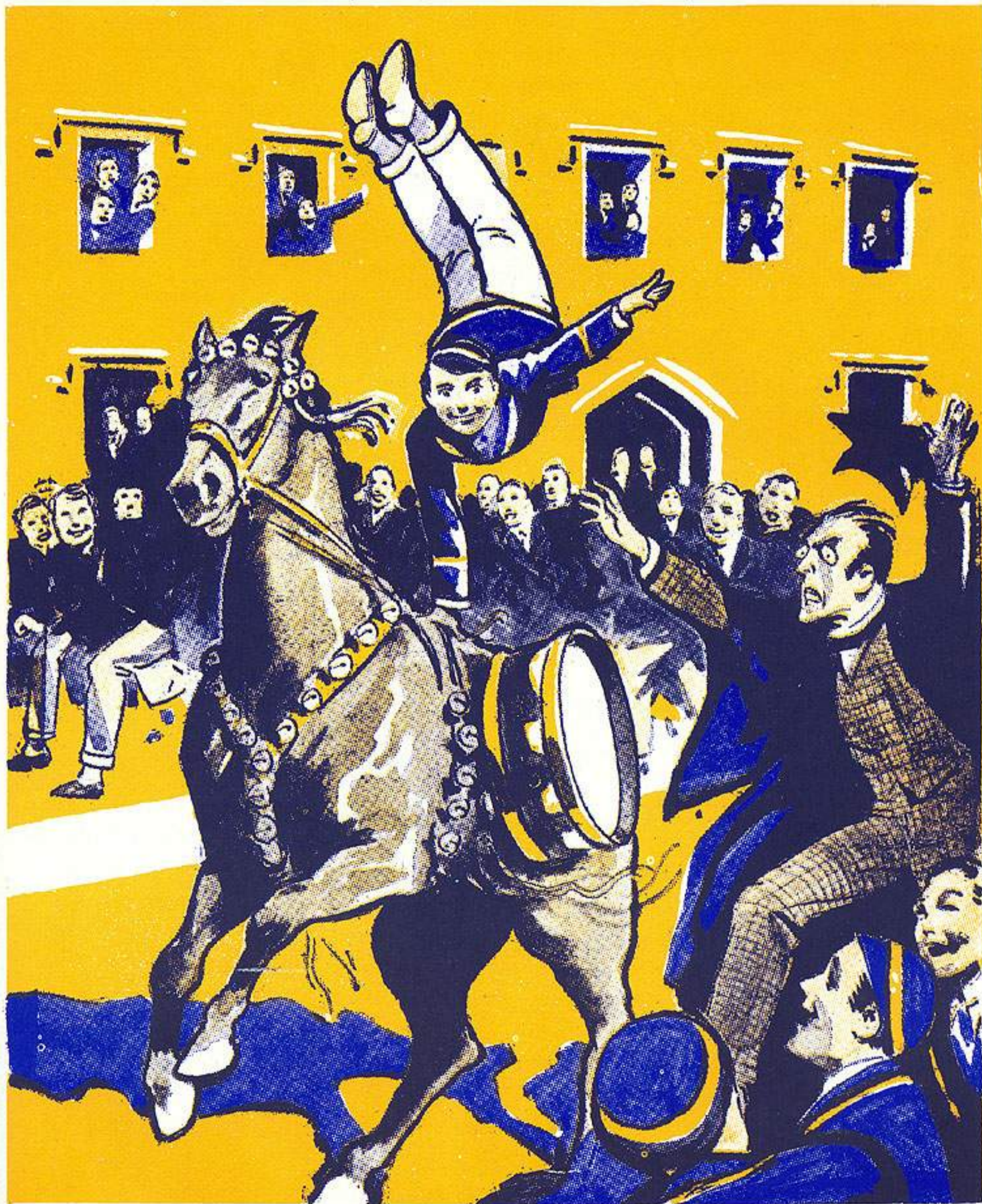


FREE GIFTS!! Important Announcement Inside!

No. 1,167. Vol. XXXVII. Week Ending June 28th, 1930.

EVERY SATURDAY.

The **MAGNET** 2^D



“POP” CAUSES A SENSATION!

(A startling incident from this week's rousing school story of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars.)

Ready for a Big Surprise? Then—



Come Into the Office, Boys!

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

AS PER PROMISE!

LAST week I tickled your curiosity with the announcement that I had something extra-special in store for you. What is more, I promised faithfully to let you into the secret this week. Well, I am a man of my word. Stand by! Now this big surprise, which has meant many weeks of planning, is ripe to be sprung on you all. Everyone knows, of course, that the Australians are over here to battle for the coveted Ashes. Everyone who is a sportsman at heart—and that term must surely include every Britisher—is frightfully keen to see the Ashes stay in England, the home of cricket. Newspapers are catering every day for "the man in the street." In their news sheets are discussed the chances of victory on both sides. Individual personalities are being boomed, titbits of information are being scattered broadcast. In short, then, this 1930 tussle for the Ashes is going to be talked about and remembered for years to come. Souvenirs of this 1930 TEST SERIES will be offered for sale all over the world. And this is where the MAGNET is going to step in and get one over its contemporaries.

SOUVENIRS OF A LASTING NATURE WILL BE PRESENTED TO "MAGNET" READERS FREE!

There, the secret is out! To every boy and girl, to every reader of this famous paper, will be presented a complete set of striking photographs of the English and Australian teams.

TOGETHER WITH A SPECIAL ALBUM!

Now how do you feel about it? Wasn't this worth while calling "A Big Surprise"? You bet! Just think of it, chums!

FOR SEVEN WEEKS

MAGNET readers will be given, in addition to the usual value for money programme of fiction, real action photos of the pick of the English and Australian cricketers. These wonderful, life-like photographs possess another virtue: they are of the "sticky-back" variety, which means that you will be able to seal them down in the special album provided and thus be able to preserve for all time a unique and fascinating collection of such cricket celebrities as J. B. Hobbs, W. M. Woodfull, "Boy" Bradman, Wally Hammond, Ponsford, etc. Isn't this just great? Isn't it typical of the MAGNET policy of keeping abreast of the times—of anticipating the public need? Jove, chums, you'll be that pleased with this big surprise that you won't be able to contain yourselves! I won't keep you in suspense—all of you, naturally, want to know when this stupendous offer will become

red-hot. Well, you haven't long to wait now.

IN A FORTNIGHT'S TIME EVERY READER

will find in his copy of the MAGNET the special illustrated album, together with the first four superb photographs. Just one word more. I know umpteen of you chaps will be eager to spread the news to your pals; that's all to the good. But please don't lose sight of the fact that the reader whose newsagent's order is a regular one will make absolutely certain of receiving these marvellous gifts. The chap who gives a regular order to his newsagent to-day, then, is real sensible. He's making certain of sharing in one of the biggest treats of the year. After that he can afford to talk about this unique offer to his friends who at present are non-readers, but not before. 'Nuff said! I've let you into the secret; I've told you the important date. The rest depends entirely upon you!

I FEEL in a remarkably good mood this morning! Probably that is because I've just been reading a selection of jokes and limericks which have been sent in by you fellows. Here's a good yarn, for which James Crook, of 20, Pilling Street, Norden, near Rochdale, gets a penknife:

THEIR ORIGIN!

A Scotsman, on entering a London shop, inquired the price of some deer antlers. On being informed, he said:

"They're awfu' dear!"

"Of course they are!" said

the shop assistant. "Did you think they were off a cow?"



In the way of anniversaries I'm afraid my diary hasn't much to record this week. However, it may interest you to know that this Monday is the birthday of the Prince of Wales, who will be thirty-six years of age. That means he was not fifteen when the MAGNET was first published. I wonder if the Prince is one of my old readers?

Next Saturday is also of interest, for it marks the eleventh anniversary of the signing of the Peace Treaty of Versailles, thus bringing to an end the Great War, in which so many old MAGNET readers fought—and fell—for the sake of their country.

Now to my post-bag!

A reader who signs himself "Inquirer" wants to know something about

A VERY DEEP SUBJECT!

He asks: "Why does a diver have his boots loaded?" Well, if a diver wasn't "loaded"—not only on his boots, but also on his chest and back—he would never be able to get to the bottom of the sea. He would simply float on the surface, for, remember, his suit contains a certain amount of air. His helmet also is very heavy, which means that he would stand on his head at the bottom of the sea unless his boots were weighted to make them heavier than his helmet.

Suppose a diver took off his loaded boots when he was on the bottom? He would immediately shoot to the surface and float there, head downwards! Therefore, the loaded boots are necessary.

My next letter comes from a fellow who signs himself "Regular Reader."

HE WANTS TO JOIN THE FOREIGN LEGION,

and asks me for the address of a recruiting officer for that force. If he takes my advice he'll forget all about it, for life in the Legion is anything but comfortable. I know, because two fellows I am acquainted with served in it—and aren't ashamed to confess that they "cleared out" as soon as they got the opportunity! Life on the blazing deserts of North Africa, with pay at the rate of one-halfpenny per day—that's all the Legion has to offer!

THERE'S just space for a limerick before I go on to next week's list of features. This one comes from J. Tingey, of 87, Forest Road, Lower Edmonton, N.9, who is now the proud possessor of a MAGNET pocket wallet:

Said Bunter: "That cake looks quite nice,"

As he reached out his hand for a slice;

But Bull very quick

Smote his hand with a stick,

And then down his neck dropped an ice!

Here's next week's programme. First and foremost:

"THE CALL OF THE CIRCUS!"

By Frank Richards.

It's a real corking yarn of the chums of Greyfriars—a yarn that will certainly make you wish it were twice as long! You'll find Frank R. at the best of his form, and you'll chuckle with delight at the adventures—and misadventures—of that popular character, "Pop."

Don't miss it—that's my advice!

Next on the list comes the final instalment of our serial,

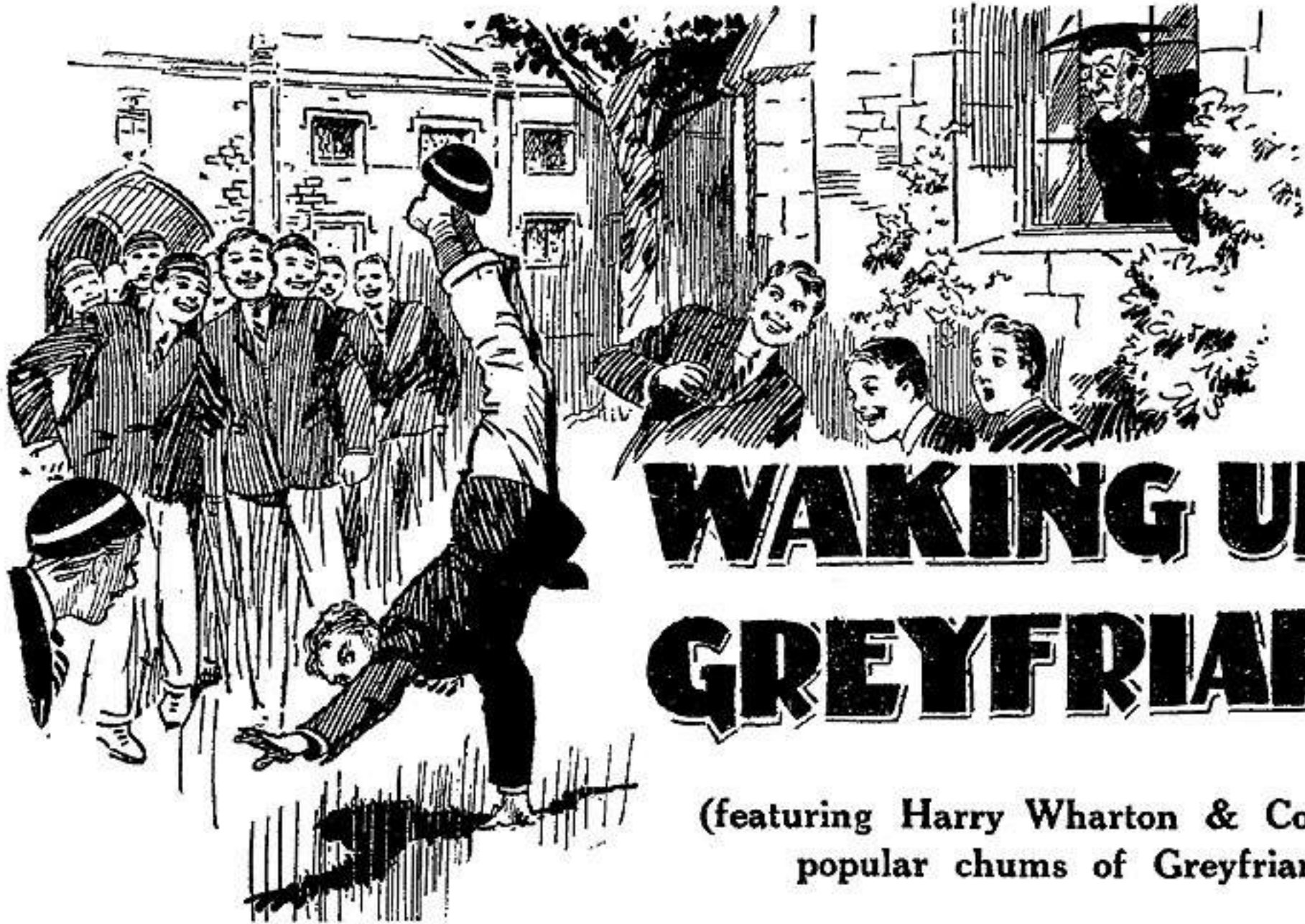
"THE TEST MATCH HOPE,"

which has won new laurels for John Brearley, whom I can claim to be a MAGNET discovery in the way of authors. In this issue also there will be full particulars of a grand new serial by Geo. E. Rochester, another MAGNET "capture" whom you all know so well.

In addition to all this, you will get a glimpse of our wonderful FREE PHOTO ALBUM and the first set of "Test" Match cricketers which will be presented with it in a fortnight's time. Suffice it to say, then, that all MAGNETITES should be sure and order their copy at the earliest opportunity.

YOUR EDITOR.

Send along your Joke or your Greyfriars Limerick—or both—and win our useful prizes of leather pocket wallets and Sheffield steel penknives. All efforts to be sent to: c/o "Magnet," 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C. 4 (Comp.).



WAKING UP GREYFRIARS!

(featuring Harry Wharton & Co., the popular chums of Greyfriars.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Fed-up!

YAW-AW-AW-AWWWWW!" Harry Wharton gave quite a start.

That deep and prolonged yawn greeted his ears as he arrived at the door of Study No. 1 in the Remove. It sounded as if the fellow in the study was tired of life.

It was a long, long, dismal yawn. It was almost a groan. It was the last word in what Hurree Singh would have called fed-upfulness.

"My hat!" murmured Wharton. "Yaw-aw-aw-awww!" came the sound of boredom again.

The yawner, apparently, was fed-up to the back teeth.

Why any Greyfriars man should be bored that afternoon was a mystery to Wharton.

It was a half-holiday; it was a glorious afternoon in early summer, and cricket called.

Life seemed particularly good to Harry Wharton that day. He had absolutely no fault to find with the general arrangements of the universe.

But the fellow in Study No. 1 evidently had!

Wharton gave the door a shove with his foot and entered.

The new fellow in the Remove was in the Study.

Cecil Popper, nephew of Sir Hilton Popper, of Popper Court, was stretched in the study armchair.

His feet rested on another chair, his hands were clasped behind his head, his face had a tired look, and his mouth was open and in the very act of emitting another portentous yawn.

He checked the yawn, however, and grinned rather sheepishly as he sighted the captain of the Remove in the doorway.

Wharton looked at him. "Tired of life?" he asked, rather sarcastically.

"Well, not exactly," said Pop. "Life's all right—if a bloke's let alone! But— Oh my!"

"What's the row?" "Everything!" said Pop comprehensively.

"Bored?" asked Wharton, still sarcastic.

"Yes."

"Well, I've looked in for you—"

"Oh, I don't mind!" said Pop.

