

“POP OF THE CIRCUS!”

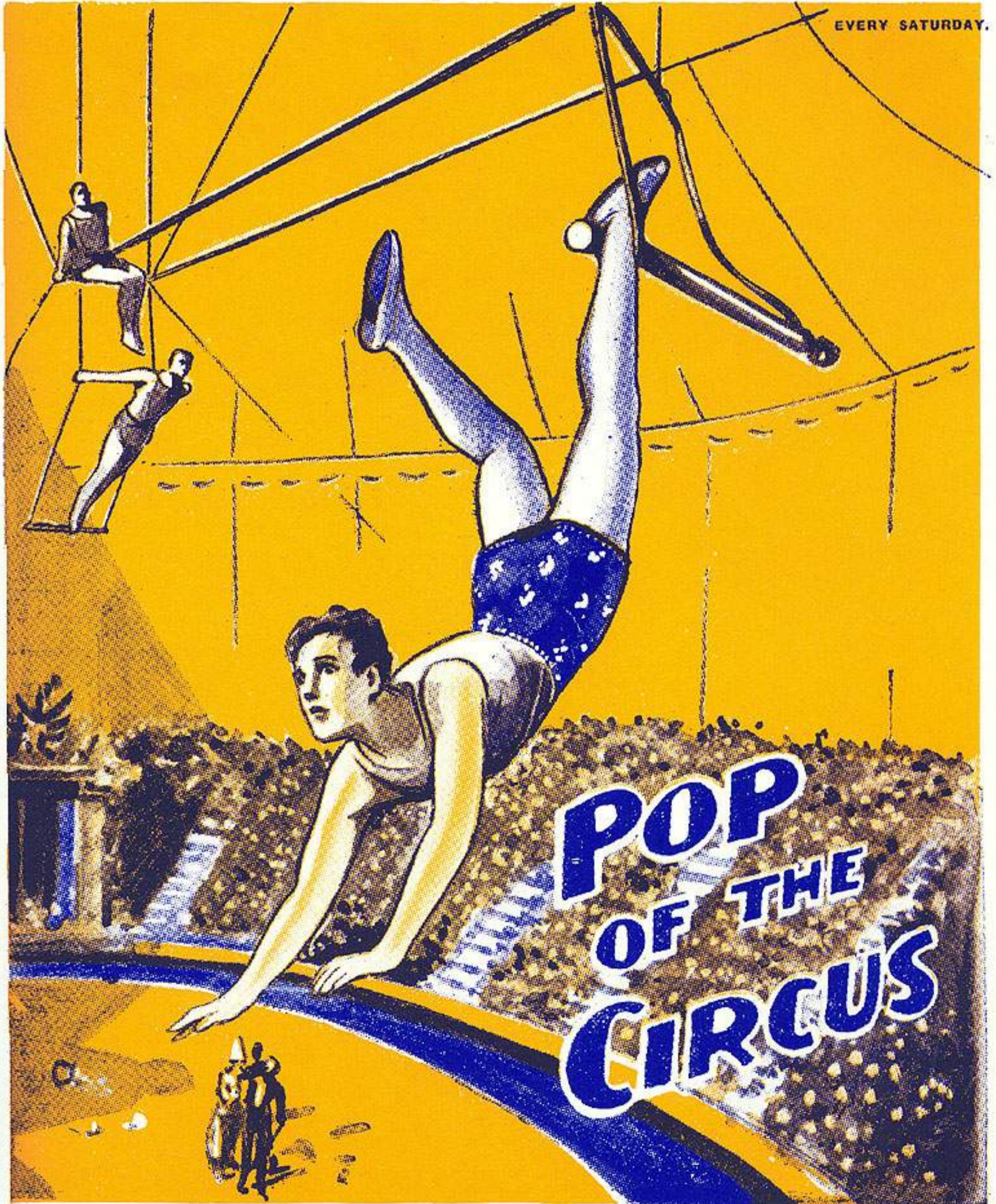
This week's superb story of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars.

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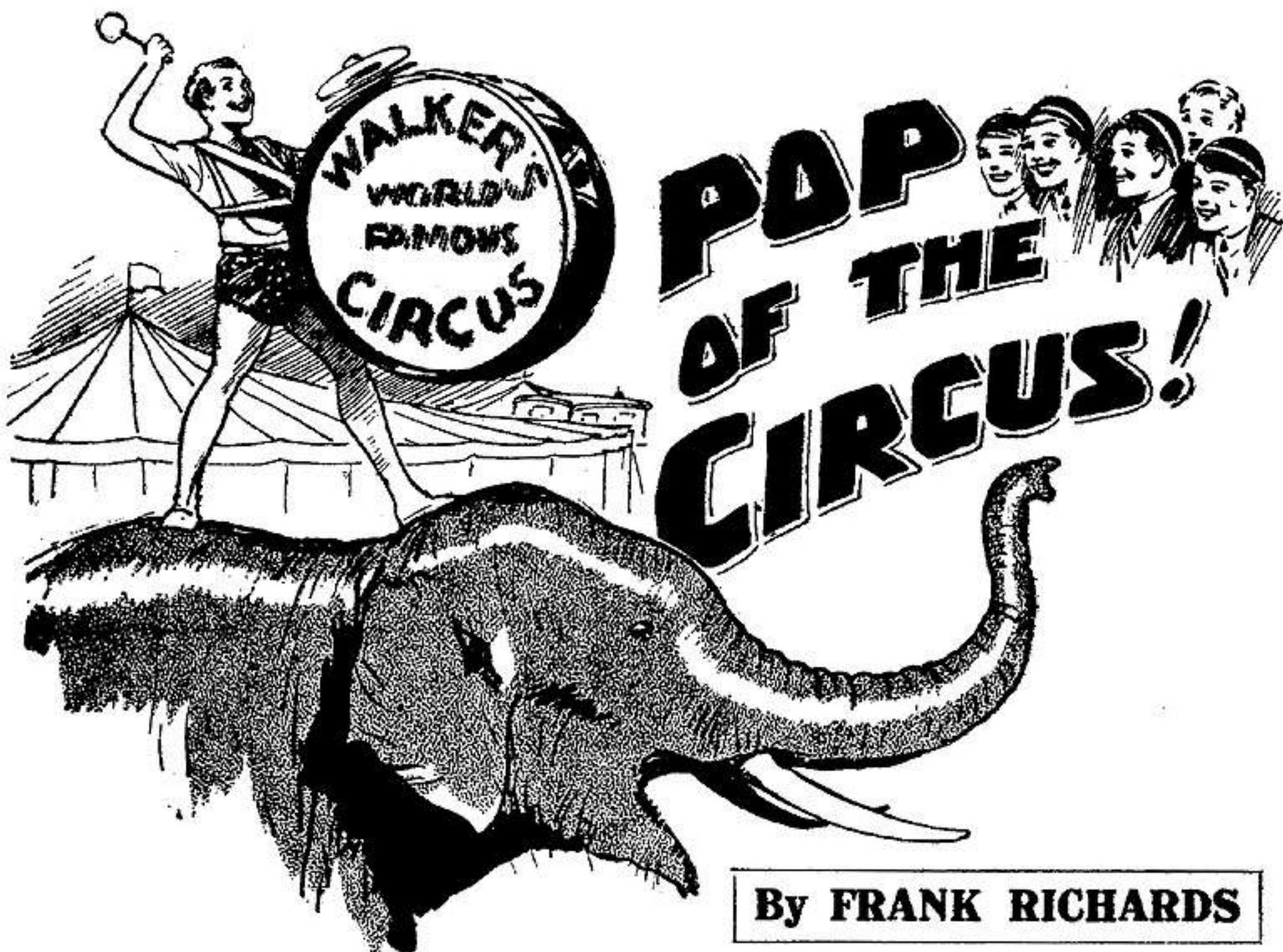
Week Ending June 21st, 1930.

The MAGNET²

EVERY SATURDAY.



THE SCHOOLBOY ACROBAT!



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bunter Knows What!

"I'VE got an idea!"

Billy Bunter made that startling announcement.

Harry Wharton & Co. were gathered in the hall at Wharton Lodge, discussing what was to be done with the day. The Famous Five of Greyfriars were enjoying their holiday, in spite of the fact that William George Bunter was a member of the party.

Bunter rolled out of the breakfast-room and joined them. Bunter was down early that morning—early for Bunter. It was only half-past nine; and Bunter had already breakfasted.

Apparently Bunter had been thinking while he packed away the foodstuffs. He announced, in a most impressive tone, that he had an idea, and seemed to expect the Famous Five to sit up and take notice immediately.

They didn't.

Bob Cherry was speaking, and he went on speaking, just as if Billy Bunter and his ideas were trifles light as air.

"What about a jolly old walk?" Bob was saying. "It's a lovely morning—couldn't be better. A dozen miles on the downs—"

"I say, you fellows!"

"Bunter couldn't do a dozen miles!" said Harry Wharton. "A dozen yards is nearer his mark."

"Oh, blow Bunter!" said Bob.

"I say, you fellows!" bawled Bunter. Bob glanced round.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is! Feel up to a dozen miles on the Surrey hills, Bunter?"

"No, you ass! I've got an idea—"

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"Gammön!"

"I've got a ripping idea for the day."

"Where on earth did you get an idea, Bunter?" inquired Frank Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent! I thought it out over brekker."

"What with?" inquired Johnny Bull.

"Oh, don't be an ass! I've got a stunning idea!" said Bunter impressively. "You fellows needn't jaw—I've settled what we're going to do to-day."

"Well, what is it, Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton, in a tone of patient resignation.

As host it was up to Wharton to be polite and patient; but the other four members of the Co. did not look very patient. They had no use for Billy Bunter's ideas, and very little for Billy Bunter.

"Oh, get it off your chest!" said Bob. "How do you want to spend the day? Eating, sleeping, or jawing?"

It was a natural question; for Bunter's activities, as a rule, were like ancient Gaul, divided into three parts—and those were the three parts.

"Nothing of the sort, you ass!"

"Oh, my hat! You're not thinking of a spread?"

"No!" snapped Bunter.

"Wonders will never cease! You're not thinking of a snooze?"

"No, you fathead!"

"Great pip! Or of wagging your fat chin?"

"Look here—"

"Well, we'd better hear this!" said Bob. "Bunter's thought of a fourth way of killing time. This beats jolly old Einstein's fourth dimension."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you give a fellow a chance to speak?" hooted Bunter. "Blessed if I

ever saw such fellows for jawing! Look here, I've got a ripping idea—a really stunning wheeze!"

"Expound!" said Frank Nugent.

"The esteemed expoundfulness is the proper caper, my absurd Bunter!" said Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "And the cutfulness short would be a preposterous boonful blessing."

"Shut up, Inky! Now," said Bunter, blinking at the Famous Five through his big spectacles, "we're on holiday here for some days."

"We knew that!" remarked Johnny Bull. "If that's all you've got to tell us—"

"We're a long way from Greyfriars now," said Bunter, unheeding. "No beastly Form masters or rotten prefects knocking about. The fact is, we can do as we jolly well like."

"Oh!" said Wharton, looking very curiously at the Owl of the Remove.

This exordium seemed to hint that Bunter's idea involved some proceedings which would have caused the chopper to come down had the juniors been at school.

"Cough it up!" said Bob. "We're wasting time, you know."

"Lots of time!" said Bunter. "They don't begin before one-thirty. I've looked it out in the paper."

"Who don't begin what?" asked Bob.

"I'll tell you, if you'll shut up a minute and give a fellow a chance to get in a word edgewise. As I said, we're on holiday now, and we can do as we jolly well like. Nobody to chip in. I suppose your uncle knows how to mind his own business, Wharton?"

Harry Wharton frowned.

"I don't know what you've got in your fat head, Bunter," he said, "but you can take it that my uncle won't

allow anything that isn't allowed at Greyfriars. What the thump are you driving at, anyhow?"

"Well, we needn't mention it to him," said Bunter. "Least said soonest mended, as he's a fussy old donkey!"

"What?"

"A fussy old donkey! Whitebridge is about ten miles from here," went on Bunter. "An easy run in a car. We can lunch early. I suppose we can have the car this afternoon, Wharton?"

"Supposer out of gear," answered Wharton. "My uncle's using the car this afternoon."

Billy Bunter sniffed.

"If I were at home, at Bunter Court, I should have the choice of half a dozen cars!" he grunted.

"Then why not beat it for Bunter Court?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as if struck by a brilliant idea. "That's the real goods! We'll walk down to the station with you and see you off."

"Pleased!" said Nugent.

"The pleasefulness would be terrific."

"Hear, hear!"

There was a chorus of approval from four members of the Co. Harry Wharton did not join in it. As host he did not feel at liberty to say what he thought.

"Oh, don't talk piffle!" said Bunter irritably. "I suppose we can do without the car. There'll be a train to Whitebridge. You can look out the trains, Wharton. All right so long as we turn up in time for the first race."

"The first whatter?" howled Bob Cherry.

"I suppose you've heard of the Whitebridge Races!" snapped Bunter.

"Oh, my hat!"

"They begin to-day," said Bunter. "Three days, you know—and the first race is at one-thirty to-day. I've picked out a horse."

"You—you—you've picked out a horse?"

"Yes. I rather fancy he will win," said Bunter. "That will set me up. If I get five to one in quids, you know, and bring it off—"

"Great pip!"

"You can lend me the quid, Wharton!"

"Thanks!"

"I'll settle that to-morrow. I'm expecting a postal-order, as I think I mentioned to you."

"My only hat!" said Bob Cherry blankly. "Is that the big idea? We're to go to the races and back geogees? Oh, my only summer bonnet!"

"You see, on holiday we get a chance," said Bunter. "We couldn't do this at Greyfriars. This extra holiday in term time gives us a chance."

"I should jolly well think we couldn't!" gasped Nugent. "You fat, frabjous fathead!"

"You howling ass!"

"Oh, don't jaw!" said Bunter.

"What are you afraid of? Think Quelchy is likely to drop on us? We needn't bother about masters. No need to say a word to Wharton's silly uncle. I dare say he wouldn't like the idea, being an old fossil. We keep it to ourselves, see? I fancy I shall do rather well on the races. I shall use what I win on the first race, as capital, and back my fancy right through the list. I may come back with fifty pounds in my pocket. You fellows needn't bet—you haven't my judgment in such matters. You can look on. But I can tell you, I'm jolly well going to make the fur fly."

The Famous Five gazed at Bunter.

"There's one thing you've left out of

consideration," said Harry Wharton mildly.

"What's that?"

"That we're not going to the races."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Now Bunter's said his piece, we may as well get out for a walk!" suggested Bob Cherry.

"Hear, hear!"

"I say, you fellows—"

roared Bunter.

"Coming, Bunter?" called out Bob, from the doorway. "A dozen miles on the downs will bring down your fat. You can spare a ton or two."

"Beast! I tell you—"

"Catch us up, Bunter, if you'd like a walk," said Harry Wharton.

"Look here—"

The Famous Five started. The ripping, stunning idea propounded by Billy Bunter did not seem to appeal to them, somehow.

Bunter rushed to the door, and glared after them with a glare that almost cracked his spectacles.

"I say, you fellows—"

he yelled.

The fellows walked on.

"Beasts!"

The beasts disappeared in the distance.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Raising the Wind!

"WELLS!"

"Sir!" said Wells.

Billy Bunter blinked at the Wharton Lodge butler. Wells' manner was perfectly respectful; as, of course, it should have been

King of the Trapeze in Walker's Circus . . . yet only a "blessed new kid" at Greyfriars!

towards so lofty and important a personage as William George Bunter. And yet somehow there was a look in Wells' eye that Bunter did not like, and never had liked. He had a feeling that, inwardly, Wells did not respect him so profoundly as a butler ought to have done. Bunter rather prided himself on a way he had of keeping servants in their place, and putting them back into it promptly, if they showed any sign of getting out of it. This, in Bunter's opinion, should have made them respect him all the more. But perhaps it didn't!

"I shall want lunch early, Wells!" said Bunter haughtily.

"Indeed, sir."

"I've got to leave at twelve-thirty."

"Very good, sir!"

"See to it, Wells!" said Bunter, in such a manner as Nero might have adopted when he remarked: "See to it, Tigellinus!"

"Very good, sir!"

"And, Wells—"

added Bunter, rather less haughtily, as Wells was about to retreat. "Hold on, Wells!"

Wells held on.

"I don't seem to have received a letter I was expecting this morning, Wells," said Bunter, blinking at him.

"No, sir?"

"A rather important letter," said Bunter.

"Indeed, sir!"

"Containing a remittance—a rather large remittance!" pursued Bunter.

Wells made no rejoinder. He waited to go.

"This puts me in rather an unfortunate position, Wells," said Bunter.

"Indeed, sir!"

"My friends may not be back before I start, you see!" explained Bunter.

Wells thought that very probable, if the juniors knew that Bunter was starting for anywhere.

"So you see how I'm placed," said Bunter. "It may seem extraordinary to you, Wells, but at the present moment, I am actually short of cash."

Wells shook his head; whether to express sympathy, or to deny that it seemed extraordinary to him, cannot be said.

"Now I'm going to do you a favour, Wells," said Bunter.

"You are very kind, sir!"

"Not at all! Borrowing money of servants is not, as a rule, a thing I should approve of," said Bunter. "But in the present circumstances, I'm going to allow you to lend me a pound note, Wells."

"You honour me, sir!" said Wells gravely.

"Well, yes," admitted Bunter. "That's so! But you're a good servant, Wells, and not likely to get cheeky because I treat you as a friend. The fact is, I really want a pound this morning."

Bunter held out a fat hand.

Wells gazed at it. Perhaps he noticed that it needed a wash; but if so, he did not remark on that.

"I will speak to the master, sir," said Wells suavely.

Bunter started.

"What?"

"And with Colonel Wharton's permission—"

"You silly ass!" gasped Bunter.

"That benighted old fossil would be down on a fellow like a ton of bricks for borrowing money from servants. Don't be a fool, Wells!"

"I fear, sir, that without the master's permission—"

said Wells urbanely.

"Look here, Wells—"

"I will speak to the master immediately, sir—"

"Don't do anything of the sort, you fathead!" hissed Bunter.

"Then I am afraid, sir, that it will be impossible—"

"Oh, get out!" said Bunter.

Wells got out. He smiled as he got out.

"Beast!" murmured Bunter. "He jolly well doesn't want to lend me a pound—that's what it means. Blessed if I know what the lower classes are coming to! My hat! That old fossilised colonel would kick me out of the house if he knew I'd been borrowing from the servants. I'll bet that beast Wells knows that! But I've got to raise the wind."

Bunter's fat brows wrinkled over that problem.

Harry Wharton & Co. had turned down the big idea. But Bunter was sticking to it. He was going to the races, where he hoped to make something like a small fortune. All you needed to do to win money on races was to pick out the horse that was going to win and back him. This certainly required uncommon judgment and perspicacity, but that was all right. Bunter had uncommon judgment and perspicacity.

A chance like this, Bunter considered, was not to be missed. It was a thing that couldn't be done in term time without the risk of getting sacked. So it was a stroke of sheer luck that Whitebridge races were held while Bunter was at Wharton Lodge on that extra-special holiday.

Only the question of ways and means had to be settled. Bunter's cash resources were limited to sixpence, and this, unfortunately, was a bad sixpence.

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Even had it been a good one, it was scarcely a sufficient sum for punting on the races.

Wells had been drawn blank. Billy Bunter made up his mind to try the colonel. Harry Wharton & Co., having turned down the big idea, were not likely to lend him any money to carry it out. Besides, they were beasts enough to stay out till after he had started. Colonel Wharton, it was true, was not a promising subject. Bunter always felt a little uneasy under the old military gentleman's clear, steady, grey eyes. But it was a case of any port in a storm; and, after all, the colonel was bound to be sympathetic when he heard that a fellow had been disappointed about a remittance, if he had any sympathy in his nature at all.

Colonel Wharton was in the library, engaged with two or three local gentlemen on some matter of local importance. It was probable that he would not care to be interrupted; but that, of course, was a trifle, in the circumstances. Billy Bunter rolled away to the library, opened the door, and blinked in. Agricultural depression, and the question of dumped imports, were going strong in the library; and Colonel Wharton, glancing round at the door, fixed his eye on Bunter in a most discouraging way.

"Do you want anything, Bunter?" he asked, in a very pointed way.

"Yes, sir," said Bunter. "I'd like to speak to you."

"Another time," said the colonel.

"It's rather important, sir—"

"What?"

"In fact, very important," said Bunter, blinking at him. "You see—"

"I am occupied now, Bunter."

"Yes, I know," assented Bunter.

"You see, sir, this is how it is—"

"Leave the room, please."

"Eh?"

"And shut the door."

"Oh!"

Bunter left the room and shut the door. The look in the colonel's eyes was quite disagreeable.

"Beast!" murmured Bunter.

The colonel had been drawn blank. But Bunter had another resource. He rolled away in search of Miss Wharton. The colonel's sister was a kind old lady, not at all like her dashed old ram-rod of a brother. And she was "soft." Bunter knew she was soft, because she spent a lot of time knitting things for the poor of the village.

He found Aunt Amy in a sunny morning-room, and she was knitting, as he expected. The wool alone, Bunter reflected rather bitterly, must have cost as much as he wanted for a flutter on the races; and Miss Wharton was wasting it on the poor. She gave Bunter a kind smile. Even Billy Bunter had not exhausted Aunt Amy's patient kindness of heart.

Bunter sat down. The sight of Aunt Amy's charitable labours had put an idea into his fat mind.

"I've been disappointed about a letter I expected this morning," he remarked.

Aunt Amy expressed sympathy.

"There was going to be a pound note in it," Bunter added.

Aunt Amy expressed sympathy a second time.

Sympathy was all very well, and gratifying in its way; but it was not exactly what Bunter wanted.

"That poor man!" he sighed.

Aunt Amy looked up inquiringly.

"I was going to give it to a poor blind man!" explained Bunter.

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"Dear me!" said Miss Wharton. "That was very generous of you!"

"Well, I am generous, you know," said Bunter. "It's always been my weakness."

"Oh!"

"Now I shan't be able to," sighed Bunter. "That is, unless somebody lends me the pound till I get my postal-order."

"My dear boy," said Miss Wharton, "if this poor blind man is in need of assistance, he must be given assistance. But you must not give away money thoughtlessly. You might be imposed upon. What is his name?"

"His—his name?"

"Yes. Does he belong to our village?"

"I—I think—not!" gasped Bunter. "N-n-no! Not to the village! No! I—I forget his name."

"Where is he at the present moment?"

"I—I forget."

"Then you could hardly give him the pound, if you had received it as you expected," said Aunt Amy, with a smile.

Bunter made no reply. He wondered whether this old lady was as soft as he supposed. Her pink old face looked quite innocent.

He decided to "chuck" the blind man. It had seemed like a good opening; but Aunt Amy wanted to know too much.

