll—"

"Who's in there?" demanded Potter, through the keyhole.

Champ, champ, champ! To judge by the sound of the busy jaws, the devourer of the feed was accelerating.

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Perhaps he realised that he had no time to lose. Either he had no time, or no inclination, to reply. There was no answer from within.

"Well, this is a go!" said Greene. "Some blessed tag!" said Tomlinson. "Some cheeky tag. A Fifth Form man wouldn't be playing a trick like that. I wonder who's got the nerve to raid a Fifth Form study?"

"I'll smash him!" roared Coker. "He's bagging my spread! My hat! I'll break him into small pieces!"

Hilton and Price exchanged a grin, and walked away. The spread evidently, was "out," and they lost interest in the matter.

"Well, if you get the door open, Coker, give me a call," said Tomlinson, and he followed Hilton and Price.

"Me, too, old boy," said Fitzgerald. "I'll be in the games study."

Coker & Co. were left alone to deal with the difficult situation.

Coker banged on the door, and howled blood-curdling threats through the keyhole. Neither the banging nor the threats seemed to produce any effect on the raider within.

"My hat!" gasped Coker, breathless with wrath. "We've got to get at him, you men! The spread's going! You can hear him!"

"We can't get in!" said Potter hopelessly. "We can collar him when he comes out, and scrag him. That's all."

"I'm frightfully hungry," said Greene plaintively.

Coker snorted.

"We're not going to wait for him to come out! We're going to get into the study!" He banged on the door again. "Here! You in there! If you don't open this door, we'll jolly well smash it in!"

Champ, champ, champ!

"That's the pie he's on now!" said Potter. "Listen to him!"

"It's going," sighed Greene.

Coker wrenched wildly at the door-handle. But there was nothing doing in that line. The lock was too strong for Coker.

"Do you hear me, you rotter?" bawled Coker. "I give you one second to open this door! Then we'll smash it in!"

The second elapsed. The door did not open!

Coker breathed deep.

"Come on!" he said.

"But what—"

"We've got to get something to bash the door in—"

"Oh, my hat! There'll be a row—"

"A door can't be bashed in without a row, Potter!"

"I mean, there'll be a row with Prout, or the Head! Doors ain't allowed to be bashed in—"

"Do you think I'm going to let that rotter burgle my spread?" hooted Coker. "Come with me, I tell you!"

Potter and Greene looked dubious, but they followed Coker. They went into the games study, where they were greeted by a general grin from the Fifth Form men present. The Fifth Form men, apparently saw something comic in Coker being locked out of his study by a fellow who was bolting his spread.

Coker did not heed them. Coker was almost at boiling point now. He was in the frame of mind of Achilles, whose wrath, the poet tells us, was to Greece the direful spring of woes unnumbered. There was no doubt that Coker's wrath would be the spring of woes unnumbered to the grub-raider, once he got into the study.

Coker looked round for something useful in the "bashing" line. There

was a heavy oaken stool in the games study, and Coker grabbed it.

"This will do it!" he said. "Come on, Potter! Come on, Greene!"

"I—I say—" mumbled Potter,

"I said come on!"

"Yes; but—"

"Are you coming?"

"Oh, yes!"

Potter and Greene trailed after Coker again, back to the locked door. Coker thumped on the upper panels.

"You sneaking, grub-raiding outsider!" he bawled. "I'm going to bash the door in! Then I'm going to smash you!"

Champ, champ, champ! Busy jaws were still going strong in Coker's study, but answer there came none.

"Lend a hand, Potter," said Coker. "This thing's heavy!"

"There'll be a row—"

"Shut up!"

"But, I say—" murmured Greene.

"You shut up, too!"

Coker and Potter grasped the heavy oaken stool, lifted it, and crashed it on the lock of the door.

There was a terrific orash.

The door creaked and groaned.

"There!" gasped Coker. "One or two more like that will do it! Go it!"

Crash!

There was a cracking sound from the lock. It was an old-fashioned lock, manufactured in the days when locks were locks. But it had not been built to resist usage like this.

Evidently it was going.

There was a startled squeak inside the study.

"Oh crickey!"

Coker jumped as he heard it.

"Why," he gasped, "that's Bunter!"

"Bunter!" repeated Potter. "Bunter's not at Greyfriars—if you mean that Remove kid—"

"It's Bunter—"

"Bunter's sent home—"

"It's Bunter!" snorted Coker.

"Think I don't know that squeak!"

He thumped on the door again. "Bunter! Bunter! You fat scoundrel! Open this door! I'll burst you!"

There were sounds of hurried movements in the study.

"Go it!" hissed Coker.

The heavy stool was lifted again. Crash it went on the lock! From the lock came an agonised creaking and cracking.

"One more will do it!" gasped Coker.

"Now, then!"

Crash!

The lock flew in pieces. The door rolled open. Coker dropped the stool, kicked the door wide open, and rushed into the study. He rushed in, with fists clenched and eyes ablaze.

Had Bunter, or anybody else, been in the study at that moment there would have been a serious case of assault and battery.

But— Coker stared round him, blankly, unbelievably. There was no one in the study!

"What— who— where—" gasped Coker.

He could not believe his eyes. Potter and Greene, following him in, could not believe theirs. That somebody had been in the study was obvious. They had heard him, and half the gorgeous spread on the table was gone!

But no one was there now! Save for Coker & Co. the room was empty!

"My—my—my hat!" gasped Coker.

"He—ho's gone!" stuttered Potter.

"Gone!" said Greene.

The three Fifth Formers rushed to the window. It was open, as they had left it. There was only one way out of

the study besides the door, and that was the window!

"He—he's jumped out!" gasped Potter. "You—you scared him, Coker, and—and he's jumped out!"

"He—he can't!" gasped Coker.

"He'd be killed!"

"Where is he, then?"

"Oh crumbs!"

Coker leaned from the window.

He stared down into the deep dusk below, with horror in his face. If the grub-raider had gone by the window—

The top of a ladder, dragged away from below was just disappearing from the ivy under the window-sill.

Coker grabbed at it, too late.

"It's a ladder!" he yelled.

"What?"

"A ladder—he's got a ladder!"

"Oh, my hat!"

From the darkness below floated up a breathless exclamation.

"He, ho, he!"

Then there was silence.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Way In I

"COME in, fathead!" Harry Wharton called out that cheery invitation, as a tap came at the door of Study No. 1 in the Remove.

It was nearly time for prep in the Remove. Most of the fellows had gone to their studies, and the Famous Five were in Study No. 1 improving the shining hour by baking chestnuts at the study fire and devouring the same.

The study door opened in response to Wharton's invitation, and the next moment the chums of the Remove jumped to their feet. It was Mr. Quelch who entered.

"Oh!" gasped Wharton. "I—I didn't know it was you, sir!"

"Quite so," said Mr. Quelch. "You should, however, be more careful in your observations, Wharton!"

"Oh, yes, sir—certainly!" stammered the captain of the Remove.

"I have received a complaint from Gosling," said Mr. Quelch.

"Oh!"

"That is why I am here," said the master of the Remove. "Gosling has made a serious complaint of horseplay in the quadrangle. It appears that he was carrying a ladder, and you five juniors—"

"We helped him, sir," murmured Bob Cherry.

"The helpfulness was terrific, honoured sahib," said Hurrec Jamset Ram Singh blandly.

"Gosling does not appear to regard your conduct as helpful," said Mr. Quelch dryly. "I presume that you were playing a practical joke."

"Heh!"

"Gosling hasn't a sense of humour, sir," ventured Bob. "We were only making him revolve on his own axis, sir."

Mr. Quelch's frown melted for a moment.

"Really, Cherry—"

"It was only a lark, sir," said Nugent.

"Quite so! But such larks, as you call them must not be indulged in," said Mr. Quelch. "Gosling is long past the age to enjoy a practical joke of that description. In order to keep your sense of humour within reasonable bounds you will each take a hundred lines and hand them to me before tea to-morrow."

"Oh!"

The Famous Five looked as if their sense of humour had been considerably damped.

"That is all," said Mr. Quelch. "I trust that this will be a warning to you, and will lead you to reflect before playing practical jokes on elderly persons who do not appreciate them."

Mr. Quelch turned to the door.

In a few more moments he would have been gone. But just then there came a sudden bump at the study window, and Mr. Quelch spun round in that direction in astonishment.

"What is that?" he ejaculated.

The juniors followed his startled glance. What on earth could be bumping at a window more than twenty feet from the ground; was a mystery to them, unless an aeroplane had gone astray and was coming down unexpectedly in the quad.

Something, it was evident, had struck the window-sill and bumped there.

ONE OF THIS WEEK'S PRIZE-WINNING JOKES!



SAFETY FIRST!

The ice gave way, and a great hole appeared. Then a man's head came up. The park-keeper, crawling cautiously along a ladder, reached the edge of the ice.

"Come closer," he shouted,

"and I'll help you out!"

"Not much!" said the victim. "I can't swim!"

"Can't swim!" sneered the rescuer. "Why, it's only up to your armpits!"

"Oh, no, it isn't," came the retort, "it's about seven feet deep out here. I'm standing on the chap who broke the ice!"

James Tattersall, of 49, Alexandra Street, Ashton-under-Lyne, who sent in the above rib-tickler, is now the happy recipient of a useful penknife. Who's following in James' footsteps?

hard. The sound was loud and clear, though what had caused it was a mystery. Obviously, it was caused by what, in a detective novel, would be called a blow from a blunt instrument. But how and why puzzled all the fellows in the study.

Mr. Quelch stared at the window blankly, and then turned his gimlet-eyes searchingly and accusingly on the Famous Five.

"What does this mean, Wharton?" he demanded.

"I—I don't know, sir."

"Is it another of your practical jokes?"

"Nunno!"

"Something, or somebody, is at the window!" rapped out the Remove master. "What is it?"

"I—I haven't an idea, sir," said Harry, in amazement: and the Co. shook their heads. They were quite perplexed.

Mr. Quelch strode across to the window.

He grasped the lower sash and threw it up.

Outside, there was deep darkness. Ivy clung to the ancient stone wall below, rustling in the wind from the sea.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated the Remove master.

Through the clinging ivy, just reaching the sill, was the top of a ladder! Mr. Quelch stared at it, blinked at it, and, reaching out, touched it! There was no mistake about it—it was the summit of a long ladder reared from the darkness below.

The Remove master stared down in the blackness.

"Who is there?" he shouted angrily. A faint gasp, apparently of surprise and terror, floated up. But no answer came.

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. He turned back to the staring juniors. "Wharton, do you mean to say that you know nothing of this?"

"Nothing, sir!" gasped Wharton.

"Someone has placed a ladder to your study window, from the quadrangle. This has been done without your knowledge?"

"Yes, sir; I can't make it out—"

"Beats me hollow," said Nugent. "We don't know anything about it, sir."

"The knowfulness is not terrific, sir."

Mr. Quelch's gimlet-eyes searched the five faces in turn. But he could read only astonishment there. It was easy to see that the juniors were as amazed as the Remove master himself.

"Very well" said Mr. Quelch. "I accept your assurance, of course. But the ladder is here, and someone is on it. He was evidently mounting the ladder and stopped when I looked out of the window and spoke. He is now keeping out of sight. Do you know who it is?"

"No, sir."

"Do you know whether a Remove boy is out of the House, Wharton?"

"I am sure not, sir," answered Harry.

"All the fellows were at call-over, and it's long past lock-up."

"Some boy may have surreptitiously left the House, and may have taken this extraordinary means of re-entering undetected," said Mr. Quelch. He turned to the window again.