"You don't bore me more than everybody and everything else at this blinking school!"

"I'd cut out the blinking, if I were you," suggested Wharton; "and you might as well leave out the blokes!"

"What's the odds?" yawned Pop.

"Well, you're a Greyfriars man now,"

CIRCUS STAR COMES TO GREYFRIARS—AND THEN THE "CIRCUS" STARTS!

said Harry. "Mean to say that you'd rather be still with the circus?"

"Wouldn't I just!" sighed Pop. "Oh dear!" He gave a dismal groan. "If only that money hadn't been left to me! There ought to be a law against a bloke having money left to him when he don't want it!"

Harry Wharton laughed. "Most fellows would be pleased," he remarked.

"How'd you like it?" demanded Pop indignantly. "S'pose you was an acrobat in a circus—Walker's World-Famous Circus—like I was? S'pose some relation you never heard of left you money, and left old Popper three hundred a year to play at guardian? S'pose the old covey rooted you out of the circus and bunged you into a school? How'd you like it?"

"Well, if the school was Greyfriars,

I'd like it no end, I think," said Harry, laughing.

"I s'pose you would," admitted Pop. "But I don't like it! I been 'ere a week, and 'ow I'm to get through another week beats me 'ollow! And week after week— Oh my!"

He groaned again.

"I had six months with a tooter," he said dismally. "That was 'orrid enough! But at least a feller could get around a bit. Once or twice I bunked and had a look at the circus. But 'ere— Oh my! Rising fifteen, and put to school! Why, all you blokes in the Remove are old enough to earn your keep! I was earning my keep years ago! I'm forgetting what I've learned—the real stuff, I mean—and bunging Latin and French into my 'ead! Old Quelchy jaws me when I drop my H's in class! Feller takes me by the ear if I whistle in the passages! Feller 'owls at me when I turn over on my 'ands in the quad! Oh my! I tell you, I don't know 'ow I'm going to stand it! I'd run away—"

"Run away!" ejaculated Wharton.

"Not 'arf!" said Pop emphatically. "Only what's the good? Old Popper would root me out agin and hook me back! He's my guardian, all proper and legal. I can't 'elp myself! I'd give him all the money that's coming to me when I'm of age if he'd chuck it and let me go! I would that!"

"What about cricket?"

Pop yawned again. Apparently, the summer game did not appeal to the one-time Wonderful Boy Acrobat of Walker's World Famous Circus.

"Blow cricket!" he answered.

"You can play, I suppose?" asked Harry.

"Oh, more or less! I ain't keen."

"Well, we're all more or less keen on it here," said the captain of the Remove. "You'll get keen, too, if you go in for it. Look here, that's what I've come in for. It's not a compulsory

day, but I thought you'd like to join up."

"Very kind of you," said Pop, without enthusiasm.

"Better than frowsting indoors on a glorious day like this, anyhow."

"P'r'aps!" assented Pop doubtfully.

"Well, get a move on and change into your flannels, and come along," said the captain of the Remove. "We're picking up sides for a game, and if you know how to hold a bat you can join up. A lot of the fellows have gone out of gates, and we shan't get a full team, so any old thing will do. It's really practice, so it doesn't matter if you let us down."

Pop dragged himself slowly from the armchair.

"I'll come along, if you like," he said. "I ain't keen on it, and I don't play much of a game. But I don't mind."

"Well, come down and change."

"Orlright!" said Pop.

He left the study with Wharton. As they went along to the Remove staircase a fat figure came slowly and laboriously up the stairs. Billy Bunter always found the ascent of a staircase laborious. He had a lot of weight to carry up with him.

"I say, you fellows!" Bunter blinked at them through his big spectacles. "Hold on a minute!"

"Just the man I want!" said Wharton cheerfully. "Buzz off and change, Bunter! You're wanted for cricket!"

"Cricket!" exclaimed Bunter indignantly. "Wharrer you mean, you ass? 'Tain't compulsory practice to-day. What are you getting at?"

"We're picking up sides, and we haven't enough men. Chance for you to show what you can do," suggested Wharton.

"Well, I'm frightfully keen, of course," said Bunter. "You know I'm a demon at games. But I've got an engagement, as it happens, otherwise I'd be glad. By the way, you remember I mentioned that I was expecting a postal-order, old chap? Well, what do you think? It hasn't come!"

"Go hon!"

"It hasn't, really," said Bunter. "Not that it would really matter, as it's certain to come in the morning. Only Mrs. Mimble has got in a fresh lot of tarts to-day, so, you see, it's rather important. If you could lend me the ten bob till to-morrow, Wharton—Think you could?"

"I think I could——"

"Thanks, old fellow!"

"But I know I'm not going to!"

"Beast!"

"Leave the tuckshop alone, and come along and play cricket," said Harry. "You take one of his ears, Popper, and I'll take the other——"

"Yaroooh!"

Billy Bunter vanished along the Remove passage. The door of Study No. 7 slammed, and the key turned in the lock. Evidently William George Bunter was not to be led or driven to the cricket field.

Harry Wharton and the new junior proceeded on their way without the Owl of the Remove.

When Pop had changed, and walked out into the sunshine, he looked rather more cheerful, and a little less tired of existence. Pop of the Circus had become Pop of Greyfriars, and he was trying to make the best of it.

And when he joined in the cricket he looked more cheerful still.

If it was not so entertaining as stunts on the high trapeze, over the heads of a breathless audience, it was at least

better than frowsting and yawning in the study.

Pop, indeed, soon looked quite merry and bright.

When Pop was merry and bright he was liable to become exuberant. His exuberance was liable to display itself in ways to which they were quite unaccustomed at Greyfriars. Which was the cause of a very unusual variation in the game of cricket that afternoon on Little Side.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Aerobic I

"B LESS my soul!" said the Head.

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Quelch.

"This is—h'm—most extraordinary!"

"Amazing!"

Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch were standing at the window of the Head's study. As was not unusual on a half-holiday, the Remove master had dropped into that study for a chat with his chief.

There was a very pleasant view from the Head's window. The grey old buildings, the tall old elms, and a wide stretch of the playing fields, could be seen from that window.

Somewhat small in the distance, but clearly seen, the white-clad figures of the Remove cricketers showed up against the green.

The Head viewed them with a benevolent eye. So did Mr. Quelch. They liked to see the fellows at cricket. When the fellows were at cricket they were healthily and harmlessly occupied, likewise, they were not taxing the patience and temper of the masters. A half-holiday gave the Remove a rest from Quelch. It also gave Quelch a rest from the Remove.

Both the masters noted when Cecil Popper of the Remove went to the wicket. Both the Form master and the headmaster were rather specially interested in that somewhat unusual new boy.

"Ah! That is the new boy in your Form, my dear Quelch!" the Head remarked.

"Yes, that is Sir Hilton Popper's nephew, sir," said Mr. Quelch.

"You find that the boy has shaken down here, after his—h'm—somewhat remarkable early experiences?"

"Oh, quite! Sometimes, I am sorry to say, he falls back into a very extraordinary way of speaking, though at other times he speaks excellent English. He is not so keen on class work as I should like to see him. I fear he was somewhat unwilling to leave his—h'm—very strange early associations."

"Probably he will forget them before long."

"I hope so."

"The comparison between life at a public school and life at a—h'm—circus will no doubt cause him to feel very satisfied with the change," said the Head.

"I should imagine so, sir. It seems impossible that any normal boy should prefer circus life to public school life."

"Absolutely impossible!" said the Head decidedly.

And they watched Pop at the wickets. Hurree Janset Ram Singh was bowling to him, and Pop seemed to be keeping his end up against the best bowler in the Remove. Twice he had taken runs.

"Cricket will be a useful part of his training," the Head remarked. "Games must appeal to any healthy boy. He has certainly forgotten the circus at the present moment, Quelch."

"Evidently!" said Quelch.

Which proved that even schoolmasters

do not know everything. For the next minute the unexpected happened, which caused a series of startled and amazed ejaculations to fall from the headmaster and the Remove master.

"Ex-ex-extraordinady!" stuttered the Head.

"Is the boy insane?" gasped Mr. Quelch, aghast.

The ball had come down to the batsman again, and Pop had cut it away quite neatly. As the fieldsman hunted the leather Pop made his run.

He made it in a manner that had never been seen on the cricket field at Greyfriars before.

His earlier runs had been made in quite a normal way. His present run was really abnormal.

He started to run, and suddenly turned over on his hands, and proceeded along the pitch in a series of swift catherine-wheels.

There was a yell from the astounded cricketers. That astounded yell floated on the breeze as far as the open window of the Head's study, where the two master's stood transfixed with amazement.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "What's that game?"

"What are you up to, you fathead?" yelled Wharton.

"Are you potty?" shrieked Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Stop it, you chump!"

"Is that what you call cricket?"

"You footling ass! Chuck it!"

But Pop did not chuck it. He was a Greyfriars man by accident, a cricketer by chance, and an acrobat body and soul. He went his own way regardless.

How he got along without dropping his bat nobody could tell. But he did not drop it. Over and over he went, his head up one moment, his heels up the next.

The Head gasped; Mr. Quelch gurgled. Yells of remonstrance and merriment sounded from the cricket field. From all directions fellows came running up to see that astounding sight. Hardly a fellow had been looking on at the game before. Now fellows seemed to appear from nowhere to stare.

"Bless my soul!" repeated the Head.

Pop careered along the pitch and reached the bowler's wicket. Peter Todd was at that end. Peter blinked at the amazing advance of the other batsman as if mesmerised. In his astonishment he forgot to run.

"You—you—you——" gurgled Toddy.

Pop arrived right end uppermost.

"Run, you ass!" he said. "What the thump are you sticking here for?"

Thus reminded of his duty, Toddy sprinted. His bat clumped on the crease just before the ball came in.

Harry Wharton rushed up to his remarkable new recruit.

"You silly ass!" he roared.

Pop blinked at him.

"What's the row?" he asked.

"Call that cricket?" shrieked Wharton.

"Yes, rather! Why, we've brought down the house playing cricket like that in Walker's World-Famous!" answered Pop.

"You fathead! Keep your circus stunts for the circus!" howled the captain of the Remove. "That isn't how we play cricket at Greyfriars."

"You've got a lot to learn," said Pop cheerfully.

"Look here, you chump——"

"Don't you think it adds variety to the game?" asked Pop innocently.

"Why, look at the crowd you're getting! There wasn't a man watching before, now there's fifty! They're cheering. You're getting the 'ands!"

"Hurrah!" yelled Temple of the Fourth. "I say, do that again! Come and see how the Remove play cricket, you men!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you—you——" gasped Wharton. "Chuck it! Do you hear? None of your funny business on this field. Keep that in mind, you fathead!"

Hurree Janset Ram Singh, with a grin on his dusky face, bowled to Peter Todd. Toddy drove the ball away and ran. Pop of the Remove ran also—in his own original way. He got along quite as fast as Toddy, and they crossed in the middle of the pitch.

Shrieks of laughter came from all sides.

"Cricket's cricket!" growled Wharton angrily.

"The cricketfulness of the esteemed Pop is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Go it, Popper!" yelled Hobson of the Shell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Get him out, Inky, and finish him!" called out Wharton.

Hurree Janset Ram Singh nodded, and prepared to send down his deadliest ball. Pop grinned as he waited for it. The shouts and yells and laughter from the gathering crowd added to his exuberance. This was something like his old life, when crowded tents had

Whatever the headmaster and the Remove master thought of that extraordinary exhibition, a hundred Greyfriars fellows were quite enjoying it.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bu'st I

"POPPER!"

"'Allo!"

Wingate of the Sixth looked curiously at the new junior. Pop was, in fact, an object of curiosity all through Greyfriars School.

"Dropped something?" asked the Sixth Form man sarcastically.

Pop looked puzzled for a moment, and then he coloured.

"Hallo, if you like that better!" he said.

"Well, that's rather better," said the Greyfriars captain. "I don't quite make you out, Popper. You speak well enough as a rule. Sometimes you drop



Peter Todd blinked at the amazing advance of the other batsman as if mesmerised. He was too astonished to run himself!

"Bravo, Popper!"

"On, Christopher Columbus! Ha, ha, ha!"

More and more fellows gathered round the field now. That pick-up game was attracting as much attention as a big fixture. Fellows of all Forms came from all directions.

Pop of the Circus careered along at a wonderful speed, catherine-wheeling from wicket to wicket. He arrived on his feet, and stood grinning. He was beginning to enjoy the game now.

"I—I—I'll boot him off the field!" exclaimed the exasperated captain of the Remove. "I—I—I'll scrag him! I'll——"

"He's getting the runs!" chuckled Johnny Bull. "Let him rip! 'Tain't a match, anyhow—only a practice game."

roared at his performances. He was thoroughly enjoying himself now.

The ball came down like a bullet. Pop knocked it away, however; and once more he went catherine-wheeling along the pitch.

"Bless my soul!" said the Head, his eyes glued on the weird figure from his study window. The Head could scarcely believe the evidence of his own majestic eyes.

"The—the—the absurd—the—the utterly absurd boy!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "I—I will speak to him very seriously."

There was a crash of a falling wicket. Pop was out. Dr. Locke turned away from the window, with a very thoughtful expression on his face. Mr. Quelch looked very thoughtful also. But from the cricket field came joyful yells.

into this weird way of speaking. What do you do it for?"

"Can't 'elp it," said Pop cheerfully. "You see, I only 'ad—I mean had—six months of tootering before I butted in 'ere—I mean here! You can't learn everything in six months. I keep on forgetting, and speaking natural, see?"

Wingate laughed. Evidently Pop regarded the dropping of H's as a natural thing.

"Well, your Form master wants you in his study," said Wingate. "You'd better take some aspirates with you. Quelch won't like you dropping H's all over the place. That's a tip."

"Right-ho!" said Pop.

He made his way to the Remove master's study, wondering rather disconsolately what was wanted. Pop's

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,167.

lines had not been wholly cast in pleasant places since he had come to Greyfriars. At the school, he felt rather like a fish out of water; and though he honestly did his best to fall into the ways of his Form, his heart was not in it.

A classical education did not appeal to Pop. At a very early age he had had to face stern realities, and that had made him older than his years in many respects. For the study of Latin he had a strong distaste and a hearty contempt. He did not see any use in it, unless a "bloke" was going to be a schoolmaster—which Pop certainly wasn't. He was going to be a circus performer, as soon as he was old enough to have his own way; that was as fixed in his mind as the immutable laws of the Medes and Persians. Still, he was landed at Greyfriars now, and there was no help for it. And he understood, too, that Mr. Quelch was kind and patient with him; and he tried to play up. But troubles were simply bound to come.

He arrived at Mr. Quelch's study, and found it empty. Mr. Quelch, after sending for him, had stepped out to speak to Mr. Prout. As he had been specially sent for, Pop knew that he had to await his Form master's return; so he waited.

He loafed about the study while he waited, whistling shrilly through his teeth. He stared at the books in Mr. Quelch's bookcase; and the very titles on their backs made him shudder. How a "bloke" could read such stuff of his own free choice, mystified Pop. As a matter of fact, it mystified other fellows in the Romove as well. Fellows had seen Mr. Quelch tucking into Sophocles like Billy Bunter tucking into cream-puffs; and they marvelled. Sophocles was Mr. Quelch's favourite among

classic authors. There was a bust of Sophocles on his writing-table; and once there had been a frightful row in the Romove when some practical joker, in Quelch's absence had adorned Sophocles with a charcoal moustache.

Five minutes of waiting were more than enough for Pop. He was full of energy, and disliked want of occupation. He picked the poker from the fender, placed it on his chin, and balanced it, to pass the time. Tricks of that kind were child's play to Pop of the Circus. With his head leaning back, he balanced the poker easily; and then, picking up the bust from the table, he clapped it on the end of the poker, and balanced the bust as well—a new and surprising experience for Sophocles.

Pop found this interesting. He moved round the study with the poker balanced on his chin, the bust on the poker, and looked out of the open window into the quad. Several fellows sighted him at the window, and there was a yell.