"I wish Wharton hadn't gone out in such a hurry!" said Bunter, beginning on a new tack.

"Has Harry gone out?"

"Yes; and so I can't ask him for the pound I lent him—"

Miss Wharton looked very serious.

"I did not know that Harry borrowed money," she said. "That is a very bad habit to form."

"Well, a chap doesn't like to dun a chap for a loan," said Bunter. "I dare say Harry's forgotten it; and I'm not the fellow to remind him. I don't mind losing the pound, really."

"Nonsense!" said Miss Wharton; and for a moment she looked like her brother. "I will return you the money now, and speak to Harry about it."

"Oh, no, don't do that!" gasped Bunter. "No need to mention it to Harry, you know."

Miss Wharton looked round for her purse, discovered it, fished in it, and produced a pound note. Billy Bunter's fat fingers closed on it eagerly. After all, it didn't matter if she did mention it to Wharton. Bunter would be gone before she saw Harry and mentioned it. Probably Wharton would be waxy. But they weren't in the Remove passage at Greyfriars now; and a fellow could hardly kick a fellow who was a guest under his roof. Anyhow, Bunter was now supplied with cash; and that, after all, was the important matter.

He left Miss Wharton quite abruptly. He had no further use for that kind old soul.

Harry Wharton & Co. had not returned when Bunter lunched early, on his lonely own, and started for the station. His ticket to Whitebridge left him seventeen-and-six out of Miss Wharton's pound note. It was not a large sum; but Bunter knew how to increase it. If he got five to one on a winner, he would turn ten shillings into two-pounds-ten on the first race. With that capital to work with, the same odds on the second race would turn the sum into twelve pounds ten shillings. There were six races in all; and if his judgment held good, and he had no doubt

that it would, he would be the possessor of an enormous sum by the time the racing was over—probably several hundred pounds.

It was a very pleasant prospect; and Bunter pictured himself rolling home in a car, with his pockets bulging with banknotes. Those beasts would be rather sorry that they hadn't joined up when he flourished a handful of fivers and tenners under their envious noses.

Billy Bunter's fat face wore a cheery smile as the train carried him on to Whitebridge. He was already, in his fat mind, spending those fivers and tenners. It was one of Bunter's ways to count his chickens long before hatching-time.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Peculiar Pair!

"POP!"

Harry Wharton & Co. really could not help taking notice.

The Famous Five were sauntering cheerily along a shady lane a few miles from Wharton Lodge in the direction of Whitebridge. They were thinking of heading homeward for lunch when they came on this rather curious scene.

The lane was a rather solitary one. It was a short cut to the Whitebridge road, seldom used by cars; for it was narrow and winding, and, except at certain spots, there was no room for two cars to pass one another. At one of the winding turns of the lane they sighted a little two-seater, with its nose plunged deep into the fern and bracken in a wide, dry ditch. Evidently that little car had come to grief at the turn. It did not look damaged; but it was undoubtedly stuck in the mud.

That was not surprising; what was surprising was the peculiar conduct of the motorist. He was a short, fat gentleman, with an almost purple face, a crimson waistcoat, and a bowler hat on one side of his head. He stood by the tilted car and shouted:

"Pop!"

If he had shouted "Help!" it would have been more explicable. But why a man should stand and shout "Pop!" at the top of his voice was rather mysterious.

"Pop!" roared the purple-complexioned gentleman, with all the force of his lungs. "Pop! Pop!"

"My only hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Is that sportsman off his rocker, I wonder?" remarked Johnny Bull.

"Pop!" roared the stout gentleman. "Pop!"

"The popfulness is terrific!" observed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The pottiffulness seems also to be preposterous."

The juniors paused in their walk. They regarded the purple gentleman with respectful interest. He did not observe their approach, as he was turned broadside to them. He gasped for breath after his vocal efforts, and then, with renewed energy, yelled:

"Pop! Pop! Pop!"

It really was surprising. The woodland that bordered the lane echoed: "Pop! Pop!"

The stout gentleman drew a red handkerchief, adorned with yellow spots, from his pocket and mopped his heated brow. Then he roared again:

"Pop! Pop! Pop!"

He looked rather excited, but not insane. But his vocal efforts were really hard to account for.

"We could help him get that crystal

set out of the ditch," remarked Bob Cherry. "I dare say that's what he wants. It's a Buster Seven; and we could shift it for him."

"The good-turnfulness is the esteemed proper caper," remarked Hurree Singh.

"Pop!" roared the stout man. "Pop! Oh, strike me pink! Pop! Pop!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry genially; and the stout man looked round and saw the Greyfriars fellows.

He seemed pleased to see them. No doubt they were the first passers-by since his Buster Seven had headed into the ditch.

"Here, hold on, young gents!" he gasped. "You'll lend a man a hand—what? Look how I'm fixed!"

"We'll lend you a hand with pleasure," said Harry Wharton, with a smile; "in fact, five pairs of hands. We'll soon have her out of the ditch."

"She ain't easy to shift," said the purple gentleman. "She's fair rooted. I missed the turning, and in she went. These're crooked lanes—strike me pink!" He mopped his brow with the red handkerchief. "But if you young gents will help we'll have her out. But we'd better wait for Pop, if you ain't in a hurry."

"Wait for Pop!" repeated Wharton.

And the purple gentleman roared again:

"Pop! Pop! Pop! Pop!"

Echo answered "Pop!" The Famous Five gazed at the stout gentleman. He mopped his brow again and looked at them amicably.

"Thank you kindly, young gents," he said. "Here I am, rooted—and got to get to Whitebridge. I got business there."

He mopped his brow again. "I been stuck here half an hour," he went on. "Nobody seems to live in these parts. Might as well be in the middle of a dessit. Don't seem to be even a man working in the fields. Pop's gone to look for help. He ain't found any."

"Oh!" ejaculated Wharton; and it dawned on the schoolboys that "Pop" was the name of some companion of this stout gentleman—a very peculiar name, undoubtedly. "That was why he was shouting 'Pop!'" The mystery was elucidated.

"Leaving me here all this time!" grunted the stout gentleman. "If the young ass'd come back we'd have a try on our own to shift her. I can't wait here all day. Lunch waiting at the Bunch o' Grapes, too. And I'm that thirsty!"

To judge by his complexion the stout gentleman was often thirsty, and often quenched his thirst.

"Name of Walker," he said affably—"Jimmy Walker's World Renowned, you know."

The juniors smiled, wondering what "Walker's World Renowned" might be.

"Pop!" shouted Mr. Walker again. "Pop! Pop! Pop!"

There was an answer from the distance at last, and a sound of rustling among the brambles.

"Ere, old Jimmy!" called back a voice.

"You young rip!" hooted Mr. Walker. "Ere I been waiting for you,



"I'm going to do you a favour, Wells," said Bunter. "I'm going to allow you to lend me a pound note." "You honour me, sir!" said the butler.

and a-shouting arter you, till I near burst my crop."

"I ain't found anybody!" came the voice again. "We won't never get the bus out of that ditch, old Jimmy."

"You come along, Pop!" snorted Mr. Walker. "Here's five young gentlemen jest come along, and all offering to 'elp!"

"Prime!" answered the voice of the unseen Pop.

The brambles by the lane swayed as Pop came through and dropped into the road. Harry Wharton & Co. looked at him rather curiously. They naturally expected to see some youth after the style of Mr. Walker—perhaps a son of that gentleman. So his appearance rather surprised them. He was a slim, well-formed lad between fourteen and fifteen, well-dressed, with a clear complexion and regular features, and a well-shaped, rather aquiline nose. His manner of speaking had been like Mr. Walker's, but in looks he was nothing whatever like that gentleman. Oddest of all, there was some elusive familiarity in his features, though he certainly was a stranger to the Greyfriars fellows, and they had never seen him before.

He gave Mr. Walker a slap on a fat shoulder as he rejoined him, and then glanced at the Greyfriars fellows with a cheery grin.

"You going to lend a 'and?" he asked.

"Certainly," answered Harry. "We'll be very glad to give any help we can."

The boy gave him a second look. "That's very kind of you," he said in quite a different voice. "I'm sure we're both very much obliged."

Wharton could not help opening his eyes a little.

Pop had spoken first in the same kind of English as Mr. Walker. Now he

spoke quite nicely, in good English with an excellent intonation.

His new manner of speaking was much more in accord with his appearance. But it was rather perplexing.

However, that was no business of the Greyfriars fellows, and now that Pop was on the scene, ready to help, the matter of shifting the car was proceeded with.

Small and light as it was, it had been beyond the powers of Mr. Walker and his peculiar companion to get it out of the ditch. But with five pairs of willing hands to help, the Buster Seven shifted promptly.

With a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull all together the seven of them shifted the Buster out of the ditch and got her into the road again.

"That's better!" said Jimmy Walker, mopping his brow.

"Prime," said Pop, relapsing into his first manner. "Spiffing! Don't you pitch her over again, old Jimmy."

"I wouldn't 'ave pitched her over if that blinking cow hadn't come along the lane!" protested Mr. Walker. "I had to miss the cow."

"You wouldn't 'ave pitched her over if you'd let that blooming flask of yours alone, you mean, Jimmy!"

"Look 'ere, Pop—"

"Well, you look 'ere, old Jimmy—"

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged smiles.

"Anything more we can do to help?" asked the captain of the Greyfriars.

Remove politely.

"Not a thing, thanks!" said Mr. Walker. "And I'm obliged to you, sir. You're a good lad, you are. So's your friends—good lads all! Strike me pink! Thank the gentleman, Pop!"

"That's all right!" said Harry, smiling. "Glad to help!"

"The gladfulness was terrific, my esteemed friend," remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "As the English proverb says, 'Many hands make light of the cracked pitcher that is better than a bird in the bush!'"

Mr. Walker and Pop both gazed at the nabob.

"My eye!" said Mr. Walker involuntarily, apparently a little overcome by the dusky schoolboy's flow of English.

"Come on, Inky!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"We are both very much obliged to you, gentlemen," said Pop, in his careful English again. "You have helped us out of a very unpleasant scrape."

"Ear him!" said Mr. Walker confidentially to the schoolboys. "Ear him! I couldn't talk like that to save my life—I couldn't."

"Shut up, old Jimmy!" said Pop.

"You young limb," said old Jimmy affectionately.

"See if the engine's all right, you old image, you!" said Pop. "I dessey you've busted her!"

"She's all right!" said Mr. Walker. "She ain't took no 'arm. If it hadn't been for that cow—"

"That flask, you mean, you old fat-head," said Pop.

"Look 'ere—"

"Well, you look 'ere—"

The difference between Master Pop's two methods of using the English language was striking and remarkable. But he seemed to recollect himself, and turned to the juniors again.

"Thank you very much for your kind assistance," he said. "It was really sporting of you."

"Not at all!" said Harry.

"Ear him!" said Mr. Walker enthusiastically. "That's how he talks since they tooter'd him! And very proper, too, him being a baronet's nevy! Which you'd never guess, seeing him along of me."

"Cheese it, you talkative old parrot, you," said Pop, "and let's get on. I dessey old Jawbones ain't a long way be'ind us!"

"Oh, my eye!" said Mr. Walker.

And he busied himself with the car at once, apparently alarmed by the suggestion that "old Jawbones," whoever that individual might be, was not a long way behind.

Harry Wharton & Co. walked on.

They heard the car start up, and Pop ejaculated "Prime!" They smiled as they went on their way.

"Well," said Bob Cherry, "that's a jolly queer family to drop on, you fellows."

"The queerfulness is terrific."

There was no doubt that it was queer. Mr. Walker and Pop were undoubtedly a peculiar pair. By the time they reached Wharton Lodge, however, the chums of Greyfriars had almost forgotten the episode. It did not occur to their minds that they were ever likely to see Pop again.

But, as a novelist would have put it, they little knew!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Just Like Bunter!

BILLY BUNTER halted.

He had walked a quarter of a mile since leaving the train, and he was nearing his destination now.

The day was warm, and Bunter was tired.

But it was not only fatigue that caused him to halt. The shady trees in

the garden of the wayside inn, and the little tables under the shady branches, looked tempting. Bunter was thirsty, and the thought of a stone ginger was grateful and comforting. Also, as his lunch was now far behind, he felt that he could do with a snack—some trifle in the way of cakes and buns and things.

He hesitated.

Being in possession of a capital of seventeen shillings and sixpence, with which, added to his judgment and keen perspicacity, he was going to make a small fortune, Bunter realised that this was a time for business, not for pleasure.

But it is well said that he who hesitates is lost.

Bunter rolled into the inn garden.

After all, he needed a pick-me-up. He had had a beastly slow journey in a slow train, and he had walked a quarter of a mile in the hot sun. He resolved to limit himself to one ginger and one cake. Bunter often made good resolutions like that, but carrying them out was quite another matter.

He grunted with satisfaction as he sat down in the shade of a tree at a little table. There were two or three other customers in the inn garden, but business did not seem very brisk. Bunter made it brisker.

He soon made the discovery that he was hungrier than he had supposed. He was also thirstier. Another discovery was that the comestibles provided at the Bunch of Grapes were very nice and palatable. There were ices, too, and ices on a warm day were agreeable. Bunter kept the waiter quite busy for some time.

The waiter was very attentive to Bunter. Perhaps he was glad to see so good a customer, and perhaps he was interested to know where Bunter was putting all these light refreshments.

Certainly they disappeared at a record rate.

It was characteristic of William George Bunter, that when he was satisfying the demands of the inner Bunter he forgot time and space and everything else.

That his bill was mounting up he knew, of course; but only in the back of his mind, as it were. More important considerations occupied his attention.

He was sipping his seventh ice, in the intervals of munching his eleventh cake, when two persons came out of the inn, and sat down at the table next to him.

Bunter blinked at them.

One was a short, stout gentleman with a purple complexion. The other was a fellow of about Bunter's own age, who looked oddly out of place in company with the purple gentleman.

Apparently they had lunched at the inn, and the stout gentleman had come into the garden to smoke an after-lunch cigar, while his youthful companion disposed of ginger-beer.

Bunter beckoned to the waiter for his bill with an inward misgiving. How much he had consumed, of the various comestibles, he hardly knew; but he was aware that the total was large. He hardly dared to blink at the slip of paper that the waiter laid on the table. But he did blink at it, and a shiver ran through him as he saw that the total was fourteen shillings.

Certainly he had consumed fourteen shillings' worth of tuck. He had enjoyed it. But after the feast came the reckoning, and the reckoning was dismaying.

"Bring me another ice!" gasped Bunter.

That was to gain time.

Fourteen shillings deducted from seventeen-and-six left three shillings and sixpence. Bunter was not good at arithmetic, but he could do that in his head.

With a total capital of three shillings and sixpence it was impossible for a punter to make a small fortune on the race, even had it been possible with a larger capital, which was, perhaps, doubtful.

Very slowly indeed Bunter consumed his additional ice.

He debated in his fat mind whether it was any use to tell the waiter that he would call in on his way back and pay that bill.

That, of course, would be easy, out of the enormous sums he was going to make on the races.

But he shook his head.

Human nature was distrustful. He would not be trusted out of sight without paying his bill. He felt that.

Indeed, the bare suggestion would be enough to make the waiter keep a very sharp eye on him, and see that he did not get away without paying.

Either he had to pay or he had to use strategy. Bunter, of course, was not dishonest. He would not have dreamed of "bilking" the waiter. All he desired was to leave the account over till later—perhaps considerably later—and then, of course, he would pay it. As the waiter was certain not to agree to that arrangement, it had to be carried into effect without consulting him—if possible. Strategy was indicated.

Just as if the waiter was a thought-reader, he seemed to hover round Bunter's table. Bunter sent him for another ice, to get rid of him. He had to have time to think this thing out. It added to his bill, of course; but that could not be helped. A fellow might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb, and the ices were undoubtedly good. With this problem occupying his fat mind, Bunter was a little irritated by the conversation that impinged upon his fat ears from the next table. But he listened to it, all the same. It was Bunter's way to give ear to everything that did not concern him.

"We dodged Jawbones all right," the boy was saying.

"We 'ave that, Pop!" answered the purple gentleman, who was the centre of a smoke-cloud now. "But there'll be a row."

"Blow the row!" said Pop. "I'm always having rows with Jawbones. I'm a good mind to chuck the 'ole business, Jimmy Walker, and come back to you for good."

"And wouldn't I like it, Pop!" said Jimmy. "I tell you, I miss you, Pop! But it wouldn't do."

"Why wouldn't it?" grunted Pop.

"You got your future to think of," said Jimmy Walker sagely, "and your uncle would be waxy."

Pop grunted.

"He don't care a brass button about me," he said.

"But he's took you up, Pop."

"Only because he's bound to," grunted Pop. "He never took me up before, did he? He knowed well enough that I needed looking after when I was a little nipper, and he took no notice. Now it's different. I don't want to go to school, Jimmy."

"It'll be for your good, Pop."

Grunt from Pop.

"Look what the tooter covey has done for you already!" said Mr. Walker. "You talk like a gentleman now, Pop, when you choose."

"I'm fed-up with Jawbones!" said Pop.

"Don't you let Mr. Clegg 'ear you

call him Jawbones, Pop!" said Mr. Walker warningly. "He would be wild."

"Let 'im!" grunted Pop. "We're 'aving a day together, like we used," said Mr. Walker. "I'm feared there'll be a row when you get back; but we're 'aving a nice day. Mebbe we'll 'ave another some time. You think Mr. Clegg came arter you?"

"Certain." "Well, he ain't likely to find you," said Mr. Walker; "and when you go back you'll apologise 'andsome. You can't do less, being a gentleman and a baronet's nephew."

Billy Bunter blinked at Pop. The two were talking, quite heedless of the curious ears within a few feet of them.

"Oh my!" exclaimed Pop suddenly. "What?"

"Look!" said the boy. His eyes were fixed on a car that had stopped before the inn. From the car a tall, thin gentleman descended.

"Oh, my eye!" ejaculated Mr. Walker, as he followed Pop's dismayed stare.

"Old Jawbones!" breathed Pop. "It's Mr. Clegg!" said Jimmy Walker. "It's your tooter, Pop! Now you'll 'ave to 'op it."

Billy Bunter, deeply interested, blinked across the garden at the gentleman who had descended from the car. He was a very spare man, with gold-rimmed pince-nez perched on a thin nose, and Bunter would have guessed that he was something in the school-master line. Apparently he was the tutor of the youthful companion of the fat man. Which was a curious state of affairs, and very interesting to Bunter. Indeed, in his deep interest in what did not concern him in the very least, Billy Bunter had almost forgotten his own pressing problem.

The thin gentleman disappeared into the inn. "He ain't spotted us 'ere, Jimmy!" said Pop hopefully.

"The game's up, Pop!" answered Mr. Walker. "You rely on it he's making inquiries arter you all along the blooming road; and he'll be out 'ere arter you in two jiffies!"

"Look here, Jimmy, I ain't going back with him," said Pop. Mr. Walker shook his head.

"Better!" he said. "You don't want trouble with him; nor with the old bloke, neither. You'll 'ave to 'op it, Pop, now you're spotted."

"I ain't spotted yet," said Pop; "and I'm going to get out of sight till he's gone on."

The boy rose from the table and backed quietly through the trees and slipped behind a bank of laurels at a little distance. He was only in time; for a minute later the thin gentleman came out of the inn, blinked round him over his pince-nez, and started through the garden directly for the spot where the dismayed Mr. Walker still sat at the little table.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Strategic!

"ANOTHER ice!" said Bunter. "Yessir." The waiter departed slowly.

It seemed to Bunter that he could read suspicion in the man's eyes.

Possibly the waiter had had to deal with "bilks" before. No doubt Bunter was not the first patron of the refreshment garden of the Bunch of Grapes who had had reasons for departing suddenly and silently just before the bill was presented.

Bunter had had his bill. Since then he had had two more ices, which increased the total to fifteen shillings. This, it was clear, did not leave enough out of seventeen-and-six for a flutter on the races. Bunter's idea was to depart without a fuss while the waiter was gone for another ice. Later on he would come back and settle, and he hoped the man would be properly ashamed of his base and unfounded suspicions.

The fat junior rose to his feet. He saw nothing of the waiter. The thin gentleman, whom Pop called Jawbones and whom Mr. Walker alluded to as Mr. Clegg, was approaching the spot, but Bunter gave him no heed now.

In other circumstances certainly Bunter would have liked to see the end of the strange affair; now time pressed.

HALT HERE, LADS, FOR A LAUGH!



Tommy: "Mummy says she doesn't want this jam; it's all stalks."

Shopkeeper: "Well, sonny, you just run back and tell her that it distinctly says on the jar, 'Branches everywhere'!"

H. Mills, of 8, Daimler Cottages, Cronin Road, Peckham, S.E.15, who sent in the above rousing rib-tickler has been awarded one of this week's useful penknives.

Jet down that funny story while you think of it. If it raises a smile you'll get a prize!

That keen, appraising look in the waiter's eye had warned Bunter that he could not gain time indefinitely by sending the man for ice after ice.

Bunter lounged away with an air of casual carelessness. His air was, indeed, so extraordinarily casual and careless that it caused several people at the other little tables to glance at him.

Worst of all, the waiter's eye was on him. That suspicious and wily man, just as if he had expected some move of this sort, had not gone for the ice; he had stopped behind a tree. Bunter, of course, was not prepared for that. His fat mind was too full of his own strategic plans to think of strategy on the part of others.

It was very unfortunate. Bunter had noticed that a shady little path ran behind a big bank of laurel-bushes, and that seemed a quiet and unostentatious way out. He strolled casually and carelessly in that direction, when a voice behind him almost froze his blood.

"Excuse me, sir, you've forgotten your bill."

Bunter's fat heart jumped.

He had quite a horrible feeling as he blinked round and saw the waiter almost at his elbow.

There was quite a cynical expression on the waiter's face.

It was obviously quite useless to explain to him that Bunter had intended to call later and settle the account.

For a second Bunter paused. Then he ran for it.

With a speed that was remarkable, considering the weight he had to carry, Bunter bolted past the laurels and rushed down the path.

Crash! Bump!

"Oh my!" gasped a voice. "Yaroooogh!" roared Bunter.

Apparently he had run into somebody.

That somebody sprawled on the earth, gasping and spluttering; and Bunter sat down heavily.

"Oh! Ooooh! Yooooop!" gasped Bunter.

"You fat idjit!" gasped Pop. "You silly chump! What you mean barging into a bloke like that there?"

"Ow! Grooogh!" "Oh my! Ow!"

Pop staggered to his feet. He had been lying low behind the laurels when Bunter, charging blindly down the path, unexpectedly crashed into him and sent him flying.

"Cecil!"

Pop stared round in dismay. He was in full view now of the thin gentleman—Mr. Clegg, alias Jawbones. Cecil, it appeared, was Pop's other name.