"Boy!"

No answer.

"I am perfectly well aware that you are there, sir," rapped Mr. Quelch into the darkness. "Give me your name, at once!"

Silence.

"Do you hear me? Give me your name this instant, and then descend the ladder and wait for me below."

There was no sound from the darkness under the window.

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips.

"Very well," he said. "I shall immediately descend." Mr. Quelch closed the window with a slam and fastened the catch. "Wharton, you are not to open this window during my absence."

"Very well, sir."

"If any of you," said Mr. Quelch sternly, "should admit the boy who is now undoubtedly on that ladder I shall deal with you severely."

The Remove master left the study. He whisked away towards the Remove staircase, leaving Harry Wharton & Co. staring at one another.

"What the merry thump—" said Bob Cherry.

Peter Todd looked in at the doorway.

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"What's up?" he asked. "Quelchy's just gone down the stairs like a jolly old thunderstorm. What have you kids been up to?"

"Nothing, old bean," answered Wharton. "Some ass has just bunged a ladder up to the window, and Quelchy thinks it's a fellow out of bounds trying to sneak in."

"My only hat! Open the window and let him in, then, before Quelchy catches him from underneath."

"The esteemed and ridiculous Quelchy has forbidden our excellent selves to open the absurd window," explained Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Well, he hasn't forbidden me—so I'll chance it!" grinned Peter Todd; and he crossed to the window.

He threw up the lower sash. As he did so a fat face, adorned with a large pair of spectacles, rose into view from the night.

Peter jumped. "Great pip! Bunter!"

"Bunter!" gasped the Famous Five.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Bunter!" stuttered Wharton.

"The bad penny again!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"Bunter! Oh, my hat!"

"I say, you fellows—" gasped Bunter.

"You born idiot!" hissed Peter Todd. "Quelchy's gone down and he'll be under the ladder in three minutes. Slither down and bunk."

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"Quick, you ass—you'll be caught!"

"I'm coming in."

"You fat duffer—"

Peter Todd was interrupted. Bunter came headlong in at the window, with a plunge. He bumped on Peter and sent him sprawling, and rolled, gasping, on the study floor.

"Ow!" spluttered Bunter. "Wow!"

"I say, you fellows—Ow!"

"Shut the window!" breathed Nugent.

"Quick! Quelchy will be along in a minute!"

Peter Todd scrambled up, grasped the window-sash, and shut it. Billy Bunter sat up, set his spectacles straight on his fat little nose, and blinked at the staring chums of the Remove.

"I—I say you, fellows! I—I've come back!"

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Only Bunter!

"BUNTER!"

Harry Wharton & Co. stared at the gasping Owl. Had it been Bunter's ghost that had appeared at the study window it could hardly have surprised them more.

"Bunter!" said Wharton. "That howling ass!"

"That burbling bandersnatch!" said Johnny Bull.

"That howling chump!" said Bob Cherry.

"That terrific and preposterous fat-head!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Oh, really, you fellows—"

"You benighted blitherer!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What the hump are you doing here?"

"I—I've come back!"

"My hat! If Quelchy had known!"

"Oh dear! I—I nearly fell off the ladder when he put his chivvy out of the window and barked!" gasped Bunter. "I didn't know Quelchy was in the study when I shoved the ladder up. The beast made me jump when

he shoved his mug out and hooted. Oh dear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Glest if I can see anything to cackle at! Think of me sticking on that beastly ladder, not knowing what to do till I saw Peter look out. I can tell you I was feeling horrid. Thank goodness it's all right now. I suppose Quelchy's gone out to see who was on the ladder."

"Yes, ass!"

"That's all right. He won't find anybody now. I dare say he will think it was a burglar. There have been burglars round here lately."

"Yes, he's likely to think a burglar would put a ladder up to a lighted window at half-past seven in the evening!" said Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"Well, he won't know it was me, anyway! You fellows are going to keep it dark, of course. Where are you going to hide me?"

"Hide you?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Yes, I've got to be hidden—now I'm safe in the House at last. It won't do for Quelchy to find me. If he saw me what do you think he would do?"

"Give you the licking of your life, to begin with, I suppose," said Harry.

"And then bundle you off home, you fat chump!"

"Well, I'm not going to be licked, and I'm not going home. It's too awful at home, you fellows," said Bunter pathetically. "I had to bolt to-day—to-morrow would have been too late. To-morrow the pater was going to take me up to the City and put me in his office. To work!" added Bunter, with a shudder.

"Awful!" said Bob.

"The awfulness is preposterous!"

"If you have tears, prepare to shed them at the bare idea of Bunter doing any work!" said Peter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Toddy!" Bunter blinked round anxiously. "I say, you fellows, do you think Quelchy will come back here when he finds there's nobody on the ladder?"

"Very likely."

"Oh scissors! I say, you fellows, hide me somewhere!" gasped Bunter.

"You benighted owl, you can't stay here!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Of all the blithering chumps—" said Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"What on earth are we going to do with the born idiot?" said Harry, in perplexity.

"You're going to stand by an old pal, old chap," said Bunter. "Think of all I've done for you, ever since you come to Greyfriars—"

"You burbling jabberwock—"

"After all, there is such a thing as gratitude—" said Bunter.

"Why don't they send him to a home for idiots?" asked Johnny Bull. "Or a lunatic asylum? Bunter's place is with the mentally deficient."

"Well, here I am, old chap—"

"Wha-a-t?"

"The question is, where are you going to hide me," said Bunter. "I've got to be out of sight when that beast Quelchy comes back. I know I can rely on my old pals."

"Bother you!" growled Bob Cherry. The juniors eyed the Owl of the Remove in perplexity. It was very likely that Mr. Quelch would return to the study; and if he found Bunter there it meant trouble for everybody.

On the other hand, extraordinary as Bunter's proceedings were, the juniors felt that they could not give him away,

or refuse him their aid to escape discovery.

The hapless Owl was on their hands now; and they simply did not know what to do with him.

"You'll have to clear," said Wharton. "You jolly well know that you can't stay here without leave. But I suppose we've got to keep Quelchy off your neck. It will mean a thumping licking all round if he finds that we've let you in here—"

"What's a licking, old chap? Don't be soft!"

"Why, you cheeky imago—"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Shut up, you fat frump!"

Harry Wharton crossed to the study cupboard and opened the door. The upper part of that cupboard was used, sometimes, as a larder; the lower part for the reception of lumber.

"Squeeze in here," said Harry.

"I—I say, there isn't room—"

"All right. Sit in the armchair if you like! Quelchy will be pleased to see you when he butts in."

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter squeezed into the lower part of the study cupboard. He squatted there, rather closely packed among the other articles, and grunted.

Wharton closed the door.

"Better clear, you fellows," he said.

"Quelchy can find us at prep when he comes back, and I dare say he won't smell a rat."

"Right-ho!"

Peter Todd and Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, left the study, to go to their own quarters.

Wharton and Nugent were left alone in Study No. 1. They hastily sorted out their books, and sat down to the table to prep.

"I say, you fellows—"

It was a still, small voice from the study cupboard.

"Shut up!" hissed Wharton.

"I say, it's stuffy in here—"

"Do you want Quelchy to hear you, you blithering fathead? He may butt in any minute."

"I say, it's dusty—"

"Shut up!"

"I—I feel as if I'm going to sneeze!"

There was a well-known step in the Remove passage.

"Here he comes!" hissed Wharton.

"Shut up!"

"Oh crikey!"

Bunter was silent, only just in time. The next moment Henry Samuel Quelch stepped into the study.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Awkward For Two!

MR. QUELCH glanced round the study.

A scene of innocence and industry met his view.

Nobody, apparently, was in the study, except the two juniors to whom it belonged, and both of them were sitting at the study table, deep in prep.

So deep were they in prep, in fact, that they did not observe—or, at least, did not appear to observe—the entrance of their Form master.

Frank Nugent's eyes were glued to the pages of a Latin dictionary, in search of a word. Wharton's eyes were glued to Virgil, and all his faculties were apparently concentrated on discovering what P. Virgilius Maro might possibly have meant by "vertitur interea caelum et ruit Oceano nox."



"Look in the cupboard, Nugent," said Mr. Quelch. "Mrs. Kebble's cat may have got in there." Nugent bent down and gave Bunter a ferocious glare as a warning to be quiet.

Mr. Quelch coughed.

Upon which those two concentrated and industrious workers became aware of his presence and jumped respectfully to their feet.

"Wharton!"

"Yes, sir."

"You did not open the window?"

"I, sir? No, sir."

Wharton did not consider it necessary to add that Peter Todd had opened the window. In the circumstances, it was sufficient to answer Mr. Quelch's question.

"It is very strange," said the Remove master. "Someone most certainly was on the ladder. He was, however, gone by the time I reached it."

"W-w-was he, sir?"

"He was, Wharton! If the window was not opened, he cannot have entered this study, so he must be still outside the House. No doubt he slipped away before I reached the spot. It is very singular."

"Very, sir."

"It is, in fact, a most remarkable occurrence," said Mr. Quelch. "This matter can only be explained on the supposition that some Remove boy is out after lock-up, and was seeking to re-enter the House by this very extraordinary means. I find that it is Gosling's ladder that was used. No doubt the boy found it where Gosling left it when he came to me. Do you know whether any Remove boy is out of the House, Wharton?"

"I—I think not, sir."

"Every boy in the Form should now

be in his study for preparation," said Mr. Quelch.

"I—I think all the Remove are in, sir."

"Yet it must be a Remove boy who placed the ladder to the window," said Mr. Quelch. "A boy of another Form would not be likely to attempt to enter by the window of a Remove study."

"I—I suppose not, sir."

"I will wait here, Wharton—"

"Eh?"

"While you go along the passage and ascertain whether all the Remove are in their studies."

"Oh!"

"I am sorry to interrupt your preparation," said Mr. Quelch kindly, "especially as I could not help noticing that you were extremely interested in your work. But as my head boy—"

"Oh, certainly, sir!"

Wharton and Nugent exchanged an involuntary glance of dismay. Mr. Quelch sat down in the armchair.

"I—I will go at once, sir!" mumbled Wharton.

"Please do!"

And Wharton went.

"You may resume your work, Nugent," said Mr. Quelch, in the same kind tone. "I do not desire you to waste your time."

"Oh, thank you, sir!" gasped Nugent. He was not really keen on resuming his work. Indeed, he found it rather difficult to put his attention into P. Virgilius Maro.

That great Latin poet never had, for the Lower Fourth, the charm he ought

to have had. Now he had less than ever.

Nugent was on tenterhooks.

Mr. Quelch, in the armchair, was about six feet from the door of the study cupboard, which was all that hid Billy Bunter from his sight.

Certainly, Mr. Quelch's eyes, though popularly compared in his Form to gimlets, on account of their penetrating qualities, were not likely to penetrate a wooden door to the fat figure that squatted on the other side of it. But if Bunter made a sound—

Even as the disturbing thought passed through Frank Nugent's mind there was a clatter from the study cupboard.

Clatter!

Mr. Quelch started. Nugent caught his breath.

"What is that, Nugent?" asked the Form master.

"I—I think something fell down in the—the cupboard, sir," stammered Nugent. "Only—only some lumber, sir. We've kept a lot of odds and ends in that cupboard, sir."

Bunpl!

It was another sound from the cupboard.