Pop grinned cheerfully. He liked an audience. He had been brought up on audiences, as it were, and he missed them at Greyfriars. Anything in the nature of an audience was a joy to him.

Under Mr. Quelch's window a crowd soon gathered. There was a shout of laughter.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry "This way to the circus!"

"Ha ha, ha!"

The study door opened.

Mr. Quelch stepped in.

He expected to find Popper of the Romove there. But certainly he did not expect to find him thus engaged.

For some seconds Mr. Quelch stood petrified, staring blankly at the junior

standing by the window. Then he found his voice.

"Popper!"
It was a roar such as the Bull of Bashan might have envied. Pop was startled and he gave a jump and spun round.

Crash! Clang!
The poker and the bust went to the floor together. The poker received no damage. But the last state of Sophocles was undoubtedly worse than his first. Sophocles hit the study floor with a bang, and distributed himself in fragments all over the room.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Pop.

Mr. Quelch gasped, too.

"Boy!"

"Oh my!"

"You—you—you—you have smashed that bust!" shrieked Mr. Quelch.

"It's bu'st!" agreed Pop ruefully.

"How dare you!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "How dare you, I say, play such—such foolish and disrespectful tricks with your master's property?"

"Oh my! Sorry, sir!" gasped Pop. "I was jest doin' a stunt while I was a-waitin' for you to 'op in, sir."

When Pop was excited or confused, all the valuable instructions he had received in six hard months from a tutor vanished completely from his mind. He became the original Pop again on the spot.

"'Op in!" repeated Mr. Quelch dazedly. "Hop, I presume you mean! What an expression! What an extraordinary expression! Upon my word!"

"I 'ope I ain't made you wild, sir!" said Pop. "I didn't go for to make you get your hair orf, sir, I reelly didn't."

"Popper, how dare you use such—such expressions? You can speak very differently when you choose."

"'Course I can, sir, when I remembers—"

"When you remember, you mean."

"Jest that, sir," said Pop. "But it's 'ard for a bloke to keep on a-remembering—"

"If you use that word bloke again in my presence, Popper, I shall cane you."

"Oh my! I mean, it's 'ard for a covey to remember—"

"If you use the word covey again, Popper, I shall chastise you with the utmost severity."

"Oh crimes!" said Pop.

"Do not say oh crimes!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "The expression is vulgar and offensive."

"I don't seem to be able to open me blooming mouth without putting me blooming foot in it!" said Pop, discouraged.

"You must not say 'blooming!' Upon my word, I hardly know what to say to the boy! Popper, the bill will be sent to your guardian for the cost of replacing that bust."

"Oh my!" said Pop. "Old Tin-ribs will be proper waxy!"

"Old what—who—"

"I—I mean Sir Hilton Popper, sir—"

"If you mean Sir Hilton Popper, say Sir Hilton Popper! I begin to fear that Sir Hilton made a mistake in placing you at Greyfriars, Popper."

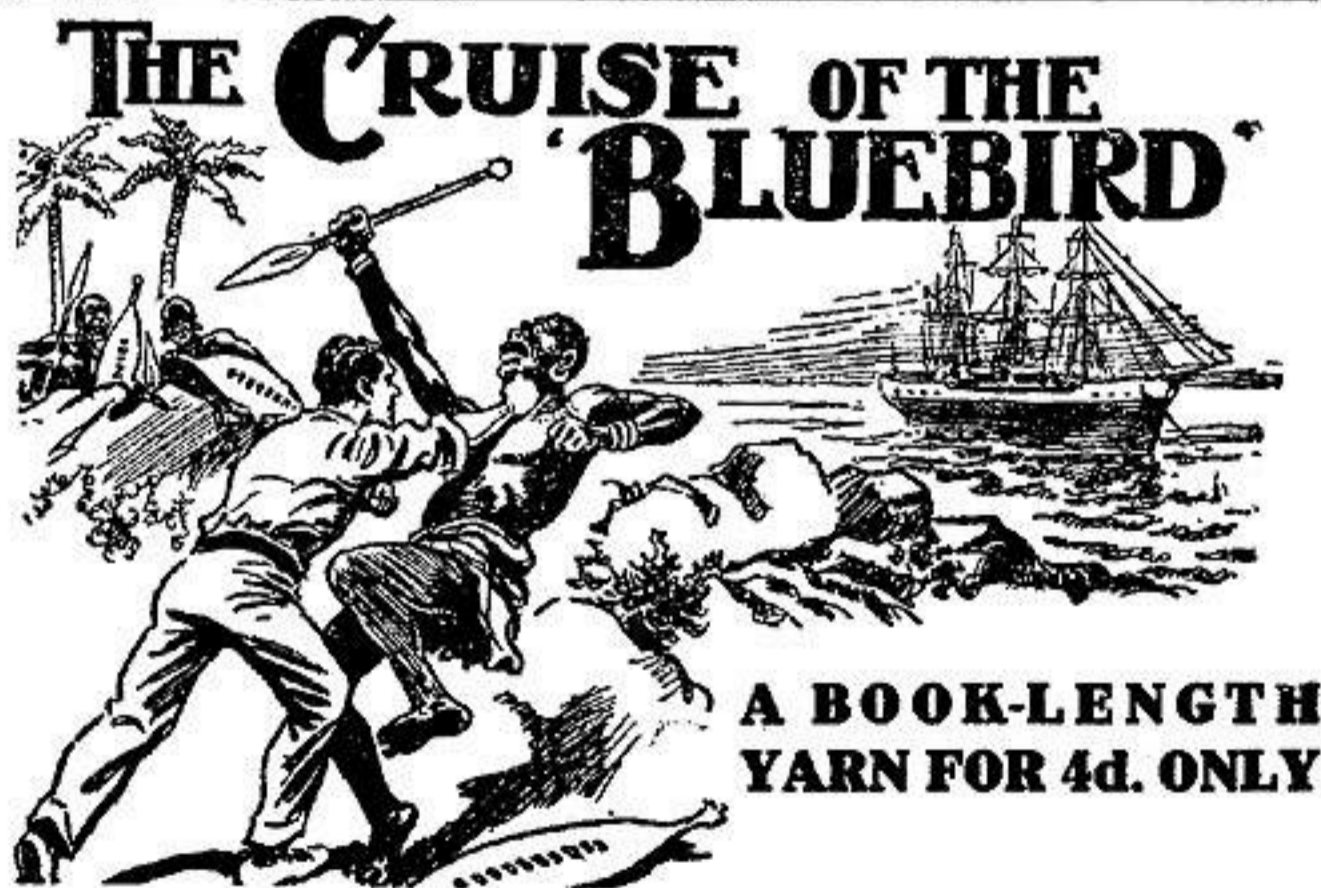
"Jest right on the mark, sir—he jolly well did!" said Pop. "This 'ere school ain't my mark nohow—"

"You must not say 'This 'ere school!'!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"I mean this here school, sir—"

"You must not say 'this here school,' either."

"Oh crimes! I mean oh crikey!" Pop amended hastily. "A bloke—I mean—a covey—that is, a feller—don't know what to say, sir. It's 'ard!"



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Mr. Quelch breathed deeply. "Popper! I sent for you to speak about your absurd, ridiculous performance on the cricket field this afternoon. I saw you—and the Head saw you. We were both amazed."

"Was you, sir?" said Pop. "Once for all, Popper, I warn you that you must forget that you were ever at a circus. You must dismiss the whole thing from your mind. You must never reproduce any of the ridiculous performances of your past life at Greyfriars. If you persist in acting here as if you were an acrobat, a conjurer, a—a—a circus performer, it will be impossible for you to remain at Greyfriars!"

Pop started. "You—you mean that, sir?" he ejaculated. His eyes gleamed. "Certainly I mean it!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "I do not desire to be hard upon you, Popper. I desire to make every possible allowance. But there is a fitness of things that must be observed. You are now a Public School boy. You must cultivate a sense of dignity—of—of reserve. I should be very sorry indeed to deprive you of the chance of fitting yourself for a better station in life. But I warn you, solemnly and seriously, that if you persist in repeating your ridiculous circus performances here, you will have to leave this school."

"Oh my!" said Pop. "Now you may go," said Mr. Quelch more gently. "I have warned you. Profit by my warning!"

"I will, sir!" said Pop. "Keep it continually in mind, Popper."

"I won't forget it for a blinking minute, sir."

"You may go!" said Mr. Quelch hastily.

And Pop went. Mr. Quelch rang for a maid to sweep up the remains of Sophocles. Pop went down Masters' Passage with a peculiar gleam in his eyes. Mr. Quelch's solemn and mysterious warning had had its effect on Pop. But that effect was one of which the Remove master never dreamed.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Very Awkward!

"JOLLY old visitors!" murmured Bob Cherry.

The Remove were in class in the morning. Mr. Quelch had just called on Popper to construe, in his turn, when the visitors blew in.

Mr. Quelch suppressed a grunt.

Quelch hated interruptions to lessons. In this respect he differed from his class. The Remove welcomed anything in that line. Any old visitors to the school would have been welcome to the Lower Fourth, and the longer they stayed the better the juniors liked it—so long as it was in class hours. So when the Head arrived at the door of the Remove-room, with the two distinguished visitors whom he was showing over the school, the Remove beamed and Quelch grunted.

The Remove was construing the Aeneid; and they were glad to bid a short farewell to the pious Aeneas and his companions.

Dr. Locke rustled in, showing in the distinguished visitors.

One was a white-whiskered old gentleman, with a military air; the other a plump lady of uncertain age, with a Roman nose and a lorgnette.

Through the glasses the lady with the Roman nose blinked benevolently at the Remove.

"This," said the Head, "is the Lower Fourth Form."

"Ah!" said the military gentleman.

"And the little fellows are at work," said the lady with the Roman nose.

The Removeites dare not look the disgust they felt.

No doubt they were little fellows, dear little fellows, nice little fellows, in the eyes of the lady visitor. She could not be expected to know that every Greyfriars fellow, senior or junior, was a "man."

"Pray do not let us interrupt," said the military gentleman.

"Pray proceed, my dear Quelch!" said the Head.

Mr. Quelch proceeded.

He had to play up, though he had a savage dislike for having his Form-room turned into a sort of peep-show.

But Colonel Corker was a great man, who took a kindly interest in Greyfriars, and if Colonel Corker had a desire to see Greyfriars men at work Colonel Corker had to be gratified.

GOT A POSTCARD?

Then jot down on it that funny yarn you know and send it along to me. It may win a

USEFUL POCKET KNIFE!

L. Rogers, of 9, Arthur Street, Netherfield, Nottingham, has done the trick. Here's his effort:—



Citizen: "I want a revolver."
Shopkeeper: "Six-shooter, sir?"
Citizen: "No! Better make it a nine-shooter. You see, it's for the cat next door!"

Now get busy and see what YOU can do!

Evidently the colonel and his lady were important people, or the majestic Head himself would not have been showing them round the school. So a mere Form master could only suppress his feelings and play up.

"You will go on, Popper!" he said acidly.

"Wot to, sir!" answered Pop.

Mr. Quelch glared at him. The colonel and his lady gave a slight simultaneous start.

It was, perhaps, unfortunate that it was Pop who had just been called on to construe when the visitors blew in. It was also unfortunate that Mr. Quelch, on the spur of the moment, did not think of passing him over and picking on some member of the Form who would have done the Remove credit, such as Mark Linley, or Wharton. If Mr. Quelch thought of that, he thought of it too late. Popper was going on.

Pop, during his period with his tutor at Popper Court, had made a lot of progress in his Latin. He could hand out a construe as good as the average in the Remove.

His Latin, in fact, was better than his English, when he forgot, or did not choose to remember, the high-class

English his tutor had drilled into him with painful efforts on both sides.

"Constitit et lacrimans." "Quis jam locus, inquit." "Achate, quae regio in terris nostri non plena laboris?"

Pop ran his eye over those verses where he had to go on. He proceeded to translate:

"He stopped and turned on the waterworks—"

There was a hush.

Mr. Quelch turned almost green. The Remove scarcely dared to breathe. The Head stood rooted to the floor. Colonel Corker gave a violent start. Mrs. Corker fixed her glasses on Pop.

Pop went on cheerfully. Any other fellow in the Remove would have said that the good Aeneas was weeping; but Pop of the Circus had his own way of expressing these things.

"What blooming show is there in the 'ole blinking world where they ain't 'eard 'ow we're down on our luck?" Pop proceeded, translating.

This was Pop's own special way of rendering:

"He stopped, and weeping, cried, What place on earth is not now full of our sorrow?"

Mr. Quelch, from green, turned to yellow.

The Head made a peculiar noise in his throat.

The Remove were quite still. They dared not laugh in such distinguished presence. They had to suppress their feelings somehow. Some of them felt that they were approaching bursting-point.

"Gad!" said Colonel Corker.

The Head was the first to recover.

"Shall we go on?" he asked faintly.

He backed out of the Remove-room.

Colonel Corker and the Roman-nosed lady followed.

The door closed on them.

The distinguished visitors were gone. They had heard a Lower Fourth boy construe; and what impression they had taken away of the Lower Fourth was unimaginable. On occasions like this the Head liked Greyfriars to be at its very best; the best goods, as it were, in the shop window. Mr. Quelch, naturally, would have liked his Form to "show off" a little. Instead of which—

There was an awful silence in the Remove-room after the distinguished visitors had departed.

The Remove waited for the storm to burst.

Mr. Quelch seemed to have some difficulty in finding his voice.

"Popper!" he stuttered at last.

"Yessir!" said Pop.

"How—how dare you?"

Pop blinked at him in surprise.

"Ain't I got it right, sir?" he asked.

"I thought I'd got jest on the mark, sir."

"How dare you use such expressions?" almost shouted Mr. Quelch. "How dare you translate 'lacrimans' as—as—as turning on the water-works?"

"But that's what it means, sir!" said Pop. "I ain't a whale at Latin, but I know I got that right, sir. 'Course, I could put it different. I could say the covey blubbed."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Remove could bear it no longer. They had to express their feelings. There was a yell in the Form-room.

"Silence!" roared Mr. Quelch.

And there was silence.

"Popper! You—you—you should have translated that word, 'Weeping.'"

"Well, I s'pose I could, sir," said Pop, doubtfully. "But that means turning on the water-works, sir; it's just the same."

"I cannot believe, Popper, that you are so obtuse as you pretend to be!" hooted Mr. Quelch. "Stand out before the Form."

"Suttingly, sir."

Mr. Quelch picked up a cane.

"Oh my!" said Pop. "You going to wallop me, sir?"

"Wallop?" repeated Mr. Quelch. "Upon my word! Popper, once for all I forbid you to use such expressions! Bend over that desk."

Pop bent over the desk.

Whack!

"Whooooooop!" roared Pop.

"Silence!" shrieked Mr. Quelch. How near the distinguished visitors might be, he did not know, and he did not want them to hear yells of anguish from the Remove-room.

On the other hand, Pop did! He put his beef into that yell, and it rang and echoed far and wide.

Whack!

"Whooooooop!"

It was a terrific yell this time. There could have been few far corners of Greyfriars where it did not rouse an echo.

Mr. Quelch gasped.

Probably he had intended to give Pop six. But he stopped at two. He did not want the distinguished visitors to get the impression that murder was being committed in a Greyfriars Form-room.

"Go to your place!" he gasped.

"Yessir."

Pop went back to his place. There was an atmosphere of thunder in the Remove-room as the lesson proceeded.

For the remainder of that morning, Mr. Quelch passed Pop over as if he had not been there. The impression was growing in Mr. Quelch's mind that a mistake had been made in placing the circus boy at Greyfriars. He was thinking that it was really impossible that Popper should continue to be a member of the Remove. Which, if he had only known it, was exactly the impression that Pop wanted to give him.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Loder's Luck I

HARRY WHARTON joined the new fellow after morning class. The captain of the Remove was looking thoughtful. He had rather a liking for Pop, queer fish as he was from the point of view of most of the Removites; and Pop belonged to his study. So Harry felt it incumbent upon him to utter a word of friendly warning. He tapped the new junior on the shoulder, and Pop turned to him with his usual cheerful grin.