"Oh my!" gasped Pop. Mr. Clegg, changing his direction, came swiftly towards him across the garden.

"Ow, ow, ow!" spluttered Bunter. "Oh dear! Ow!"

Pop gave him a glare of concentrated wrath. He had been in safe cover till Bunter barged him out of it. Now he was spotted—there was no doubt about that.

"You fat idjit!" hissed Pop. "Ow, ow! Leggo!" roared Bunter, as the exasperated Pop grabbed him by the collar. "Wharrer you up to? Leggo! Ow!"

Bang, bang, bang!

Thrice Bunter's bullet-head smote the path and at each smite Bunter gave a wild roar.

"There, you chump!" gasped Pop. "There, you silly fat'ead—"

"Yaroooogh!"

"Cecil!" The thin gentleman in the pince-nez was staring at Pop icily over the laurels. "Cecil! Kindly cease this disturbance at once and come with me. I am ashamed of you."

"Oh, stow it!" grunted Pop. He released Bunter and glared at the tall, thin gentleman rebelliously.

"What, what? Come with me at once, Cecil!" said Mr. Clegg. "Your guardian is very angry at your taking french leave in this way—"

"He would be!" grunted Pop. "I have been following you and searching for you—"

Grunt!

"You were seen to join a—a—a former associate," said Mr. Clegg. "I have been inquiring after you all along the road—"

Grunt!

"Now, come with me at once! You were in hiding here!" exclaimed Mr. Clegg. "You were deliberately keeping out of my sight!"

"Look 'ere—"

Mr. Jimmy Walker rolled up. "You'd better 'op it, Pop!" he said. "The game's up, kid; you 'op it!" He

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turned to Mr. Clegg. "No 'arm intended, sir; jest a day with an old pal, that's all, sir! Arternoon to you, Mr. Clegg, sir!"

The tutorial gentleman took no notice whatever of Jimmy Walker. He apparently regarded that genial gentleman with unutterable contempt and indifference.

"Come with me immediately, Cecil!" he said, as if Jimmy Walker did not exist at all.

"Better 'op it, Pop!" advised Jimmy Walker.

There seemed to be a struggle in Pop's mind. But he appeared to come to the same conclusion.

"Oh, orl right!" he said. "I s'pose the jig's up now."

He shook hands with Jimmy Walker—a proceeding that Mr. Clegg eyed with icy disdain—and then slowly followed the thin gentleman across the garden. Mr. Jimmy Walker, with a dismal countenance, went slowly back to his table, where he sat down and lighted a fresh cigar, staring after the boy who was getting into the car with Mr. Clegg.

Meanwhile, Bunter was struggling after his second wind. He sat in the path by the laurels, gasping for breath—watched with an utterly unsympathetic eye by the waiter.

He struggled to his feet at last.

"Fifteen shillings, please," said the waiter pleasantly.

"Of—of course; I—I wasn't going without paying," said Bunter.

"Of course not!" said the waiter cynically. "You was just running about for exercise. Fifteen shillings, please."

There was no help for it. The man was fairly hovering over Bunter, and there was absolutely no chance for further strategy. Slowly, reluctantly, Billy Bunter counted out the required sum.

"Now hook it, you bilk!" said the waiter.

Billy Bunter hooked it.

He hooked it in the lowest spirits. The chance of a lifetime had passed him by. He was not going to make a small fortune backing horses. Still, it was barely possible that he wouldn't have, anyway.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Waxy!

"MY dear Harry!"
"Yes, auntie!"
"You will not think I am cross?" asked Aunt Amy anxiously.

Harry Wharton smiled.
"You never are, dear," he answered.
"What's up?"

After lunch Miss Wharton had decided to speak to her nephew. She was quite worried by Bunter's disclosure that dear Harry had, apparently, formed the habit of borrowing and forgetting his debts. Harry stopped by his aunt's chair on the sunny terrace, and his comrades strolled away and left him to it.

"Nothing wrong is there, auntie?" asked Wharton, rather surprised by the serious expression on the old lady's face.

"No! Oh, no! But, my dear boy—"

"Yes?" said Harry; something, evidently, was "up," and he wondered what it was.

"You remember what Shakespeare says—" pursued Aunt Amy.

"Shakespeare?"

"I think it was Shakespeare," said Miss Wharton. "Does he not say:

"Neither a borrower nor a lender be,
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry."?"

"Yes, we've had Hamlet in literature class at Greyfriars—I remember it quite well," said Harry.

"If you should not find your allowance sufficient, Harry—"

"But I do," said Harry—"quite."

"Well, well," said Miss Wharton. "I believe schoolboys borrow from one another at times—"

"Sometimes," said Harry, more and more puzzled.

"There is, perhaps, no harm in this, to some extent," said Miss Wharton, rather doubtfully. "But one should never, never forget to repay."

"I hope I shouldn't," said Harry. "My hat! I'm sure I've never forgotten to repay a loan when I've had to raise the wind."

"My dear boy!"

"Really and truly," said Harry, "if there's any man at Greyfriars I owe anything to, I'm not aware of it."

"You have forgotten, my dear," said Miss Wharton gently. "That is what I wished to impress upon your mind, Harry—never to forget such a matter."

"But I haven't!" ejaculated Wharton, bewildered. "I assure you, auntie, I don't owe any Greyfriars man anything."

"Not now," said Miss Wharton, "for I settled the matter immediately I heard of it, Harry. I thought it best to do so."

"You've—you've settled the matter?"

"Yes, Harry."

"But who—what—how—" stuttered Wharton.

"You appear quite to have forgotten," said Miss Wharton, gazing at him with mild and affectionate reproof; "and Bunter, from what he said, would never have asked you—"

"Bunter!" exclaimed Harry.

"Yes. Now, if he had not mentioned it to me, and never mentioned it to you, Harry, the matter might have been totally forgotten, which would be a very serious state of affairs," said Miss Wharton, shaking her head.

Wharton breathed hard.

"But I don't owe Bunter anything, auntie," he said.

"You have forgotten that he lent you a pound? You really have completely forgotten it?" asked Miss Wharton.

"He—he—he lent me a pound?"

"Do not trouble about it now, Harry—I have paid it—"

"You've paid it?" gasped Wharton.

"Yes, yes; I paid it at once!"

"The fat villain!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"The spoofing rotter!" roared Wharton.

"My dear Harry—"

"I—I—I'll squash him—"

"My dear boy!" exclaimed Miss Wharton. She gazed at her nephew in astonishment. "You must not be angry with Bunter—the fault is not on his side, but on yours. You forgot—"

"I never owed him a pound!" hooted Wharton. "It was gammon!"

"Oh, goodness gracious!" exclaimed Miss Wharton.

"I—I—I'll—"

"Is it possible that Bunter made an untruthful statement?" exclaimed the old lady, greatly shocked. "What a dreadful, unscrupulous boy!"

"Oh, that fat ass always talks out

of the back of his silly head," said Harry. "You see, he hasn't the sense of a bunny rabbit. He ought really to be in a home for idiots."

"My dear Harry!"

Wharton calmed down. He registered a mental vow to make the Owl of the Remove squirm; but that was not a matter he could confide to Aunt Amy.

"Perhaps Bunter was mistaken," said Miss Wharton; it was her kind way to take a charitable view of all things. "I have noticed that he has a very bad memory. Perhaps some other boy owes him a pound."

"Um!" said Harry.

"I do not like to think that he can have spoken with intentional untruthfulness," said Miss Wharton, shaking her head. "That would be very dreadful."

Then she smiled.

"No doubt it was a mistake," she said. "But I am very, very glad to learn that you have not forgotten a debt, Harry. I was quite worried."

"That's all right, auntie," said Harry. "I don't owe anybody anything. Call it a mistake."

He was smiling cheerily when he left Miss Wharton. But when he joined his chums in the grounds his face was grim.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the jolly old trouble?" asked Bob Cherry.

"That villain Bunter—"

"What's the latest?" asked Nugent, with a grin.

"That fat fozler has been telling my aunt that I owe him a pound, and she's settled it for me—"

"Oh, great Scott!"

"The frabjous chump seems to have gone out," said Harry. "Wells said that he lunched early and cleared. I'm going to squash him when he comes in. It's too thick!"

"The thickfulness is terrific," agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I suppose it's rather against the rules of hospitality to punch a guest," said Harry. "But Bunter's such a weird guest. He's got to cough up that pound he's diddled from my aunt. And—and I suppose I can't wallop him in the circumstances. But one of you fellows might."

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"My dear man, I'll wallop him with pleasure," he said.

"The wallopfulness of the esteemed Bunter will be grateful and comforting," declared Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Talk of jolly old angels!" said Bob. "There he comes!"

A fat figure rolled in at the gate, and came rolling up the drive.

William George Bunter was returning from his outing.

His outing did not seem to have afforded him a lot of satisfaction, to judge by the morose expression on his fat face.

He looked decidedly gloomy and discontented.

But he brightened a little as the Famous Five bore down on him.

"I say, you fellows—"

"You fat rotter!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! If that's the way you talk to a guest—"

"You spoofing porpoise!"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Bunter. "Look here, you fellows! I've run out of tin. Lend me—"

"Where's that quid?" demanded Wharton.

"Eh, what quid?"

"You told my aunt that you'd lent me a pound, and she squared for me, you fat fraud!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. He had already forgotten that trifling incident. "Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Shell out, you fat burglar!"

"The—the fact is—" stammered Bunter. "There's nothing to be waxy about, old chap! Of course, I never did anything of the sort."

"What?" hooted Wharton.

"Miss Wharton misunderstood me," explained Bunter. "She's old and silly, you know—"

"She—she's what?"

"Old and silly! Softening of the brain, I fancy," said Bunter, blinking at the captain of the Remove. "No good taking any notice of her, you know. Just drivel!"

"Why, you—you—you—" gasped Wharton.

"Never mind that," said Bunter, dismissing the trifling matter airily. "Look here, if you could lend me ten bob—"

"You fat rascal—"

"If that's the way you talk to a guest, Wharton, I can only say I— Whoop!"

Shake, shake, shake!

Wharton had grasped the Owl of the Remove by the collar and was shaking him with all the strength of his arm.

Bunter shook like a fat jelly.

"Groogh!" he gasped.

"Leggo! Ooooooop!"

Shake, shake, shake!

"Ooooch! Leggo! Beast! If you make my gig-gig-glasses fall off—oooho!—you'll have to pay for them! Ooooooooooop!"

Shake, shake, shake!

"Gurrrrrrrrrrg! Leggo! Beast!"

"There!" gasped Wharton. "Now—now—"

Bunter jerked himself away, spluttering.

"Ow! You cheeky rotter!" he roared.

"I'll jolly well lick you! I mean, I'd jolly well lick you if I wasn't your guest! I—groogh!—I hope I've got some manners! Ow! Keep off, Bob Cherry, you beast!"

"It's my turn now!" explained Bob.

"Stand steady! I'm going to kick you right across the drive. See if I can do it with one kick."

"Yarooogh!"

Billy Bunter rushed away into the trees. Apparently he did not desire to ascertain what Bob could do with one kick.

"After him!" roared Bob.

"Collar him!"

"Scrag him!"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

The fat junior fled for his life. With a whoop the chums of the Remove rushed in pursuit.

But they had no intention of catching Bunter. They merely wished to teach him a much-needed lesson; and they easily kept pace behind the Owl of the Remove.

"Put it on, you men!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, loud enough for the ears of Bunter. "Don't let him get away!"

Billy Bunter put on speed, and vanished in the green of the park. The Famous Five came to a halt, chuckling. They walked back to the drive and strolled out into the road, leaving William George Bunter to his own devices. Unfortunately for Bunter he was not aware of that. Deep in the thickly-wooded park Billy Bunter, like Charley's Aunt, was still running.



With a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull all together the Buster was dragged out of the ditch into the road again.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.
The Runaway!

"OLD on!"

Mr. Clegg, driving the handsome Rolls, did not hold on and did not heed. Only he frowned.

"Old on!" repeated Pop.

Then Mr. Clegg answered:

"Cecil! Both your guardian and I have warned you against association with your—er—former associates! In a few hours you seem to have lost all the advantages of your studies. From that remark no one would imagine that I had been your tutor for six months."

"Six months 'ard—what?" said Pop.

"Pray be more careful in your speech, Cecil! Your elision of the aspirate—"

"My blooming what?" ejaculated Pop.

"Your dropping the H—"

"Oh, that!"

"Yes, that; it is a fault which you have succeeded in remedying, and you should be very careful not to fall into it again."

"Oh, come off!" grunted Pop. "You make me tired!"

Mr. Clegg compressed his lips.

"If you are going to be impertinent, Cecil, we had better say no more!" he said coldly.

"I've asked you to 'old on!" said Pop sulkily.

"I see no occasion whatever to stop. We have a long journey before us, owing to your foolish truancy to-day."

"My cap's blown off!"

"Oh!"

Mr. Clegg glanced round at Pop, and saw that he was indeed capless. He slowed down.

"That was exceedingly careless, Cecil!" he said crossly. "However, I suppose we must turn back for your cap."

With compressed lips the tutorial gentleman backed the car and turned.

It was clear that Pop was in a very ill-humour at the spoiling of his day's outing with that exuberant gentleman, Mr. James Walker. Certainly he did not seem to be trying to be nice to his tutor.

Mr. Clegg drove back along the road. They had come a good distance from Whitebridge, and had lately passed through a village, and along a country road that was bordered by the high palings of a park. That park belonged to Wharton Lodge, though neither Mr. Clegg nor Pop was aware of it, neither ever having heard of Wharton Lodge.

The cap lay by the roadside, by the park wall. Pop pointed it out as the car came gliding back.

"There's the blooming goffer!" he said.

"You must not say blooming, Cecil! I have told you so many times. Neither is it proper to allude to a cap by such an absurd and unmeaning expression as 'goffer.'"

"Well, that's the tile, if you like that better," said Pop.

"I do not like it better! You should never, in any circumstances, call a cap a tile."

"Oh, my!" said Pop. "Well, there it is, anyhow, and if you'll 'old on, I'll get 'old of it."

The car stopped, and Pop descended. Mr. Clegg sat at the wheel, and waited for him. Pop bent down and secured the cap, and jammed it on his head. But instead of crossing back to the car, he made a sudden jump, caught the top of the palings, and swung himself over the park wall.

"Cecil!" shouted Mr. Clegg.

With one leg across the wall, sitting astride, Pop grinned back at the surprised and irritated gentleman in the car.

"I let that cap blow off a-purpose!" he remarked, cheerfully. "Jest to make you 'old on!"

"Come back immediately!"

"Not 'arf!" said Pop.

"Cecil! Descend at once, and come back to the car. We shall be late home as it is, and there is no time to waste!"

"You can 'ook it for 'ome as soon as you like!" retorted Pop. "I ain't coming."

"Your guardian——"

"You tell my guardian I'm fed-up!" said Pop deliberately. "I don't like that old covey any more'n he likes me. I'm jest fed-up to the back teeth, and so I'm telling yer!"

Mr. Clegg descended from the car.

"Like a game of ide-and-seek?" grinned Pop. "Why you couldn't 'op it over this 'ere wall, Clegg! You go back and tell my guardian that I'm fed-up and I'm chucking it. I ain't going to school, so I tell you. I've tried 'ard to stand it, and there ain't anything doing. And you can tell him that I wouldn't be found dead at Greyfriars. Got that?"

"Come down at once!"

"Wouldn't you like me to?" grinned Pop.

Mr. Clegg, his face set with grim annoyance, came close to the wall and reached up for the elusive Pop.

That cheerful youth stood on the wall, balancing himself by holding to a branch of a tree within.

"Ow'd you like me to drop on your 'ead, Clegg?" he asked.

"Descend——"

"Rats!" said Pop.

"I shall use force!" shouted Mr. Clegg, "and I warn you, that I shall take full advantage of your guardian's permission to administer chastisement."

"If that means that you're going to pitch into me, Clegg, you ain't going to 'ave the chance," said Pop. "So-long, old covey!"

And he dropped on the inner side of the wall.

"Upon my word!" gasped Mr. Clegg. "Cecil! Cecil!"

"'Ere!" chuckled Pop, from the inner side of the high wall.

"You are trespassing in a private park."

"Think it's the first time, old bean?" chortled Pop. "Not by 'arf a 'undred times, cocky!"

"You may be taken in charge!"

"I'll risk it, Clegg! You 'op it and tell the old bloke that he ain't going to see me any more."

Mr. Clegg breathed hard.

"Cecil! Listen to me! If you have any foolish idea of rejoining that disreputable character, Walker, you may as well abandon it at once. Your guardian will take legal proceedings against Walker for enticing you away from his guardianship."

"Good-bye!"

"You—you young rascal!" roared the tutor. "If you do not come back at once I shall obtain the assistance of the police to secure you."

"'Ear, ear!" said Pop. "That will be a lark, won't it, Clegg? I'll dodge 'em all right!"

"I order you——"

"Rats!"

Pop strolled away through the trees of the park, leaving Mr. Clegg vociferating on the other side of the high palings. That he was trespassing on private property did not seem to worry that cool and cheerful young gentleman at all.

Mr. Clegg shouted, and shouted again. But he realised that Pop was gone. He shut his teeth hard. Probably Mr. Clegg's position as tutor to that rather remarkable youth was no

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sincere. Certainly he looked, at that moment, as though he would have liked to lay a stick very forcibly about Master Pop—as no doubt Master Pop fully deserved.

Pop, whistling cheerily, strolled away through the park. But presently he ceased to whistle, as it dawned upon him that, being in private precincts, it would be wise not to betray his presence. He threaded his way across the park of Wharton Lodge, with a cheery grin on his face. Suddenly he caught sight of a fat figure rolling away among the trees at a great rate.

"My!" ejaculated Pop. "That fat covey again!"

He recognised the fat fellow, who had inadvertently betrayed him to his tutor at the Bunch of Grapes at White-bridge.

Bunter spotted him at the same moment; but the recognition was not mutual. The short-sighted Owl of the Remove was too far off to recognise him, and he took him for one of the Famous Five.

"Ow! Keep off, you beast!" howled Bunter.

"My 'at!" ejaculated Pop.

"Beast!"

Bunter plunged away into the bushes, leaving Pop staring after him blankly.

"My 'at! That fat bloke must be fair off his crummet!" murmured Pop.

He pursued his way, and reached the farther wall of the park, climbed it, and dropped over into a lane. After a keen and cautious glance round him, he started off at a rapid walk, whistling shrilly once more—satisfied that he was done with Mr. Clegg.

Meanwhile, the hapless tutor, having given up shouting for the truant, was standing by the car, in a puzzled and extremely worried frame of mind. Mr. Clegg had passed the age when it was easy to negotiate a high wall, neither was he prepared to trespass recklessly on private grounds. He looked round as five schoolboys came out at a gate at a little distance, and as they came up he called to them:

"Excuse me, young gentlemen!"

Harry Wharton & Co. stopped.

"Can you tell me to whom this park belongs?" asked Mr. Clegg.

Wharton smiled.

"Yes; to my uncle, Colonel Wharton," he answered.

"A boy—a pupil—in my charge has climbed over the wall, and—and run away in the park," said Mr. Clegg, rather breathlessly. "Doubtless I can obtain permission to look for him."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Yes, I should think so," said Harry.

"If you go up to the house—my uncle is indoors——"

He pointed out the gate.

"Thank you—thank you!" said Mr. Clegg.

He stepped into the car and drove to the gates of Wharton Lodge and turned in, the juniors looking after him curiously. Mr. Clegg disappeared, and they resumed their walk to the village.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Only Bunter!

COLONEL WHARTON came down the drive, the tall, thin gentleman walking by his side. The worried tutor had found a friend in need.

"The young rascal!" said the colonel. "I have no doubt that we shall find him easily enough, Mr. Clegg."

"I must apologise for giving you this trouble, sir."

"Not at all," said the colonel politely.

"It would be disagreeable—most disagreeable—to return without him," said Mr. Clegg. "Sir Hilton Popper is—is somewhat—somewhat imperious, sir. Probably he would blame me. And yet——"

"We will find the boy," said Colonel Wharton. "I shall be glad to help—and, if necessary, I will call my keepers."

"You are very kind, sir," said the tutorial gentleman. "Sir Hilton lent me his car to follow the boy, when it was discovered that he had bolted—actually bolted—with a former low associate—a disreputable circus person. The boy's motives I cannot fathom—low tastes, I fear, derived from low associates of earlier times. The nephew of a baronet, of a gentleman so highly placed as Sir Hilton Popper of Popper Court, and bearing the name of Popper——"

"Quite so!" said the colonel.

"If you should consider it judicious to chastise him, sir, for having trespassed on your property, I should raise no objection—no objection whatever," said Mr. Clegg.

Colonel Wharton smiled.

"Well, we will find him first," he said.

They entered the park, bright in the afternoon sunshine. A keeper came in sight, and the colonel called to him, and he joined up to help in the search.

But though the colonel expressed the opinion that Master Cecil Popper would soon be found, it did not seem an easy task. The park was rather extensive, and in some places the plantations were thick. There were numerous hiding-places for any fellow who wished to conceal himself.

"You have seen no one in the park, Jessop?" asked the colonel.

The keeper shook his head.

"No, sir; but I thought I heard somebody a while back," he said. "It was near the new plantation."

"We will look in that direction first," said the colonel. "This way, Mr. Clegg."

And the three followed a "ride" through the park, and arrived at the desired spot. The "new plantation" was of young trees, planted rather thickly; and as they came in sight of it the keeper uttered an exclamation.

"There he goes, sir!"

There was a momentary glimpse of a figure among the young trees, but it vanished in an instant. A sound of rustling and crashing was heard. Obviously it was the sound of someone in full flight.

"Secure him, Jessop!" exclaimed the colonel.

"Yes, sir!"

The keeper plunged into the plantation in pursuit of the fugitive.

The colonel and Mr. Clegg followed more slowly.

They came out into the open on the other side, and found Jessop standing, with a grin on his face, close by a large stack of brushwood that had been cut and piled for removal.

"You have not caught him?" exclaimed the tutor.

Jessop, grinning, pointed to the stack of brushwood.

"Look, sir!" he answered.

The brushwood was stirring, as if a small earthquake was going on in its interior.

Colonel Wharton laughed.

"The boy is hiding!" he said.

"He's crawled under that there brushwood, sir!" said Jessop. "I didn't see him, but I saw the stack moving as I came up. We've got him, sir."

"The absurd, troublesome boy!" exclaimed Mr. Clegg. "Cecil! Cecil! Come out at once!"

There was no reply, but the stirring of the heap of brushwood ceased. Whoever was in it was lying low, very cautiously now, perhaps unaware that he had already betrayed himself.

"Thank goodness we have found him," said Mr. Clegg. "If you will let your keeper remove the brushwood, sir—"

"Remove it at once, Jessop!"

The keeper began to drag the brushwood away. There was a gasp of alarm from the interior of the pile.