As a matter of fact, Billy Bunter was rather closely packed there. The space was not large, and all sorts of odds and ends had been shoved in there out of the way. A fellow ordinary girth might have found room. But Bunter's girth was not ordinary; it was extraordinary—in fact, it might have been considered extra-extraordinary. There

really was not room for Bunter. He could not move without shifting something. And it was difficult for Bunter to keep still. Crouching uncomfortably in a stuffy, confined space, Bunter was afflicted by "pins and needles." He simply had to squirm.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Quelch. "Only—only some lumber, sir," murmured the unhappy Nugent. "There—there's rather too much rubbish in that cupboard, sir."

"You should not keep a great deal of rubbish in the study, my boy," said Mr. Quelch. "When a thing is useless it should be got rid of."

Nugent could not explain that the "rubbish" to which he had referred had objected strongly to being got rid of.

"Oh! Yes, sir!" said Nugent.

Crash!

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch. "You had better look in the cupboard, Nugent! It sounds to me as if some animal may have got in—Mrs. Kebole's cat, perhaps."

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Nugent.

He crossed to the study cupboard and opened the door, a few inches. He dared not open it wider, for he knew that Mr. Quelch's gimlet eyes were following him, and Bunter would have been in full view, with the door open. He opened it just wide enough for his own figure to block the view while he glanced in.

Billy Bunter, half-buried in lumber—old boxes, fencing foils, boxing-gloves, a legless chair, bundles of firewood, a broken desk, and other useful or useless articles—blinked at him in anguish. The boys' maid never bothered about the mysterious recesses of study cupboards, and the result was that just accumulated there to a considerable extent. Bunter had, naturally, disturbed a lot of the dust. In fact, he lived, moved, and had his being in dust. Some of it was in his nose. The tickling in his nose amounted to positive torture. But he dared not sneeze! With heroic efforts he held back the sneeze that threatened to break forth at every moment.

Nugent gave him a glare—a ferocious glare, intended to convey a warning to be quiet.

Then he closed the cupboard door again.

"There's no cat in there, sir," he said, turning back to the table, with perspiration oozing out on his brow. Advisedly, he did not say there was no animal in the cupboard. There was an animal there—a very fat and troublesome animal.

Mr. Quelch nodded, and leaned back in the armchair. Nugent resumed his prep, or, rather, an affectation of prep—in a harassed frame of mind.

The danger had passed—if only Bunter kept quiet. Wharton's returning footsteps could be heard now.

Mr. Quelch rose as the captain of the Remove came back into the study.

"Well?" he asked.

"Every Remove man is in his study, sir," said Harry.

Mr. Quelch looked very perplexed.

"Then it cannot have been a Remove boy who was on the ladder," he said. "It is very singular—very singular indeed. The matter must be looked into further. Thank you, Wharton!"

Mr. Quelch rustled out of the study, to the intense and unspeakable relief of the chums of the Remove.

"Atchoo—choo—chooooo!"

Wharton and Nugent jumped.

It was a terrific sneeze from the study cupboard. Bunter had held it back, long and manfully. But there is a limit

to human endurance. Bunter had reached the limit.

"Atchoooooooh!"

It was an emphatic sneeze—a thunderous sneeze. All the pent-up energy of that long-restrained sneeze came out with a roar.

"Atchoooooooh!"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Nugent.

"That tears it!"

"Oh, my hat!"

The study door had barely closed on Mr. Quelch. That he heard that tornado of a sneeze was certain.

The two juniors stood rooted to the floor, expecting the study door to reopen.

It did!

With crimson faces, overwhelmed with dismay, Wharton and Nugent faced their Form master.

They waited for the storm to burst.

To their amazement the expression on Mr. Quelch's face was quite kind—in fact, benignant.

"Wharton—"

"Oh dear! Ye-e-es, sir!"

"Was it you that sneezed?"

"I, sir! Oh, no, sir!"

"Then it was you, Nugent. You appear to be catching a cold, my boy. You must be careful in this very uncertain weather," said Mr. Quelch kindly. "March is a very treacherous month. Have you felt this coming on long, Nugent?"

"Oh, no, sir! That is—no, sir."

"It's a very serious thing, you know, Nugent," went on the Remove Form master. "once a cold gets a grip on you it's not an easy matter to shake it off!"

"N-no, sir!" stammered Nugent.

"You look a little feverish," said Mr. Quelch. "Your face is red—very red indeed."

"Is—is it, sir?"

"It is, Nugent. You certainly appear to be catching cold. You had better go and see the House dame at once, Nugent. A cold cannot be dealt with too early."

"Oh, yes, sir—certainly!"

"Lose no time about it, my boy," said Mr. Quelch kindly.

And he left the study again, while the two juniors, on tenterhooks of horror, waited in silent anguish for that sneeze to be repeated from the study cupboard.

"Atchooooooh! Choo! Chooooop!"

It came just as the door closed on Mr. Quelch. Wharton and Nugent gazed at one another with feelings too deep for words.

Mr. Quelch, about to go on his way, was arrested once more by that gargantuan sneeze, which rang and echoed from the study. He looked in again.

"Nugent—"

"Oh dear! Yes, sir!"

"I am afraid this is serious, Nugent.

I will take you to the House dame. Come with me. If the cold is taken in time, it may prevent the necessity of removing you to the sanatorium. Follow me."

"Oh, yes, sir!"

Frank Nugent gave Wharton an eloquent look, and followed Mr. Quelch. He closed the study door after him quickly. Had another sneeze followed the fat would have been in the fire.

Wharton, left alone in the study, wiped his perspiring brow.

"Oh crumbs!" he gasped.

"Atchooo-choo-choo-choooooop!"

From the study cupboard proceeded a series of gargantuan sneezes. But Mr. Quelch was out of hearing now, and Billy Bunter was at liberty to sneeze to his fat heart's content.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

What's to be Done?

BILLY BUNTER crawled from the study cupboard. He gasped and sneezed in turns, as he crawled.

"Oh dear! Atchoooh! Oh crumbs! Ow! Atchoooh! I say, is the beast gone? Oh dear! Atchoooh!"

"You silly ass—"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"You irabjous chump!"

"Atchoooh! Is the beast gone, you beast? Ow! Atchoooh!"

"Yes, he's gone. And the sponer you're gone, too, the better," growled the captain of the Remove.

"I'm not going."

Billy Bunter sank down in the study armchair. Quelch was gone, and he was not likely to come back any more. Anyhow, Bunter had had enough of the cupboard. The armchair was infinitely more comfortable.

Wharton glared at him.

"You fat Owl! You can't stop here."

"Where shall I go, then?" demanded Bunter.

"Go home, you ass!"

"Oh, don't be a silly idiot, Wharton! I've told you I can't go home. The pater's going to take me up to the office in the morning, if I'm at home. If you think I'm going to work in an office—"

"You unspeakable ass! Do you think you can stop here?"

"Yes."

Bunter settled down comfortably in the armchair. Wharton looked at him as if he could have eaten him. Bunter's gasping and sneezing died away. He was feeling better now.

A few minutes later Frank Nugent came back to the study. He grinned ruefully at Wharton.

"Cold all right, old bean?" asked Harry, laughing.

Nugent chuckled.

"It was kind of Quelch," he said. "Too jolly kind! What is that fat idiot doing here?"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"It's time for you to travel, you benighted handersnatch!"

"Yah!"

Billy Bunter, evidently, had no intention of travelling. Short of hurling him headlong from the study, there was no getting rid of him.

Wharton and Nugent settled down to prep again. Prep had to be done, even with the worry of the egregious Owl on their minds.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up!"

"You fellows needn't bother about prep. We've got something more important than prep to consider," said Bunter indignantly. "I've got to be fixed up for the night."

"You'll get fixed up for a funeral, if you don't shut up!"

"Beast!"

Prep went on for a few minutes, Bunter glowering from the armchair. Bunter had escaped discovery up to the present. He had had, in fact, a series of hairbreadth escapes. But his future was still uncertain—very uncertain. All that was certain was that he wasn't going home to face the unnerving prospect of work. That was fixed, and immutable. But the rest was very uncertain, indeed.

When such a problem had to be solved, it was, in Bunter's opinion, utterly futile and frivolous for the fellows to be bothering about so unimportant a matter as prep. Nero fiddling while Rome was burning was nothing to it. Accustomed as he was to selfishness on all sides, Bunter felt that this

was altogether too thick. Anybody might have fancied, from the way these fellows went on, that their affairs were as important as Bunter's.

"Look here, you chaps—" Bunter began again.

Wharton glared round.

"Will you shut up?"

"No, I jolly well won't!" retorted Bunter. "We've got to settle what's going to be done. And you're wasting time."

"Prep, you fathead—prep!"

"Never mind prep! You can chance it in the morning with Quelch. Now, about me—"

Wharton picked up the inkpot.

"Another word," he said, in a concentrated voice, "and you get this—see? Just one more word before we're done prep, and you bag it! I mean that! Now dry up!"

Bunter opened his mouth—and closed it again.

He could see that Wharton was in earnest—deadly earnest. He was waxy! There was no reason, so far as Bunter could see, why he should be waxy. But he was; there was no doubt that he was. So the Owl of the Remove relapsed into silence; he did not want the contents of the inkpot.

Prep was got through in Study No. 1.

It was over at last, and the two juniors rose from the table. Then the voice of Billy Bunter, like the voice of the turtle, was heard in the land once more.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Well, fathead?" grunted Wharton.

"You've done prep!" said Bunter sarcastically. "Talk about Pontius Pilate fiddling while Carthage was burning! Look here, what are you fellows going to do? It will be dorm soon. I can't go to the Remove dormitory; I should be spotted."

"You can go and eat coke!"

"Beast! If you've any suggestions to make—"

"Only that one!"

"Well, if you can't suggest anything, I suppose I shall have to stick in this study," said Bunter. "Nobody will come here again till the maid comes early in the morning. I shall have to get up early and dodge her. It's hard lines! You know I hate getting up early. Not that you care!" added Bunter bitterly.

"Not a rap!" agreed Nugent.

"Not a single, solitary rap!" assented Wharton.

"Beasts! Well, what about bedclothes?"

"Bedclothes?"

"I suppose you don't imagine that I can sleep here without blankets in a March night?" exclaimed Bunter indignantly. "Well, you fellows cut up to the dorm and bag some blankets for me."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I'm not asking you for your own blankets," sneered Bunter. "Don't be alarmed. Sneak the blankets off some other fellow's bed."

"You don't think a fellow would kick up a shindy if he found his blankets missing?" grinned Nugent.

"Oh! Of course, we'd better not have a fuss; they might suspect something. Better bring your own blankets, on second thoughts."

"And what are we to do without blankets?"

"I hope you're not going to be selfish, Wharton. This isn't a time for your beastly selfishness."

"Oh scissors!"

"Half a dozen blankets will do," said Bunter. "Bring a pillow as well. I can rough it. Might as well shove in your overcoats."

"And do you think we can carry half a dozen blankets down from the dorm without half Greyfriars seeing us?" asked Harry.

"If you think I can sleep here without bedclothes, Wharton—"

"You fat idiot! You can't sleep here at all! Go and report yourself to

GREYFRIARS CELEBRITIES.

A gallery of Greyfriars celebrities would not be complete without George Wingate, captain of the school. So our special rhymester hastens to assure you that George has not been forgotten.



A WORD allow me, readers all,
About the Greyfriars skipper;
Rugged, good-natured, strong
and tall,

A friend to every nipper!
In discipline's stern name will he,
With firm and grim-set chin, "gate"
Unruly fags; yet all agree
None's finer than George Wingate!