"Look here, kid," said Harry, seriously. "It's no bizney of mine, but I'm going to give you a tip."

"Cough it up," said Pop.

"You were pulling Quelch's leg with that con this morning. You jolly well know better."

Pop chuckled.

"What the dickens do you think those visitors thought, when they heard your con?" demanded Wharton.

"Never thought about it," answered Pop, cheerfully. "But Quelch was quite green, wasn't he?"

"It may be funny to make a Form-master look green," said Wharton. "But you may make him fed-up at the same time."

"Think so?" asked Pop.

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"Well, I'm pretty sure of it. I never saw Quelch looking so thoroughly fed before."

"Same 'ere," agreed Pop. "I fancied the old covey would bust a biler."

"Look here, what are you doing it for?" asked Harry. "You can talk good English when you like."

"It's 'ard to keep on remembering of it," said Pop, shaking his head. "The way you talk don't come natural to me, some'ow."

"That's all very well; but this is the first time you've let yourself go in that style in the Form-room."

"It comes easier, though," said Pop.

"It will come harder if you get Quelch's rag out. If he finds you much trouble, you may have to clear."

"Don't I know it?" said Pop. "He warned me of it hisself only yesterday. That's why."

"That's why?" repeated Wharton.

"Jest that!" said Pop, with a nod.

"Look 'ere! My uncle Popper is a governor of this 'ere school! He bunged me in 'ere, without so much as saying by your leave. Well, if I get turned out of 'ere, he won't be able to bung me in another school like this, what?"

"Very likely not."

"Prime!" said Pop.

Wharton stared at him blankly. He began to understand.

"Why, you fathead!" he exclaimed, aghast. "Mean to say that you're trying to feed Quelch up, so that you will be turned out of Greyfriars?"

"You've got it!" assented Pop, coolly. "It's me for the circus, if I get 'arf a chance."

"Well, my hat!" said Wharton, blankly.

"The old covey put the idea into my 'ead yesterday!" Pop confided to him. "Soon as he says it, I says to myself, I says, 'That's the goods!' I says! See? Old Quelch is a bloke of his word, ain't he?"

"Yes, rather."

"Well, if he keeps his word, all right!" said Pop. "Me for the circus! If he clears me out of 'ere, old Popper won't want me on his 'ands agin at Popper Court. He can't stand me about the 'ouse. Well, then ain't he likely to do the sensible thing, and let me go back to Jimmy Walker?"

"My hat!" repeated Wharton.

"See the idea?" grinned Pop.

"You—you—you want to be sacked?" gasped Wharton.

"I'd jest jump at it."

"Well, of all the howling asses," said the captain of the Remove. "It's the chance of a life-time for you, getting in at Greyfriars."

"I'd give it away with a pound of tea!" answered Pop. "No more circus tricks, says Quelch. Any more circus tricks, he says, and you'll have to 'op it! Well, if I have to 'op it, I'm going to make a long 'op back to Walker's World-Famous!" He chuckled. "Ever seen a bloke walking on his 'ands?"

"Not outside a circus!"

"Well, look!"

"You silly ass!" roared Wharton.

"In the middle of the quad—you can be seen from every master's window—"

"Ear! 'ear!" answered Pop.

And he turned over on his hands, and proceeded to walk on them, with his hat held between his feet.

There was a roar. Pop very quickly had an audience. Fellows rushed up on all sides to witness the performance.

Wharton looked on blankly. He understood now; and he was of opinion that if Pop wanted to leave Greyfriars,

he was going the right way to work. A glance at Mr. Quelch's study window showed him the Remove master's astonished and wrathful face there.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "This way to the circus! No charge for admission."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder of the Sixth came striding on the spot. He shouted wrathfully to the performer.

"Here, stop that! Stop that at once! Do you hear?"

Pop heard, but heeded not. He continued to walk on his hands, amid roars of laughter.

Loder rushed at him. As he reached him, Pop's feet came down with a crash, landing on Loder's waistcoat.

"Oh!" gasped Loder.

He sat down suddenly.

Pop was on his feet in a twinkling. He grinned down at the gasping prefect.

"You shouldn't get in the way, you know," he remarked.

Loder scrambled up, crimson with rage. He picked up his ashplant which had fallen from under his arm.

"You young scoundrel!" he roared.

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Pop.

"Bend over!" roared Loder.

"Anything to oblige!" said Pop cheerfully.

He bent over obediently. Loder took a business-like grip on the ashplant, swished it in the air, and brought it down with a terrific swipe.

Had Pop taken that swipe, he certainly would have been hurt. But the boy acrobat of Walker's World-Famous Circus had his own ideas about that. The ashplant came slashing down swiftly, but more swiftly still Pop whisked out of the way. The cane, meeting no resistance as it swept through empty space, continued its career, and landed on Loder's own leg.

Loder had put all his beef into that terrific swipe. Now he had reason to wish that he hadn't!

The crack on his leg sounded like a pistol-shot. It was followed by a fiendish yell from Loder.

The bully of the Sixth dropped the cane, and stood on one leg, clasping the other with both hands, yelling with anguish.

"Ow! Ow! Ow! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Removites.

"Ow! Oh! Oh gad! My leg! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder hopped frantically on one leg, nursing the injured limb. There were yells of laughter on all sides. Pop discreetly retreated from the spot through the yelling crowd. For the moment Loder of the Sixth was unable to deal with him, and Pop safely departed for parts unknown before Loder had time to recover.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Startling I

"COMING down?" asked Frank Nugent.

Pop of the Remove shook his head and groaned.

"Can't I?" he answered.

Prep was over in the Remove studies. Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent were going down to the Rag; but Pop remained at the study table, with a dismal expression on his face.

"Five 'undred lines!" said Pop. "That's what I got for letting Loder cane hisself in the quad to-day! Five 'undred lines!"

"Well, you asked for them!" said Nugent, laughing. "I wonder Quelch

didn't give you a thumping good licking!"

"He said he'd caned me once to-day, and did not wish to cane me a second time," said Pop. "He ain't a bad sort, old Quelch. Fact is, I don't like his cane. He lays it on too 'ard! If he'd push me out of the blooming show, I wouldn't mind! But that there cane of his is a corker! I s'pose I got to do them lines. He said afore bed time, and I ain't done any yet!"

"Pile in," said Wharton, and let it be a lesson to you not to play the goat any more, old bean!"

"Br-r-r-r-r!" said Pop. Wharton and Nugent joined their chums in the Remove passage, and the Famous Five went down the staircase together. They were rather sorry for Pop, with so overwhelming an imposition to write out, but there was no doubt that the new fellow had asked for it. Indeed, if Pop went on as he had started, it seemed certain that his career at Greyfriars School would be a hectic one.

Pop groaned, and began to write lines. He had roeled off about a hundred when the door opened, and a fat face and a large pair of spectacles glimmered in.

"Oh, 'ook it, Bunter!" said Pop, impatiently. He had plenty to do, and no time to waste on the Owl of the Remove.

"Oh, really, Popper, I—"

"'Ook it!" repeated Pop. "Unless," he added, "you'd like to do some of these blooming lines for me!"

"I'd be jolly glad, old chap, only I've sprained my wrist. Cricket, you know," said Bunter. "Slogging at the ball. I dare say you've noticed that I'm a demon at games!"

"Can't say I 'ave!" answered Pop. "But if you ain't going to 'elp—why, 'ook it! You're 'indering!"

"You remember I mentioned to you yesterday that I was expecting a postal-order?" asked Bunter.

Pop grinned. He had not been long at Greyfriars, but he had been there long enough to learn all about Billy Bunter's celebrated postal-order.

"I remember!" he answered. "'Ook it!"

"It still hasn't come," said Bunter. "P'r'aps the bloke forgot to post it!" suggested Pop, with sarcasm.

"Well, that's hardly possible," said Bunter, shaking his head. "It's from one of my titled relations, you know. There's been some delay in the post; and the fact is, it puts me in rather a fix. I suppose you couldn't lend me the ten bob till it comes?"

"You've 'it it!" agreed Pop. "I couldn't!"

"Well, make it half-a-crown," said Bunter. "By the way, old fellow, you

want to keep an eye open for Loder. Loder will be after you like a Red Indian for making him wallop himself with his cane."

"That's all over," said Pop. "Quelch took the matter into his own 'ands, and he give me lines, and I'm doing them now; so I should be glad if you'd shut up and 'ook it!"

Bunter chuckled. "Loder will take it out of you, all the same. Loder had to give in to Quelch, but he will make you squirm as soon as he gets a chance. I heard him speaking to Carne of the Sixth about you."

"You 'ear a lot of things, don't you?" said Pop, eyeing the Owl of the Remove with considerable disfavour.

vengeance, this was a favourable opportunity for catching the new junior on his own. True, it was against all the rules for a prefect to butt into a matter which had been taken into a Form master's hands and settled by him. But Pop had seen enough of the bully of the Sixth to know that Gerald Loder cared very little for the rules, so long as he could keep up appearances.

There was a heavy tread in the Remove passage a few minutes later.

"Oh, my!" repeated Pop. The door of Study No. 1 was thrown open.

Loder of the Sixth walked in, and grinned sourly at the sight of the new junior sitting at the table.



"Popper!" roared Mr. Quelch. The junior was startled and gave a jump. Crash! Clang! The poker and the bust went to the floor together.

"Well, what about that half-a-crown?" asked Bunter.

"Nothing about a 'arf-crown!" said Pop. "For goodness' sake, roll out of that door, and shut it after you, and let a covey get his lines done!"

"Beast!" "Op it!" said Pop.

"I'm not anxious for your company!" said Bunter scornfully. "I'm rather particular whom I mix with, and I draw the line at circus acrobats! And I jolly well won't tell you now what Loder said!"

"I don't want to 'ear it!" "I was going to tell you that Loder's coming up here after you!" said Bunter. "Now I jolly well won't! Yah!"

And with that and a scornful sniff, William George Bunter rolled out of the study and slammed the door after him.

"Oh my!" said Pop. He did not resume writing his imposition. Prep being over in the Remove, the studies were deserted, except for Study No. 1, where Pop sat at his lines. If Loder of the Sixth was looking for

Pop eyed him warily. "I 'ope your leg's better, Loder?" he said, very civilly.

"Do you?" said Loder. "Get up from that chair!" Pop rose slowly to his feet. He kept the table between himself and the bully of the Sixth.

"Now come here, and bend over this chair!" said Loder.

"What for?" "I'm going to give you six! Get a move on!"

Pop of the Remove did not get a move on. He remained where he was, eyeing Loder very watchfully across the table.

"You ain't going to lick me, you know!" he said. "Mr. Quelch's given me five 'undred lines for what 'appened in the quad to-day!"

"Oh, that!" said Loder carelessly. "No, I'm not going to lick you for that, Popper. Not at all! That matter was settled by your Form master, and it has nothing further to do with me. You mustn't imagine for one moment that

I'm raking that affair up again. In fact, I'd forgotten all about it."

Loder's manner was quite playful—as playful as that of a cat dealing with a mouse.

"Then what are you licking me for?" demanded Pop.

"You've a right to know!" said Loder, with the same playful manner. "I'm going to lick you for whistling in the passages. You've been told several times that it's against the rules for a junior to whistle in the passages. You're not in the circus now, you know; and you have to do as you're told at Greyfriars."

"But I ain't been whistling in the passages since I was told!" objected Pop. "Give you my davy I ain't, Loder."

"I don't know what a davy is—not having had the advantage of being brought up in the slums," said Loder genially. "But if you mean that you give me your word, you can save your breath. You'll want it for howling before I've done with you. Bend over that chair!"

"You mean that you're going to lick me for making you whack your leg in the quad, and you've got a whopper all ready to tell Quelch if he wants to know!" said Pop.

"I'm not here to argue with you," said Loder. "Are you bending over that chair, or do you want me to take you by the collar?"

"I ain't going to be licked for nothing," said Pop stubbornly—"and you can put that in your pipe and smoke it, Loder."

"That does it!" said Loder; and he strode round the table at Pop.

Pop circled round the table in the other direction.

Loder's eyes gleamed, and he grasped the table and whirled it aside. Pens and ink and papers went in a shower to the floor. He made a jump at Pop; and Pop made a jump at the window, which was wide open to admit the summer air.

"You young ass! Come back!" yelled Loder, in alarm, as the schoolboy acrobat negotiated the window.

Pop did not come back. The fact that the window was more than thirty feet from the ground, and that a fall meant instant death, was nothing to the one-time King of the Trapeze of Walker's World-Famous Circus. He hung on the window-sill, his legs trailing among the thick tendrils of ancient ivy below, and grinned at Loder.

"Come arter me!" he suggested. Loder stood glaring at him through the open window. The peril of the junior's position was terrible—or would have been to anyone but a practised acrobat.

"Come back!" hissed Loder.

"Bow-wow!"

"You mad young idiot!"

"You mad old idiot!" retorted Pop agreeably.

"I—I—I'll smash you!"

"Get on with it!" said Pop cheerfully. "You 'it me, and down I go; and what'll you say at the inquest?"

"You—you—you—" gasped Loder.

"Me—me—me!" mimicked Pop.

"Will you get in?" hissed Loder.

"Not 'arf!"

"Then I'll drag you in, and thrash you within an inch of your life!" said Loder, between his teeth.

He came closer to the window, and laid his cane on a chair. Pop eyed him coolly.

"You lay o' and on me, and down I go!" he said.

Loder took no heed. He stretched out

his hands over the sill to grasp the junior by the shoulders and drag him in.

The next moment he stopped dead, transfixed, with a gasp of horror. Pop's hands left the window-sill, and his head and face disappeared from view. There was a rustling sound in the thick ivy below; and then silence. Loder, rooted to the floor, gazed out into the darkness with a face white with horror.

"Good heavens!" breathed Loder.

For a full minute he could not move. Then he forced himself to the window, and leaned out and looked down.

Only darkness met his view. Loder trembled.

Not a cry—not a sound from below! But he did not expect to hear a cry; he knew that if the falling junior had struck the earth from a height of thirty feet there would be no cry. The perspiration trickled thickly down Loder's pallid face.

For a moment or two he was conscious of remorse. He wished from the bottom of his heart that he had let the junior alone.

But that thought was quickly

ANOTHER BUDDING RHYMESTER CATCHES THE JUDGE'S EYE

with the following Greyfriars limerick.

HE GETS A POCKET WALLET FOR IT!

At our school is a champion
"whacker"
Who is dead nuts on every
young slacker.
So the boys hatched a plot
And the answer we got
Was a jolly good tale: "Who
Hacked Hacker?"

Sent in by C. Wolverson,
13, Borneo Street, Walsall, Staffs.
Make it your next job to com-
pile a limerick and let me have
it. Our prizes are WELL
WORTH WINNING!

banished by the more pressing thought of the consequences to himself.

What was going to happen to him?

Loder shuddered. There could be no doubt. He had seen the two hands slip from their hold on the window-sill at the same moment; Popper had had no chance to grasp the ivy below with either of them. He had simply let go his hold and shot down out of sight. He must have gone down like a stone. Loder stood at the open window with his teeth chattering. The night was warm, but he was feeling an icy chill running through him.

Slowly—slowly, Loder of the Sixth turned away from the window. Slowly he dragged himself from the fatal spot. Slowly he crept out into the Remove passage.

Several minutes ticked away on the study clock. Then a face rose into view—had there been anyone to see it—at the study window, and Pop peered into the study.

He grinned as he saw that it was vacant, and climbed in.

To Loder's eyes, when he had seen the junior's hands slip from the sill, a fatality had seemed a certainty. He had not been aware that the schoolboy acrobat's legs had been twined in the thick tendrils of the ivy below, and that it was child's play to the King of the Trapeze to hang by his legs.

All the while the horrified Loder had been staring from the window, Pop had been snuggled in the thick ivy a few feet below, waiting for him to clear.

The circus schoolboy sat down at the table again, and resumed his impot. What Loder thought, and what Loder was going to do, did not worry him; he had got rid of the bully of the Sixth, and that was all he cared about. Line after line raced from his pen, and he forgot all about Loder.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Only a False Alarm!