"Ow!"

Jessop grinned.

"You'd better come out!" he said.

"Ow! I—I'm not here!"

"Upon my word!" said Colonel Wharton, in surprise. "I seem to know that voice—"

"It does not sound like Cecil Popper's voice!" said Mr. Clegg, in equal surprise. "But there can scarcely be another boy hiding—"

"Here he is, sir!" said Jessop.

Armfuls of brushwood were dragged aside, and a hidden figure was partly revealed.

There was a yell.

"Ow! Keep off, you beasts! I'll jolly well lick you! Yarooogh! If you kick me, you rotters—"

"Good gad!" ejaculated the colonel. "Wha-a-at—" exclaimed Mr. Clegg. "Here, you come out!" said Jessop. He grasped a fat shoulder and jerked. There was another yell, and a fat face and a large pair of spectacles came into view.

"That—that is Bunter!" exclaimed Colonel Wharton. "What in the name of goodness—"

Billy Bunter leaped wildly to his feet. He was still under the impression that he was being hunted by the Famous Five, and he did not stop to look before he leaped. He made a wild bound to escape.

Crash!

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Clegg.

Bunter's wild rush unfortunately took the direction of the tutorial gentleman. He collided with Mr. Clegg like a battering ram.

"Ooooooogh!" gurgled Mr. Clegg.

The tall, thin gentleman doubled up like a pocket-knife.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter. "Wow—"

"Oh! Ooooooogh!" spluttered Mr. Clegg, as he sat down.

Colonel Wharton grasped the Owl of the Remove by the shoulder.

"Bunter—"

"Ow! Leggo, you beast!" yelled Bunter.

"What!" roared the colonel.

"You beastly rotter—leggo—yarooogh—help—"

"Bunter—are you mad?"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter, realising at last that it was not one of the Famous

Five who had grasped him. "Oh! Is—is it you, sir? Oh dear! I thought it was one of the other beasts."

"Ooooooogh!" said Mr. Clegg faintly. He sat and gasped. Bunter had knocked most of the wind out of him.

"It's Master Bunter," said Jessop blankly. "What was he hiding for?"

"Bunter!" The colonel shook the fat junior. "You stupid boy, what does this mean? What—"

"Ow!" gasped Bunter. "I—I thought those beasts were after me—oh dear! Ow!"

"You absurd boy!" snapped the colonel testily. "Go away at once! Mr. Clegg, I am sorry—"

Bunter blinked round.

"Ain't—ain't they after me?" he gasped.

"If you mean Harry and his friends, they have gone out—"

"Oh, the beasts! I thought—"

"You are a fool, Bunter!" snapped the colonel. "Go away at once!"

"You—you're sure they ain't after me?"

"Nonsense!" snapped Colonel Wharton. "Mr. Clegg, let me assist you—"

He helped the tutor to his feet. Mr. Clegg was gasping painfully. Billy Bunter caught the expression on his face and rolled away hastily. He did not like the look in Mr. Clegg's eye at all.

"Oh dear! I—I am quite breathless!" gasped Mr. Clegg. "Oh dear! Oh!"

It was some minutes before Mr. Clegg

(Continued on next page.)

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was sufficiently recovered to resume the search for the missing Pop.

But the search, when it was resumed, was in vain. Too much time had been wasted on Bunter, and by that time, Pop was outside Wharton Park, and departing for parts unknown.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Walker's World-Famous!

BANG! Bang!
Pom-pom-pom-pom!
"Hallo, hallo, hallo! A jolly old circus!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Hold on!" called out Harry Wharton.

It was the following morning, and six cyclists were turning out of a lane into the main Whitebridge road, when the circus procession came along.

The Famous Five halted and jumped off their bicycles at the corner. The procession took up most of the road, and they did not want to run into it. Also they were rather interested in watching it pass by.

Pom-pom-pom-pom!

Bang!
An elephant led the procession with a youth in spangles, apparently an acrobat, mounted on his neck, beating a drum.

Following the elephant came horses and caravans and other impedimenta. A clown, seated on the roof of a van, blew loud blasts on a trumpet which mingled more or less harmoniously with the thumping of the drum. It was not a large circus, but it was making all the noise it could, doubtless with a view to advertisement.

"My hat!" ejaculated Nugent.

"What—"

"It's jolly old Walker!"

"Walker's World-Famous!" exclaimed Johnny Bull, pointing to a banner that bore the title: "Walker's World-Famous Circus and Hippodrome."

"Oh!" exclaimed Wharton. "Then that's what that old johnny was talking about yesterday."

"That's it—and there he is, in the Buster Seven, in the procesh!" grinned Bob Cherry.

The Famous Five had almost forgotten the encounter with Mr. Jimmy Walker, though they had rather wondered, at the time, what he had meant by his mention of "Walker's World-Famous." This, evidently, was the World-Famous. It was a circus, and Jimmy Walker was the proprietor thereof, though the Greyfriars fellows took the liberty of doubting whether it really was world famous. No doubt that was a little exaggeration of Mr. Walker's.

In the Buster Seven, Mr. Jimmy Walker was taking part in the procession, wearing a shiny silk hat now, and an expansive smile on his purple face, as well as a large cigar in his mouth.

Bang! Pom-pom-pom!

"Why, there's the kid!" exclaimed Nugent. "That fellow Pop!"

The lad in spangles on the neck of the elephant grinned down at the Famous Five, evidently recognising them.

It was Pop, though he looked very different now, in his acrobatic attire. He rose to his feet on the elephant's neck, and standing on one leg, beat the drum in that precarious attitude, much to the admiration of a crowd of small boys who were following the procession.

"Hold on, Bunter!"

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Billy Bunter was cycling with the Famous Five that morning. He was far astern; but he overtook them when they had halted at the corner of the lane.

Unfortunately, there was a rather steep slope down the lane into the road and Bunter was going strong.

"Gerrout of the way, you fellows!" he shouted.

"Stop!" called out Wharton.

"Shan't!"

"Look here, you silly ass—"

"Gerrout of the way!"

"I tell you—"

Bunter did not heed. Uphill Bunter went very slowly; and on the level he was not rapid; but when he was going downhill Bunter could put on speed. And when he was on a slope like this he was not going to stop. He was not going to lose the advantage of the free-wheeling, with the consequence of having to pick up again on the pedals sooner than was absolutely necessary.

The Owl of the Remove was short-sighted, and perhaps he had not noticed the circus procession in the road. Or perhaps he did not heed it. Anyhow, he came on full tilt.

Pop, on the elephant, waved his drumsticks to the Famous Five in cheery greeting, and passed on. The procession passed on after him; and Mr. Jimmy Walker, in the Buster Seven, was just opposite the opening of the lane when Bunter happened.

"Stop!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Rats!" retorted Bunter.

"You benighted ass—"

Harry Wharton & Co. dragged their machines out of Bunter's way just in time. Otherwise, there would have been a terrific mix-up.

Bunter shot through the group, barely missing several bicycles and their owners. He shot into the road.

"Ere, look out!" roared Jimmy Walker, in alarm.

Mr. Walker jammed on his brakes.

Fortunately, the Buster Seven was going at a crawling pace, as it had to keep time with the elephant that led the procession.

It stopped. But Bunter did not stop. By the time Billy Bunter perceived that there was no way across the road it was too late to stop.

He rushed on at the Buster Seven.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Look out!"

Bunter, perceiving his danger as soon as it was fairly under his fat little nose, wrenched at his handlebars.

The bike spun round, barely missing the Buster and the horrified Mr. Walker. It wobbled and danced with the sudden turn, curled up, and went spinning; and Billy Bunter was deposited in a sprawling heap on the grass by the roadside.

"Yaroooh!"

The roar that emanated from William George Bunter must have been audible over a considerable part of the county of Surrey.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow-wooooooop!"

"You silly ass!" yelled Harry Wharton. For a moment he had feared that the Owl of the Remove was booked for a bad smash. It was a relief to see that he had only had a severe bump—and nobody regretted the severity of the bump; except Bunter. Bunter roared and howled; and the sound of his lamentation was heard far and wide.

"Oh, my eye!" ejaculated Mr. Walker, and he started the car again, while Bunter rolled and roared.

"Ow! Help! Yaroooh! I'm smashed! I'm injured! My legs are

broken—and I've sprained my back-bone! Whocop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bang, bang, bang! Pom-pom-pom! went the drum, dying away in the distance. The circus procession swung on towards Wimford, leaving the Owl of the Remove spluttering and gasping in the grass beside the road, not quite sure that he was still alive.

Mr. Jimmy Walker raised his shiny silk topper, and waved it cheerily to the Famous Five as he passed on.

"Appy to see you at the circus, if you like to come along, gents," he shouted. "You don't want to miss Walker's World Renowned!"

And the Buster Seven glided on, and the rest of the procession trailed after it.

Harry Wharton & Co. waved back cheerily. They rather liked the exuberant gentleman with the purple complexion.

The procession trailed on, the roar of the drum and the trumpet fading away towards Wimford; and the chums of the Remove gathered round Bunter, who was still sprawling and gasping.

"Staying there all day, old bean?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Ow! Beast! I'm killed—"

"No such luck!"

"I mean, nearly killed! All my ribs are broken!" wailed Bunter. "I can't move! You'll have to get an ambulance!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Go home and send the car for me, Wharton! I'm frightfully injured! I've dislocated the spinal column of my leg!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Get up, you fat ass!" said Johnny Bull. "Here's your bike!"

"I can't!" howled Bunter.

"Look here, you malingering, fat worm—"

"Beast! Go back and send the car for me."

"You mean you're too jolly lazy to ride home on your bike?"

"Yah!"

"Well, if Bunter wants to stay there we'd better get moving," said Harry Wharton. "I'll send the car, Bunter—"

"Good."

"To-night—"

"Eh?"

"If you're not back by dark. Ta-ta!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Come on, you men," said Harry; and the Famous Five remounted and pedalled on their way.

Bunter sat up in the grass.

"I say, you fellows!" he yelled.

But the fellows rode on regardless.

"Beasts!"

In spite of his innumerable broken bones, Billy Bunter scrambled to his feet and remounted his bike. He did not want to wait there till dark for the car to fetch him in. Perhaps his injuries, after all, were not quite so extensive as he had stated. At all events, he succeeded in riding after the Famous Five, and rejoining them in the lane.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Bunter's recovered!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "There's endurance, if you like! Fancy a fellow riding a bike, with all his ribs broken and his spinal column dislocated!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beasts!"

The Famous Five chuckled; and Billy Bunter snorted. As usual, he was a much-injured youth; and, also as usual, nobody seemed to care.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Nothing Doing!

"POP!"

"Cough it up, Jimmy!"

"It won't do, Pop!" said Mr. Jimmy Walker, shaking his head seriously.

Grunt from Pop.

Walker's World-Famous Circus was pitched on Wimford Common. Mr. Jimmy Walker, seated on a tailboard, was smoking a cigar and frowning thoughtfully through the smoke. The big tent was in the course of erection for the evening performance; and Mr. Walker was keeping one eye on the work that was going on, and the other, dubiously, on Pop.

Pop, once more in the natty clothes in which Harry Wharton & Co. had first seen him, was standing with his hands in his pockets and a frown on his rather good-looking face.

"Look 'ere, old Jimmy, why won't it do?" he demanded.

Mr. Walker shook his head again.

"It won't, -Pop!" he said.

"You don't want me back in the circus?"

"Course I do," said Mr. Walker reproachfully. "You knows I does, Pop. Ain't you the making of it? I never 'ad but one really good turn, and you was it! Walker's World-Famous ain't been the same since the Wonderful Boy Acrobat and King of the Trapeze 'ooked it. I can tell you that without making you conceited, Pop. You know it."

"Well, then, you old image, you," said Pop, "if you want me back, and I want to come back, what about it?"

"Your guardian—"

"Blow 'im!" said Pop disrespectfully.

"That tooter bloke 'ad to go 'ome without you yesterday Pop," said Mr. Walker. "I fancied you'd gone with him; and you could have knocked me down with a coke-ammer, when you walked in last night, and told me you'd given 'im the slip."

"Wasn't you glad to see me?"

"Course I was! But it won't do! That tooter covey's gone 'ome and reported to His Nibs!" said Mr. Walker. "Well, what follers? His Nibs, of course. The old ramrod will be arter you, Pop; and I can't keep you 'ere, even if it was right for me to keep you, which it ain't."

"Why ain't it?" growled Pop.

"You got your future to think of."

"Blow my future!"

"But you can't blow it," argued Mr. Walker. "You got somethin' better afore you than swinging on the high trapeze, Pop. You're going to be a gentleman, you are."

"They've been making me into a gentleman for six months now," growled Pop, "and I'm fed-up to the back teeth!"

Mr. Jimmy Walker rubbed his purple nose thoughtfully.

"Fed-up," repeated Pop. "Old Tin-ribs don't like me. Think ho'd have took any notice of me but for that there money coming along? Ho never did afore. Who saved me from work'us when I was a little nipper? Jest tell me that, you old image, you!"

"I s'pose I did," said Mr. Walker.

"Who was it 'elped my father when he was on his last legs, and his own brother never wanted to 'ear a word from him?" demanded Pop. "You did, you old image! You lost money on him, and you know you did. He never was worth what you paid 'im."

"He did his best," said Mr. Walker tolerantly. "He was a good one with 'orses, he was. He did his best, when he was sober, Pop."

"You lost money on him," said Pop; "and you never expected to make any money on me, and you know you didn't! Then it turned out that I was good stuff, and a draw in the circus. And jest when I was fancying I was going to make it up to you, then comes along this blinking baronet, and wants to make a gentleman of me. Old Tin-ribs

more reason why you want me to stick to you. Ain't I going to be a blooming prop to your declinin' years?"

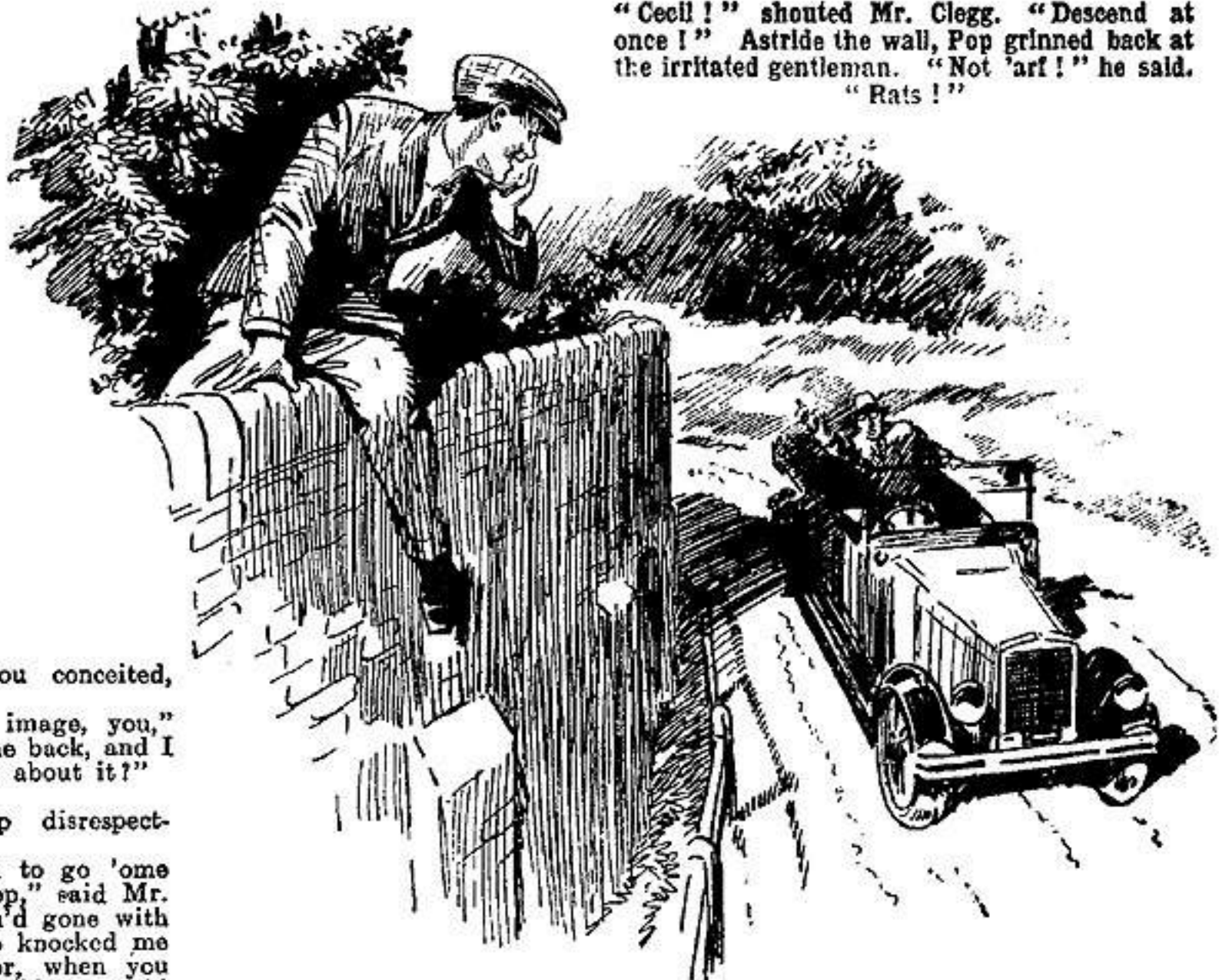
"It ain't possible, you young donkey you!" said Mr. Walker sadly. "Old Tin-ribs will 'ave the law on me! He's your guardian, all legal and proper, and he can take you away if he likes. Why, he can send a bobby to fetch you away, if he chooses!"

Pop gave an emphatic grunt. But he made no other answer to that remark. Mr. Walker continued to shake his head.

"It'd be the making of the World-Famous to 'ave you back, Pop," he said. "But it can't be did—it can't! Not till you come of age, boy. And by that time you'll 'ave forgotten all about old Jimmy Walker."

"If you want me to punch your nose,

"Ceel!" shouted Mr. Clegg. "Descend at once!" Astride the wall, Pop grinned back at the irritated gentleman. "Not 'arf!" he said. "Rats!"



would have been glad enough never to 'ear my name 'spoke if that money hadn't been left to me, and him appointed my guardian. Ain't that so?"

"I s'pose it is," admitted Mr. Walker. "But—"

"Well, cheese it, old Jimmy! I'm sticking to the circus, and I'm sticking to you, unless you turf me out."

Mr. Walker sighed and shook his head.

"Your father was a gentleman, Pop, and a baronet's brother. He came low down in the world when he got a job in my circus. Backing horses and jerking his elbow, pore feller! He always was the gentleman, Pop, when he was sober, and he was always sober when he was hard up. Now you've got a chance to be a gentleman, too—"

"Cut it out!" said Pop. "If being a gentleman means leaving an old pal in the lurch, I'd rather be an acrobat."

"Wouldn't I jest like you back, Pop!" said Mr. Walker wistfully. "The circus game ain't what it was—it's never been the same since the War—and I'm getting old."

"Gammon!" said Pop. "You're as young as ever you was. But if you're getting on, you old image, that's all the

old Jimmy, jest say that again!" growled Pop.

Honk, honk!

A car stopped on the road by the common. A tall gentleman, with an eyeglass screwed in his eye, alighted from it, and came towards the circus encampment with long strides. His grizzled brows were knitted over his monocle.

"Oh, my eye!" said Mr. Walker dismally. "That's old Tin-ribs! 'Tain't the tooter this time, Pop; it's your guardian hisself!"

"My!" said Pop, in dismay.

Mr. Walker rose from the tailboard, and touched his hat respectfully to Sir Hilton Popper of Popper Court, Courtfield, Kent.

The boy eyed the baronet silently and resentfully.

"So you are here, Cecil," said the tall gentleman, in a deep voice.

"I'm 'ere!" grunted Pop.

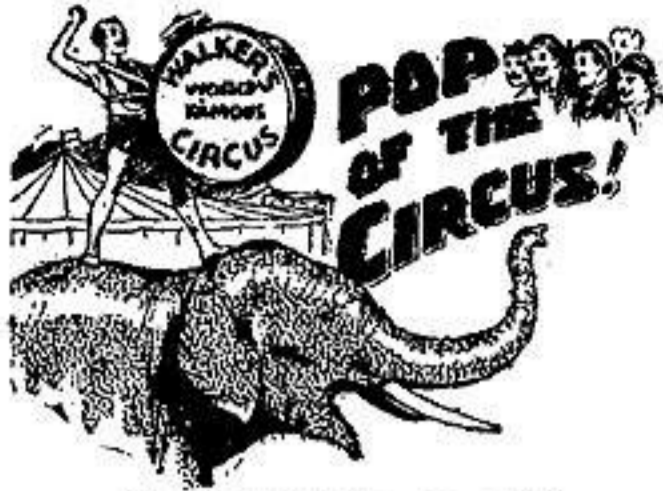
"You deliberately eluded Mr. Clegg yesterday."

"I ain't denying it."

"You have returned to your old disreputable associates."

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(Continued from page 13.)

"You see, sir—" said Mr. Walker feebly.

"Silence!" hooted the baronet, his eyeglass gleaming at Mr. Walker. "Let this occur again, and proceedings will be taken against you. I shall have no mercy on you, sir, if you venture again to entice my nephew away from his home and his guardian."

"Old Jimmy never did nothing of the sort!" snarled Pop. "He's been tellin' me all along that it won't do, and I got to go back."

"Very sensible advice!" snapped Sir Hilton. "Very sensible indeed! Certainly you have to come back! I am going to take you back in my car now. Your conduct is disgraceful. In a few days you are to enter the school of which I am a governor—my old school—and you dare to leave your home and return to this—this circus!"

Pop opened his lips and closed them again. Mr. Walker's awe of the baronet was deep and overpowering, almost amounting to terror. And Pop, though to a lesser extent, shared the feeling. In the actual presence of his guardian the thoughts of rebelliousness faded from his mind.

"You will come with me—now, Cecil," said Sir Hilton. "If your former—er—associate has indeed given you such good advice, you will do well to profit by it. Come!"

Pop turned to the circus proprietor. "I—I got to go, old Jimmy!" he muttered huskily.

"You 'ave," said Mr. Walker. "You've been a good boy to me, Pop. Try to be a good boy with your guardian, and at the big school you're going to. Old Jimmy will be proud of you, Pop, when you grow into a gentleman like your uncle."

Sir Hilton looked at the old circus master, and his grim, frowning face relaxed a trifle.

"That is very proper advice—very proper indeed!" he said. "I am sure you mean my nephew well, Mr.—er—Walker. Cecil, you may say good-bye to Mr.—er—Walker!"