A giant upon the footer field,
A genius at cricket,
Whate'er the odds, will Wingate yield?
Not he! He'll always stick it!
He knows that tho' the way seems dark
And for a rest you're yearning,
Sheer grit will always hit the mark—
A lesson worth the learning!

Of course, our captain's not quite free
From chaps whose pose as critics:
First Team selections they should be,
They think—tho' paralytics!
Coker, for instance, gets quite "cracked"
When him they don't include, O!
He fails to see the obvious fact
That he's more fit for ludo!

That Wingate reigns without a foe
Is not to be expected.
Loder, a cad from tip to toe,
Has many schemes effected
To lower Wingate's colours; but
That task, thank goodness, needed
A greater figure than he cut.
So Loder ne'er succeeded!

For Loder, unlike Wingate, aims
At being gay and "bladey";
At backing "gees" and playing games
That decent chaps think shady.
And Loder knows that Wingate's mind
Is far above such notions.
In which specific fact you'll find
The cause of L.'s emotions!

Three cheers for Wingate! O'er the
School
Long may he reign Head Prefect!
We know he'll never play the fool
And rarely show a defect.
Beneath his stern but kindly sway,
Greyfriars to greater glories
Will most assur'dly win her way.
Full details—future stories!

Quelch. It's too late for you to be sent home to-night; so he will fix you up, and send you home in the morning."

"I've told you a lot of times that I'm not going to be sent home. If you think I'm going to work in a beastly, stuffy office to please you, you're mistaken! I say, you fellows, don't go!"
But the fellows did not heed.

They seemed to have had enough of the fascinating society of William George Bunter. Apparently they felt that it was possible to have too much of a good thing. They went.

"I say, you fellows!" yelled Bunter.
But the fellows were gone.

"Beasts!" roared Bunter.
The Owl of the Remove was left in solitary possession of Study No. 1.

A few minutes later Peter Todd, on his way down, looked into Study No. 1 and grinned at the frowning face of the fat junior.

"You still here, fatty?"

"I say, Peter, old chap, cut up to the dorm, and fetch me some blankets—"

"I don't think!"

"If you're going to be a selfish beast like Wharton—"

"I am! Worse, in fact!"

"Beast!"

Peter grinned and departed.
Billy Bunter sat down again in the armchair to consider the matter. His considerations of the matter gradually blurred as he nodded off to sleep. It was nearly bed-time now, and Bunter was tired. His fat chin dropped upon his podgy chest and he slumbered—and from Study No. 1 proceeded a deep and echoing rumble, well-known in the Remove dormitory when Bunter was there! Forgetful of his troubles, Billy Bunter slept and snored.

At half-past nine the Remove fellows were shepherded off to their dormitory, and Wingate of the Sixth saw lights out. In the Remove dormitory all were soon asleep. In Study No. 1 Billy Bunter also was asleep—and snoring.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Startling!

EXTRAORDINARY!" said Mr. Quelch.

The Remove master was surprised.

At ten o'clock that evening Mr. Quelch had looked out of his study window, to enjoy a breath or two of fresh air, after an hour or two spent in correcting papers for his Form.

Gazing into the placid night, Mr. Quelch had become aware of a beam of light streaming out into the darkness.

He did not particularly notice it at first; there were still many lighted windows. But it dawned upon him after a time that the beam of light came from a Remove window.

In the Remove studies, of course, all lights should have been out. The Remove had been in bed half an hour.

Mr. Quelch frowned.

It looked as if some Remove fellow had sneaked down from the dormitory after lights-out, carelessly betraying himself by turning on the light in his study. Either that or some fellow had carelessly left his light burning. In either case it was up to Mr. Quelch to look into the matter.

The Remove master left his study, thoughtfully picking up a cane as he passed his table.

He made his way to the Remove passage.

He did not need to search for the study in which the light was still burning. There was a gleam of it under the door of Study No. 1.

Mr. Quelch approached the study, taking a firm grip on the cane as he did so. Then he halted in amazement, and confided to space that it was extraordinary.

From Study No. 1 in the Remove proceeded a strange, startling sound.

"Grrrrrrrrrr!"
It was something like the whir of machinery, it was something like the rumble of distant thunder; it was something like the growl of an approaching aeroplane. It resembled all these sounds—but it was not one of them. Mr. Quelch was perplexed to guess what it was.

Whatever it was, it was emphatic and continuous—like the "unending melody" of Wagner but perhaps a trifle less melodious.

"Extraordinary!" repeated Mr. Quelch.

He listened for a few moments; then he quietly opened the door of the study and looked in.

"Snorrrrrrrrr!"
Mr. Quelch gazed. Astonishment was depicted on his speaking features. He almost gaped.

"Bunter!" he said faintly.
Reclining in the study armchair, with his fat little legs stretched out, his mouth wide open, was Billy Bunter—going strong!

"Bunter!" repeated Mr. Quelch.
He gazed at Bunter. Bunter, deep in the land of dreams, snored. Mr. Quelch realised now what that strange and unnerving sound was. It was not the muttering of thunder; it was not the voice of the tempest! It was Billy Bunter's hefty snore.

Bunter was fast asleep—and dreaming! He was dreaming of the spread he had annexed in Coker's study; eating over again, in the realms of fancy, that delicious cold chicken that had melted in his capacious mouth. He smiled as he slumbered.

"Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch, for the third time.

The ghost of Bunter could not have startled him more. Bunter, so far as Mr. Quelch had known, was at home in the Bunter villa in Surrey. As the Head's letter, recalling him to Greyfriars, had been delivered to Mr. Bunter that day, Mr. Quelch expected to see the Owl of the Remove on the morrow. He did not expect to see him to-night. But there he was—in balmy slumber, snoring!

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch. He frowned portentously.

Bunter, apparently, instead of waiting till to-morrow, had returned to the school that day—as he was at full liberty to do, after the delivery of the headmaster's letter.

But why had he not reported himself to the Form master? Why had he entered the school secretly, surreptitiously, and gone to sleep in a study instead of the dormitory? That was inexplicable.

Frowning, Mr. Quelch approached the sleeping beauty.

Bunter did not wake. Bunter fell asleep easily enough, but he was not an easy waker. He snored on luxuriously, while the angular form of the Remove master bent over him.

"Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch, in a deep voice.

Snore!
"BUNTER!"

Snore!
"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch.

He reached for Bunter's shoulder, grasped it, and shook the fat junior. There was a momentary cessation of Bunter's nasal efforts. He murmured in his sleep.

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"Ooooooh! Leggo! Beast! 'Tain't rising-bell!"

Then he snored again.

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Quelch.

"BUNTER! BUNTER!"

Snore!
Shake, shake, shake!"

"Grooooooh!"

Bunter turned over a little in the chair, without opening his eyes. He settled down again, and snored.

"BUNTER!" hooted Mr. Quelch.

Snore!

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips. His hoot would have awakened the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus; but it had no effect on Billy Bunter. It passed the fat junior by like the idle wind which he regarded not. But Mr. Quelch had something more effective than his voice at hand. He raised his cane. He felt that that would wake Bunter, if anything would.

Whack!
"Yaroooooh!"

Mr. Quelch was right! The cane did wake Bunter!

"Yow-ow-ow!" roared Bunter.

"Beast! Wharrer you up to? Yah! Oh crikey!"

He started up, his eyes wide open over the spectacles that had slipped down his fat little nose.

"Bunter!"

"Oh crumbs! Quelch!" gasped Bunter.

He blinked at his Form master.

"Bunter, you foolish and ridiculous boy!"

"Ow! Keep off!"

"Bunter—"

"Yaroooooh!"

Bunter left the armchair with a bound. With another bound he was on the safe side of the study table. He blinked across the table at Henry Samuel Quelch.

"Bunter! What—"

"Oh dear! Oh scissors! Keep off! I ain't going home—"

"Bunter! Come here!"

"Ow!"

Bunter did not come there! The study door was open—and Bunter made a desperate bound for it.

"Bunter!" shrieked Mr. Quelch.

Bunter did not heed. He flew! The astonished Remove master made a stride after him. Bunter's flying footsteps echoed back along the Remove passage. Mr. Quelch rushed out after him.

"Bunter!" he roared.

"Oh, crikey!" floated back from the distance.

Bunter was gone.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch faintly. "Is the boy out of his senses? What can be the reason of this extraordinary conduct? It is—amazing!"

Bunter! Bunter, I command you to come here at once!"

If the Owl of the Remove heard the command he heeded not, but continued his flight down the Remove passage, panting and gasping, his fat, little legs working like clockwork.

There was a faint echo from a distant staircase, then silence. Mr. Quelch breathed hard and deep.

"I shall cane that boy!" he said, addressing space. "I shall cane him with the utmost severity. I shall Bunter! BUNTER!"

Silence!

Billy Bunter had vanished into space.

With compressed lips, and feelings that were inexpressible in words—at all events, in words suitable for utterance by a Form master—Mr. Quelch turned out the light in Study No. 1, and rustled away.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

All Serene!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" murmured Bob Cherry sleepily. He raised his head from the pillow, and blinked round in the darkness of the Remove dormitory.

Something had disturbed him. He did not know what it was, but he had an impression that somebody was moving in the dormitory.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Any of you fellows up?" yawned Bob.

There was a gasp in the darkness. Bob Cherry sat up in bed.

"Who's that?" he ejaculated.

No answer.

"What's the row?" came a sleepy voice from Harry Wharton's bed.

"Somebody's up!" answered Bob. "I heard—Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's somebody coming! Sounds like Quelch's hoofs."

There was a sound of rather heavy footsteps in the passage outside. The door opened.

"Quelch!" murmured Wharton.

"What the thump—" He blinked in the light that was suddenly switched on.

Mr. Quelch, with a frown on his brow, stood in the doorway, looking into the lighted dormitory.

Wharton and Bob Cherry stared at him. Several other fellows awakened, and stared.

Mr. Quelch advanced into the room.

"I see that you are awake!" he said, with an inflexion of sarcasm in his voice.

"You woke us, sir!" said Vernon-Smith politely.

"Do not be impertinent, Vernon-Smith!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"But you did wake us, sir!" said the Bounder.

"You will take fifty lines, Vernon-Smith!"

"Oh!"

More and more of the fellows awakened now. Most of the Remove sat up in bed, blinking at Quelch, and wondering what this late visit might portend. The Remove master scanned face after face.

"Is Bunter here?" he rapped out sharply.

"Bunter!" repeated a dozen voices, in amazement.

"Yes—Bunter!"

"Not that I know of, sir!" said Harry Wharton. "He certainly wasn't here when we went to bed."

"The herfulness is not terrific, esteemed sahib!" murmured Hurreo Janset Ram Singh.

Bob Cherry remembered the gasp he had heard in the darkness, a minute or two before Mr. Quelch's arrival. But he said nothing. Bunter, if he was there, was not in sight. Nobody was to be seen in the dormitory, except the fellows sitting up in the long rows of beds. One bed was vacant and unmade, the one that belonged to Bunter when he was there. Mr. Quelch's gimlet-eye turned on it. But there was no sign of Bunter.

"Then Bunter has not come here?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"We haven't seen him, sir."

"Isn't Bunter at home, sir?" asked Lord Mauleverer.

"He is not at home, Mauleverer. Greatly to my astonishment, I found him in a Remove study a short time ago. I have been searching for him since, but so far have not found him. I thought that he might have come here."

Billy Bunter suddenly let go his hold on the bed, with the result that Mr. Quelch sat down on the floor with a bump. "Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the Removites.