MR. QUELCH started to his feet. It was not like the quiet, reserved, impassive Remove master to display emotion of any kind. But even the cold and self-contained Form master was not proof against the look on Loder's face as he presented himself in the study. Loder was looking as if he had seen a ghost, or something still more horrid.

"Loder! What ever is the matter?" ejaculated Mr. Quelch, startled and alarmed. "What—what—what—"

"An—an accident, sir!" said Loder hoarsely.

"What has happened?"

"Popper, sir—"

"But what—what—"

"It was not my fault!" gasped Loder.

"I cannot be blamed! I—I went to Popper's study to—to speak to him—"

"What has happened?"

"I—I intended simply to speak to him, in a kind way, to—to warn him to adopt a more respectful attitude towards Sixth Form prefects. As he is a new boy, and badly trained, I thought that a few kind words—"

"What has happened?"

"But he—he misunderstood, and—"

"What has happened?" shrieked Mr. Quelch.

"He—he—he—" Loder gurgled huskily. "He—he—he jumped—"

"Jumped?"

"Out—out—out—" Loder seemed unable to finish.

"Out of what?" almost yelled the alarmed Form master.

"Out of the window!" gasped Loder.

Mr. Quelch stood transfixed.

"Out of a Remove study window, do you mean?"

"Yes!" gasped Loder.

"Impossible! What do you mean? A Remove study window! If he jumped out of a Remove study window he must have been killed instantly."

"It—it wasn't my fault sir—I am not to blame. I—I was speaking to him in the kindest possible manner."

"Upon my word! Loder, you must be mistaken! Unless the boy is insane, he cannot have been guilty of such an act!" Mr. Quelch spluttered. "Bless my soul! If this is true, Loder—"

"It—it—it's true!" groaned Loder.

"Loder! More than once I have heard complaints of bullying on your part! Once or twice I have spoken to you about it! Loder, what have you done to drive a foolish boy to a desperate act?"

Loder fairly cringed.

"Oh! Nothing! I swear, nothing! I—I—I—"

"I cannot believe that such a thing has happened! Such things do not happen! But I must investigate at once."

Mr. Quelch hurried from his study.

Loder followed him, almost tottering.

Many surprised glances fell on the Remove master as he whisked away to

the door, his face wildly perturbed, and his gown fluttering behind him. He almost ran into Wingate of the Sixth, and the captain of Greyfriars stared at him with wide-open eyes.

"Has something happened, sir—" gasped Wingate.

"Yes—no—I do not know; Loder states that a Remove boy has fallen from a study window— The new boy, Popper—"

"Oh!" gasped Wingate.

"Get a light, Wingate, and come with me! Lose no time!"

"I've an electric torch in my study—"

"Quick!"

Mr. Quelch bounded on. Wingate quickly got hold of the electric torch and followed him into the quad. Loder staggered out into the night air, his knees knocking together.

"I say, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter burst into the Rag, his eyes almost bulging through his spectacles with excitement.

"I say, you fellows!" he yelled.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Pop—pop—pop—" stuttered Bunter.

"What?"

"Pop—Pop—Popper's fallen out of the study window—"

"Great Scott!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I say, you fellows, Loder did it!" shrieked Bunter. "I heard him tell Carne he was going up to collar Popper in the study after prep—and he looks as chite as walk—"

"What?"

"I mean as white as chalk—"

There was a rush out of the Rag at once. Hardly anybody believed the startling news; but all were alarmed. The door of the House stood wide open, the night breeze whispering in. Some of the fellows rushed out into the quad. In the distance, under the Remove windows, a light was winking in the darkness.

"There they are!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Looking for the bub-bub-body!" gasped Bunter.

"It can't be true!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "It's impossible! But for goodness' sake let's go and see."

"Come on!" gasped Wharton.

It was against all rules for fellows to leave the House at such an hour. But rules counted for nothing in that moment of wild alarm. Already the startling news was spreading like wild-fire. Fellows of all Forms crowded out of the House, and scudded round towards the winking light of the electric torch in the Greyfriars captain's hand.

Mr. Quelch, doubting but deeply alarmed and horrified, scanned the ground under the Remove study windows.

Nothing of an unusual nature was to be seen there.

Wingate flashed the light to and fro; and horrified glances swept the ground. But they discovered nothing.

"I was—was sure it could not have happened," panted Mr. Quelch. "I was—was sure of it! Loder, you have made some childish mistake—"

"I saw him fall—" quavered Loder. "There's no sign of him here!" said Wingate dryly.

"He may have fallen farther out—"

"Look—look, Wingate! Bring the light."

The light flashed to and fro. Several other fellows had produced electric

torches, too. Lights flashed and glittered on all sides. But they revealed no trace of what all dreaded to see.

Loder stared round him, stupefied. That Popper had fallen from the window, he knew. But if he had fallen, where was he?

"Some—some trick has been played!" hissed Mr. Quelch. "Loder, you have made a stupid mistake—or you have been deceived somehow! Thank goodness it is no worse."

"But—but—" babbled Loder. "I—I saw—"

"Nonsense!"

Mr. Quelch stared round at the buzzing, excited crowd, with a baleful eye.

"What are you boys doing out of the House?" he hooted. "Go in at once—at once! Do you hear me?"

"We—we thought Popper was killed, sir—" gasped Billy Bunter.

"Nonsense! Silence!"

"Perhaps he's smashed into such small pieces, sir, that you can't find them—"

"Take fifty lines, Bunter!"

"Oh lor'!"

"Return to the House immediately, all of you. This is—is shocking—scandalous—unprecedented—"

The Greyfriars fellows faded away out of the scene. Mr. Quelch, with compressed lips and glittering eyes, followed them in. Loder tottered in after him. Loder's brain was in a whirl; and he had given up trying to understand what it all meant.

Mr. Quelch whisked away to the stairs.

"Come with me, Loder! You others, remain where you are! There's no cause for excitement—none whatever! I am sure of that! Wingate, will you kindly see that there is no more uproar."

The Remove master hurried up the stairs. Loder followed him. They arrived in the Remove passage, and Mr. Quelch fairly hurled open the door of Study No. 1.

"Oh my!" said a startled voice within.

Mr. Quelch strode into the study.

Popper of the Remove, sitting at his lines, blinked at him. Then he rose respectfully to his feet. A faint grin dawned on his face at the sight of Loder's astounded visage in the doorway. Loder stared at the new junior as if he could scarcely believe his eyes—as indeed he scarcely could.

"Popper!" Mr. Quelch's voice was almost a roar.

"Yessir!"

"What have you been doing?"

"My lines, sir!"

"What? What? Loder has stated that you jumped from the study window. What

absurd trick have you been playing now?" roared Mr. Quelch.

"Oh my!" ejaculated Pop. "I—I—I never jumped from the winder, sir!"

"I am aware that you did not! Loder, explain yourself! Here is the boy, unharmed! Do you dare to repeat to me that you saw him jump from the study window? Explain yourself at once."

Loder almost babbled.

"I—I didn't say jumped, sir—"

"You did say jumped, Loder! You said distinctly, jumped!"

"I—I meant—I meant that he fell—and he did fall!" gasped Loder. "I saw him let go and fall—and I can't understand—"

"Is it possible, Popper, that you have been playing your circus tricks—your acrobatic tricks—in so dangerous a place as a window thirty feet from the ground?"

"Oh!" gasped Loder. He began to understand.

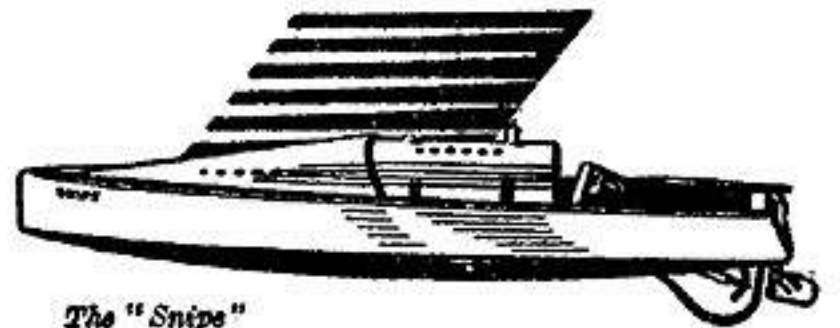
Pop suppressed a grin. The expression on the face of Henry Samuel Quelch hinted that it was no time for grinning.

"Answer me, Popper!" roared Mr. Quelch.

"I jest 'ung out of the winder, sir," said Pop. "That bloke was going to lick me, and I wasn't going to be licked for nothing. I jest 'ung out of the winder by my 'ands, sir, and took 'old of the ivy with my legs; and when he grabbed at me, I let go with my 'ands, sir, and 'ung by my legs! I wasn't in any danger, sir—I've done riskier things than that on the 'igh trapeze in Walker's World-Famous. Why, bless your 'eart, sir, it was nothing to me."

"You—you—you hung by your legs, (Continued on next page.)

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to the ivy, thirty feet from the ground!" gurgled Mr. Quelch.

"I've 'ung from a trapeze fifty feet 'igh by my toes, sir," said Pop. "It wasn't nothing!"

"You have dared to run such risks! You—you—you— Loder, you told me that you came to this study to speak a few kind words of warning to this junior. He states that he climbed out of the window because you were going to cane him."

"I—I—I—" gasped Loder. He had never expected contradiction from Pop, in the fearful circumstances. "I—I meant—"

"Loder, you have prevaricated. I shall mention the matter to Dr. Locke. Go!" hooted Mr. Quelch.

Loder gave Pop one look, and went. The Remove master turned to the new junior again. All his alarm and anxiety had turned to wrath, as is not an uncommon happening.

"Popper, you deliberately tricked Loder into the belief that a fatality had occurred. You played a trick that might well have led to a dreadful accident. I have warned you. You have not forgotten my warning. You have now left me no resource but to request Dr. Locke to send you away from Greyfriars. I have no doubt—no doubt whatever—that the Head will accede to my demand. Not a word! You have brought this on yourself."

And with those crushing words Mr. Quelch whisked out of the study.

Pop blinked at him. Crushing as the words were, dismayed as they would have been to any other Greyfriars fellow, Pop of the Remove looked neither crushed nor dismayed.

He grinned. Mr. Quelch was no sooner off the scene than there was a rush of Remove men up to Study No. 1. Every fellow in the Form wanted to see Pop, and hear what had happened. A crowd of faces stared in at the doorway, and beheld an unexpected sight. Pop was pirouetting round the study table in a sort of triumphant dance, and chortling as he pirouetted.

"What the thump—" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"I'm going!" trilled Pop.

"Going?"

"So Quelch says. He won't let me off. I'm sacked!"

"Sacked?"

"Yes. Prime, ain't it? Hurrah!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Hurrah!" yelled Pop. "Me for the circus! Hoo-blooming-ray!"

A fellow under sentence of the sack, as a rule, was reduced to the lowest depths of the dumps. That was not the case with Cecil Popper of the Remove. That night, in the Remove dormitory, Pop dreamed that he was already back in Walker's World-Famous Circus; and a joyous grin overspread his face as he slumbered. And when the Remove turned out in the morning at the clang of the rising-bell, the summer sun was not brighter than the face of Pop of the Circus.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Quelch is Too Kind!

P RIME!" That was Pop's enthusiastic, if not elegant, remark as he walked out into the sunny quad that morning.

His face was merry and bright. Nobody, catching sight of the new fellow in the quad, would have guessed that he was to be "bunked," after

being little more than a week at the school.

Pop seemed to be walking on air. He whistled shrilly through his teeth as he walked. It was not a musical sound, but it was merry.

"Prime, ain't it?" said Pop, ceasing to whistle, and grinning widely as he came on the Famous Five.

The juniors laughed.

"All depends on the point of view, I suppose," said Harry Wharton. "I wouldn't like to be in your shoes, old man."

"The primefulness does not appear terrific, to my honourable and ludicrous self," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"You really want to get out of Greyfriars?" asked Frank Nugent.

It was difficult for a Greyfriars man to understand anybody wanting to get out of Greyfriars, whatsoever might be the attractions elsewhere.

"Don't I—just!" said Pop, with a deep breath.

"Then you must be a thumping ass!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"I s'pose you wouldn't see it," said Pop tolerantly. "You ain't never 'ung by your 'eels on the 'igh trapeze! You ain't never stood on your 'ead on a galloping 'orse. I ain't running down the school. Nice old place, for a quiet life. I like you fellers, too! Most of the fellers I've met 'ere is good sorts. But—"

Pop shook his head. Greyfriars was all right, in its way, but in comparison with Walker's World-Famous Circus, it was like moonlight unto sunlight, as water into wine!

"Well, I'm glad you're pleased, anyhow," said Wharton. "As it can't be helped now—"

"Pleased as Punch!" said Pop. "I say, when do you fellers think it will come off? Afore classes, I s'pose?"

"Well, I suppose so, if it's coming off at all," said Harry. "I suppose Quelch will take you to the Head first, and then call Sir Hilton Popper on the phone, and tell him. And I suppose he'll come for you."

Pop's cheery face fell a little. "That's rather a fly in the jam!" he admitted. "I don't want to see old Tin-ribs! Still, he won't want to keep me at 'ome! That stands to reason! I'll make him tired of me if he does. Bother 'im, anyhow!"

After breakfast Pop expected to be called on by his Form master, to be taken to the Head. But it did not happen.

Quelch, apparently, was 'eaving it till later.

There was no doubt that the Remove master had meant what he had said in Study No. 1, the previous evening. He had been deeply and intensely angry. After his serious and solemn warning to Popper, the circus schoolboy had not only repeated his acrobatic performances, but repeated them in a way that endangered life and limb. It was enough to exasperate the most patient master, and to make him anxious to get such a very peculiar pupil off his hands. Pop had no doubt that Quelch meant business; but he wished he would get on with it.

If he was going, what was the use of another morning's lessons? It seemed absurd, to Pop, to worry himself over lessons that fine sunny morning, when he was under sentence to leave the school.

However, as nothing was said to him, he had to join up when the Remove went to their Form-room.

Mr. Quelch was observed to give him a somewhat grim look as he came in

with the Remove. After that one glance, however, he took no especial notice of Popper.

When the Form went out in break Pop expected to be called on to stop behind. But he was not called on, and he went out with the rest, puzzled and a little uneasy.

"What's he 'anging it out for?" he asked Wharton. "Why don't the old covey come down to business?"

"Better ask him," said Wharton, laughing.

"Well, he ain't a bloke you can ask," said Pop ruefully. "But I wish he'd get on with it. 'Tain't any good 'anging it out. Keeping a bloke in suspense, you know."

After third school, however, Pop found that the Remove master had not forgotten him.

When the Lower Fourth were dismissed the Form master called on Popper as the juniors filed out.

Pop's heart bounded.

It was coming at last! He turned towards the Form master's desk and approached Mr. Quelch. He realised that it would be wiser, as well as better form, not to show what he felt about the matter, and he tried as hard as he could to look serious and solemn. After all, Quelch was a good sort in his way; and he had been kind and patient in many ways with his rather troublesome new pupil. Pop would not have hurt his feelings for worlds; and, anyhow, it was, to say the least, judicious not to let Quelch suspect that he was glad to go.

"Yessir!" said Pop.

"Kindly do not say 'Yessir!'" frowned Mr. Quelch. "'Yes, sir' are two words, not one, Popper. Say 'Yes, sir.'"

"Yessir!"

"It appears to me, Popper, that since you have been here your pronunciation has deteriorated instead of improved."

"Oh my!" said Pop.

"You must not say 'Oh my!'"

"I mean blimey, sir!" said Pop innocently.

"Upon my word, if you use such an expression as 'blimey' again, Popper, I shall cane you!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

Popper was silent, and there was a pause. Mr. Quelch eyed him and coughed. Pop began to feel apprehensive.

"I have been considering your case, Popper," resumed the Remove master, at last. "Your conduct yesterday was outrageous, as I am sure you realise."