Pop said good-bye to Mr. Walker, and, with a downcast face, followed the baronet to the car. Jimmy Walker stood staring after him, blinking as he stared; and as the boy entered the car, and it drove away, Mr. Walker gave a deep, deep sigh. A hand waved from the car and Mr. Walker waved back. Then he sat down on the tailboard again, and the back of his plump hand brushed away something that trickled down a purple cheek.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Back to School!

"**C**OURTFIELD!" sang out the porter.

"Here we are again!" said Bob Cherry.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

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"I say, it's rotten, ain't it?" said Bunter. "I was just beginning to enjoy the holiday. I say, the Head might have given us more than a week, considering that we rescued Fishy when he was kidnapped—I mean, I did—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. It was practically all my work, and you fellows merely got Fishy out of the place—"

"Merely that, and nothing more," grinned Bob.

"Yes; I fancy the Head knows that all the credit was due to me," said Bunter. "He might have given us a longer holiday, I think. But he's ungrateful. You fellows are ungrateful, too. You know jolly well that I wanted to go to Margate instead of sticking at Wharton Lodge. I told you I'd rather go to Margate, as you jolly well know. Look here, you beasts, if you can't listen to a chap—"

But the Famous Five did not listen.

They tumbled out of the carriage, and Billy Bunter snorted and followed them.

The extra holiday was over, and the chums of the Remove were coming back to school. They had enjoyed a week away from lessons in the middle of the term, and they agreed that it was an excellent idea of the Head's to reward them in that way for their services in rescuing Fisher T. Fish from the clutches of Barney McCann, the kidnapper. But everything comes to an end; and that holiday had ended.

It was quite a cheery party that came back—excepting Bunter. Bunter took unto himself all the credit for that rescue of the kidnapped junior—on what grounds was known only to Bunter. Bunter considered that the Head might have extended the holiday to the end of the term—at least, for Bunter himself.

But the Head hadn't; and Bunter could not help thinking him very ungrateful. But Bunter was accustomed to ingratitude.

He rolled after the Famous Five as they headed for the bridge over the line, where the local train waited.

"I say, you fellows—"

Bunter panted on and rejoined the chums of the Remove.

"I say, you fellows!" bawled Bunter, as the Famous Five changed their direction when he had nearly reached them. "I say, you dummies, you're going the wrong way! That ain't the way to the local train."

He put on a spurt and overtook the chums of the Remove.

"You going by the local to Friardale, Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Yes, you ass! Think I'm going to walk?"

"Wouldn't you rather walk to the school from Courtfield?"

"No, you fathead!"

"Then we would! Good-bye!"

"Look here, you beasts—"

"You've got your ticket," said Harry. "There's the train! Your company is awfully nice, old fat man, but we've had a lot of it lately, and it's possible to have too much of a good thing."

"The too-muchfulness is terrific."

"I say, you fellows—" roared Bunter, as the Famous Five walked away to the exit from the platform.

They disappeared without replying. "Beasts!" gasped Bunter. "After all I've done for 'em! Beasts!"

And Bunter rolled away for the local platform. Nothing would have induced him to walk from Courtfield to the school. Which did not displease the

Famous Five, who had had quite enough of William George Bunter's fascinating company during that extra holiday at Wharton Lodge.

Harry Wharton & Co. left the station and walked down Courtfield High Street. They left the town behind and walked along the road over the common in the direction of Greyfriars School.

A walk was agreeable after a long railway journey, and it was not made less agreeable by the fact that Billy Bunter did not like walking.

Honk! Honk!

The Famous Five, sauntering in a cheery row, almost filled the road, when the honking of a motor behind made them jump out of the way.

They cleared to the roadside, and a handsome Rolls, with a liveried chauffeur, passed them, going on towards Greyfriars.

"That's old Popper!" remarked Nugent; and the juniors politely raised their hats to the tall, white-moustached, monocled gentleman who sat in the car, who acknowledged the salute stiffly.

"Great pip! Who's that with him?" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

And five voices uttered the name at the same moment: "Pop!"

Beside the baronet in the car sat a youth, whom the Famous Five recognised immediately.

It was Pop—undoubtedly Pop—though he was not looking anything like so merry and bright as when they had seen him in company with Mr. Jimmy Walker, and mounted on the neck of the circus elephant.

"Pop!" said Bob Cherry blankly.

"The popfulness is terrific."

"My only hat!"

Pop did not look at the juniors; he did not seem to see them. He was sitting with a glum expression on his face, staring directly before him.

In a social sense, Sir Hilton Popper was any number of cuts above Mr. Jimmy Walker. But he did not seem so congenial a spirit. He seemed to have a depressing effect on his youthful companion.

The car was gone in a few moments, and the Famous Five stared after it in a state of great astonishment.

"That circus kid," said Bob. "What the thump can he be doing in company with old Popper?"

"Goodness knows!" said Harry.

"Pop! Popper! Pop!" said Bob.

"My hat! His name can't be Popper, can it? Is Pop short for Popper? Is he a relation of the jolly old baronet?"

"How could he be—a circus kid?" said Johnny Bull. "Old Popper's no end of an aristocrat—descended from a fat alderman or something who bought a title in the reign of James the First."

"My hat!" said Harry, with a whistle. "I noticed something familiar about that kid's chivy when I first saw him. I know now whom he's like—old Popper!"

"But they can't be relations—"

"Looks like it! He's very like old Popper except that he's good-looking—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And his name's Pop, and Pop must stand for something—it can't be a name on its own. He's a Popper!"

"Well, my only hat!" said Bob.

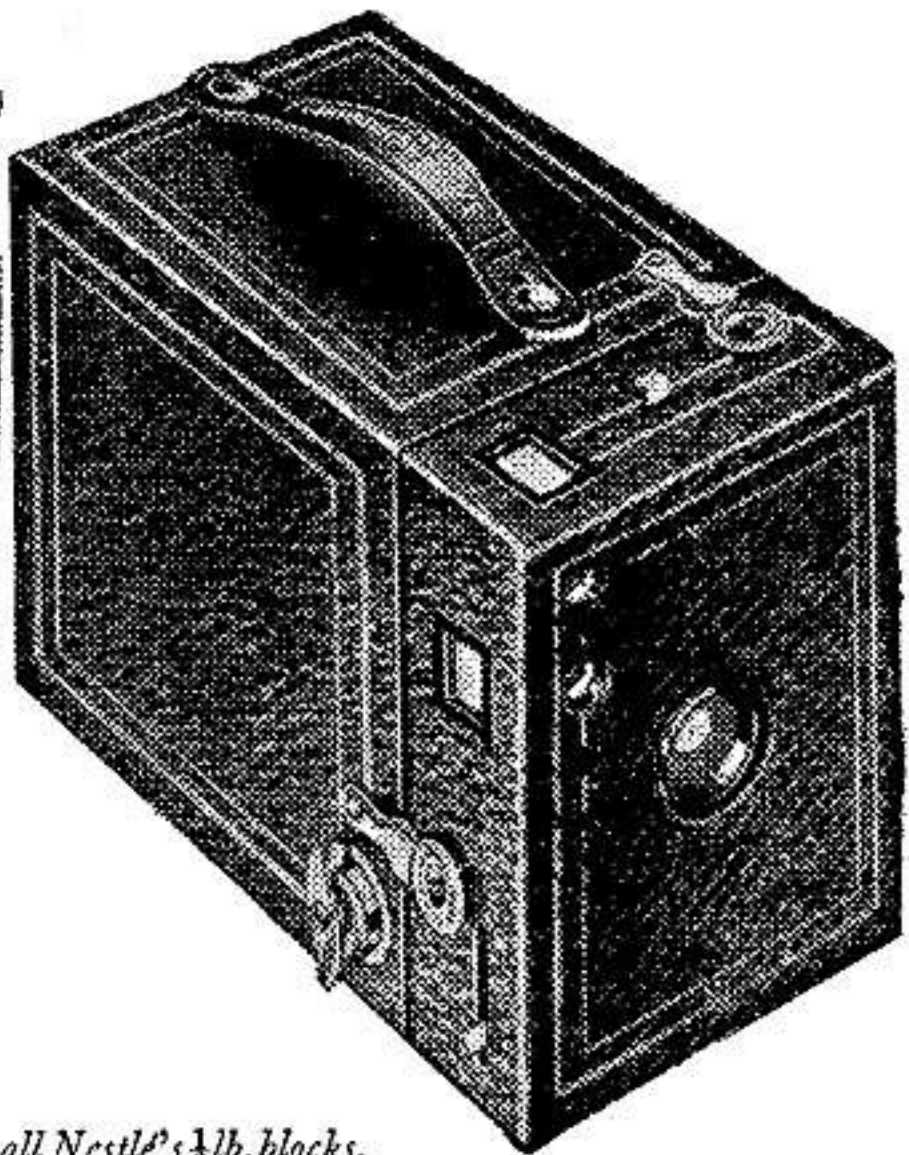
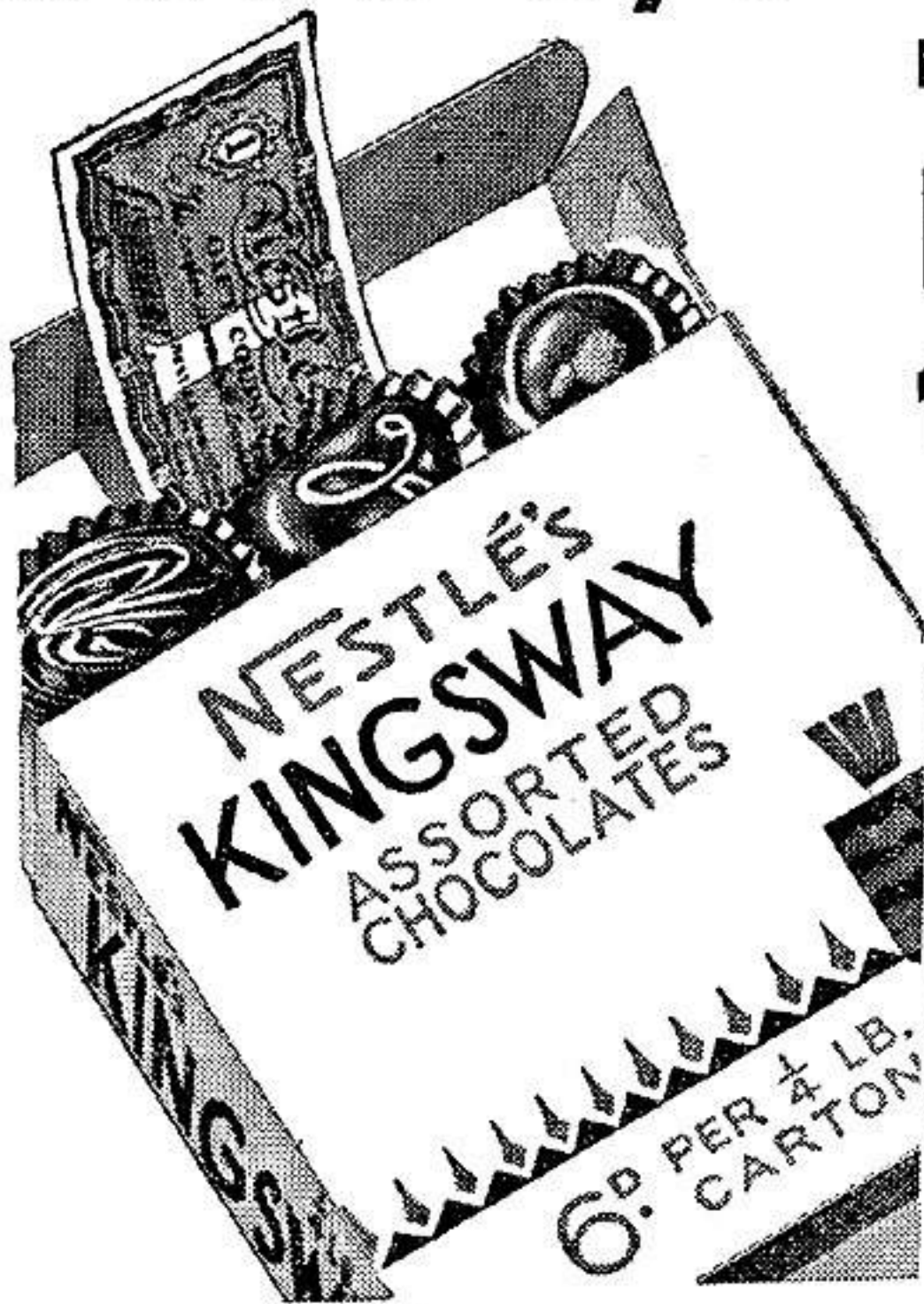
It was quite a surprising discovery, but it seemed probable, now that they came to think of it. But what a relative of the lofty and lordly Sir Hilton Popper could have been doing at a circus was a mystery.

"I suppose old Popper's going to Greyfriars," said Nugent. "He's a
(Continued on page 18.)

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POP OF THE CIRCUS!

(Continued from page 16.)

governor of the school. Queer that he should be taking the kid with him."

"Oh crumbs!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"What—"

"I heard that a relation of Sir Hilton Popper was coming to Greyfriars. Old Popper's seen Quelch about it—the kid's coming into the Remove. That must be the kid!"

"Phew!"

"I remember now," said Harry Wharton with a nod. "There was talk about it—a nephew of the old bird, I believe! Look here, if he's coming to the school, we'd better say nothing about the circus and Mr. Walker. Most likely the kid wouldn't like that to be jawed up and down the Remove."

"That's so," agreed Bob.

The baronet's car had disappeared now. Harry Wharton & Co. walked on, quite interested to discover whether the rather mysterious Pop was indeed the nephew of Sir Hilton, who was to enter the Remove.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The New Removee!

BILLY BUNTER rolled up the Remove passage, pushed open the door of Study No. 1, and blinked into that celebrated apartment.

"I say, you fellows!" squeaked Bunter.

He squeaked in vain. The fellows were not there.

But although Wharton and Nugent were not in the study, No. 1 was not wholly unoccupied. A junior stood at the window, with one knee resting on the window-seat, looking out and down into the quad, apparently interested in watching the swarm of fellows below.

Bunter blinked at him.

He could not see the fellow's face, but he was aware that this was not one of the Removees. He concluded that it was a new boy—as, in fact, it was.

Bunter rolled into the study.

He was rather anxious to meet Harry Wharton & Co., as there was an important question to be settled, which was—whether Bunter was going to tea in Hall, or tea with his dear old pals. But he forgot Harry Wharton & Co. now. Bunter was interested in new boys.

Bunter was not, perhaps, the fellow to take a lot of notice of a new kid in the way of helping him to find his feet in his new surroundings. Bunter was not a philanthropist. Still, new boys interested him. A new boy was a fellow who had never heard of Bunter's celebrated postal-order, and was, therefore, more likely to cash it than a fellow who knew all about it.

"Hallo, kid!" he said effably.

The new fellow turned.

Bunter blinked at him curiously through his big spectacles. Something familiar about the fellow struck him at once.

"New kid?" asked Bunter.

"Yes."

"Glad to see you, old scout!"

The new fellow raised his eyebrows a little. Whatever sort of greeting he had expected at Greyfriars, he had certainly not expected to be welcomed in this effusive way.

He looked rather hard at Bunter, and then a grin of recognition dawned on his face.

"You!" he said.

"Seen me before?" asked Bunter.

"Yes, rather! I never knew you belonged to Greyfriars, though."

"Well, I seem to have seen you somewhere," said Bunter, blinking at him. "May have met you somewhere; I go to a lot of places, you know. In fact, my vacations are a regular whirl of gaieties. A fellow gets a bit tired of it sometimes, you know. You can soon get fed-up with a lot of functions one

after another. Probably I've met you at some nobleman's country house?"

"More probably not!"

"Um! Well, my name's Bunter. I'm in the Remove."

"Any more at home like you?" asked the new fellow.

Bunter blinked at him. This remark seemed rather disrespectful and ungrateful, considering that Bunter was being kind to the new kid.

"Quelch put you in this study?" he asked.

"Yes."

"That's rather rotten," said Bunter sympathetically.

"Is it? Mr. Quelch told me there were two very agreeable fellows in this study."

"Too bad of Quelch!" said Bunter, shaking his head. "I'm afraid you'll find your company here rather rotten."

"Do you mean that it's your study?"

"Eh? No, I don't!" roared Bunter.

"Oh, good!" said the new fellow, with evident relief. "I'm glad it's not so bad as that!"

"Look here, you cheeky cad—" Bunter made an effort to control his wrath. "I—I mean, look here, old scout, you'd better not be cheeky! You'll find it won't pay in the Remove. I'm not going to lick you—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! Look here, you haven't had your tea, I suppose?"

The new fellow shook his head.

"Well, I haven't, either," said Bunter. "As you're a new kid, I thought I'd show you round a bit and stand you some tea. We get a filthy tea in Hall. By the way, what's your name?"

"Popper."

Bunter opened his eyes behind his big spectacles.

"Popper! Any relation to Sir Hilton Popper? He's a governor of the school and a big pot."

"His nephew."

"Oh!" said Bunter more respectfully. A nephew of Sir Hilton Popper was "somebody." "Why, I remember now; I heard old Popper's nephew was coming here. I heard old Quelch talking to old Prout about it. So you're the johnny."

"I'm the johnny," agreed Popper.

"How do you get on with old Popper?" asked Bunter curiously. "He's a bit of a stuffy, stiff-necked old fossil, ain't he?"

"I see you know him," agreed Popper of the Remove. "Still, as he happens to be my uncle and guardian, you'd better not call him names."

"Eh? Why not?"

"Well, I might punch your nose."

Bunter blinked at him and decided to take that remark as a joke.

"He, he, he!"

"My hat! Have you got one of those cheap American alarm clocks in your pocket, Stunter?" asked the new fellow.

"No, I haven't!" roared Bunter. "And my name's Bunter, not Stunter. And I don't want any cheek! I've a jolly good mind—"

"Go it!"

"I—I mean I came in here to be friendly," said Bunter reproachfully. "Hearing that there was a new kid in the Remove, I thought I'd look him up and show him the ropes a bit. I'm always kind to new kids. I've got a kind heart, you know, and a generous nature."

"Your face doesn't give you away, if

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that's the case," remarked Popper. "Nobody would guess it."

Bunter breathed hard. This new beast was being positively unpleasant.

Still, Bunter could bear a lot of unpleasantness when there was a hope of getting an advance in cash on his postal-order.

"Well, I'm rather sorry you're put in this study," he said. "I'll let you come along to my study sometimes when you want some decent company. Rather hard on a new kid to be put along with Wharton and Nugent. Nugent isn't so bad; only a bit of a milksop. Wharton's a beast! I used to be in this study myself, you know, but I changed out. I couldn't stand Wharton. It's been much better since I changed out."

"For Wharton?"
"No, you chump; for me! You don't seem to have much sense," said Bunter. "I say, where have I seen you before? I know I've seen you somewhere."

Popper of the Remove eyed him very curiously; but he made no answer, perhaps not desiring to enlighten Bunter. But the Owl of the Remove was blinking at him inquisitively, and recognition was dawning in his fat face.

"Oh, my hat! Popper—Pop!" exclaimed Bunter. "Why, you're that kid I saw on the elephant—the kid who was with that low, boozy rotter at the inn—"

Bunter stared blankly. That discovery astounded him.

Popper of the Remove made a step towards him, with a black frown on his brow and a glitter in his eyes.

"If you're speaking of Jimmy Walker, don't do it again, Bunter!" he said. "Any more of that and I'll change your features for you—sharp!"

"That's the name—Walker!" chuckled Bunter. "What a specimen! He, he, he!" He jumped back the next moment. "Here, keep off, you beast! I haven't come here to row with you."

"Then keep your blooming tater-trap shut, you flabby freak!" said Pop, relapsing into his manner of speaking before he had had the advantage of an expensive tutor at Popper Court. "I dessay you'd burst if I 'it you!"

"Look here—"
"You 'member 'ow I banged your fat 'ead that day at the inn near White-bridge?" demanded Pop. "Well, I'll bang it like that agin if you don't mind your p's and q's! Chew on that, you flabby oyster!"

Bunter blinked at him blankly. "You—you can't be old Popper's nephew—talking like that!" he ejaculated. "Old Popper couldn't have a nephew a circus rider! Look here, what's the game? What are you up to at Greyfriars?"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" snapped Pop, turning back to the window.

"All serene, old fellow!" said Bunter, with a sudden return of amicable civility. "I don't mind what you are; I'm no snob. A fellow of really good family never is. I say, what about tea in my study?"

"Blow tea in your study!"
"My dear chap, I'm going to be your friend—"

"You jolly well ain't!" said Pop.

"Look here—"
"Oh, checco it! If this ain't your blooming study, 'op out of it!"

"He, he, he!"

Pop had been speaking in quite a cultivated voice in the first part of this curious interview; now he was speaking in anything but a cultivated voice, and dropping aspirates right and left. The training he had received from the worthy Mr. Clegg seemed to be only skin-deep.

"You cackling ass, travel!" snapped Pop, glaring at Bunter over his shoulder. "I'm fed-up with you! I tell you, 'op it!"

"Don't be stuffy, old chap," said Bunter soothingly. "Blessed if I can make you out, but I'm going to be kind to you. I suppose you don't want all the fellows to know about the circus! He, he, he!"

Pop grunted, and made no reply. "I'll keep it dark, old chap," said Bunter. "I'm the fellow to keep a secret! I say, Popper—"

"Oh, buzz off!"
"There was something I wanted to mention," said Bunter. "Leaving home in rather a hurry to-day, I left my money behind. It's all right, I'm expecting a postal-order by the first post to-morrow. Can you lend me ten bob to tide me over? If you could—"

"I could!"
"Thanks!" Bunter held out a fat hand.

"But I'm not going to," added Pop.

"Look here—"
"Shut that blooming door arter you."

"You low rotter—"
Pop turned from the window, and came swiftly across the study towards Bunter. But swift as he was, he was not so swift as the Owl of the Remove. Bunter disappeared into the passage with wonderful speed.

Slam!
The door closed on the vanishing Owl.

Cecil Popper of the Remove, alias Pop the Wonderful Boy Acrobat of Walker's World-Famous Circus, turned back to the window with a grunt. And Billy Bunter, bursting with news, rolled away to tell the other fellows all about it.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Secret I

MR. Quelch glanced at the clock in his study for about the tenth time.

There were a hundred-and-one matters to which Henry Samuel Quelch had to give his personal attention.

Sir Hilton Popper could hardly have been unaware of that. But he seemed unaware of it.

Sir Hilton was not, as a matter of fact, accustomed to giving much consideration to anyone but his important self.

And as he was a governor of Greyfriars, he had to be given his head, so to speak. It was rather unfortunate that a governor of the school lived within a few miles of the school. From the point of view of a schoolmaster, members of the governing body could not live at too great a distance.

Dr. Locke would have been quite pleased had Sir Hilton resided at his town house, or had he taken up ranching in Canada, or big game shooting in Africa. And Mr. Quelch would have shared his feeling.