"Oh!" ejaculated Peter Todd suddenly.

He was startled. Something had bumped on his bed from underneath, and it gave Peter quite a start.

The gimlet eyes gleamed at Toddy. "Do you know anything of Bunter Todd?"

"I—I haven't seen him here, sir!" gasped Peter. "I—I was asleep till you came in, sir."

"He may be in concealment in this room!" said Mr. Quelch.

Peter heard a suppressed gasp. He knew now what had bumped under his bed.

"It is most extraordinary," said Mr. Quelch. "Bunter appears to have returned to-day; and for some inexplicable reason, he has kept his return a secret, instead of reporting himself to me. Bunter! Bunter, if you are here, I command you to show yourself."

The command fell upon deaf ears. If Bunter was there, he did not show himself.

The Remove master frowned.

"I shall search the dormitory!" he said.

"Oh crikey!"

Mr. Quelch jumped.

"What—what was that? Who spoke?"

No answer!

"Did you speak, Toddy?"

"N-n-no, sir!"

"That ridiculous and unseemly ejaculation, Todd, appeared to come from your direction."

"D-d-did it, sir?"

"It did!" said Mr. Quelch.

He advanced to Toddy's bed. He stooped by the side of the bed, and peered underneath it.

He gave quite a start, as his eyes fell upon a fat, terrified face, with two terrified eyes blinking through a pair of large spectacles.

"Bunter!" he ejaculated.

"Ow! I'm not here, sir—"

"What?"

"I—I mean—"

"Come forth at once, Bunter!" hooted Mr. Quelch.

"Ow!"

Bunter did not come forth! He went forth—on the other side of the bed. With an angry exclamation, Mr. Quelch reached after him, as he squirmed away, and captured a fat ankle.

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Toddy.

"Bunter—"

"Yow-ow-ow! Leggo!"

Mr. Quelch grasped the fat ankle firmly, and tugged. There was a dolorous howl from William George Bunter.

"Ow! Leggo! Wow!"

"Come out at once!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Ow! Ow! Wow!"

Mr. Quelch tugged hard! Billy Bunter, in despair, clutched a leg of the bed, and held on. Mr. Quelch tugged, and Bunter clung; and the whole Remove gazed at the extraordinary scene with breathless interest.

"Bunter—I command you—"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"You—you—you—"

"Wow!"

Mr. Quelch made a supreme effort. He fairly put his beef into it, and tugged with a tug that Bunter could not resist. The fat junior let go his hold; and under the pull of that terrific tug, he fairly flew out from under the bed.

He came so suddenly, and so swiftly, that Mr. Quelch was not prepared for it. Mr. Quelch sat down.

Bump!

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in an involuntary yell from the Remove. They could not help it.

"Bless my soul!" gasped Mr. Quelch breathlessly.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

The Remove master staggered to his feet. His face was crimson; his eyes glistened. He grasped Bunter by the collar and dragged him up.

"Silence!" hooted Mr. Quelch. "The next boy who laughs will be caned in the morning! Silence!"

Sudden gravity descended on the Remove.

"Now, Bunter—"

"Yaroooh!"

"What does this mean, Bunter? For what reason have you concealed your return to the school? How dare you do so? What does this extraordinary conduct mean? Are you out of your senses?"

"Oh! Ow! No, sir! Ow! Leggo!" gasped Bunter. "I didn't, sir—I mean, I wasn't—it wasn't me, sir!"

"What does it mean?" hooted Mr. Quelch. "Since the Headmaster wrote to your father giving permission for you to return—"

"Eh?"

"Why did you not return openly—"

"Wha-a-a-t?"

"Instead of entering the school in this absurd, surreptitious manner? Explain yourself at once!"

Bunter blinked at him.

"I—I—I—" he stuttered. "Oh crikey! I mean—"

"However, you shall explain yourself in the morning—the hour is late," said Mr. Quelch. "I will give instructions for your bed to be made. Remain here."

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter. Mr. Quelch left the dormitory. He was completely puzzled by Bunter's remarkable conduct in returning to the school surreptitiously, after the Head's permission had been given or held to come back. Bunter, on his side, was quite astonished to hear of that permission. But he was very relieved, too.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry.

"You fat chump, didn't you know—"

"Of course I didn't! The Head's letter must have got there after I bunked—"

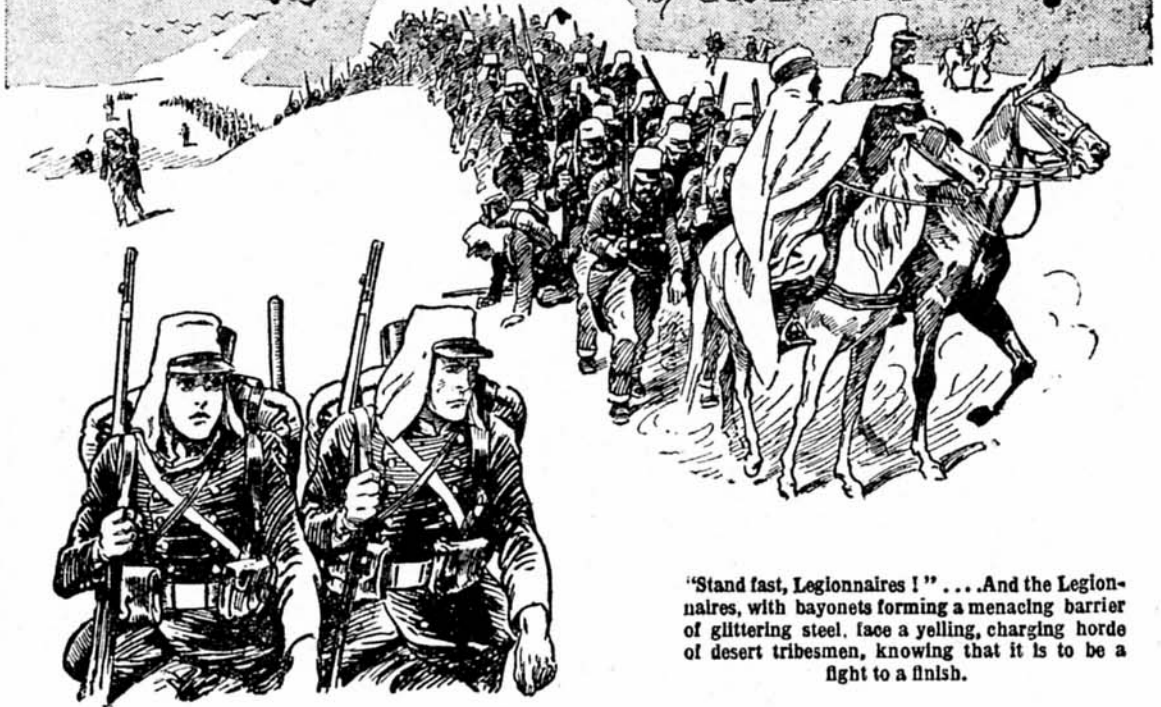
(Continued on page 28.)

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START THIS VIVID STORY OF THE FOREIGN LEGION TO-DAY !

For the Glory of France!

by Geo. E. Rochester



"Stand fast, Legionnaires!" . . . And the Legionnaires, with bayonets forming a menacing barrier of glittering steel, face a yelling, charging horde of desert tribesmen, knowing that it is to be a fight to a finish.

INTRODUCTION

Paul Blake, Fifth-Former of Greystones, learns that Guy Warren, his cousin and captain of the school, is in serious trouble. Thirty pounds of the funds placed in Warren's charge have been gambled away, and rather than see the son of his guardian exposed as a thief, Paul decides to take the blame. This he does by running away from Greystones. A few miles from the school, however, he meets Mahjuba Smith, an orphaned waif of the roads. The two tell each other their stories, and then Paul suggests that they join the Foreign Legion together. Jub agrees, and in Paris the two chums enlist in the Legion for five years. At Marseilles they meet Charles Desmond, once captain of Greystones, and Esterharn, a former officer in the French army. The four become firm friends and manage to be sent to the desert fort of Sidi-bel-Abbes together. A week or two later Paul is startled to find that Guy Warren and his sister June are visiting Sidi on their African tour. Warren has inherited the title and fortune of his father, and for fear that Paul Blake will ruin him by telling the truth about the stolen money, he arranges with the villainous Sergeant-Major Bolke that the youngster shall be killed—somehow. Then comes the news that the warlike Arabs have risen, and a strong punitive draft of the Legion, including Paul, Jub, Esterharn and Desmond, is sent south into the desert to quell them.

(Now read on.)

A Man Dies!

FORTY miles the battalion marched that day over heavy, burning sand. And when at length a halt was called the weary men flung themselves down and slept the sleep of utter exhaustion.

Reveille brought them to their feet once more, and the arduous march was continued. They were heading for Zukra, a small, fortified village five hundred miles into the desert; a village which, whilst scarcely aspiring to be called a fort, served as a refitting dump for the Legion.

For five long, endless days, scorched THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,151.

beneath a blistering sun, the battalion marched on. But every man was hard as nails, and, as yet, there were no cases of sickness, sunstroke, or of lo cafard, the terrible desert madness.

At the friendly villages and oases through which they passed they learned that the primary cause of all the trouble was a certain fanatical Touareg chief, named Ali bu Sadi, who had stoutly sworn by every hair of the beard of the prophet that he would sweep the French out of the Sahara once and for all.

And if his plans were allowed to mature he seemed in a fair way to carrying out his threat. For tribal differences were being forgotten, and Touareg, Moor, and warlike Senussi were swearing eternal brotherhood and uniting against the common foe.

The desert—so the battalion was informed by marabouts and Arab camel-drivers—was a death-trap. It was seething with tribes who were flocking to the black banner of Ali bu Sadi.

"We cannot continue like this," prophesied Lemarne, as the battalion lay encamped on the fifth night. "Sooner or later we are bound to connect with these Touaregs."

His words proved correct, for towards mid-afternoon of the following day an Arab gounier came riding frantically in with the news that a strong force of Touaregs was lying in ambush amongst the sandhills seven miles ahead.

"How many do they number?" snarled Sergeant-Major Bolke, before taking the man in front of Lieutenant Villiers, who was commanding the battalion.

"Fifteen hundred—at the very least!" panted the man.

Sergeant-Major Bolke smiled grimly. "And we number a thousand," he informed Lieutenant Villiers, who knew

it. "The odds are even enough to warrant us pushing on."

The lieutenant agreed, and a plan of campaign was speedily decided upon. Three miles to the east of where the Touaregs were lying in ambush the ground rose in a long, sloping sandhill. And towards this rising ground, moving in extended formation, the battalion advanced.

Every man was on the alert and tingling with excitement. Within the hour they would be at grips with the enemy. But the attack was to come sooner than they expected; for the Touaregs had scouts out, and these reported to the main body that the infidel dogs were making a detour.

What happened next was what Sergeant-Major Bolke had anticipated. Only, unfortunately, it happened before he had got the battalion ensconced on the rising ground of the sandhill, which was what he and Lieutenant Villiers had been staking on. The Touaregs abandoned their ambush and, charging out of cover, swept down to the attack.

As though emerging from out of the ground, they topped the ridge of a long, low sand-dune, a mass of yelling, white-robed, camel-mounted figures. Frenziedly brandishing swords and spears, they thundered down on the battalion, and from their throats came their dread, menacing war-cry:

"Ul-ul-ullah Akbar!"

On they came, long lines of yelling fiends, mounted on swiftly moving camels. And, with left knees on the sand and rifle-butts cuddled into cheeks, the battalion silently awaited their coming.