"'Orrible, sir!" said Pop cheerfully. So long as Quelch did not take a lenient view, Pop was willing to agree to anything. "Awful, sir!"

"I am glad you realise its seriousness, Popper."

"'Course I do, sir!" said Pop. "You can't be expected to put up with it, sir. I ain't expecting it."

"You caused an alarm in the school, and there might have been a terrible accident!" said Mr. Quelch sternly. "Such conduct cannot possibly be tolerated, Popper. You must be aware of that."

"I get you, sir!" assented Popper.

"You must not say that you get me!" hooted Mr. Quelch. "Such expressions are—are—are outrageous!"

"I mean, I under-constumble, sir."

"You—you what?" gurgled Mr. Quelch. "What ever can possibly be the meaning of that extraordinary expression?"

"Oh, that's a word Joey, the clown, uses in his back-chat in the circus, sir," said Pop. "You never saw Walker's World-Famous Circus, did you, sir?"

"Certainly not."
 "You want to see it, sir," said Pop. "If it ever comes along this 'ere way, sir, you 'op it to that circus and see the show! It's a sight for sore eyes, sir. Joey is the funniest clown you ever see sir—he will fair make you burst a biler larfing."

"Silence!" said Mr. Quelch in a formidable voice.

"Oh, yessir!"

Mr. Quelch breathed hard.

"As I have said, Popper, I have considered your case. Your conduct has been thoughtless, disrespectful, outrageous, unprecedented—not at all what can possibly be tolerated at Greyfriars."

"I know, sir! I ain't sooted to a school like this, sir!" said Pop. "I ain't blaming you for sending me away, sir. I see meself that it's jest right and proper."

"I am glad and relieved, Popper, to see that you realise the seriousness of your conduct. It encourages me to give you another chance."

Pop jumped.

"What?" he ejaculated.

"Last night," said Mr. Quelch, "I was resolvéd that you should leave Greyfriars. I consulted with your headmaster. He very kindly left the decision in my hands. Nevertheless, after consultation on the matter, we came to the conclusion that your outrageous conduct was rather due to the bad training you received at an early and impressionable age, than to any serious faults in your character. We decided that you might be given another chance to make good at this school."

Pop's jaw dropped. He stared at the master of the Remove in blank dismay.

"Oh!" he gasped.

"You will be allowed to remain, Popper—"

"Ow!"

"And I trust," said Mr. Quelch sternly, "that you will try to deserve this kindness—"

"Oh my!"

"I shall pass over your outrageous conduct. I shall take no further notice of the matter. I shall give you, as I have said, another chance. Make the most of it, Popper; I warn you to make the most of it! Such a chance will not recur, should there be any repetition of your disorderly conduct. Bear that in mind! You may go!"

Mr. Quelch probably expected thanks. Probably he expected relief to dawn and shine in the face of the respited Removeite. No doubt he expected a burst of gratitude.

If Mr. Quelch expected these things, he was disappointed. Pop did not utter a word. He only stared blankly at the Remove master.

Pop's card-castles had fallen in ruins round him. The circus was as far off as ever!

He was forgiven! Forgiveness, in most circumstances, is gratifying. In these circumstances, it wasn't! In utter, overwhelming dismay, the circus school-boy blinked at the forgiving Form master.

"Oh my!" he said at last.

"You may go!" repeated Mr. Quelch acidly. He was disappointed; annoyed. The boy seemed to have no proper feeling.

Slowly, dismally, Pop turned away. In silence, he almost crawled from the Form-room. He limped out into the quad. The summer sunshine did not

lighten his clouded face. His expression was one of fixed gloom.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry clapped him on the shoulder. "Enjoying life, what?"

"Oh my!" said Pop.

Bob looked at him.

"Poor old chap!" he said. "Feeling it now, what? I fancied you'd feel it when it really came to going. I'm awfully sorry."

"Fathead!" said Pop ungratefully.

"What-a-t?"

"I'm not going!" mumbled Pop.

"Not going?" ejaculated Bob.

"The Beak's given me another chance!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Another chance!" repeated Pop. "And me counting my blooming chickens afore they was 'atched! Oh my! I s'pose he means well. He's let me off! I got to stick it! Oh my!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob.

"What are you cackling at, you fat-head?" demanded Pop resentfully.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Bob.

"Oh, rats!" growled Pop, and he stalked away, leaving Bob still yelling.

Pop of the Circus was still Pop of Greyfriars. When everybody had expected him to get sacked, Mr. Quelch had relented and given him another chance. It was too bad, Pop considered. And his dreams of returning to the circus faded into obscurity—but not for long!



Loder glared at Pop through the window. "Come back, you mad young idiot!" he hissed. "Shan't, you mad old idiot!" retorted Pop.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Hears of Something to his Advantage!

"A LARGE cake!" said Mr. Prout.

Billy Bunter started.

It was purely by chance that Bunter, in morning break that Saturday, had selected the wall under the Fifth Form master's study window upon which to lean his portly person.

Of all attitudes Bunter preferred the horizontal. He found his weight easier to support when thus extended. Still, he could not lie down always; and when he could not lie down, he liked to sit down. Nevertheless, he could not sit down always; and when he could neither lie down nor sit down, he liked to lean. Now he was leaning. There was, in point of fact, too much of Bunter for Bunter to carry it about with comfort. It eased him to let the solid old walls of Greyfriars support his weight for a time.

That the study window above him was open, to admit the fresh air of the pleasant summer's morning, Bunter had not noticed. He had not even noticed that it was Prout's window till he heard Prout's voice.

Bunter was not thinking of Prout. His thoughts were wrapped round a much more important personage—W. G.

(Continued on page 16.)



(Continued from page 13.)

Bunter to wit. There were few moments when Bunter's thoughts strayed far from W. G. Bunter.

More especially, it was the inner Bunter that occupied his thoughts. The inner Bunter was spacious; and soon after a meal, Bunter was conscious of an aching void there. In break, a fellow needed light refreshments. Had Bunter received the postal-order he had been expecting for quite a considerable time, Bunter would not have been leaning against the wall under Prout's window. Bunter would have been in the school tuckshop, wrapping himself outside foodstuffs.

But the postal-order had not arrived; so there was Bunter, occupied, as Shakespeare would have expressed it, in chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy. His sweet fancy painted the doughnuts in Mrs. Mibble's shop in attractive colours on the blank canvas of his fat mind. His bitter fancy gloomed on the fact that he was stony, and that not one of the considerable number of beasts in the Remove would lend him anything.

Butting suddenly into his meditations came the deep and fruity voice of Prout from the open window of the study.

It was rather startling. From doughnuts Bunter's thoughts had turned to cake—a natural transition. His affections were almost equally divided between doughnuts and cake. Both were delightful. Doughnuts, perhaps, were a little more scrumptious; on the other hand, cake was more solid and lasted longer. Bunter was thinking, then, of cake; and Prout's remarkable observation in the study chimed in, harmonising with his thoughts. It was really an odd coincidence. It seemed to be a case of two sculs with but a single thought, two hearts that beat as one.

"Iced top—certainly!" said Mr. Prout.

Bunter listened, of course; Bunter listened to everything; he was "some" listener. But really Prout's remarks were rather surprising. Mr. Prout, the master of the Greyfriars Fifth, could hardly take a personal interest in cakes, even large cakes with iced tops. Mr. Prout had reached the age when a large cake with an iced top, instead of presenting irresistible attractions, was rather regarded as a deadly enemy. Billy Bunter could have dealt with the largest imaginable cake, and come up smiling and asked for another. But a large cake would have given Mr. Prout what the doctor would have called dyspepsia, and what the juniors would have called jip. So it really was odd to hear Prout talking to himself about large cakes with iced tops.

"Fruit—oh, certainly!" said Prout.

"Well, my hat!" murmured Bunter, in wonder.

"Really, I know very little about—ah—cakes!" said Mr. Prout. "I leave details to your judgment. A large cake? Certainly. Fruity? Oh, yes! Iced? Certainly. And a suitable inscription. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,167.

Eh? What did you say? Yes, yes! I forgot to mention it. Yes, certainly, a birthday cake! Oh, yes!"

Billy Bunter's fat brain did not work quickly. But he began to understand. Prout was not talking to himself; he was talking into the telephone in his study. He was ordering a birthday cake from some establishment where they supplied such comestibles. What the thump Prout could want with a birthday cake was still a mystery. But there it was; he was ordering one.

"A Happy Birthday, or something of that sort," went on Prout. Oh, yes; or Many Happy Returns of the Day. Oh, yes; the usual thing, you know! It is for a boy—yes, a nephew. Quite so; yes! I presume that it can be delivered to-day? What—what? Very good! Any time so long as I may be able to catch the post with the parcel before six. Very good! Yes, that is all, thank you! Mr. Prout, Greyfriars School. Good-bye!"

The fruity voice of Mr. Prout died away.

The Fifth Form master hung up, and stepped to the study window to look out into the quadrangle.

His glance fell on the fat junior, leaning on the wall beneath the window. Mr. Prout frowned.

He did not approve of slackness. It was true that Bunter did not belong to his Form, and that Form masters were not supposed to butt into other Form masters' duties. There was an etiquette about these things. Mr. Prout, however was superior to etiquette.

"Bunter!" he rapped out.

Billy Bunter started and blinked up at him.

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"Do not lounge!" said Mr. Prout.

"Eh?"

"Do not lean and lounge about in that slack manner, Bunter! It is shocking! It is a very disagreeable spectacle. Your Form master would be displeased if he saw you. Pull yourself together!"

Bunter's eyes gleamed behind his spectacles. He would have liked to tell the Fifth Form master to go and eat coke. He would have liked to mention that it was like Prout's cheek to slang him. But it was wiser to leave these remarks unuttered, and Bunter rolled away without replying, followed by a disapproving glance from Prout.

The bell rang for third school soon afterwards, and Bunter rolled in with the Remove.

Third lesson that morning dealt with geography; but Billy Bunter's thoughts were not of a geographical nature.

His fancy dwelt on the cake that Prout had been ordering on the telephone, probably from the bunshop at Courtfield. They were famous for their cakes at the Courtfield bunshop. Bunter did not like Prout, and he thought it would be awful to have him for an uncle; but just then Bunter wished that he were Prout's nephew. Some unknown nephew of Prout's was going to get that large cake, with iced top and a suitable inscription. Bunter wished that Prout was his uncle, positively for one occasion only, as it were.

"Bunter!"

It was Quelch's acid voice, and it recalled the Owl of the Remove from a happy day-dream featuring large cakes with iced tops.

"Oh! Yes, sir!" stammered Bunter.

"You are not paying attention, Bunter."

"Oh, yes, sir! I—I heard every word you were saying, sir!" gasped Bunter, wondering what Mr. Quelch had been saying.

"Indeed! And what is the most striking feature of Mount Everest, otherwise Mount Gaurisankar, in the Himalayas, Bunter?"

"The—the iced top, sir."

"What?"

"I—I mean—"

"If you mean that the mountain is covered with perpetual snow, Bunter, you—"

"Oh, yes! Exactly, sir."

"And what else can you tell me about Mount Everest, Bunter?"

"It—it's the largest cake in the world, sir—"

"The what?" roared Mr. Quelch.

"I—I—I mean, the largest mountain," gasped Bunter. "When—when I say cake I—I mean mountain, sir. The largest world in the cake—I—I mean, the largest Himalaya in the mountain—that is to say—"

Bunter was getting mixed.

"You will take fifty lines Bunter."

"Oh lor'!"

"And if you do not pay attention, Bunter, you will be detained this afternoon in the Form-room."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

The fat junior sat up and took notice after that.

Detention that afternoon would have put the lid on schemes that were forming in Bunter's podgy brain.

That afternoon a large cake was to be delivered from the bunshop. It would be landed in Prout's study. Already it had occurred to Bunter that it would be a good deed to save Prout the trouble of getting that parcel off to his nephew. There was somebody much nearer at hand who would appreciate that cake fully as much as Prout's unknown nephew. Bunter could not afford to be detained that afternoon.

For the remainder of third lesson Mr. Quelch had a model pupil in Bunter. The Owl of the Remove hung on his words as if they were pearls of price dropping from the Form master's lips. When the Remove were dismissed at last Bunter breathed freely. He was done with Quelch now, and could devote his powerful intellect wholly and solely to the task of saving Prout the trouble of getting that parcel off.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Friend in Need!

"ANG it!"

Bunter grinned. He did not need telling who had made that remark, which fell on his ears as he approached Study No. 1 in the Remove. There was only one Greyfriars man who disregarded the aspirate in that reckless manner.

The fat junior blinked into the study. He had come to look for the Famous Five, but Harry Wharton & Co. were not there. Pop was in the study, and he was moving about restlessly, with an exceedingly dissatisfied expression on his face.

"Where are those beasts?" asked Bunter.

"Oh, 'op it!" grunted Pop.

"Have they gone out?" demanded Bunter.

"Yes. 'Op it!"

"The rotters!" said Bunter indignantly.

Bunter had been rather busy since dinner. He had been keeping an eye open—or, rather, two eyes, not to mention a large pair of spectacles. He had not watched in vain.

A large parcel had been delivered for Mr. Prout. Trotter had taken it to Prout's study.

Prout was out of gates. He had walked abroad with Capper, the master of the Fourth.

Fate, indeed, seemed to be playing into Bunter's fat hands. Prout, no doubt, would come in in time to get that parcel off by post. But, in the meantime, the parcel lay on his study table, where Trotter had placed it.

All that was necessary was to bag the cake while it was there unwatched and unguarded. Bunter had already suggested it to Skinner, to Snoop, to Stott, to Fisher T. Fish, to Bolsover major, and to Wibley, generously offering them "halves." Each and every one of those fellows had told him to go and eat coke, to go and chop chips, or something of the kind. Possibly some of them had conscientious objections to bagging the cake. All of them had strong objections to taking the consequences of bagging it. Bunter came to Study No. 1 on a forlorn hope. He was going to ask every man in the Remove before he took the risk of bagging the cake himself. Bunter liked cake, but he did not like risks.

And he found that the beasts had gone out! Sneaked off, as it were, while Bunter was otherwise engaged.

"The rotters!" repeated Bunter. "Sneaking off like that! Sure they're gone out, Popper?"

"Yes. 'Op it!"

"You're jolly civil!" sneered Bunter.

"Oh, 'op it!" said Pop. "I ain't feeling merry and bright this afternoon, and your face don't make me feel any better."

"You cheeky beast——"

"'Ook it!"

Billy Bunter neither hopped it nor hooked it. He fixed his eyes, and his spectacles, on the new junior. He had had a very faint hope of enlisting the Famous Five in the good cause. It occurred to him that Popper was a more hopeful subject. Popper, to judge by his recent proceedings, was a reckless fellow, regardless of consequences, and that was just the kind of fellow Bunter wanted to meet.

"I say, old chap——" he began affectionately.

"Nothing to lend!" said Pop briefly. A fellow did not need to be more than a week at Greyfriars to learn what Bunter meant by "old chap" uttered in an affectionate tone.

"I'm not asking you to lend me anything," said Bunter, with dignity. "The fact is, I came here to do you a favour, Popper."

"You could do me a bigger one by taking your face away," answered Pop.

"Like cake?" asked Bunter, unheeding.

Pop looked at him.

He was thinking of Walker's World-Famous Circus, and his desire to be there. Still, he was not inaccessible to the attractions of cake.

"Well, I've got one," said Bunter, "and, look here, I'll go halves if you like. You fetch it up for me, and we'll whack it out."

"Where is it?" asked Pop, with faint interest.

Bunter coughed.

"Funny thing is, they delivered it by mistake into Prout's study. I can't think how it happened. That Trotter is such a fool, you know. Instead of bringing it to me, he's put it in Prout's study."

"Well, tell him to 'ook it out again."

"He—he—he's gone out."

"You can ask Prout for it, I suppose."

"He—he's gone out, too."

Pop looked at him. He was a new fellow, and did not know Bunter's ways

so well as the rest of the Remove knew them. Bunter hoped that Pop would swallow this whole.