But Popper Court was only a few miles away, and Sir Hilton was generally there. He took his duties as a governor very seriously, and it was the opinion of all

the staff at Greyfriars, that there was much too much of Sir Hilton.

Still, on the present occasion, Sir Hilton really had business at the school, and especially with the Remove master.

He was placing his nephew in Mr. Quelch's Form, and his nephew was not exactly like the usual run of fellows who came to Greyfriars.

He had already bored the Head almost to tears, now he was boring Mr. Quelch almost to frenzy.

Mr. Quelch wondered drearily whether he was ever going to depart, or whether he was a permanent fixture in the study.

At the same time, he had to keep up an agreeable manner, a governor of the school being a very important personage. Mr. Quelch's glances at the clock were frequent but surreptitious.

"I have told the boy," Sir Hilton was saying, "to be extremely careful to say nothing of his former—er—rather peculiar associations. You will see the wisdom of this, sir."

"Ah! Yes! Quite so!"

"It is very painful for me, that such associations should ever have existed," said Sir Hilton. "I have explained to you that my brother was—er—h'm—somewhat reckless and unfortunate. His son was left without care—quite unprovided for. He spent his earliest years in a—a—a circus." Sir Hilton seemed hardly able to utter the obnoxious word. "Such associations have, of course, left their mark on him."

Mr. Quelch sighed. He had heard all this before, but Sir Hilton, like many fussy old gentlemen, laboured under the delusion that his remarks were worth making a second time, even a third time.

"But he has improved wonderfully with his tutor, Mr. Quelch. Clegg really has worked wonders. I am sorry to say, however, that Cecil still has a wretched, a disgraceful hankering after his old life. It will be your object to repress anything of this kind with severity."

"Um! Yes! Quite!"

"His guardianship, owing to circumstances, has devolved on me," said Sir Hilton. "I must do my duty by him, painful and troublesome as that duty undoubtedly is."

"Ah! Yes! Quite!"

"Of course, the circus must be entirely suppressed. I have cautioned Cecil! It will tell very much against him here, if his former occupation should be known. It would also be humiliating for me personally. He has promised to be discreet."

"Quite so!"

"Had I been aware," continued Sir Hilton, "that a relative would leave a considerable fortune to the boy and appoint me his guardian, I should have taken steps earlier to seek him out, and

(Continued on next page.)

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—and rescue him from contaminating associations."

"No doubt!" said Mr. Quelch, somewhat dryly.

Sir Hilton gave a little grunt.

Mr. Quelch had a very shrewd idea that Sir Hilton had expected that fortune to come to the holder of the Popper title, not to the penniless son of the baronet's penniless younger brother.

And he was well aware that a regular income was attached to Sir Hilton's guardianship, and he could not help suspecting that otherwise Sir Hilton would have declined to take on that painful and troublesome duty.

Certainly he had left his nephew for a good many years in his "contaminating associations," without bothering his head about him.

So the Remove master had a fairly clear idea of the exact length and depth and breadth of Sir Hilton's sense of duty.

"However——" said Sir Hilton.

It seemed too good to be true to the hapless Form master, when Sir Hilton actually rose to his feet at last. He had almost given up hope that Sir Hilton would ever go.

"I have no doubt, Mr. Quelch, that Cecil will soon—er—approximate to the Greyfriars standard," said Sir Hilton. "Only it is very necessary that no mention of the circus should be made here. Very necessary indeed. You will quite appreciate that, I am sure."

"Quite!" said Mr. Quelch.

To his horror, Sir Hilton showed signs of sitting down again.

Mr. Quelch rose hastily.

Sir Hilton took his leave. He walked out to his car, and never had the Remove master been so happy to see any gentleman's back.

He really was gone at last.

Mr. Quelch was able to proceed with his own affairs now. Sir Hilton had seemed sublimely unconscious that Mr. Quelch had any affairs to proceed with.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Quelch. "Upon my word! Dear me!"

Mr. Quelch left his study. A few minutes later, passing along the passage near the Rag, he heard a fat voice from that apartment

"I say, you fellows! It's true! The kid's been put in Wharton's study—he, he, he! Makes out that he's the nephew of old Popper—that old blighter at Popper Court, you know! And I jolly well tell you that he's a circus performer.

Mr. Quelch stopped dead.

It was not his way to take notice of remarks that were not intended for his ears, but now he simply couldn't help it.

Sir Hilton had impressed upon him, not once, but many times, the strict necessity of eliminating the circus, as it were; of hushing up that peculiar portion of his nephew's past.

Mr. Quelch fully agreed with the baronet on that point, if on no other. He had no doubt that the boy would be sensible enough to say nothing about it at Greyfriars.

And now he had learned that, already, on the first day of the term, it was known.

"A clown or acrobat or something," went on Bunter, with a fat chortle. "I've seen him riding on an elephant in a circus procession."

"Gammon!" said Skinner.

"Oh, really, Skinner——"

"What rot!" said Peter Todd. "I saw him come in with old Popper! He's Popper's nephew, all right."

"I tell you I saw him riding an elephant in a circus procession!" roared

Bunter. "I saw him with a fat, old, boozey circus man."

"Bosh!"

"You can ask Wharton. Wharton saw him, too. It was near Wharton's place in Surrey. All of them saw him!"

"Rubbish!"

"Well, ask Wharton, Toddy, you beast! I say, Wharton! Here's Wharton; he'll tell you! Wharton, old chap, didn't you see that fellow they called Pop in a circus procession?"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" came Wharton's reply.

"You saw him, too, Bob——"

"Fathead!"

"Look here, you jolly well know it's true!" howled Bunter. "You all saw him when I did, and you jolly well know——"

"Can't you mind your own bizney?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"I say, is there anything in it, you fellows?" asked Bolsover major. "If there isn't, you can say so, can't you?"

"They jolly well know!" hooted Bunter.

"Oh, shut up, Bunter!"

"The shut-upfulness is the proper caper, my esteemed Bunter! The jawfulness is too terrific!"

"I can jolly well tell you——"

Mr. Quelch walked on his way.

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for sending in the following
Greyfriars limerick:

Coker stormed up the passage
one day.
"Where's that fat barrel,
tart-stealing jay?"
'Neath the table, with fear,
Bunter quaked: "I'm not
here.
Don't you beasts go and give
me away!"

Sent in by Miss Ethel Carr,
43, Saville Street, Dalton Brook,
Rotherham.

Obviously, it was not going to be kept secret at Greyfriars that Popper of the Remove had once been Pop of the Circus.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Peculiar New Boy!

"QUELCHY put you in here?"

"Yes."

"Right-ho!"

Pop looked rather suspiciously at Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent as they came into the study.

The one-time acrobat of Walker's circus was, perhaps, a little suspicious and touchy among the crowd of well-dressed fellows at his new school. And Billy Bunter had not given him a good impression of the manners and customs of Greyfriars men.

"You're Popper?" asked Wharton.

"Yes."

"I'm Wharton, and this kid is Nugent!"

The suspicious look on Pop's face was changing to one of amazement. He recognised the two schoolboys now.

"My only 'at!" he ejaculated.

Wharton smiled.

"You remember seeing us before?" he asked.

"I never thought I'd meet anybody I knew 'ere," said Pop. "But I seem to 'ave met 'arf Greyfriars, from what

I can make out. There was that fat bloke in specs, and now you two——"

"And you'll see three more who know you," said Nugent. "But it doesn't matter, I suppose. We couldn't help seeing you on that elephant, you know!"

"I s'pose not," said Pop. "My 'at! My only goffer! And old Popper tellin' me to be careful not to let it out that I ever was at a circus!"

"Oh crumbs! Did he?"

"Mighty pertickler about it, too!" grinned Pop. "He's ashamed of it, you see, and thinks I ought to be ashamed of it, too. Well, I ain't!" he added, rather aggressively.

"Quite right!" said Harry. "Why should you be?"

"Oh!" said Pop, a little taken aback. "That's 'ow you look at it, is it? You ain't looking down on a bloke?"

"What rot!"

"My uncle figgered that the blokes 'ere would turn up their noses at me if they knowed," said Pop.

"Well, if you see a nose turned up, punch it!" said Harry. "That will turn it down again."

Pop chuckled.

"You'll find all sorts of chaps here," said Harry. "Most of us are quite decent, I assure you. It was rather unlucky that Bunter saw you on the elephant if you wanted to keep the circus dark."

"I don't want to; but Uncle Popper wanted to, and I said I'd keep it dark," said Pop. "Well, it ain't my fault if it's got out. Fur as I'm concerned, I'd shout it out from the 'ouse-tops! And I'm jolly glad it's out, too, bein' as I didn't let it out myself. My guardian said I mightn't be able to stay at Greyfriars if it got out."

"Don't you want to stay?"

"Do I want to stay?" said Pop derisively. "Course I don't! I want to get back to Walker's! If this 'ere makes me 'op, I'll be jolly thankful!"

Skinner of the Remove looked in at the doorway. Several fellows looked in over his shoulder.

"Is he here?" asked Skinner.

"There he is," said Bolsover major. "That's Popper! I say, Popper, were you ever at a circus? Bunter says——"

"Ho, he, he!" came a fat cackle from the passage. "He jolly well won't deny it! He's a blessed acrobat, or a clown, or something!"

"Kick that fat frog, somebody!" said Harry Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

Pop of the Remove looked rather surlily at the crowd of faces in the doorway.

"I tell you he's a low bounder!" came Bunter's voice again. "Talks like a bargee, and drops his 'h's' all over the shop! He, he, he!"

"Well, let's hear him drop them," said Skinner, staring with uncivil curiosity at the new fellow. "Go it, Popper!"

Pop coloured. Bunter's remark, perhaps, had recalled his tutor's training to his mind, and when he spoke it was the careful diction he had learned from the industrious and painstaking Mr. Clegg.

"I'm sorry I can't oblige you, whoever you are," he answered. "Do you fellows always come and stare at a new chap like this? Can't say much for your manners, if you do!"

"He talks all right!" said Bolsover major. "I knew that fat idiot was gammoning, as usual."

"Oh, really, Bolsover! I tell you he was dropping his 'h's' all over the shop——"



"You come in 'ere, you fat idjit," roared Pop, glaring at Bunter, "and I'll give you something that'll shut up your silly tater-trap for you!" "Oh scissors!" gasped Skinner.

"You're old Popper's nephew, ain't you?" asked Snoop.

"I have that honour," answered Pop gravely.

"Heir to the jolly old baronetcy, and all that?" asked Skinner.

"Not at all; I understand that there are others," said Pop, "cousins of mine. There's quite a lot of Poppers about. I believe the heir to the baronetcy is a captain in the Guards."

"And you've never been in a circus?"

"Lots of times! I'm fond of circuses!"

"I mean, you've never performed in a circus?"

"Baronet's nephews don't perform in circuses, as a rule, do they?" asked Pop.

"He's gammoning!" yelled Bunter. "I tell you I saw him on the elephant, in the procession, dressed up like an acrobat, and those fellows saw him, too! I saw him with a fat, boozy, old circus man—"

"You fat spadger!" roared Pop, dropping all of a sudden the high-class pronunciation he had imbibed from Mr. Clegg. "You come in 'ere, you fat idjit, and I'll give you a wipe round the kisser that'll shut up your silly tater-trap for you!"

"Oh scissors!" gasped Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is that how you talked at the circus?" yelled Snoop. "Oh, my hat!"

Pop glared at them.

"Yes, that's 'ow I talked at the circus, and it's 'ow I'll talk 'ere, if I blooming well like!" he retorted.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here, you fatheads clear off!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "This isn't a peep-show! Move along!"

"Isn't it?" chuckled Skinner. "Oh,

my hat! Quelchy will have a fit when he gets Popper in class!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton shut the study door on the grinning crowd. He coloured rather uncomfortably as he turned to Popper.

"Don't mind them, kid," he said. "You—you see—"

"Bless your little 'eart, I don't mind!" answered Pop. "But I ain't 'earing any bloke run down Jimmy Walker. Old Jimmy's one of the best! Old Jimmy stood by me when I hadn't a bean. He's worth a 'undred of Sir Hilton Popper, and then a few more! Old Popper never took any notice of me till a fortune was left me; and he wouldn't 'ave then, only he bags three 'undred a year so long as he's my guardian."

"Oh," said Harry.

"The old codger's on the make, that's what he is, with all his airs!" grunted Pop. "Old Jimmy never was! I'll wring that fat spadger's neck, if he don't shut up about old Jimmy!"

"What about tea?" murmured Nugent.

"Prime!" said Pop. Then he chuckled. "I mean, ripping. You fellers say ripping when you mean prime, don't you?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Make it ripping," he said. "When in Rome, do as Rome does, you know."

"I'll make it spiffing, if you like!" answered Pop cheerfully. "I've told old Popper that I'll do my best 'ere. I said I'd keep it dark about the circus. 'Tain't my fault it's got out, is it?"

"Certainly not."

"And I'm glad it 'as!" said Pop emphatically. "P'r'aps I can't 'ang on 'ere now. I ain't running down your

school, you know; but, of course, I wouldn't be found dead 'ere, if I could 'elp it! If I 'ave to 'op it, 'ear, 'ear!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Nugent. "You'd rather be at the circus?"

"Wouldn't I just!" sighed Pop. "I can tell you, I 'ave—I mean, have—to keep a 'old on myself all the time, to talk like what Clegg taught me. It don't come natural. I s'pose you fellows are used to it. Well, I ain't!"

"You'll get used to it," said Harry, with a smile.

"I'd rather mizzle," said Pop. "Why old Popper couldn't leave me where I was, and where I was 'appy, beats me. P'r'aps if I get the 'oof out of this school, he may make up his mind to it—what?"

"Look here, kid," said Wharton seriously, "you're here, and you ought to try to make the best of it. If you've come into a fortune, you'll have a position to keep up some day. You need to get ready for that."

"You ain't never swung on a 'igh trapeze?" asked Pop.

"Nunno!"

"Ain't never 'ung on by your 'eels, with a whole tentful roaring cheers and giving you the 'ands?"

"No!" gasped Wharton.

"Well, if you 'ad, you'd understand," said Pop. "Gimme a chance of 'oppin' it, and you won't see my 'eels for dust!"

After which the subject dropped; and, the rest of the Co. having come up, there was tea in Study No. 1.

Pop of the Remove found the Famous Five very polite and agreeable; and they found him rather entertaining, with his tales of life at the circus, which he told with great gusto and very few aspirates.

They agreed that they rather liked Pop. But they wondered a good deal how he was going to get on at Greyfriars, and rather doubted whether he would continue long to honour the Remove with his presence.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Row in the Rag!

"ERE!" Every eye in Big Hall turned on Popper of the Remove.

The Head was taking call-over. The whole school was assembled in Big Hall, masters and prefects in their places, and fellow after fellow had answered "adsum" to his name. But when Dr. Locke came to the name of the new junior there was no adsum in response. Pop answered cheerfully, and in a loud and penetrating voice:

"Ere!"

"Ear, 'ear!" murmured Skinner, and there was a chuckle in the Remove.

Dr. Locke was seen to start.

"Popper!" he repeated.

"Ere!"

"You fathead!" whispered Bob Cherry. "You don't say here—"

"He didn't say here," giggled Snoop; "he said 'ere!"

There was a suppressed chortle, and Mr. Quelch's gimlet eye gleamed at his Form.

"Silence!"

"You say adsum," whispered Bob.

"What for?" asked Pop.

"It's Latin, and means 'Here I am.'"

"That old cove ain't Latin, is he?"

"Oh crumbs! No."

"Then what's the good of torking to 'im in Latin?"

"Silence!" hooted Mr. Quelch.

The Head was going on with the roll.

It was not uncommon for a new boy to make such a mistake, though Pop was the first new boy who had said 'ere.

A new boy who made a mistake was generally overwhelmed with confusion under the sea of eyes. Not so Pop of the Remove. He gazed round cheerfully at staring faces.

There was absolutely no shyness about the nephew of Sir Hilton Popper. Probably his early life among spangles and sawdust had knocked all the shyness out of him, and the Greyfriars crowd was much less numerous than the crowd he had been accustomed to face in Walker's World-Famous Circus.

There was a good deal of suppressed merriment in the Remove, and fellows in other Forms, who as a rule took no interest whatever in a new kid in the Lower Fourth, showed a very unusual interest in Pop.

When the fellows came out of Hall, Coker of the Fifth bore down on the new junior.

"Here, kid!" exclaimed Coker.

Pop looked round at him. He did not seem to like Coker's manner.

"Here, goat!" he answered.

"Eh, what?" ejaculated Coker. "What do you mean, you cheeky young ass?"

"Jest what I say," answered Pop cheerily. "If I'm a kid, you, bein' older'n me, you must be a goat!"

"That's cheek," said Coker, frowning, "and I don't like your cheek."

"Can't say I like yours," said Pop, "or the rest of your face, neither! I s'pose you call it a face?"

"Where did you come from?" asked Coker. "What sort of a blighter have they landed on Greyfriars this time? What's your name?"

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"Popper. What's yourn?"

"Yourn!" repeated Coker dazedly. "Did you say yourn? Oh, my only hat! What's Greyfriars coming to, I wonder!"

And Coker of the Fifth walked on his way, apparently quite overcome.

Popper stared after him, and walked away, whistling shrilly through his teeth. Whistling in the passages at Greyfriars was not only forbidden but unheard of.

"Here, young 'un, chuck that!" called out Wingate of the Sixth.

Pop stared at him.

"Chuck what?" he demanded.

"Whistling! It's not allowed here."

"Oh, my!" said Pop. "Can't a bloke whistle if he wants to?"

"A—a what?" ejaculated the Greyfriars captain.

"Bloke."

"I don't think I'd use that word, kid," said Wingate, looking at the new boy very curiously. "It's not—h'm—used here."

"Orlright," said Pop. "I ain't above taking a 'int! Well, then, can't a covey whistle 'ore if he likes?"

"Neither a bloke nor a covey is allowed to whistle in the passages!" said Wingate, laughing. "So chuck it!"

"You ain't a master 'ere, I s'pose?" said Pop, eyeing him.

"Nunno! But I'm a prefect, and you have to do as a prefect tells you."

"Oh, come off!" said Pop derisively. "Think you can stuff me?"

"Wha-a-at?" ejaculated Wingate.

"Prefect!" said Pop. "I've learned all about prefects with old Jawbones—Roman officials they was. You'll be saying you're a consul next!"

"My only hat!" said Wingate blankly. "What sort of a weird merchant is this! Here, Wharton, as you're head of the Remove, you'd better take this sportsman in hand, and explain to him what a prefect is, and that he'd better not argue with one."

"Right-ho!" said Harry, laughing; and he slipped his arm through Pop's, and led him away to the Rag.

He explained to the new fellow, on the way, that certain members of the Sixth Form were appointed prefects by the headmaster, and endowed with authority over the Lower School. Pop listened patiently, but announced his opinion that it was "rot."

When they came into the Rag, the voice of William George Bunter, like that of the turtle, was heard in the land.

"I say, you fellows, it's too thick!" declared Bunter. "I say, it's the giddy limit! Guttersnipes coming to Greyfriars, you know! I can hardly imagine what my people would think of it. If my titled relations knew—"

"The Duke de Bunter would have a fit!" remarked Peter Todd.

"Oh, really, Toddy! It's not a joke!" said Bunter warmly. "There's a limit; and that outsider is the limit! I can tell you what, I'm going to write to my father about it!"

"Who's going to lend Bunter a stamp?" asked Peter.

"Beast! We've got some rank outsiders here already," said Bunter, with great indignation. "That fellow Linley, who worked in a factory—"

"What about me?" asked a quiet voice.

"Oh! I—I didn't see you, Linley, old fellow! I—I mean, we can't be expected to stand that outsider Popper in the Remove. He may be old Popper's nephew, but he's no class—absolutely no class! I tell you I saw him riding on an elephant in a circus

procession—and I saw him with a fat old, boozy circus man—a frightful old ruffian—Yarooooooh!"

Pop came into the Rag with Wharton—at a rather unlucky moment for Bunter.

A finger and thumb closed like a voice on Bunter's fat ear.

Bunter spun round with a yell.

"You fat idjit!" said Pop.

"Yow-ow-ow! Leggo, you beast!"

"You blinkin' fat image! Can't you keep a civil tongue in your silly 'ead when you're talking of your betters?"

"Yooooop!"

Bunter jerked his fat ear away with a roar of anguish. He caressed that fat ear with a fat hand.

"Shut up, you fat chump!" said Bob Cherry.

"A still tongue is the cracked pitcher that goes longest to the well, my esteemed Bunter," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"That's all very well!" growled Bolsover major. "But Bunter's right. We don't want guttersnipes from goodness knows where at Greyfriars!"

"Oh, cheese it, Bolsover!"

"This isn't a home for hooligans!" snorted Bolsover.

"Ain't it?" said Pop cheerfully.

"What you doin' 'ere, then?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What?" gasped Bolsover major.

"What did you say?"

"Deaf?" asked Pop. "Deaf as well as fat'eaded?"

"Why, you—you—you—" gasped the bully of the Remove. "You cheeky snipe! Do you want me to mop up the floor with you?"

"Oh, my! You couldn't mop up the floor with 'arf of me!" answered Pop disdainfully.

"Couldn't I?" roared Bolsover. "I'll jolly well—"

Harry Wharton hastily interposed.

"Chuck it, Bolsover! He's a new kid—"

"Oh, let him come on, if he's 'unting for trouble," said Pop.

Bolsover major whirled round Wharton, and came on with a rush.

The next few minutes were exciting—especially for Bolsover major. When they had elapsed Bolsover was lying on his back, gasping for breath, and blinking dizzily at the ceiling.

"Oh, my hat! That kid can use his hands!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

Pop chuckled.

"I 'ad to learn to use my 'ands when I was roughing it in the circus," he said. "Now, you Bunter—"

"Here, you keep off!" yelled Bunter, in alarm. "I say, you fellows, help!"

"I ain't going to touch you, you fat idjit! But you keep a civil tongue in your 'ead, and leave Jimmy Walker alone, see? Another word about old Jimmy, and I'll give you a wipe round the mug that'll make you uglier than you are already."

And Pop walked out of the Rag, whistling, leaving the fellows there staring after him.

"Well," said Bob Cherry, "we've had some queer kids before, but we've got a coughdrop this time!"

Sir Hilton Popper's nephew had made rather a sensation on his first day at Greyfriars. New kids in a lower Form did not usually attract much attention; but that evening quite a number of fellows were discussing Pop of the Circus!

THE END.

(Don't miss the next rousing yarn in this series, entitled: "WAKING UP GREYFRIARS!" You'll vote it a real good 'un!)

THE TEST MATCH HOPE!

By
JOHN BREARLEY.



Somebody's out to ruin "Smiling" Bill Murray's cricketing career . . . and Bill's England's crack bowler!