"Prepare to fire!" barked Bolke.

The Legionnaires tensed, every man squinting along his rifle-barrel, which

was sighted straight into the yelling, charging horde.

"Fire!"

There came a deafening crash of musketry, and lurid flame spat viciously from rifle-muzzles as the Legionnaires poured a withering fire into the Touaregs.

Above the din rose the screams of wounded camels and dying men, and through the thin, drifting, acrid smoke Paul saw that the enemy were momentarily checked in a seething, surging mass.

"Keep firing, you dogs!" roared Bolke. "By thunder, if they override us we're done!"

The Legionnaires obeyed, a long reverberating crash of musketry coming from their double ranks. Volley after volley they poured into the screaming, shrieking mob, for they knew only too well what their fate would be should they be overridden and live to be taken prisoners.

But the Touaregs were forming again, driven by their fanatical hatred of these soldiers of France. On they came, eyes flaming with blood-lust, swords and gleaming spears upraised, yelling their battle-cry:

"Ul-ul-ullah Akbar!"

Some had long barrelled muskets, but their shooting was necessarily wild. Yet more than one bullet got home, and a Legionnaire near Bolke reeled over with a choking sob, face foremost to the sand.

"Bayonets!" screamed Bolke; and at the word the kneeling ranks rose as one man, their bayonets a bristling barrier of glittering steel.

The charging, white-robed fiends were almost on them now; and, standing as rigid as though on the parade ground, Bolke gave the stirring last command:

"Stand fast, Legionnaires!"

Next instant the first wave of the frenzied Touaregs broke against that solid wall of steel; broke, recoiled, then surged forward again, thrust by the press behind.

But they could not pass, for now the Legionnaires were advancing, inch by inch, foot by foot, yard by yard, their crimson bayonets thrusting, lunging, and parrying, as remorselessly they forced the Touaregs back.

And did a Legionnaire go down with severed shoulder or cleft skull, to be trampled underfoot, then the gap was instantly closed as a comrade from the rear rank stepped forward into the breach.

Shoulder to shoulder in the foremost rank were Paul and Jub, fighting desperately, half-dazed by the yells and screams, the blood and horror of it all. For they were new to this awful game of war.

A huge Touareg bore down on Paul, his great curved sword whirling aloft for the downward slash. Paul's crimson bayonet flashed up to parry the blow, and was shivered at the hilt. With such savage force had the Touareg struck that the rifle was torn from the boy's hand. Like lightning, the Touareg's sword swept up again, to whirl downwards on the now defenceless boy.

But in that split instant of time Jub's shoulder took Paul heavily in the ribs, sending him staggering clear. Yet nought on earth could check the career of that downward, flashing sword. It took Jub full on the shoulder near the base of the throat, cleaving its way through tunic and bone.

Conscious of nothing in that moment, save that Jub had given his life for him, Paul snatched up his chum's fallen rifle, and whirled on the Touareg,

with blazing eyes. Again the Touareg's sword flashed up, but before it could descend a foot of venomous steel took him between the ribs.

With a scream he swayed back in the saddle, the sword falling from his nerveless hand. Then, heeling over, he pitched heavily to the ground, to lie a lump and huddled heap in soaking, blood-stained robes.

"They're breaking!" Bolke's exultant bellow sounded above the hubbub of battle. "Forward, Legionnaires!"

Like a receding wave of the sea the Touaregs were falling back. It was the prelude to panic and stampede. A few moments later the rout was complete, and there came a roar from Bolke:

"Give 'em lead, you dogs!"

The crash of rifles rang out, and more than one of the fleeing, white-robed figures collapsed on the desert sand. Another volley, and another speeded the sad and scattered remnant in their flight.

The victory was complete, and it was useless to pursue the survivors of the encounter. But those moments of victory were the saddest Paul had ever known, for, kneeling on the sand, he held in his arms the friend who had given his life for him.

Jub's eyes flickered open, and, as he gazed up at Paul, his livid lips twisted into a brave smile.

"Reckon it's the end of the road for me, Paul," he whispered. "You all right?"

"Yes, Jub."

Jub was silent, and when next he spoke his voice was weaker.

"It was an awful weary road, and lonely, till you came along. You're the only friend I've ever had. God bless you, Paul, and bring you through! I—I'm going now. Good-bye, old pal!"

Foebly his hand groped for Paul's as the words trailed away. Paul took it and held it fast, unconscious for the moment that Jub had pressed his father's V.C. into his hand—a lasting memento of their brief friendship. Jub's glazing eyes slowly closed. Then suddenly his head fell back, and he went limp. Majuba Smith was dead.

Reverently Paul laid him down, and, straightening to his feet, stood a moment with eyes awning. Mechanically he placed the little bronze cross in his pouch; his lips moved in silent prayer.

"Poor devil!" spoke a voice at Paul's elbow. "So Smith has got his discharge."

Turning, Paul found that the speaker was Lemarne, powder-begrimed, and with a blood-stained bandage round his head.

"Yes," said Paul quietly. "He took a sword thrust which was meant for me."

Lemarne nodded.

"He was a good one, that Smith," he said. "I am sorry he has gone. He was a man!"

With that he passed on. But let the words of that hard-bitten Legionnaire be the epitaph of Majuba Smith, who lies in a lonely desert grave:

"He was a man!"

Lemarne's Warning!

THE battalion had lost a hundred men, killed in the fight. Of the remainder, over three hundred had been wounded. And it was on the question of these latter that Sergeant-Major Polke almost quarrelled with the Lieutenant Villiers.

"The wounded must be sent back to the nearest oasis under escort," said Villiers, who was a humane individual. "It is impossible for them to continue on towards Zukra."

"Escort!" repeated Bolke bitterly. "And where are we to find an escort without reducing the strength of the company to less than half?"

The lieutenant was firm for once.

"It is unfortunate, but it cannot be helped," he said. "The wounded cannot go on, and if they are sent back unescorted they will be wiped out by the first marauding band to sight them."

Villiers had his way. And at dawn the following morning the battalion, now only four hundred and fifty strong, marched forward, with another three hundred miles of burning, Arab-infested

(Continued on next page.)

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desert lying between them and Zukra.

Paul Desmond, Esterharn, and Lemarne were in the leading four, and more than once as they trudged wearily on throughout that endless day, Paul was conscious that Lemarne was watching him.

It was just before camp was pitched for the night that the old Legionnaire spoke.

"Keep awake to-night," he muttered. "I have something to say to you."

With his knapsack for a pillow, and his greatcoat for a ground-sheet, Paul lay awake that night staring up at the star-spangled sky. Lemarne came to him at last, and stretched himself out on the sand by the boy's side.

For a few moments the Legionnaire was silent; then in a scarce audible whisper, he said:

"This force can never hold Zukra." Paul made no answer, and Lemarne went on in the same low tones:

"But we will not be put to the test. For not a man of us will ever reach Zukra alive!"

The tense, vibrant words startled Paul. He turned his head towards Lemarne.

"What do you mean?" he whispered. "I mean that we were far from strong when we numbered a thousand men," was the answer. "Now there are little more than four hundred of us. It is madness to go on. We shall be wiped out to a man."

Paul was silent, and Lemarne continued:

"I am no coward, nor am I afraid to die. But neither am I an animal that I should be butchered because of the stupidity of those who lead us."

His fingers gripped on Paul's arm. "For four long years I have served France faithfully and well in the ranks of the Legion," he went on; and there was a quiver of suppressed passion in his low tones. "But promotion has never come my way. Bolke has seen to that. Well, I am through—through before I die, either by Arab knife, or by madness in the brain. Do you know Hotzman?"

"Yes."

"And Johansen the Swede?"

"Yes."

"And Zimmermann, Stulz, and Kalgar?"

"Yes, I know them all," responded the boy. "Are they not comrades of ours?"

Lemarne hitched himself closer.

"Listen, then!" he said, his lips close to the boy's ear. "And swear by every oath which you hold sacred that you will never divulge one word of what I am about to tell you!"

Paul hesitated.

"I swear!" he said quietly. "Good!" exclaimed Lemarne. "I know you well enough to know that you will keep your oath whether you come in with us or not. Well, then, I, and the ones whom I have named, are going on pump."

"Deserting?" ejaculated Paul. "Yes, deserting. We are not fools. It is madness, I tell you, to go on!"

Paul was conscious of a dull disappointment. He had not thought this of Lemarne. Somehow the man had always struck him as being a soldier of the very finest type.

And it almost seemed as though Lemarne sensed something of what was in the boy's mind, for he resumed:

"You do not understand. If by some vile chance we live to win through to Zukra, do you know what lies in store for us there? Weary, endless days of blistering heat; existence on short and rotten rations and stinking water; and Bolke—always Bolke! I know what that furnace of Zukra is like. Non d'un nom—it is terrible!"

Hardened Legionnaire though he was, Lemarne broke off, with a shudder.

"But why have you told me this," asked Paul softly, "about you and Hotzman and the others?"

"Because we wish you to join us!" "Me?" exclaimed the boy. "Why?"

Again the firm, brown fingers of Lemarne tightened on Paul's arm. "One reason is that I like you, boy," he answered. "I have talked the others round, and you may join us if you will. What have you done to Bolke?"

"What have I done to Bolke?" repeated Paul, astonished at the question. "Why, nothing!"

"Yet he hates you more than any other man of the company," said Lemarne grimly. "Sacre diable, but I have seen him watching you more times than once since we left Sidi-bel-Abbes, and I have read the murder in his eyes. He means you harm, mon enfant!"

"But, Lemarne—"

"I am warning you!" cut in the Legionnaire. "Why he hates you so I do not know. But hate you he does, and that hatred is going to find a vent. Then you will either die or wish to die. You have been in the Legion some little time, but even yet you do not know what Bolke is capable of when roused."

"He has treated me all right since we left Sidi-bel-Abbes," responded Paul.

"Yes; for this is a perilous march, and he has had other things to occupy him. But wait! If le bon Dieu permits, and the company wins through to Zukra, then I would not stand in your shoes for one million francs!"

"But I cannot understand what he can have against me, Lemarne," muttered the boy. "I know he thinks me a thief—"

"That is nothing!" interposed Lemarne. "He is one himself—and worse. No; there is some deeper cause than that for his hatred. But be wise, mon enfant, and do not linger to inquire. Come with us. To-morrow night we camp at the fort of Sulta. And when 'Reveille' blows the next morning we will have gone!"

A silence fell between them—a silence broken suddenly by Paul.

"I am grateful to you from the bottom of my heart, Lemarne!" he said quietly. "But I stay with the company."

"You mean that?"

"Yes."

"You are throwing away your one chance of life," warned the old Legionnaire. "Why won't you come?"

Paul's answer came so low that he could scarce hear it.

"You know—do you not?" Lemarne's lips twisted in a smile. "Yes, I know," he replied. "It is because you have signed on for five years. You wish to keep faith. Ah, once I thought as you, but that is over now! It is the Legion which does not keep faith. It promises you distinction and promotion. It gives nothing—nothing, save soul-killing discipline and a death amidst the burning sand. Well, I am through with it all. And I ask you, for the last time will you join us?"

"No, I cannot!"