Instead of which, Pop put his fingers to his eye, and opened his eyelids wider.

"Look!" he said.

"Eh?" Bunter blinked at him in surprise. "What?"

"See my eye?" asked Pop.

"Eh? Yes! What about it?"

"See any green in it?" inquired Pop.

Billy Bunter blinked at him. Evidently Pop had not swallowed it whole. He had not swallowed it at all!

The Owl of the Remove breathed hard.

"Just like a rotten outsider like you to doubt a fellow's word!" he said scornfully. "I suppose old Popper sent you here to be made a gentleman of. Well, I can tell you that it's ungentlemanly to doubt a gentleman's word."

"I ain't!" said Pop. "I've only doubted your word."

"Why, you cheeky beast——"

"Oh, 'ook it!" said Pop. "If you want to steal a cake out of Prout's study, go and do your own burgling. I ain't a blinking burglar!"

"Look here, old chap! It's a ripping cake!" said Bunter. "Prout's ordered it specially to send to his nephew for his birthday. He told them on the telephone that it was to be a ripper. Look here! It's in his study now, and there's nobody there. Easy as falling off a form. We'll go halves! What about it?"

Pop gazed at him curiously. Bunter, evidently, had no scruples about bagging a cake which Prout had ordered specially to send to a small nephew on his birthday. Bunter, on the other hand, did not regard himself as a dishonest person. He would have been shocked at the suggestion. Bunter's fat intellect had its own way of performing its functions. Somehow or other, it always seemed to Bunter that, if there was tuck about, he had some sort of mysterious right to it. Untold gold could have been left in Bunter's presence without risk. But anything of an edible nature could not be trusted in the same universe with Bunter.

"Well, you're a corker, you are!" said Pop. "You're a real corker, and no bloomin' error. What are you doing at Greyfriars instead of Borstal?"

"Look here, you cheeky rotter——" roared Bunter indignantly.

"Oh, 'ook it!" said Pop.

"Look here, old chap——"

"Let's have this clear," grinned Pop. "Which am I—a cheeky rotter, or an old chap?"

"It's as easy as falling off a form," urged Bunter. "Of course, there'll be a row. But who's to know? You nip into the study, and nip out again, and— and there you are! And it's a scrumptious cake."

"There ain't any risk?" grinned Pop.

"None at all! None whatever!"

"Then why don't you nip in yourself?"

"Oh, I—I—I——" stammered Bunter. "You silly ass, a fellow might be sacked! I—I—I mean——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Pop.

"I mean, if he was spotted! 'Tain't

like bagging another fellow's tuck Prout's a Form master! Not tha there's any risk!" added Bunter hastily. "Simply none! Prout's the kind of man to make a frightful row about it. But he'd never know! You nip in——"

"I don't think!"

"You—you see, I mean, there's no risk for a fellow like you. You're clever!" said Bunter. "Now, I ain't clever! See?"

"I see!" grinned Pop. "Soft sawder don't cost much, does it?"

"Beast!" said Bunter.

He turned to the door. Pop chuckled. But as the fat junior was rolling out, a new thought seemed to strike the circus schoolboy.

"'Old on!" he exclaimed.

Bunter turned back hopefully. If the temptation of a large and scrumptious cake had proved too strong for Popper, after all——

"Prout's rather a rorty old codger, ain't he?" said Pop thoughtfully.

"He would kick up no end of a shindy."

"Yes; but he'd never know——"

"A feller might get sacked for it?" said Pop.

"Yes; but it wouldn't come out!"

"A feller could let it come out!" said Pop.

"Eh?"

"'Ow much you fancy Prout's paying for that cake?" asked Pop.

"Quite a pound," said Bunter. "It's large and fruity, and——"

"A feller could send him a postal-order for the money," said Pop thoughtfully.

"Wha-a-at?"

"I mean, if a feller was bunked for bagging it out of a Form master's study. What?" said Pop.

Bunter blinked at him blankly.

"What do you mean, you ass? Do you want to be sacked?" he snapped.

"You've got it," said Pop. "Leave it to me, old fat man. Leave it to your Uncle Pop! If Prout raises Cain all over Greyfriars, think Quelch will give me another chance? No fear! I ain't been 'ere long, but I've noticed that he can't stand Prout. Prout butts in too much, what? Too much of the heavy father about old Prout! It would make Quelch as mad as a 'atter to have Prout raising Cain about a Remove feller bagging things out of his study. Leave it to me!"

Bunter could only blink.

"All serene!" said Pop. "I bag that cake! I 'and it over to you, if you like! I don't want it! When they raise Cain about it, I own up! Then it's me for the boot! Leave it to me!"

Billy Bunter could only conclude that the new fellow was not quite right in the upper story. That, however, was

(Continued on next page.)

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an unimportant trifle. The important matter was to bag the cake.

Ten minutes later, Bunter was waiting in the quad, with an eager, fat face, and a beating, fat heart. Pop joined him there with a parcel under his arm. It was a large cardboard box carefully wrapped and tied.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

He could scarcely believe in his good luck.

"Now 'ook it!" said Pop.

Bunter had a generous impulse.

"You have some, old chap! Let's get out of gates, where it's safe, and we'll whack it out."

Pop shook his head. He had bagged that cake for his own peculiar reasons, but he would not share in the plunder.

"Op it!" he answered.

Bunter hopped it.

Pop of the Remove walked back to the House whistling. He had strong hopes now of soon becoming once more Pop of the Circus.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bad Luck for Bunter!

"DISGUSTING!" said Mr. Prout. "Not a pleasant sight!" said Mr. Capper.

"If there is anything I dislike in a boy, it is greed!" said Mr. Prout.

"One cannot like it!" agreed Capper.

"I would not criticise Quelch!" went on the Fifth Form master. "But there are some members of his Form who would not be a credit to any school. Much as I like and respect Quelch, I have never been able to approve of his methods."

"My own feeling towards Quelch," said Capper, "is one of respect and friendship. But I cannot help admitting that his methods, as you say—"

Capper coughed expressively.

"Look at the boy!" said Prout. "I said disgusting! I should have said revolting! Revolting is the word!"

"I agree with you!" said Capper.

Billy Bunter was utterly unconscious of the fact that he was the object of these uncomplimentary remarks.

Bunter was busy. With Prout's cake in his possession, wrapped up and addressed to Prout, Bunter had naturally felt that the sooner he got outside Greyfriars, the safer he would be. Like other beasts of prey, he retired to a secluded spot to devour his quarry.

The spot he had found was secluded and pleasant. Sitting at the foot of a tree in Friardale Wood, in a pleasant, shady glade, Bunter had unpacked the cake, carved it with his pocket-knife, and started operations on it.

As it was a couple of hours since dinner, and Bunter had had nothing since but a packet of toffee and some caramels, and a few biscuits, and a few bananas, he was naturally hungry. He was prepared to do full justice to that cake. And it was a lovely cake! It was a scrumptious cake! The Courtfield bunshop people, famous for their cakes, were living up to their reputation. Bunter had never tasted a more delicious cake. And it was an enormous cake! There was enough even for Bunter! Anybody but Bunter might have thought that there was even too much.

Bunter was enjoying himself.

Far from the madding crowd, as the poet so well expresses it, Bunter sat in happy solitude and devoured the cake.

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That Prout had gone out for a walk with Capper, Bunter knew, because he had watched them start. That their wandering footsteps led them through Friardale Wood, Bunter naturally did not know.

Seated in the grass, his back to the tree, the cake on his knees, the box and its wrappings lying by his side, his mouth full, Bunter was enjoying life, and he had no eyes for anything but his occupation. And on the thick grass, Mr. Prout and Mr. Capper made no sound as they strolled through that pleasant woodland glade. Not a foot-step alarmed Bunter, and as he did not look up from his occupation, he did not see the two gentlemen approaching. Bunter had no eyes in the top of his head, naturally.

"The boy will make himself ill," said Mr. Prout, eyeing Bunter from the distance, with great disfavour.

"Very probably!" agreed Capper.

"A disgusting exhibition, Capper."

"Loathsome!" said Capper.

"Apparently it is the wretched boy's intention to devour the whole of that enormous cake," said Prout. "If he does so, he will positively be ill! I cannot allow this."

Mr. Capper coughed.

"Quelch dislikes intervention in affairs of his Form!" he murmured. "The sight is, as you say, revolting! Nevertheless—"

"Quelch certainly never expresses gratitude for advice from a senior master who is willing to place a longer experience at his service," said Prout. "Quelch is—h'm—"

"Sensitive," said Capper.

"I should say touchy," said Prout. "Tart, in fact! Nevertheless, as Quelch is not present here, I feel bound to intervene, and prevent that greedy boy from making himself seriously ill. Probably Quelch will not thank me, when I mention the matter to him. I receive very little thanks from Quelch. That does not, however, discourage me from being of service to a colleague. I shall intervene, Capper. It is my duty."

"H'm!" said Capper.

Whether it was Prout's duty or not, he was going to intervene. The persistent kindness with which Prout intervened in the affairs of other masters at Greyfriars, seldom or never elicited gratitude, but Prout, as he said, was not to be discouraged. Prout was far from realising that he was an interfering and fussy old gentleman. This had never occurred to him.

Mr. Prout accelerated, and approached the fat and happy Removite.

Still Bunter did not observe him. Bunter was happy and busy, and breathing a little hard from his exertions. All nature smiled on Bunter that day. He was in possession of an enormous and scrumptious cake. He had obtained it without risk to himself; all the risk fell on Popper. As soon as the row started, the trouble was going to fall on Pop. That was his own arrangement, and never had Bunter acceded to any arrangement more heartily. Bunter was enjoying life. There was not a shadow on his satisfaction—till the shadow of Mr. Prout suddenly fell on him.

Then Bunter started and looked up. "Oooooogh!" he gasped.

The sight of Prout almost paralysed him.

It was to avoid establishing any possible contact with Prout that he had retired to that secluded glade in the wood with his prey. And here was Prout!

Bunter gasped—at an unfortunate

moment. His mouth was full of cake. Some of the cake went down the wrong way. Bunter gasped again—and gurgled—and choked! He spluttered wildly.

"Oooooogh! Groooooogh! Hoooooh! Woooooch!"

"Disgusting!" said Prout.

"Whooooogggggh!"

"Revolting!"

"Gurrrrrrrggg!"

"Such a spectacle of greed—"

"Gug! Gug! Gug! Gug-gug!"

"Perhaps I had better pat him on the back!" said Mr. Capper thoughtfully. "He appears to be choking!"

"Goog! Gooooogh! Wooooogh!"

Mr. Prout stooped and patted Bunter on the back. Prout had a large, plump hand, and he patted hard.

"Groog! Ooooooh! Oh! Ow! Leave off!" gurgled Bunter. "Oh crikey! Ow! Leave off! Woooooh!"

"Bunter! You will cease this—this indiscriminate gorging—this—this revolting—" Prout broke off suddenly.

His eyes seemed to become glued on the box, the wrappings, and the label. Bunter had made considerable progress with the cake, but it was a very large cake, and the words "Happy Returns" could still be distinguished on what was left. Prout doubtless would have supposed that it was Bunter's birthday, and that some kind, but injudicious, relative had sent him that cake, but for the label that was staring him in the face. On that label his own name was written. On that label was printed the style and title of the Courtfield Bunshop!

For some moments Prout gazed aghast.

Slowly he understood.

This was not a birthday cake sent to Bunter by a kind but injudicious relative. This was the cake that he had ordered by telephone that morning, when, as he remembered now, Bunter had been lounging under his open study window. This was the cake that must have been delivered at the school in his absence, and, which, obviously, evidently, and palpably, Bunter must have purloined from his study.

"Upon my word!" gasped Prout, finding his voice at last. "Upon my word! Capper! This wretched boy has stolen that cake!"

"What?" ejaculated Capper.

"Look at the label!"

"Dear me!" said Capper.

"This morning," gasped Prout, "I ordered a birthday cake, by telephone, to send to my nephew! This boy was loafing—lounging—slacking—under my study window! Doubtless he overheard me! Taking advantage of my absence, he has purloined the cake!"

"Goodness gracious!" said Capper.

"Bunter! What have you to say?"

"Grooogh!"

"Speak!" thundered Prout.

"Gug-gug-gug!"

"I will take this boy, and the—the remains of the cake, direct to his Form master!" gasped Prout. "Quelch has made many remarks—I cannot call them agreeable remarks—on the subject of intervention in his Form! We shall see what remarks Quelch will make now! This wretched boy is caught in the actual possession of the cake, recklessly gorging! I shall take him to Quelch! Bunter, rise! Come! Not a word! Come!"

Mr. Prout and Mr. Capper resumed their walk through the wood, in the direction of Greyfriars. After them trailed a dismal youth, bearing the box with the remainder of the cake. Nature no longer smiled on Billy Bunter. He was no longer enjoying life. Life looked to him like a weary desert, the dismal

horizon unbroken by a single gleam. Billy Bunter had fallen from his high and palmy state of satisfaction, and great was the fall thereof.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Not a Success!

HALLO, hallo, hallo!" "You look bucked?" "The buckfulness is terrific!"

Harry Wharton & Co. regarded Pop of the Remove with surprised interest. When they had gone out that afternoon they had left him looking rather dismal. Now they had come in for tea, and they found Pop looking not only merry and bright, but amazingly bright and astonishingly merry. He was cake-walking round the study table when they came in, balancing a chair on his chin in sheer exuberance of spirits.

Pop dropped the chair and looked round, and his face beamed on the Famous Five. Evidently he was in high spirits—there had been a change since the Co. had seen him last.

"Come into a fortune?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Better'n that, I fancy," said Pop cheerfully. "You fellers come in to tea? All right—my last tea 'ere, I think."

"You're going?" exclaimed Wharton.

"I fancy so." "What have you been up to, you fathead?" grunted Johnny Bull.

Pop chuckled. "I'll tell you over tea," he said—"I tell you it's a corker! I fancy it's going to work the oracle. All through that fat idjit Bunter, too! Me for the circus!"

The chums of the Remove sat down to tea in the study in a rather perplexed frame of mind. Pop, apparently, regarded his departure from Greyfriars as a certainty now, and rejoiced thereat. The juniors were rather curious to learn what could possibly have happened during their ramble up the river that afternoon.

Over tea, Pop proceeded to explain. Harry Wharton & Co. listened as he told his story, punctuated by chuckles.

"You know Prout?" grinned Pop. "Rorty old codger—what? What you think he'll do when he comes in and finds that cake gone?"

"He'll raise Cain, of course," said Nugent.

"The Cainfulness will be terrific."

"Course, I'm going to pay for the cake, after I'm clear of 'ere," said Pop. "Bunter seems to think that a cake is his'n, if he can get hold of it. But I can square old Prout later, or else order another cake for the old scout. So long as I have to bunk—"

"You frabjous ass!" said Harry. "Quelch will be as mad as a hatter. He hates Prout butting in—and Prout's got a good excuse now. He will fairly rag Quelch when it comes out that a Remove man raided his study."

"It'll come out all right!" chuckled Pop. "I ain't going to make a secret of it, you bet your boots."

The Famous Five were looking rather serious. The matter, in their eyes, was more serious than it seemed to be in the circus schoolboy's.

"What you think'll happen?" grinned Pop.

"I'm afraid you'll have to go," said Harry. "Quelch gave you one more chance—and this tears it."

"Good egg!" said Pop. "That's how I worked it out. Bunter would have got off with a licking if they'd caught him bagging the cake—but not me! Quelch said distinct I'd 'ave to go if I didn't

accompanied by a deep, wailing sound of suffering.

Groan!

The juniors in Study No. 1 started. "What the thump?" ejaculated Bob.

"That's Bunter!" said Nugent.

"The Bunterfulness is terrific! The esteemed fat Bunter has made himself terrifically ill with too much cake!" grinned Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

Groan!

It was an almost hair-raising sound of suffering. Harry Wharton jumped up and opened the door of the study.



Bunter started and looked up as a shadow fell on him. "Oooooogh!" he gasped, for it was Mr. Prout, whose cake he was eating!

make the most of the chance he gave me! Well, this does it, don't it?"