A Blow in the Dark!

OF the wild turmoil afterwards, the fight to get into the pavilion, the hundreds of hands that gripped or patted his shoulders, Bill had only the haziest impression.

Everyone on the field appeared to be grabbing him at once while, in the dressing-room at last, a constant stream of visitors, most of them famous old-time cricketers, flocked to congratulate him.

It was a joyous moment. A clear-cut win over the Australians was definitely on the cards now, for England had three whole days in which to ram her advantage home.

When James Barr came bustling in later, laden with gold-necked bottles, not a man there but filled his glass eagerly and drank Bill Murray's health with a hearty and confident vim.

In the evening merriment reigned supreme. The Severnshire party had selected a quiet hotel, away from the busier parts of Nottingham; but as soon as dinner was over one and all proposed a theatre and a hilarious night generally; for the next day was Sunday—and a rest.

Their faces fell, however, when Bill shook his head decisively. He had had enough of crowds for one day, besides which, he owned up honestly that the long duel against Woodfull & Co. had tired him thoroughly.

"No, thanks!" he chuckled as his friends pushed back their chairs. "Not for little William. I'm absolutely done, chaps, and my blessed head's whirling. You push off and enjoy yourselves; I'm going to write a letter home, go for a short stroll, and then turn in."

"I'll stay with you, Bill," offered Nickalls at once.

"Oh, no, you won't!" snapped James Barr instantly. "If Bill wants to be quiet, let him. We'll go to a show ourselves. Bill, go to bed. Waiter, where's my hat? Where's the telephone? Where's a few taxis? Come on, all of you—scat!"

As usual, the masterful millionaire had his own way. Bill grinned in answer to their cheerful "good-nights," and watched at the door while a burly commissioner packed them skilfully into hastily-ordered cabs. With the departure of the



joyful, noisy squad, peace descended on the hotel once more. Bill waved his hand to the vanishing tail-lights, laughed, and strolled away to the little writing-room on the first floor.

The commissioner's respectful voice called after him:

"Cab for you, Mr. Murray?"
"No, thanks!" replied Bill over his shoulder. "I'm not going out—yet!" he added as an afterthought.

The commissioner nodded, and, waiting until the young Test player had disappeared up the stairs, he walked casually back to his post on the hotel steps once more.

On the other side of the road a man paused to light a cigarette, his features showing vividly in the brief glare of the match. The commissioner's hand moved slowly from his belt, and his thumb jerked upwards—twice.

Settling himself comfortably before a desk, Bill was soon deep in a letter to Alec, for the last thing he had promised was to send home a detailed account of each day's play. The grim light returned to his eyes once or twice when he thought of the younger boy's acid-burned hands, but he shook off the mood and plunged cheerily into his task.

Finished at last, Bill sealed up the bulky package and glanced through the window. The night was dark but perfect. Half an hour's stroll to blow the cobwebs off his brain, he thought,

and then—to bed! It was a comforting scheme after a hectic day.

The commissioner was still standing by the door when he went down, and Bill grinned at him.

"Just the chap I want," he said. "Are there any quiet strolls round here, d'you know?"

The man's rather small eyes narrowed as he wrinkled his brow.

"Why, yes, sir; turn left at the end of this road and you'll come to where some new houses are being built. T'other side o' that is all fields and country. It's fair deserted at this time o' night."

He drew a white handkerchief slowly from his pocket, flapped it once or twice, and mopped his forehead elaborately.

"Very hot night, Mr. Murray, ain't it?" he suggested.

Taking the hint, Bill slipped a sixpence into his ready hand, and went off, somewhat amused. The commissioner gave his handkerchief another flap and replaced it. The faintest suspicion of a leer glistened in his shifty eyes.

A moment later a little, oldish man and a sturdy young one strode briskly past the hotel. They did not look at the commissioner, and he in turn stared idly down the street in the direction Bill had taken. But as soon as the two men had passed he turned on his heel and went quickly into the lobby again. His work was finished.

It was the purest spite that had brought the Weasel and Jerry Hogan, his chief ally, hot-foot to Nottingham on Bill's track.

The discovery that their rascally attempt with the gloves had misfired had been made soon after the

INTRODUCTION.

Owing to his amazing bowling feats, "Smiling" Bill Murray, a Severnshire County colt, is hailed everywhere as the hope of England in the coming Tests, and is promised fifty pounds for every Test Match in which he plays, by a millionaire named Barr. "Smiling" Bill is more than elated at his success, for his one aim in life is to pay for an operation to cure his paralysed father, who, years before, had been "outed" when about to expose a coinng gang, and has been unable to speak ever since. Fearing the possible consequences should John Murray regain his memory, Luke Thurston and his rascally associate, the Weasel, who were Murray's assailants, try to ruin Bill's cricketing career. Bill is duly selected to play in the first Test at Trent Bridge, and soon proves a thorn in the side of the Australian team, who, batting first, put up a very poor show indeed. (Now read on.)

youngster's departure from Severn City. In a frenzy of baffled rage and disappointment the little thug had set out to follow.

By sheer luck, he had discovered an old crony in the commissionaire of the Severnshire party's hotel; one who had been easily bribed to keep an eye on Bill's movements while he was inside the place. After that the Weasel and Hogan had settled down to await their chance—and take it when it came, with a vengeance!

All this day they had trailed the cricket party. They had sat at Trent Bridge, cold with fury at Bill's triumph; but as far as getting near enough to damage him went, they were foiled by the crowds surrounding him. At the close of play they had stationed themselves within sight of the hotel door and bided their time ever since.

The sight of Bill's friends going off without him had made their tough hearts leap; the commissionaire's handkerchief sent them prowling into action. As they went swiftly but silently down the dark street, the Weasel's right hand slipped into his pocket, and closed lovingly on something that lay inside.

Meanwhile, Bill was enjoying his ramble. His head was still full of Test match thoughts, and a faint breath of air on his hot temple made him glad he had preferred this solitary tramp to a crowded theatre, with autograph hunters pouncing upon him and everyone pointing him out as the hero of the day. He was not conceited, but he had had some!

His "friend," the commissionaire, had certainly put him on to a quiet neighbourhood. He had not met a soul so far, save a watchman crouched over his brazier, and, wandering on, he was soon in the middle of a half-built region where scaffold poles for houses stood forlornly on either side of a churned-up road. Stacks of bricks and building materials sprawled between, while beyond everything lay dusky fields and faintly-rustling trees. Nottingham, like most cities, was swallowing a bit more of the countryside.

There was no moon, only starlight. A hush brooded over everything. Once the faint chink of a rolling stone came to Bill's ears, but he thought nothing of it, and the sound was not repeated. Blissfully unaware of the shadowy figures gliding towards him, he sauntered on. A car was coming into Nottingham from the country; he could see its headlights flickering occasionally, lighting the trees as it came down the twisting road towards him.

Behind him the dim, murderous shapes closed in swiftly now, Hogan hugging the ragged hedge, the Weasel fitting like a wraith from cover to cover, each with his right hand in his pocket.

The oncoming car scared them; there was no time to lose. A faint hiss stopped Hogan in his tracks. His hand, with a flat automatic in it, slid smoothly out of his pocket and covered Bill steadily, while the bristling Weasel sneaked forward on noiseless feet, a sturdy rubber club gripped tightly in his fist.

The first hint of danger Bill received was a low snarl of hatred behind him. He whirled instantly, like a tiger at bay; but the Weasel struck too quickly. Something whistled through the air and thudded soggly on the boy's left shoulder.

His bowling arm flapped to his side like an empty sleeve.

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Racked with agony, Bill lashed out savagely with his right, missed, over-balanced, and fell through a red mist, face downwards, on to the country road.

As he fell the approaching car shot round a bend and came towards him at top speed.

Captain Sinclair Again!

"GOSH, but I'm fed-up!"

And if ever a fellow looked it, Bill Murray did as he sat in the Severnshire pavilion, and watched the county gradually crumpling up before Holmes and Sutcliffe of Yorkshire.

Three days had gone by since the finish of the Test Match at Trent Bridge—seven since the night the Weasel had laid him out so completely. The mysterious and murderous attack on the young star bowler was still the sensation of the hour, however, especially as Australia had won the first Test Match just on time by 38 runs!

With Bill helpless in the pavilion England had been left with only four bowlers instead of five—much too big a handicap in Test cricket. In their second innings, the Australian batsmen had piled up runs galore, and although England had fought back sternly, a last-minute collapse had brought her to defeat.

Bill groaned even yet as he thought of that awful Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday when he had sat eating his heart out, while England's lead slowly slipped away from her.

His arm was stiff and tightly bandaged; indeed, had it not been for the kindly motorist who had jerked his car to a standstill within two yards of Bill's limp figure, picked him out of the road and raced off to the nearest doctor, matters might have been far worse. According to the medical man, if the Weasel's blow had landed another inch to the left Bill would have finished with cricket for good. As it was, he was out of the game for almost a fortnight.

The only ray of satisfaction was that he was practically a certainty for the Lord's Test, and that James Barr's first cheque for fifty pounds reposed safely in the bank. Bill had made an awkward effort to hand some of the money back as he felt he had not earned it all; but the old millionaire had soon altered his ideas on that score in one fluent and explosive sentence:

"Give it back—Gr-r-r-r!"

Still, Bill's heart was as heavy as lead. The ferocious way his unknown enemies went to work, and the rapidity of their attacks made his head swim. In the space of two weeks they had made three attempts to cripple him; both he and Alec were laid up in consequence.

He had caught an instant's glimpse of his assailant at Nottingham, just before the blow fell, and knew him for the same little man with the spiteful eyes who had led the attack coming up in the train from Severnsmouth.

But why, why, why? A hundred times a day Bill racked his brains for a reason. Jealousy? Rats! He couldn't help knowing that the Severnshire team liked him to a man. Yet—someone wanted him out of cricket entirely, for every attempt so far had been to permanently cripple his hands or his bowling-arm.

He sat staring at the play for a few minutes longer, and then got up to go, unable to stand any more. He had a clue to follow up that might lead him to the little man, but so far he had been too fed-up to follow it up, and,

besides, his left arm rendered scraping out of the question for the time being.

The idea of going to the police scarcely occurred to him—he was too like his father for that. But his rugged face hardened as he thought of what would happen if he ever did get within hitting distance of his enemies when he was fit again. If all three were present, so much the better.

He had put the acid-lined batting-gloves in his locker some days before, and now, taking them out, he strolled moodily down to the High Street, where Jakeman's Sports Shop stood on the corner. Old Jakeman himself was behind the counter when Bill entered, and he gave the young professional a welcome beam.

"Hallo, Bill! How's the arm, my boy?"

"Not so bad!" grunted Bill.

Under the old man's curious eyes he unpacked the stained and tattered gloves and spread them on the counter.

"Don't touch 'em, Mr. Jakeman!" he warned. "Somebody bought these here and doped them with carbolic acid. After that they sent 'em on to me—with this letter!"

The outfitter's eyes opened wide as he read it.

"Why, good heavens, Bill, this is terrible! I heard about poor Alec. But—but I know nothing about this, lad!"

Bill grinned despite himself. Old Mr. Jakeman was the most harmless person in Severnshire.

"I know that," he answered. "But what I want to find out is this—can you remember the chap who bought these gloves last week?"

"Eh?" spluttered the outfitter. "Good gracious, lad, you're the second person who's asked me that this afternoon!"

It was Bill's turn to jump.

"Great Scott! Who was the first?" he asked eagerly.

"Why, a—a stranger to me, Bill—a London gent, I think—at least, he spoke very drawly and wore a monocle, and—"

"Ye gods! Captain Sinclair!"

"Dunno his name, lad. He didn't bring in any gloves with him, but he asked me if I remembered selling any pairs last week, and if so, what the customers were like who bought them!"

He shrugged his shoulders apologetically.

"I couldn't help him, o' course. I can't possibly remember everyone who comes in here—specially as one pair o' gloves doesn't make much of a stir, you see."

Bill was thinking rapidly. The full story of Alec's mishap with the doped gloves had been common property in the city for a week past, which would explain why Captain Monty Sinclair knew all about them. But what was he doing following up the same clue as himself—without the gloves?

Dismissing the question from his mind for a moment, Bill turned to the outfitter again.

"I understand!" he nodded. "Well, I think I know the chap who did buy the gloves. See if you can recollect him from my description, will you, Mr. Jakeman?"

Bending over the counter, the young cricketer drew a vivid picture of the Weasel as he remembered him in the railway carriage, while Jakeman listened closely. To his delight, a gleam dawned in the old fellow's eye, and he nodded sharply.

"Yes—yes, I remember!" he cried excitedly. "Little bad-temperd man, with a nasty voice; tried to beat me

down on the prico. Yes, yes; that's the man. I remember wondering at the time what he wanted with batting-gloves; little dried-up sneak!"

"You don't know him?" asked Bill quickly. "Or his name?"

"Don't know his name!" replied Jake-man, slowly and thoughtfully. "But, d'ye know, son, I believe I've seen him more'n once walking up the High Street yonder. Somehow he seemed famfhar."

"Great Scott! Look!"

At mention of the High Street, Bill's eyes had automatically glanced through the shop window into the busy thoroughfare, and for one startled moment his limbs refused to act. In the next, he had shot out of the shop, leaving an astonished old man staring after him open-mouthed.

For, on the other side of the road, strutting confidently along, with a truculent glance for any passer-by who happened to catch his eye, was the evil little hound for whom he was searching!

Heedless of his crippled arm, Bill Murray crossed the pavement in two giant strides. Having eyes for only one thing—that small, hateful figure ahead—he utterly failed to notice a small two-seater parked a few yards below Jake-

man's, with the driver standing by its side.

But the driver noticed him, and gave a low whistle of surprise. As Bill came scudding past, a hand reached out and pulled him up short.

"Hallo, dear old thing!"

Bill jumped as though he'd been stung.

"Captain Sinclair!"

"Correct, laddie!"

Recovering himself with an effort, Bill tried to draw himself away, his eyes still following his quarry.

"Can't stop now, sir!" he panted. "I'm in a hurry!"

To Bill's surprise, the grip on his arm tightened sternly. Yet Captain Sinclair still smiled with lazy urbanity.

"I know you are, old fruit! And I've just tumbled why! And instead of letting you go I'm going to take you straight back to your little cottage!" he drawled quietly.

Instantly Bill's cheeks went red with anger, and he tried again to pull free from that amazingly powerful grasp. He glanced furiously up the road, and saw his quarry rapidly disappearing in the distance.

"Go to blazes!" he snorted. "You interfering bounder! Let me go!"

A few people were already beginning

to turn their heads in curiosity; he could see old Jakeman bobbing about in his doorway like a scared old hen.

Suddenly he became aware of two very hard and very blue eyes boring into his and the captain's voice speaking low and sharp.

"You reckless young ass!" it whispered angrily. "Follow the Weasel and you'll get hurt—badly. Do as I say, please! I'm Sinclair—of Scotland Yard!"

Discoveries I

AS usual, Alec was alone in the cottage with his father when the captain's car drew up at the gate a few minutes later, and Bill tumbled out with a look of astonishment still on his face.

He stepped past Alec into the parlour without a word, and both boys faced the captain in silence when he came lounging gracefully through the door after him. Catching sight of Alec, he nodded cheerfully.

"Ah, hallo, my son! How are the lilywhite hands and so forth?"

"All—all right, sir!" stammered Alec, confused by the unexpected visit and Bill's strained expression. He stood glancing from one to the other, while
(Continued on next page.)

COME INTO THE OFFICE, BOYS!

A BIG SURPRISE FOR YOU!

FOR some time past I have been planning a gilt-edged, top-hole, first-class surprise for you fellows, which I'm going to spring on you in a very few weeks' time. That it will please every present reader, I'm thoroughly convinced; that it will be much sought after by boys and girls in every portion of the globe is one of those very rare things labelled a certainty. Just what is the nature of this big surprise I'm keeping until next week. You must allow me to tickle your curiosity for a week, at any rate; that's only a fraction of the time I and my staff have devoted to this corking wheeze. Right bang from the beginning of the year the good old MAGNET has forged ahead, gaining new friends, both young and old, and added considerably to its high reputation. That's the stuff; there's no boundary to the MAGNET'S road of progress; there's no limit to the BIG SURPRISES in store for its host of loyal readers. Watch next week's chat and all of you will be let into the secret of the MAGNET'S LATEST AND GREATEST OFFER!

A VETERAN PIONEER!

Of course, you've all heard of "Deadwood Dick." What boy, British or American, hasn't? There are quite a number of people, however, who imagine that he never existed. They are wrong. Deadwood Dick was very much alive—until just recently. And now I've heard that Deadwood Dick, one of the last of the veteran pioneers of the Wild West, has died.

He died at Deadwood, the little town in South Dakota from which he took his name, and where he first sprang into prominence as a fighter of Red Indians and bands of outlaws. There were stirring times in those days, and Deadwood Dick was one of the first of the shot-gun patrols which rode with the Deadwood stage coach to protect it from robbers.

In those days, South Dakota was known

as the "Badlands," and a man had to be pretty quick "on the draw" if he wanted to live long! Deadwood Dick was, and he played an important part when the Sioux Indians revolted and attacked the white men, persuading other tribes to join in with them. Much slaughter took place, but after some time the whites, thanks to the efforts of such fighters as Buffalo Bill and Deadwood Dick, managed to conquer the Indians, and peace was restored. And now Deadwood Dick, the last of the pioneers, has gone, but his memory will always be kept green in the stirring tales of the Badlands in which he appears as the hero.

ONE of my readers, John Harris, of Gravesend, asks me an interesting question this week, which reminds me of a curious thing that happened a short while ago. One can understand small objects being misplaced, but can you understand this:

LOST—AN EARTHQUAKE!

And an earthquake that must have been one of the largest ever experienced in history. John wants to know how scientists can tell there has been an earthquake long before the news comes from the stricken district. This is done by means of an instrument known as a "Seismometer." The slightest tremors of the earth are recorded on this, so that whenever an earthquake takes place the man in charge of the seismometer knows it. There is one of these instruments at Kew, and others in various parts of the world, and by comparing notes, the scientists can obtain a rough idea of where the earthquake took place.

But this is the curious thing! Just a month or so ago, all the seismometers in the world registered an earthquake of tremendous proportions, but they were unable to say exactly where it occurred. It is thought to have happened

somewhere round about the Black Sea, but no news of any earthquake in that neighbourhood has yet come through. Therefore, one of the biggest earthquakes that the world has ever known has been lost!

The explanation is, doubtless, that the 'quake took place somewhere in an uninhabited region, and therefore no damage to life or property has been done. But the scientists would dearly like to know where that confounded earthquake has got to.

A. Boresford, of 8, Florence Grove, Burgass Road, Thornewood, Nottingham, will be busily engaged in showing his chums his fine MAGNET penknife this week. I have awarded it to him for the following yarn, which should raise a smile on your faces.

Jimson: "How do you manage to afford such a long holiday?"

Jameson: "Quite simple, y'know. One month on the sands and eleven on the 'rocks'!"

Now we'll have a look at the Black Book!

First amongst next week's attractions comes

"WAKING UP GREYFRIARS!"

By Frank Richards.

And if you don't chuckle all the time you are reading this full-of-fun yarn—well, I'm a Dutchman! "Pop" once again plays a prominent part in it, and that in itself is sufficient to ensure that this latest yarn of the finest boys' writer is going to hold your interest until the very last line.

After that comes a long instalment of our great Test Match serial:

"THE TEST MATCH HOPE!"

in which you will continue the adventures of "Smiling" Bill Murray. I told you that this was the finest serial ever written about the "Tests." Don't you agree with me?

Jokes, limericks, and your Editor's chat, in which latter will be divulged the nature of the Big Surprise mentioned earlier on, will round off a really tip-top programme. So don't miss next week's issue whatever you do!

YOUR EDITOR.

the captain seated himself carelessly in the rocking-chair and beamed up through his monocle.

"All quiet and comfy!" he announced. "Well, young Murray, I suppose I've given you a shock, what?"

"You have!" replied Bill curtly. "Alec, this gentleman is from Scotland Yard—so he says!"

"Oh, it's quite true, dear boy!" protested the captain amiably, as Alec gasped. "I suppose," he went on slowly, "I ought to have explained when I was here last; only—well, I had to be a bit cautious at first, you see!"

He looked up brightly at Bill, who returned his glance icily.

"I see!" he replied. "Well, you're going to explain now, Captain Sinclair, or there's going to be trouble. You wouldn't have held me up in the High Street just now if I'd had two arms—and that's flat. I don't want you butting in, Scotland Yard or not! The fellow I was after was the man who knocked me out at Nottingham—and burnt Alec's hands!"

Very slowly, Captain Sinclair raised his arm and pointed to the silent figure at the bureau.

"He's the chap who brought that about, too!" he answered softly.

"What!" Both boys leaped towards him with a roar.

"How d'you know?"

"Can you prove it, sir?"

The captain shook his head gently.

"No, I can't yet!" he confessed reluctantly. "But I might if you'll help!"

As before, his languid air fell away as though by magic, and he waved a hand briskly.

"Now, look here, lads, let's stop sparring and get to business! Sit down, both of you! I'm serious!"

"Bill, I've told you the truth. I'm from Scotland Yard—a special investigator. And I'm the one official at the Yard your father dealt with when he, too, was a detective!"

He paused to let the words sink in. "Then that's why—" began Alec eagerly.

"Yes. That's why the shock of my coming here last time revived your dad for a few seconds. In the old days I was the man who handled John Murray's confidential reports and acted on them—the only man who could possibly call himself Lone John Murray's assistant. So he recognised me, you see, and knew what I was. And because of that he tried to tell me something!"

"Oh!" cried Bill contritely. "I'm sorry!"

The captain's hand silenced him.

"Forget it, Bill. Now, listen again, lads. You know all about your dad's reputation by now; and you know, as we do, that he was on a big case when he was smashed up. And it was right here in Severnshire where he was hurt!"

The boys held their breath.

"Well, Scotland Yard never forgets these things. Ever since then I've been trying to find out what that case was, and who knocked John Murray over the head. At the time he went down, somebody was flooding England with counterfeit notes. Wonderful forgeries they were, too, and no one could get a line on them. Your father said nothing, of course; but, somehow, from a vague hint that he once dropped to me, I feel sure he was after that 'some-one.' And—mark this—from the day

John Murray was crippled, and the police took charge, the counterfeiting stopped—sharp!"

A solemn hush filled the little room, while the detective lit a cigarette slowly.

"Bill, three attempts have been made lately to shove you out of cricket for good. Why?"

At the echo to his own ceaseless thoughts Bill grinned ruefully.

"Search me!"

"Right! The first was in the local train. I didn't take much stock of that, because, from the vague description given to the police, you might have fallen foul of an ordinary bunch of train or racecourse roughs—savvy?"

Bill nodded.