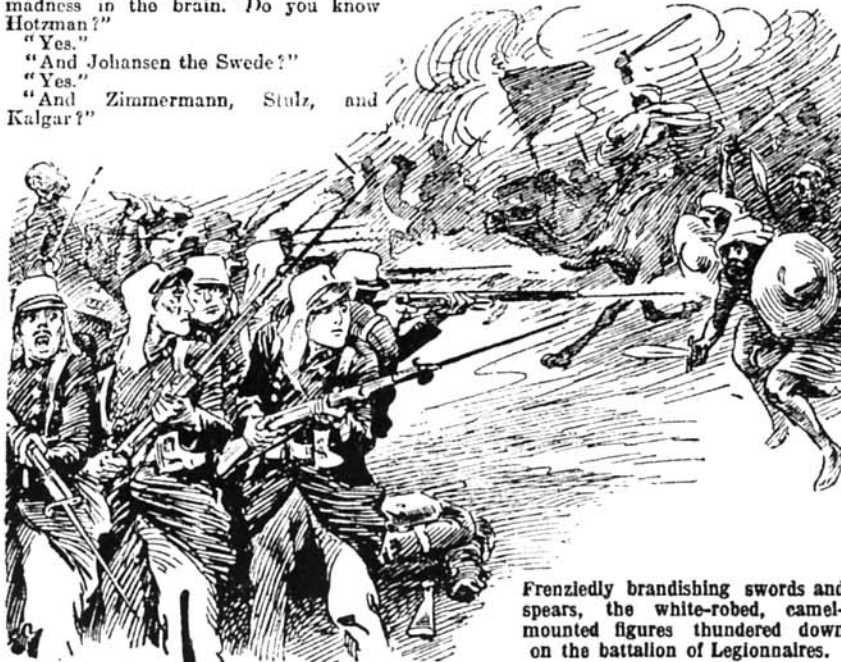
"You mean you will not!" retorted Lemarne. "Boy, you are a fool! We can win through to safety, and the Legion will know us no more. But have it your own way. You will forget what I've said?"

"Yes; it is already forgotten, Lemarne!"

Satisfied, the Legionnaire nodded and moved away.

The Sulta Fort.

THERE was a certain detail about this proposed desertion which Lemarne had not mentioned to Paul Blake, and it was rather an important detail namely, that before the



Frenziedly brandishing swords and spears, the white-robed, camel-mounted figures thundered down on the battalion of Legionnaires.

deserters cleared out they intended to murder Sergeant-Major Bolke.

Lemarne had not mentioned this interesting fact to Paul, for the simple reason that he himself was entirely ignorant of it.

He was not the leader of the band of deserters. As a matter of fact, it was only within the past twenty-four hours that he had joined them, at the express invitation of Hotzman, who was the moving spirit.

For weeks now Hotzman, Johansen, Zimmermann, Stulz, and Kalgar had been plotting to murder Bolke. They had talked it over long before leaving Sidi-bel-Abbes. And they proposed to do it the following night at the fort at Sulta.

They certainly wouldn't have hesitated to have taken Lemarne into their confidence about this little killing had they been quite sure of his approval. But they weren't sure of it; for Lemarne had a peculiar code of honour. He didn't object to desertion, but it was quite on the cards that he would draw the line at murder—even the murder of such a fiend as Bolke.

So, to be on the safe side, Hotzman & Co. had decided to keep that part of their scheme entirely to themselves. They would lie quietly in wait for Bolke, without the assistance of Lemarne. Then, when they had sunk a foot of cold steel into the sergeant-major, they would collect Lemarne, scale the mud wall of the fort, and depart into the night.

It would be a perilous journey to reach the coast. It was a hundred to one chance and more against any of them coming through alive. But they were willing to risk it as long as Lemarne was with them. He knew the desert almost as well as any Arab. He was cool, calculating, courageous, and cautious. In short, the ideal leader for such a venture. That was why they had asked him to join them. And, once away from the fort, Hotzman was prepared to hand over to him—only too willingly—the reins of leadership.

So there you have what was pending when the company struck camp at dawn and moved forward towards Sulta.

As has already been said, Lieutenant Villiers was a young man, and before noon of that day he was a very sick one. It was the sun which had got him, for he had neither the physique nor the toughness of the men whom he commanded. Raving, he was strapped down on an improvised stretcher, and the company continued the march under the sole command of Sergeant-Major Bolke.

Towards mid-afternoon they had a brush with a party of Veiled Men of the Desert who were mounted on horses, and numbered about two hundred strong. But the blue-clad Arabs refrained from coming to close quarters, contenting themselves with a long-range fusillade which did no damage and which drew a punishing and saddle-emptying volley from the kneeling Legionnaires.

The sun was setting red beyond the rim of the desert when, worn out and utterly weary, the company reached the small fort of Sulta. Since dawn they had been plodding through hot, sinking sand, broiled beneath a scorching sun. But did Bolke dismiss them to their quarters? He did not!

He kept them at rigid attention, with full marching kit on their backs, whilst the muster-roll was called. He was in command now, and he intended to let them know it.

For twenty minutes he made them fix and unfix bayonets. It was ghastly

As the Touareg's sword was about to whirl downwards on Paul, Jub charged the defenceless youngster clear.



after what they had gone through during the past few days, and more than one man was swaying on his feet with things going blurred in front of his eyes.

But Bolke was in an evil mood. "I'll smarten you up, you hounds!" he snarled. "We rest here for two days, and, by thunder, you'll spend every hour of them on the parade-ground! Attention! Par files de quatre, en avant, marche!"

But scarce had the company moved off in fours, than the white-faced Parading—a Portuguese—stumbled drunkenly out of the ranks and collapsed, his rifle clattering from his hand.

"Halte!" roared Bolke.

Obediently the company halted, and striding up to where the Portuguese lay, Bolke kicked him savagely in the ribs.

"Get up, you dog," he snarled, "or I'll kick you to death!"

Parading strove to raise himself. But he was all in.

"And this is the scum they send us for soldiers," said Bolke, with an oath. "Blood and fury! But I'll harden him yet!"

He rapped out an order, and two Legionnaires stepped forward. Half carrying and half dragging the wretched Portuguese, they got him off the parade ground.

Slowly Bolke stepped towards the ranks, rigid at attention.

"If there are any more of you feeling that way," he said gratingly, "just say so!"

It was a threat, not an invitation. But the Swede, Johansen, in the rear four with Hotzman, Stulz, and Kalgar, answered.

"Ja, I do!" he said stolidly. Bolke wheeled on him like a spiteful cat.

"Do you, you animal?" he screamed. "By thunder, I'll teach you to give insolence to me!"

Undoubtedly it was the thought of the thing he and his friends meant to do to Bolke that night that had lent Johansen the courage—or foolhardiness—to answer as he did. It was rather good fun to goad Bolke when you knew

that within a few hours the tyrant would be dead.

But as Johansen listened to the abuse which beat upon his head, his colour deepened.

As a rule, he was one of the most phlegmatic and thick-skinned of individuals, but there is a limit to what flesh and blood can stand.

And Bolke, determined to have a victim, was exceeding that limit. With an almost superhuman effort, Johansen held himself in check, his thoughts pinned desperately on what he would do to this blasphemous dog later in the evening.

Then suddenly his eyes flamed and berserk passion mounted to his brain. For Bolke was snarling:

"I wish I had your hag of a mother here that I could spit upon her—"

With a maddened roar, Johansen leapt forward, his clubbed rifle whirling aloft. But before it could descend, Bolke had nimbly drawn his revolver and shot the Swede full between the eyes.

"Remove the animal's carcass," he said pleasantly, slipping his revolver back into the holster and gazing with cold eyes at the huddled, lifeless heap which had been Johansen.

Hotzman, Stulz, and Kalgar exchanged glances. They did not speak, but as they bent sullen gaze on Bolke, each one registered anew a mental vow that before the dawn came, their comrade would be amply avenged.

And back to Paul Blake's mind came the grim words of Lemarne. "Weary, endless days of blistering heat, rotten rations, stinking water, and Bolke—always Bolke!"

"If that's what is in store for us at Zukra," reflected the youngster bitterly, "I'd better clear out with Lemarne and the others." But then his jaw set doggedly. "Hang it, no!" he muttered. "I'll stick it out now, and Bolke can do his worst!"

(Desperate, enraged, the plotters are ready to strike! Within a very few hours things will be moving swiftly at the lonely fort in the desert. Whatever you do, chums, don't miss next week's thrilling instalment of this serial—it's better than ever!)

INSIDE INFORMATION!

(Continued from page 11.)

It was quite right for that goal to count. There is nothing to prevent a goalkeeper wandering all over the field and kicking the ball how and when he can. But if he is outside his own penalty area then he becomes an ordinary player, which means that he can't handle the ball without penalty. It used to be quite a common thing in first-class football for goalkeepers to take their side's penalty kicks, but it isn't done so much nowadays. It is considered too risky to take a goalkeeper so far away from his "home quarters."

Let me add at once that for me, at any rate, some of the joy, the excitement, the thrill, has been taken out of football by this idea that the goalkeeper should be a "home secretary."

I remember how "Tiny" Joyce—so called because he was such a big fellow—used to take his side's penalty kicks when he was the goalkeeper of Millwall. And I recall him on at least one occasion taking a penalty kick which was saved by the opposing goalkeeper and the ball kicked clear. You should have seen Joyce scampering from one end of the field to the other in the desperate effort to get back to his place between his own goal-posts ere the other fellows could get in a shot. And you should also have seen the efforts of the other fellows to get in a shot before "Tiny" got back.

In the old days, too, there was no goal-

keeper more entertaining to watch than Dick Roose, an amateur 'keeper who played with first-class clubs and who was among the many sportsmen who lost their lives in the War. In those days the goalkeeper was permitted to handle the ball anywhere in his own half of the field, and he used to avail himself to the full of this "licence." It was no uncommon thing to see him standing well outside his penalty area when his side was attacking, and, instead of falling back if the other fellows advanced, he would dash forward and sometimes pick the ball off the toes of an opponent when that opponent was still forty yards or so from goal.

It may be added that by his unorthodox methods Roose probably gave away as many goals as he saved, but first-class clubs considered him quite good enough to "keep" for them.

Much of recent football legislation, however, has had for its object the curbing of the activities of the goalkeeper, and in doing this some of the joy has been taken out of the game for the spectators.

In the long ago, for instance, the goalkeeper was allowed to come out to the six yards line when a penalty kick was being taken. First the rule was altered so that he had to go back to his line on these occasions. Then, quite recently, the rules were further altered, so that the goalkeeper must now stand still until the ball is actually kicked from the penalty spot.

BILLY BUNTER'S "COME-BACK!"

(Continued from page 23.)

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "If I'd known—" gasped Bunter.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. Look at all the trouble I've had for nothing—"
 "Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Remove.
 "Dodging Quelch all this time—getting in at windows with a ladder when I might have walked in at the door—"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Beasts!"

Billy Bunter slept soundly in the Remove dormitory that night. Once more the old familiar snore awoke the old echoes.

His interview with Mr. Quelch in the morning was not, perhaps, pleasant. But Bunter was back again, and in that there was solace for Quelch's unpleasantness. He was back at school; and the dreadful prospect of work in a City office under the orders of a man who was to see that he did not slack had faded away like a horrid vision of the night.

So Bunter rejoiced!
 And he was the only fellow in the Remove who did!

THE END.

(There'll be another treat of a yarn dealing with the chums of Greyfriars in next week's MAGNET, entitled: "NAP OF THE REMOVE!" Owing to the increased demand, nowadays for this great school-story paper it's up to you to order your copy of the MAGNET well in advance to avoid disappointment.)



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This week, Bob Cherry, of the Greyfriars Remove, insists on "bursting into print," and the result is as sunny and breezy as Bob himself!