"But the second—the gloves that burnt Alec's hands—was too deliberate. As soon as I heard about that I pricked up my ears!"

"Loud cheers!" remarked Alec, with a comical glance at his bandages.

"Quite!" The captain acknowledged the sly dig with a smile. His face sobered immediately, however. "And the third attack—before I could take steps to prevent it—told me a lot. And because the police aren't exactly dead from the neck up, we soon punted round and found exactly who the thugs were, both in the train and at Nottingham!"

"Oh!"

"One was the little man—Joe Necker, known to his 'friends' as the Weasel. The other was Jerry Hogan. The third doesn't matter so much.

"Now, we've had an eye on Necker for some time, chiefly because he's got plenty of money and doesn't work for it. Up till now he's been too clever for us, however. But as soon as he joined up with Hogan he made a mistake, because Jerry's an old friend of ours, and he's done 'time' three times for carrying a gun and for brutal assault!"

"Although neither of 'em know it—as you saw by the way the Weasel swaggered along to-day, Bill—both could have been arrested last Monday. Yet they're still free, because I want 'em free. For some reason—I haven't quite fathomed yet why—the Weasel is deliberately after your scalp, Bill. If I can find that reason, I shall be on to something big. I'll tell you why in a minute."

Fascinated by this curious glimpse into the ways of police officials and criminals, Bill and Alec could only nod mechanically. The detective flicked his cigarette-end into the grate and tapped Bill on the knee.

"Now, my son, think, and think carefully! Why does Weasel Joe Necker want your cricket career smashed?"

Another deep silence fell. Chin in hand, Bill sat staring before him, while he thought harder than he had ever done before in his life. The detective's words had given him fresh facts to go on; yet he had never harmed the Weasel in his life—hadn't even known he existed until that afternoon in the train.

It couldn't be that the Weasel wanted to stop him playing for England. Men like that weren't usually interested in cricket. And if someone was paying him to do it, then who could it be? As far as Bill knew, he hadn't an enemy in the world, and it would have to be a pretty bitter one who would try to cripple him for life.

Why—why—why? The question churned in his brain over and over again. His eyes, rambling round the

room as if to aid his thoughts, fell on John Murray, sitting crumpled up in his chair, as Captain Sinclair's words ran through his head: Why does Weasel Joe Necker want—

And then, like a great white light flooding a darkened room, an explanation dawned on him, so startling that his heart thumped horribly, and he half-rose in his chair from the shock.

The captain's hand fell on his arm like a vice.

"Yes, Bill?" he whispered piercingly. "What is it?"

"It's dad!" choked Bill. "Dad! Don't you see? It's not me they're after really. It's only to stop me earning Mr. Barr's money for dad's operation! Oh, my only aunt!"

All three, the foppishly-dressed detective and the two bandaged youngsters, stared at each other, quivering with eagerness.

"What do you mean, lad?" asked Sinclair alertly. "I know about Jimmy Barr's offer—everybody in Severnshire does. But what's this about your dad's operation? By gad, we're getting near!" he cried exultantly.

In white-hot words, that tumbled over themselves, Bill explained the secret ambition he and Alec cherished between them regarding John Murray. Captain Sinclair's eyes blazed as he drank in every syllable.

"And who else have you told besides me?" he snapped the moment Bill stopped.

Both boys looked blank.

"Why, no one! We've never mentioned it to a soul before—ever!"

The captain's face clouded.

"But you must have done!" he persisted. "Think! If no one knows about this, why should anyone try to stop you?"

"Oh!" mumbled Bill dazedly, seeing his wild theory crumble into thin air. "Never thought of that! I—"

A shrill whoop from Alec made both spin round to where the younger boy fairly danced with feverish excitement.

"Yes, we have—we have!" he yelled. "The man at the window—the man at the window, Bill! I've just remembered! That night—"

Every vestige of colour drained from Bill's brown face; he collapsed slowly into his chair.

"The man at the window!" he repeated thickly. "My stars, but it can't be, Alec!"

"What is it? Tell me!" The captain's voice cut in like the crack of a whip.

"Why, a—a chap looked in here the night I first told Alec about Mr. Barr's offer!" muttered Bill. "It was the day after the Australian match. Alec and I nearly went off our chumps when I got home; and we were talking about it for hours—"

"And what a chance it gave us for dad!" broke in Alec.

"Let me think. Yes, I remember shouting out loud that I'd play in every Test and earn the whole two-fifty, so we could bring back dad's life and memory—"

"And then we saw someone at the window!"

"At that very moment?" breathed Sinclair tensely.

"Yes; because I grabbed Bill's arm and stopped him!" cried Alec.

"What did you do? Quick!"

"We dashed outside. But the chap had gone. We ferreted around, but couldn't see any signs. And ever since then we've reckoned it was an old

tramp or a gipsy sneaking round to steal or spy out the land!"

"Ah! You heard nothing? Saw nothing?"

"Not a sign! The chap must have moved like lightning!"

The captain did not reply at once, but took another cigarette from his case. His eyes sparkled like blue gems, and both boys noticed that his fingers fumbled slightly with suppressed emotion.

"It was Joe Necker!" he said quietly, after a while. "I can't prove it yet, but it was! He can move like a ghost!"

"Phew!"

"And I'm slap on the trail at last!"

With his fingers drawing smoothly the captain sank back into his chair and regarded the boys quaintly. He was fast becoming his old self again.

"Some afternoon—what! By Jove, I'm glad I stopped you from tackling that little fiend one-handed, Bill. From now on I'm having you both watched wherever you go. So if you see any strange birds knocking around here don't be alarmed!"

Flinging his arms wide, he drew a long, deep breath of satisfaction and chuckled merrily. After that he grew serious again.

"Now, let's sum up what we know. We know there's a spark of life and memory somewhere in your father's brain still. We know, too, that the Weasel is after Bill, because Bill can earn the money that will set that spark into a flame again. And—"

He nodded significantly.

"You can bet the Weasel knows that

as soon as John Murray gets his memory back something mighty unpleasant is going to happen!"

"Good gad!" Bill remembered something. "Is it anything to do with those forgeries you were talking about, then?"

Captain Sinclair shook his head thoughtfully.

"That I don't know for certain. But there's this much to go on—clever though the Weasel thinks himself, I've seen him go prowling into Luke Thurston's house five times during the last month!"

"Luke Thurston!" cried Bill and Alec together. "What, Mr. Thurston, of Woodside Hall?"

"Mr. Thurston, of Woodside Hall!" repeated Sinclair soberly. "Up in the Beacon Hills. Mr. Thurston, who was once an engraver in Jo'burg, the mysterious rich man who has financed half the business firms in Severnshire for the last four years!"

His fist thudded on the table.

"And the man who disappeared suddenly for six months, the very night John Murray was silenced!"

A fortnight later the English cricket world threw out its chest and rejoiced mightily, while forty thousand people at Lords burst over the boundaries and stampeded across the ground to cheer the England team that had just beaten Australia, and so drawn level in the race for the Ashes.

It had been a great game, its fortunes swaying breathlessly throughout the three long days.

Winning the toss again, Australia had batted first, and a long groan of dismay had gone up when, in the second over, Bill's damaged arm let him down completely. Many people had protested against playing the young Severnshire star, but after his magnificent bowling at Nottingham, the Selection Committee had taken a chance. Bill, too, had honestly believed himself fit, for he had bowled against Derbyshire during the previous three days, and done well. But after eight balls in the Test, a red-hot pain had darted through his shoulder joint as he tried to get a little extra spin on the ball, and from then on his arm was useless for the day.

Despite this blow, England had weighed in nobly. Tate, Larwood & Co. stuck to the Cornstalk batsmen like grim death, and dismissed them for 279—a moderate enough total under the circumstances.

Followed then a glorious innings by Hobbs and a dour fighting century by Sutcliffe. These two slowly, but thoroughly, took the edge off the bowling, as they had so often done before, and then Hammond and Tyldesley proceeded to make hay of it.

First thing on Tuesday morning, England declared, leading by exactly 300, and all eyes turned on Bill Murray again.

(You can be sure Bill will play a big part in the second Test match. Read how he fares in next week's gripping instalment. Order your MAGNET now!)

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"HARD ye latest, lads!"
 Fatty Bacon of ye Remove
 put his head round the portal
 of ye Common-room and asked
 that question.
 "Queen Anne's dead!" hazarded
 Malypene.
 "She hasn't been born yet!"
 retorted ye fat scholar. "And though it not
 think it a laughing matter, either, when
 thou knowest."
 "What is it, then, Fatty?" inquired
 Launcelet de Broke, the cheery Prefect
 of ye Remove and Captain of Junior
 Sports. "Some matter of great serious-
 ness?"
 "Ay, I'll tell thee. Dr. Goodsmyle,
 our worthy headmaster, has decided that
 we do not work hard now."
 "What!" exclaimed a dozen indignant
 voices.
 "So he has posted a notice on ye board
 increasing our hours of labour from now
 on," finished Fatty Bacon. "Ye giddy
 limb, ain't it?"
 "By my doublet, I should think so!"
 cried Launcelet de Broke hotly. "Surely
 ye Head ought to be content with our
 working from five in ye morn up to nine
 of ye evening. Come, lads, we will see
 into this!"
 "What-ho!"

YE REBELS OF GREY FRIARS!

"All work and no
 play makes Jack a
 dull boy." Dr.
 Goodsmyle appar-
 ently didn't think
 so in the Good Olde
 Days . . . hence
 the rebellion at
 Grey Friars.



And a great crowd of Removites
 followed their prefect downstairs to ye
 Hall, where they found an excited con-
 course gathered round ye notice-board.
 Launcelet de Broke made his way to the
 forefront and read out ye notice aloud:
 "BY ORDER,
 All Collegers will work longer at their
 lessons as from to-morrow. Ye new and
 revised time-table is given herunder:
 4.30 a.m. to 8.29 a.m.—LATIN.
 8.30 a.m. to 9.00 a.m.—BREAD AND
 CHEESE AND WATER.
 9.00 a.m. to 12.59 p.m.—LATIN.
 1.00 p.m.—CHEESE AND WATER
 AND BREAD.
 1.30 p.m. to 6.59 p.m.—LATIN.
 7.00 p.m. to 7.15 p.m.—ARITHMETICK
 AND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE.
 7.16 p.m. to 9.59 p.m.—LATIN.
 10.00 p.m. to 10.29 p.m.—WATER AND
 CHEESE AND BREAD.
 10.30 p.m. to 10.35 p.m.—RECREATION.
 10.36 p.m.—BED.
 Item: All holidays are abolished.
 (Signed) HAROLD GOODSMYLE,
 Headmaster of Grey Friars."
 There was a great shout as Launcelet
 de Broke roared ye end.
 "Shame!"
 "Fie on Master Goodsmyle for a scurvy
 knave!"
 "Verily, this is a bit thick!" said
 Launcelet de Broke. "Ye old hunk has
 even deprived us of our half-holidays for
 archery and cricket and picnicking."
 "What's that?" demanded a stern
 voice from the back of ye crowd just then.
 "What didst call me then, thou wright?"
 "There was a dismayed silence. It was
 Dr. Goodsmyle himself—the stern and
 scholarly taskmaster who ruled medieval
 Grey Friars with a rod of iron.
 Most of the collegers shrunk away from
 the Head's majestic presence. But
 Launcelet de Broke, who feared naught,
 faced Dr. Goodsmyle without flinching.
 "I called thee an old hunk, master!"
 he replied. "So thou art, judging by this
 notice!"
 "What—what—" gasped the in-
 credulous Head.
 "A hundred hours a week is enow for
 any scholar to work; but, not content
 with that, thou wast to us to work a
 hundred and twenty now. It can't be
 did!"
 "Silence, De Broke!" roared Dr.
 Goodsmyle. "For saving thy head,
 master thou shalt receive a thousand
 stripes a day for ye rest of ye term."
 THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 1166.

stone appeared at ye window above ye
 heads of ye pikemen. A moment later it
 dropped with a terrific thud, and half a
 dozen pikemen collapsed under it, yelling,
 "Yaroooooooh!"
 "Gadzooks! Garroff my chest!"
 "Whoooooop!"
 "First blood to us!" shouted
 Launcelet. "Keep it up, lads!"
 "What-ho!"
 Ye cheery juniors turned their attention
 to ye archers. There was a store of
 mouldy apples in ye mill, and these they
 proceeded to turn to great advantage by
 flinging them at ye bowmen.
 A rain of ancient apples descended on
 ye warriors' heads, smiting them on their
 ears, noses and eyes with fearful force!
 Whizz! Thud! Squelch!
 Plop!
 "Yaroooooooh! What ye
 thump—
 "Yoooooop! Something's
 smitten me on ye earpiece!"
 "Ow! By dose!"
 "Have at them,
 my brave warriors!"
 roared Dr. Good-
 smyle, from ye rear.
 "Who cares about a
 few mouldy apples
 —whoooooop!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 The tyrant of
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 ready.
 "Here they come!" exclaimed De
 Broke. "Prepare ye for action!"
 Ye pikemen and archers were permitted
 to advance to ye portal, then—
 Swooooooh! Swooooooh! Swooooooh!
 Flour rained down on them, and with
 cries of chagrin, ye warriors dropped ye
 ram and scrambled to safety.
 "Hurrah! Hurrah!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 Ye juniors chuckled with glee.
 Then a sudden brain-wave came to
 Launcelet de Broke as he noticed ye Head
 standing in safety under ye sails of ye
 mill. He clasped Malypene by ye arm.
 "Quick! Canst find a butcher's hook
 or something like it?" he asked.
 "What ye merry dickens wantest thou
 with a butcher's hook?" asked Mal-
 ypene, in surprise.
 Launcelet chuckled.
 "To fape our worthy master with!"
 was his reply. "He is standing 'neath
 ye sails of ye windmill, and if only we can
 fix a hook to one of ye said sails, he'll be
 caught up and carried round!"
 "By my doublet! That's a right
 merry wheeze!" laughed Malypene.
 "Methinks the very article for ye job is
 lying over there in ye corner, too!"
 "So it is! Bring it hither!" quoth
 our hero.
 Malypene fetched it from ye corner and
 handed it over, and Launcelet, his eyes
 gleaming with excitement, sprinted up ye
 stairs to ye top of ye building and climbed
 up on to ye roof.
 "From this spot, he was able to reach
 out and attach ye hook securely to one
 of ye windmill's sails. Having made
 sure that it was secure, he then raced
 downstairs again and looked out to see ye
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 He was just in time to see ye sail sweep
 down over ye head of Dr. Goodsmyle,
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 "On ye ball! Go it, my bonny boys!"
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 "Ye ye delight of ye Grey Friars rebels
 and to everybody else's amazement,
 Dr. Goodsmyle, dangling 'neath the
 windmill's sail, was being slowly drawn
 up into mid-air!
 As the wind was not strong enow to
 carry him up to ye top, Launcelet de
 Broke gave orders for a number of ye
 rebels to turn ye rollers inside ye mill and
 help ye sail round. The result was that
 this howling headmaster was carried tight
 over ye top and came down ye other side
 with a fearful splash.
 Whizz!
 "Keep it up, lads!" cried De Broke.
 "As fast as ye like; we'll keep him
 spinning round till he gives in, now!"
 "Whate-ho!"
 Outside, ye unhappy Head was shouting
 in fear and amazement.
 "Yoooooop! Lemme get out! Grooooooh!"
 Launcelet de Broke leaped out of ye
 window.
 "Why, if it's not ye Head!" he ex-
 claimed, in pretended astonishment.
 "Prithee how didst get like this?"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 Ye Head turned a furious face to ye
 leader of ye rebels.
 "I believe ye varlets know something
 of this!" he roared. "Stop ye sails
 and let me get down!"
 "Not until thou agree'st to our terms!"
 answered Launcelet.
 "Grooooooh! I shall be hurt in a
 minute!" gasped Dr. Goodsmyle, still
 swinging round. "What, then, are thy
 terms, De Broke?"
 "Our terms, worthy master, can be
 summed up in a little couplet:
 "Up in twelve-hours day
 Art willing to grant them?"
 "Never!" roared ye Head. "Rather
 would I die than submit to such humilia-
 tion!"
 "Right-ho, then! Turn ye sails a
 little faster, lads!"
 "Ay, ay, Launcelet!"
 The lads piled in with a right good will
 and Dr. Goodsmyle, still hanging from
 the end of his sail, was whirled through
 the air at a dizzy speed.
 "Ow-row! Whoooooop! I shall fall
 and bust my pate, soon! Yooooop!"
 "Going to agree to our terms, master?"
 asked Launcelet, cheerfully.
 "No!"
 "Faster, lads, then!"
 "Yoooooop! Ow! All right, then!"
 bowed ye Head of Grey Friars suddenly.
 "I'll agree; anything ye like will I do
 if ye'll but let me down on terra firma
 again!"
 "Done!" cried Launcelet de Broke.
 "I'll just draw up a charter and thou
 canst sign it when ye sail reaches ye top
 again!"
 With that, the rebel leader turned back
 into ye mill and inserted ye following
 memorandum on a sheet of parchment:
 "I, Harold Goodsmyle, agree that
 'a twelve-hours day and time for play
 shall be ye basis of work for ye scholars
 of Grey Friars at all future times and
 occasions."
 Hurriedly dashing to ye top of ye
 building, Launcelet was just in time to
 catch ye Head before he dropped again.
 "Here's ye giddy charter!" he said,
 holding up ye Head's progress with a
 handy pole. "Sign here, master; thou
 hast a pocket quill pen on thy person?"
 "Yes, verily!" snorted Dr. Goodsmyle
 producing the document with difficulty and
 signing the document with a bad grace.
 "Of course, it is understood that no
 punishments will be inflicted in con-
 nection with ye rebellion?"
 "Of course there will be—I mean,
 certainly not!" yelled Dr. Goodsmyle,
 as Launcelet made to release the sail
 again. "Fear not, De Broke; ye'll not
 be punished—honest injun!"
 "Good enow!" quoth Launcelet, with
 a merry twinkle in his eye. "Lower ye
 sail to ye bottom, lads and we'll rear a
 ladder against it and set our worthy master
 free! Victory is ours!"
 "Hurrah!"
 Within five minutes of that, Dr. Good-
 smyle had been released and returned to
 ye College to hide his diminished head,
 ye archers and pikemen had returned to
 ye Cross Keys whence they had come,
 and ye rebels were marching back to
 Grey Friars amid much laughing, chaffing
 and cheering.
 The first rebellion at Grey Friars was
 over and won, and ye cheery rebels could
 claim without fear of denial that they
 had achieved a glorious victory!
 THE END.
 (Look out for another "Hal Smiles"
 yarn next week, chaps.)
 THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 1166.

"What-ho!"
 "Rats!"
 "Rats, and many of
 same!"
 "I'm going on
 strike!"
 "Why, thou insolent
 varlet—
 "Rather than put up
 with the change I'll raise
 the standard of revolt at
 Grey Friars and lead a
 rebellion against thee!"
 shouted De Broke. "What
 say ye to that, lads?"
 Ye crowd, heartened by
 their leader's boldness,
 responded with a yell.
 "Ay!"
 "Up, ye rebels!"
 "Down with tyranny!"
 Dr. Goodsmyle's face went purple with
 rage.
 "Why, ye rebellious wights—where are
 ye prefects? Have at these rascals and
 remove them to ye deepest dungeons,
 where they shall be boiled in oil!"
 But ye senior prefects had discreetly
 departed and there was nobody left to
 carry out ye Head's commands. And Dr.
 Goodsmyle almost danced with rage.
 "Back to your Form-rooms, varlets!"
 he hooted.
 "Back to nothing!" retorted Lau-
 celet de Broke. "I and my followers will
 obey thee no more until this order is
 repealed. Until that time we'll bar our-
 selves out in ye olde windmill outside ye
 school walls!"
 "Well said, Launcelet!" cried Mal-
 ypene. "I'll follow thee, for one!"
 "And I!"
 "Hurrah!"
 "I'll put ye all in ye dungeons and give
 ye thousands and thousands of
 stripes—"
 "When you catch us!" said De Broke.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "In ye meantime, we're going to ye
 olde windmill for our bawling-out! Good-
 bye, master!"
 "You—you—"
 Dr. Goodsmyle choked. But he was
 powerless to stop ye rebellious crowd, and
 ye juniors, cheering heartily, followed
 their intrepid leader out of ye school,
 across ye bright, sunlit quadrangle and
 over ye fields to ye olde windmill which
 Launcelet had chosen as the scene of his
 bawling-out.
 There, they trooped inside, bolted and
 barred ye door on ye ground floor, and

went up ye
 stairs to ye
 higher floors
 for ye next
 move in ye
 great drama.
 II.
 Half an hour
 later Dr.
 Goodsmyle
 arrived at ye
 windmill at the
 head of a company of archers
 and sturdy warriors carrying
 pikes and broadswords.
 "Ho, there!" he called
 out. "Launcelet de Broke!
 Launcelet! I have come to give thee
 out of a window and salted
 the Head with mock detestation."
 "Harold Goodsmyle!" he
 retorted.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Thou saucy varlet!" roared ye en-
 raged Head. "I have come to give thee
 thy last chance. If thou surrender now
 I'll let ye off with a year in ye dungeons,
 five hundred thousand stripes, and a
 boiling in oil. Otherwise, thy punishment
 will be much more severe!"
 "My hat! I think I'll take a chance
 and keep up the rebellion!" grinned
 Launcelet.
 "Then, prepare for trouble, with a
 capital T!" snorted Dr. Goodsmyle,
 who will take this windmill by storm and
 force you to surrender! Have at them
 now, men!"
 Instantly the archers drew their bows
 and let fly a volley of arrows, while the
 pikemen rushed to ye portal of ye mill.
 Launcelet de Broke hastily dodged
 inside again. But he did not intend to
 remain inactive, as ye warriors soon found
 to their cost. Of a sudden a huge mill-

stone appeared at ye window above ye
 heads of ye pikemen. A moment later it
 dropped with a terrific thud, and half a
 dozen pikemen collapsed under it, yelling,
 "Yaroooooooh!"
 "Gadzooks! Garroff my chest!"
 "Whoooooop!"
 "First blood to us!" shouted
 Launcelet. "Keep it up, lads!"
 "What-ho!"
 Ye cheery juniors turned their attention
 to ye archers. There was a store of
 mouldy apples in ye mill, and these they
 proceeded to turn to great advantage by
 flinging them at ye bowmen.
 A rain of ancient apples descended on
 ye warriors' heads, smiting them on their
 ears, noses and eyes with fearful force!
 Whizz! Thud! Squelch!
 Plop!
 "Yaroooooooh! What ye
 thump—
 "Yoooooop! Something's
 smitten me on ye earpiece!"
 "Ow! By dose!"
 "Have at them,
 my brave warriors!"
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 smyle, from ye rear.
 "Who cares about a
 few mouldy apples
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