I.

"To Bayu!"
 "O-B-A-Y-U," of the Fourth Form at Cayningham College, read out the letters one by one, then put down his magnifying-glass and looked at his chum, Fred Larking, with a puzzled smile.
 "What on earth does it mean?" asked Fred Larking, wonderingly.
 "Ask me another! But the letters are there right enough. Have a look for yourself."
 And Hal handed his chum the ivory ring he had been examining.
 It was a queer-looking ring, yellow with age and crudely chased. It had come into Hal Smiles' hands only an hour before. Hal had broken detention to accompany his chum to the neighbouring town of Warrington, and on the unexpected appearance of Mr. Crossley, his Form master, had taken refuge in a little curiosity shop in the High Street. To gain time, he had purchased something in the shop. Naturally, he had chosen the cheapest article in sight. That article, as it happened, had been the ivory ring.

Sad to relate, the little ruse had failed in the end. Mr. Crossley had been waiting outside the shop, when Hal ventured forth again, and Mr. Crossley, a somewhat sour gentleman, had smiled at his boy and promised something very painful for Hal Smiles on the very painful for Hal Smiles on the morning. Hal and his chum had returned to Cayningham in sackcloth and ashes, as it were.
 Back in the study which the two shared, the ivory ring had been brought out for examination. It was only on looking at it closely through a magnifying glass that Hal had noticed the minute lettering inside the ring.
 "O-B-A-Y-U!"

Fred Larking, in his turn, spell out the letters. Having done so, he looked up again at Hal Smiles with a face as blank as before. What those cryptic letters meant was for the moment a deep mystery.
 "Must mean something!" remarked Hal.
 "Simply must!" agreed Fred, passing back the ring. "But what?"
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HAL SMILES AND HIS MAGIC RING!

Hal Smiles examined the ring closely again. "O-B-A-Y-U," he repeated thoughtfully. "That spells 'To Bayu'—"
 Bang! Hal Smiles and Fred Larking almost jumped out of their skins.
 What had happened was certainly enough to make any schoolboy jump. No sooner had Hal spoken those strange and puzzling words, "To Bayu," than a loud report had echoed through the study. Simultaneously, there was a flash of blue flame and a puff of smoke.
 And then—

II.

Hal's Luck!

THE two Fourth-Formers rubbed their eyes in utter astonishment. Standing before them was a gorgeous gentleman arrayed in the flowing garments of some Oriental country. A scarlet turban crowned his dark head, green slippers were on his feet, and a blaze of colour encased his slim body. Glittering jewels, scintillating from his fingers, round his neck, and on his forehead, while a flashing semitransparent from his belt.
 "Crikey!" ejaculated Fred Larking. "That was all he could say. As for Hal Smiles, he was unable to find enough breath to say as much as that for a moment.
 The gorgeous vision bowed, touching his forehead with his hands. Then his voice broke the silence in a peculiar chant that sounded strangely in the prosaic atmosphere of a Cayningham study.
 "Master! I am thy slave! All Gazoomph, the Spirit of the Ring attends thy wishes!"
 "Jumping jimmies! How the dickens did you get here?" gasped Hal Smiles. The strange, singing voice of the mysterious Oriental visitor sounded again in the Fourth-Formers' study.
 "Ah Gazoomph, the Spirit of the Ring, flies on the wings of the wind to attend the bidding of his master."
 "Dashed if I follow this at all!" said Hal. "You say your name is All Gazoomph?"
 "Master, thou sayest truth!"

"Well, then, All Gazoomph, what I should like to know is how you got into this study without opening the door?"
 "Verily thy question is easily answered. The walls of human habitations are as thin as air to him dwelling in a far-off cave the voice of his master mountains and seas and through the bric-a-brac of his palace to answer his master's call."
 "Here, draw it mild!" remonstrated Hal Smiles.
 "Master, thou talkest strange talk!"
 "Now, let's get to the bottom of this," said Hal. "You say you heard me calling 'To Bayu'—"
 "Permit thy slave to speak, and he shall give thee understanding."
 "Fire away, then, old bean!"
 "The ring thou holdest in thy hand, O Master, charmed the dusky visitor, 'is the magic ring of Hassan Baba, Grand Vizier in Bagdad in ancient times. I, All Gazoomph, am the Spirit of the Ring."
 "No hat!"
 "To him that holdeth the ring is given this great gift—that the first wish he shall make each day shall be immediately fulfilled. I, the Spirit of the Ring, answer to the call of 'To Bayu,' but even though thou summon me not, I still hear thy words and carry out thy wish."
 "Gammom!"
 "Just what I was going to say," remarked Fred Larking. "Looks to me as if the old boy's a conjurer and is trying to pull our legs."
 Hal Smiles nodded.
 "Magic rings don't exist in the twentieth century. Never existed at all, in fact, outside kids' books. Now listen, All Gazoomph—"
 "Thy slave hears thee, O Great One."
 "And not so much of the 'thy slave' and 'O Great One' either!" said Hal Smiles severely. "Now, we've listened to your explanation, and we don't think much of it. As far as I can follow, you're saying that this is a magic ring?"
 "Even so, Master!"
 "And that while I'm holding this ring, the first wish I make every day is fulfilled. That the idea?"

"Great is thy wisdom and understanding, O Master!"
 "Well, then, frankly, All, we can't take it in. I still don't quite follow what you are and where you come from, and I can't believe in this ring business. It's too steep!"
 "Much too steep!" concurred Fred Larking.
 "Be a rare old lark if it were really true, wouldn't it?" chuckled Hal.
 "Come to think of it, Freddy, we're a bit short of supplies for tea, and it would only be necessary for me to say 'I wish someone would send us a jolly food feed and—'
 Bang!
 "Look!" shrieked Fred Larking.
 Hal Smiles was already looking. That is perhaps an inadequate description. He was staring before him, open-mouthed and wide-eyed with dumb-founded amazement.
 A few seconds before, the study table had been in the unhappy condition of Old Mother Hubbard's proverbial cupboard.
 Now—
 Mounds of food—stacks of it, reposed on the table. There was tuck on every inch of its surface—tuck of every conceivable kind and variety. Meat-pies, hams, joints of beef, sausage-rolls, cake, pastries, fruit, nuts, chocolate, toffee—all these and more were there in quantities so vast that the whole collection might have kept the school going for a week.
 "Oh!"
 It was an astonished, almost incredulous gasp from Hal Smiles.
 "Kik-kik-crikey!" stuttered his chum. The voice of All Gazoomph brought them round again.
 "Master, the vanda are before thee. Eat to thy heart's content."
 "B-b-but—"
 "Art thou not satisfied? If not, I will procure thee these tasty meats and rare and refreshing fruits from the East—"
 "Oh, ye gods! Don't do that!" cried Hal, in alarm. "Well, this beats Barney! I then it's really true?"
 "Have I not said so, O Great One?"
 "Then whatever I wish so long as I hold this ring will always come to pass?"
 "Nay, Master. Only the first wish thou utterest each day canst thou have fulfilled."
 "My hat! That's good enough. I should imagine!" grinned Fred Larking.
 "Hal, my boy, we're made!"
 "But—but I can't believe it!"
 "Then try one of these attack-and-kidney pies, and you'll soon change your mind. They're great!"

"Master may I now return over the seas and mountains to the gods, thine is my dwelling?" chanted All Gazoomph.
 "Su p p s e you can!" said Hal, scratching his head in bewilderment. "I don't want to detain you, of course—"
 Bang!
 A puff of smoke, and the mysterious visitor from the East had vanished, leaving two bewildered, but thoroughly jubilant Fourth-Formers, to the biggest feed that had ever been assembled into one room of such a size.
 Such was the manner in which Hal Smiles' magic ring came to Cayningham.

III.

The Power on the Ring!

"T'S you for the jumps this morning, Hal!" remarked Fred Larking, as he and his chum walked into the Fourth Form room next day.
 "Hi! I'd forgotten Crossley owes me a swishing for cutting detention yesterday," said Hal Smiles, with a grimace. "I wish he'd came himself instead of me for once. Might make him a little more gentle in future!"
 "Temporarily, Hal had forgotten that he was the owner of a magic ring and that the first wish he expressed that day was bound to be fulfilled.
 He remembered it a little later—only five minutes later, as a matter of fact.
 Mr. Crossley came into the Form-room carrying a grin on his hand and wearing a grim look on his unhappy face.
 "Yes, sir?" said Hal Smiles, smothering a groan.
 "Yesterday I caught you in the horrid act of breaking detention. For that misdemeanour I am going to make an example of you by canning you very severely."
 "Oh, sir!"
 "Stand out before the class, Smiles, and touch your toes!"
 Smiles reluctantly obeyed the order.
 "Remember, Smiles," went on Mr. Crossley, as he watched his cane through the air, "I am doing this for your own good." Mr. Crossley always said that on these occasions. "I can assure you, my boy, that the punishment I am going to inflict will hurt me more than you!"
 Then Mr. Crossley waded in.
 But the way he waded in was really extraordinary.
 He started with the VERY evident intention of canning Hal Smiles.
 At the last fraction of time, however, his cane seemed to be diverted from its course by some invisible power.
 And instead of the Fourth-Former it was the Fourth Form master himself who got the business end of the cane.
 "Whooooo!" roared Mr. Crossley.
 And then the Fourth were treated to a unique spectacle. Something seemed to inspire Mr. Crossley to feverish efforts at his task. The master of the Fourth was by no means a novice in wielding the cane. Long years of

experience had made him quite an expert at the game, in fact. But this time he excelled himself.
 The cane rose and fell with the regularity and precision of clockwork. But instead of falling on Hal Smiles, the intended victim, it fell on Mr. Crossley himself!
 "Thwack! Thwack! Thwack! Thwack! Thwack!" Hal Smiles, finding that nothing was happening so far as he was concerned, stopped touching his toes and stood up to look.
 For a moment he was staggered. Then he remembered his wish, and the explanation of the weird scene came to him in a flash.
 "Ha, ha, ha!" he roared suddenly.
 "Whooop! Help! Yooooop!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Fourth. Naturally, they didn't understand the reason for their Form master's peculiar behaviour; but whatever the explanation, they found it decidedly entertaining.
 Mr. Crossley's expression was simply ferocious. He still seemed to be trying to reach Hal Smiles. But the harder he tried the more he seemed to can himself.
 Then suddenly he stopped. The cane dropped from his fingers, and the master of the Fourth staggered to his desk still roaring.
 "Whooooo! Yow! I'm mad! Canning myself instead of that boy! Groooooop!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Fourth. Hal Smiles regarded the toxy ring which he now wore on his finger almost affectionately.
 "May I go now, sir?" he asked meekly.
 "Ow! Yes! Groooooop!"
 And Hal Smiles went, with a grin on his face and elation in his heart.
 Yesterday he had been a doubter. Even after that amazing experience in the study, he had wondered whether it might not have been some wild conjuring trick. But now he knew for certain that he owned a magic ring whose powers staggered the imagination.
 A vista of amazing possibilities stretched before him now, and Hal determined to make the most of them.
 THE END.

(Bob Cherry is busy writing another of these amusing "Hal Smiles" yarns, so look out for it in the near future. Meanwhile, don't miss our new feature under the heading of "MEDICAL GREYFRIARS," which will appear in these latter pages next week.)
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Instead of falling on Hal Smiles, the intended victim, the cane, by some mysterious means, fell on Mr. Crossley himself!



A few seconds before the study table was bare. Now it was stacked with tuck of every conceivable kind and variety!