"Looks as if it does!" said Bob Cherry.

"And old Popper will soon get fed-up with me at Popper Court," said the circus schoolboy brightly. "He could 'ardly stand it before, when he was going to get rid of me by bunging me in at Greyfriars. It's me for the circus if this comes off all right."

The juniors smiled. How Pop could possibly prefer the circus to Greyfriars was a mystery to them. Still, as he evidently did, they wished him luck.

"All the same, it's rather thick," said Johnny Bull. "Prout will fairly crow over poor old Quelch."

"The crowfulness will be preposterous."

"And Quelch may lick you as well as boot you, you fathead!" said Bob.

"Who cares?" said Pop.

There was a shuffling of feet in the Remove passage, as of a fellow dragging himself limply along. It was

Groan!

"Bunter! What on earth—"

Groan!

Bunter was limping and shuffling up the passage. He gazed at the captain of the Remove with a lack-lustre eye. His fat face was quite pale. He wriggled like a contortionist. Obviously, Bunter was in a state of the deepest anguish.

It was not a case of too much cake, that was clear. Bunter's dreadful sufferings had come from without, not from within. Bunter, in short, had evidently had the licking of his life.

He tottered into Study No. 1. He blinked dismally, woefully, at the juniors, and shook a feeble fist at Pop.

"Beast!" he said faintly.

"What's 'appened?" exclaimed Pop.

Groan!

"Licked?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Yes! Owl! Wow! Ooooooh!"

"But who—what—how—"

Groan!

Groan!

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"Sit down, old fat bean," said Nugent consolingly.

"I—I can't. I—I shan't sit down again for a week, at least!" groaned Bunter. "Oh dear! Ow! Ow!"

The juniors gazed at Bunter. Bunter leaned on the table and groaned. Food-stuffs were under his eyes, but the Owl of the Remove did not touch them—hardly looked at them. That showed how far gone Bunter was as nothing else could have done.

"But—who licked you?" asked Nugent.

"Ow! Quelch! Wow!"

"What for?" asked Harry.

"Ow! That beastly cake! Wow!"

"You silly bass!" exclaimed Pop, in alarm. "You ain't told them that you had the cake, have you? You fat'ead, you! I'm going to own up to bagging that cake as soon as the row starts. If you make out that you did it, you dummy, I'll jolly well punch your 'ead!"

Groan!

"Tell a bloke what's 'appened!" roared Pop, in great anxiety. "What have they licked you for, when it was me bagged the cake? I s'pose you never told them you put me up to it, and that you had it, you duffer?"

Groan!

"Cough it up, Bunter," said Wharton.

It was clear that something had gone wrong with the scheme.

"Oh dear! You—you see, I took that cake out of gates for safety," said Bunter, drearily, "and—and old Prout came right on me while I was scoffing it in the wood. Ow!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"He saw his name on the label, and knew it was his cake!" moaned Bunter. "Ow, ow! I say, you fellows, I'm suffering frightfully. I'd never have believed that old Quelch had so much muscle. Ow!"

"Prout caught you with the cake?" said Pop blankly.

"Ow! Yes! He marched me back to the school, and right into Quelch's study, with what was left of the cake," moaned Bunter. "He let Quelch have it, I can tell you—said that a man couldn't leave a cake in his study because it wasn't safe from Remove

fellows! Ow! The old blighter fairly let himself go! He was enjoying himself. Ow! You see, he had Quelch at a disadvantage. There was nothing Quelch could say! He was in a frightful temper."

"I imagine he was!" chuckled Wharton.

Bunter groaned deeply.

"Prout jawed for a solid five minutes," wailed Bunter, "and all the time Quelch was looking madder and madder! He had to apologise to Prout for what had happened. Fancy his feelings! And then—ow!—then he took it out of me! He wouldn't listen to a word! You see, they knew who'd had the cake when I was found scoffing it! They—they looked on that as conclusive evidence."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Groan!

"Oh my!" said Pop.

"Quelch licked me till his arm ached!" said Bunter drearily. "He was gasping when he finished! So was I! Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you fat idjit!" said Pop. "You had to let Prout catch you with the cake! You had to spoil the whole thing! You had to knock it on the head, you dummy!"

"Beast! Ow!"

"You silly chump! You burbling fathead!" howled Pop. "Now I'm left out of it! Lot of good me owning up that I bagged the cake, now you've been licked for bagging it! You fat'ead!"

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

Groan! Billy Bunter limped out of the study. He rolled away dismally to Study No. 7, the picture of woe. It had been a glorious feast; but after the feast had come the reckoning, and the reckoning had been severe. For a long, long time Study No. 7 in the Remove echoed to the sounds of woe.

In Study No. 1, the happy satisfaction had left the face of Cecil Popper of the Remove. Once more fortune had failed him. Instead of the "boot" for Pop, the affair had led only to a licking for Bunter. Bunter deserved the licking; that did not matter. But the "boot"

was as far off as ever from the junior who had the amazing desire to be "sacked" from the school. Harry Wharton & Co. left the study, chuckling, after tea, leaving Pop of the Remove with a face almost as dismal as Bunter's.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Popper Going Strong!

"WHARTON!"

"Sir!"

"Where is Popper?"

"I don't know, sir."

"Does anyone in the Form know where Popper is?" asked Mr. Quelch.

No reply.

Apparently, no one knew.

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips, and the lesson proceeded. It was a few days later, and the Remove were in class in the afternoon. Pop of the Remove had not come in with the rest. Mr. Quelch was a stickler for punctuality, and it was seldom that Remove men ventured to be late for class. But Pop was not merely late; he was ten minutes late when Mr. Quelch inquired after him. And still he did not come in.

The glint in Mr. Quelch's eye indicated that a warm reception awaited Pop when he did come in.

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged glances. They wondered whether this was a new move in Pop's extraordinary campaign to get himself dismissed from Greyfriars. Still, he could hardly expect the "sack" for cutting class. He was certain to get a licking, but a licking was of no use to him, besides being painful.

When half an hour had passed Mr. Quelch recurred to the subject of Popper. He paused in the lesson, looked at the clock, snorted, and addressed the head boy of the Form.

"Wharton! You have no knowledge of where Popper may be, and why he is remaining out of the Form-room?"

"No, sir!" said Harry. "I don't think I've seen him since dinner?"

"Has anyone seen him since dinner?"

"I saw him go out of gates, sir," said Skinner. "That was about ten minutes before the bell went."

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips hard. "Very well!" he said.

If Pop had gone out of gates ten minutes before class, he was evidently playing truant intentionally. The glint in Mr. Quelch's gimlet eyes grew more pronounced. Most of the fellows felt sorry for Popper when he came in. But he seemed in no hurry to come in. Minute followed minute, and there was no sign of Popper.

"My hat!" whispered Bob Cherry. "He can't have bunked on his own, surely?"

Wharton shook his head. "They'd fetch him back!" he said.

"Then he's just cutting class to get Quelch's rag out."

"Looks like it, the fathead!"

Mr. Quelch's eye glittered over the Form.

"Someone is whispering, I think!" he said acidly.

And there was a tomb-like silence in the Remove-room.

Clang! Clang! Tinkle-tinkle! Jingle-jangle-jangle! Every fellow in the Form-room gave a jump as that startling sound was suddenly heard floating in at the Form-room windows from the quad.

Mr. Quelch started almost convulsively. Such a disturbance had never been heard within the scholastic precincts of Greyfriars before. It sounded

Souvenirs of the "TESTS"

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as if about a hundred bells were ringing all at once in the quad.

Clang! Clang! Clatter! Clatter! Jingle! Jingle! Jingle!

The Removites exchanged startled looks. That outburst of dissonant music was simply amazing.

It was with difficulty that the fellows remained in their seats. Every face turned round towards the windows. But, without rising from the forms, it was impossible to see out of the windows except upwards to the blue sky. Amid the jangling of innumerable bells, there was a clattering and thudding of hoofs. Apparently, some four-footed beast was loose in the quad.

"What the merry thump—" exclaimed Vernon-Smith.

"What the dickens—" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Silence in the class!" hooted Mr. Quelch.

The Remove master whisked to the nearest window. He stared out of it into the quadrangle.

The juniors, not venturing to leave their places, craned their necks to watch Mr. Quelch. From his expression they hoped to get a clue to what was going on in the quad. His expression was startling. Amazement, horror, and wrath grew and intensified in the speaking countenance of Henry Samuel Quelch.

He gazed at the scene in the quad—whatever it was—as he might have gazed at the fabled Gorgon.

He seemed unable to believe his eyes. Meanwhile, the uproar continued. Bells jangled, hoofs thundered, and the beating of a drum was added to the din. Pom, pom, pom, pom! came booming in at the Form-room windows.

"Upon my word!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, what the dickens—" gasped Squiff.

"I say, you fellows, it's a runaway horse or something—"

"Sounds like a giddy circus!" said Peter Todd.

"What the merry thump—" The excitement in the Remove-room was almost feverish now. The juniors simply could not sit still. They rose in their places in a hubbub of excitement.

"The boy is mad!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

He leaned from the window.

"Popper!" he shouted. "Popper!"

"Oh," gasped Bob Cherry, "it's Popper! But what's Popper doing? What's he up to—what?"

"Popper!" roared Mr. Quelch.

Clatter! Clang! Jingle! Pom, pom, pom! Mr. Quelch, looking rather like a Gorgon himself, spun round from the window and made for the door. At the door he hooted back at his Form.

"Keep your places!"

Then he rushed out of the room.

The Removites kept their places—till Mr. Quelch had rushed out. Then, with one accord, they left them and bounded to the windows. Every window was crammed with faces, staring into the quad.

Then they saw!

What they saw made them jump. No wonder Mr. Quelch had been stricken with amazement, horror, wrath, and other emotions. Such a sight had never been seen within the walls of Greyfriars before.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob. "Popper is—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This way for the circus!" chuckled Smithy.

"Oh, the ass! He'll be sacked for this!" exclaimed Redwing.

"Go it, Popper!" yelled Squiff.

The Removites roared with excitement and merriment. In the passages was a hurrying of feet, a buzzing of

GREYFRIARS CELEBRITIES.

This week's snappy poem by the Greyfriars rhymester is written around Gerald Loder, a Sixth Form bully and a first-class cad.



OF Gerald Loder now I write, Though not in terms of praises:

The things in which he takes delight,

A decent chap amazes.

A bully of the deepest dye,

That best should be forgotten;

And though to find some good I try,

I find he's really "rotten."

A Sixth Form bully, first-class cad,

With ways that are malicious;

To deal in matters really bad,

You'll find him quite ambitious.

Unscrupulous in every way,

A chap that's past redemption;

I'd doom him, if I had my way,

To solit'ry detention.

Carne and Walker, prefects, too,

Are "birds of that same feather,"

And rotten things they all can do—

They always "flock together."

But still, their influence is weak,

A tribute to Greyfriars—

You'd have to go for miles to seek

Some more with their desires!

Yet Loder, if he troubled, could

Bring laurel wreaths upon her—

At sports, exceptionally good,

He'd win his school much honour.

But "sporting" in another way,

Appeals to Gerald Loder—

He likes a life that's bright and gay,

And "something" in his soda!

For Loder seems to take delight

In everything malicious—

He can't enjoy a thing that's right,

His temper's fierce and vicious.

If all the "Powers-that-be" could know

His ways, they soon would quell him;

A pair of heels he'd quickly show—

For they would soon expel him.

We cannot quaff the flowing bowl

To such an utter rotter:

He needs to find a "better 'ole,"

Where things are slightly hotter.

But still, our brimming glass we'll raise

And voice our firm desires,

That one day he will change his ways

And honour great Greyfriars.

startled voices. Masters were leaving their Form-rooms, and every window that looked on the quad was crowded with staring faces. Yells of laughter rose on all sides. The Removites saw Mr. Quelch shoot out of the House, like an arrow from a bow, heading for the strange figure that careered there.

That figure was Pop of the Circus.

Pop was standing on the bare back of a horse—evidently a hired horse, hired for this great occasion. Bells were hung all over the horse, and they jingled and jangled as he moved. Coloured streamers were tied on him, and streamed in the wind with a cheery effect. Pop, as he stood on the back of the careering steed, was beating a drum. Probably the clanging of the bells, and the roar of the drum, excited the horse; at all events, the animal was careering wildly round the quad, clattering and thudding and crashing.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Wharton.

"That's the giddy limit!"

"A circus performance in the quad!" ejaculated Vernon-Smith. "Is that born idiot asking to be bunked?"

"You've got it!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Why, the Head will see him from the Sixth Form room—" gasped Skinner. "The Great Beak himself will come out to him."

"I say, you fellows, I believe that fellow wants to be sacked, you know—"

"There goes Quelchy!" chortled the Bounder. "Quelchy looks waxy! Quelchy looks wild! Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Quelch was scooting across towards the bareback rider. His face was deadly in its expression; his gown fluttered behind him as he flew. He gasped and panted.

"Popper!" he shrieked.

Pom! Pom! Pom! went the drum.

"Popper! How dare you! Stop! Cease! Descend!" raved Mr. Quelch.

Pom, pom, pom!

The Remove master flung himself in the way of the galloping horse. Pop, apparently guiding his steed with his feet, swerved round the Remove master and galloped on.

"Go it, Popper!" shrieked the Remove. Any interruption to lessons was welcome to the Lower Fourth; but an interruption on these lines was pure joy.

Pom, pom, pom! Jingle! Jangle! Clang! Thud, thud, thud!

It was astonishing how much noise could be made by a galloping horse, a set of bells, and a thumping drum. Every echo of Greyfriars was awakened. The din was terrific.

Mr. Quelch spun round after the elusive performer, and rushed in pursuit. His gown fluttered wildly; his mortar-board flew off, and sailed away on the wind; the summer sunshine gleamed on the bald spot on the crown of Quelchy's head, which reflected back the sunshine.

From the House came Prout and Capper, Wiggins and Twigg. Form masters were deserting their Forms; and the Forms were packing themselves at the windows to watch the amazing show.

"By gad!" boomed Prout. "Upon my word! The boy is mad—mad! This is unheard-of! Unprecedented! Unparalleled! Good gad!"

"Mon Dieu!" said Monsieur Charpentier. "Mon Dieu! Name of a name of a name! C'est un fou!"

"Popper! Stop!" shrieked Mr. Quelch, in wild pursuit. "Stopper—pop! I mean, Popper, stop! Stop!"

"Boy!" boomed Mr. Prout.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Capper. "Really—really—even for a boy of Quelch's Form—really—really—"

Tramp, tramp, tramp! went the galloping horse. Round and round the quad went Pop, as if in the ring at Walker's World-Famous Circus. Pop liked an audience—and he was getting one now. He liked applause—and he was getting that, too! Whatever might be the opinion of those in authority, there was no doubt that the Greyfriars fellows were enjoying this. From every Form-room window came yells of delight and encouragement.

"Go it, Popper!"

"Keep it up, Pop!"

"Bravo! Bravo!"

From the doorway of the House emerged a majestic figure. The din had reached the Head in the Sixth Form room, and drawn him forth. The Head forgot the Sixth, and even Euripides, as he gazed at the circus performance in the quadrangle.

"Oh!" said the Head faintly. "Oh!"

He gazed spellbound.

Tramp, tramp, tramp! Thud, thud, thud! Pom, pom, pom!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Pop of the Circus was standing on one leg now, on the back of the careering horse. He changed to the other leg. Then he suddenly overturned, and for a second the spectators thought he was falling. But he was only reversing his position; and he continued on his wild way standing on his head on the horse's back.

There was a deafening roar of applause from the crowded Form-room windows.

"Bravo!"

"Hurrah!"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bob Cherry, wiping his eyes. "I say, there's the Head—look—the jolly old Beak! Pop wants to get out of Greyfriars—I fancy he will get what he wants this time!"

"Yes, rather!" chuckled Wharton.

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

Mr. Quelch had stopped, breathless, perspiring, wild with wrath. From the Head, as he advanced into the quad, came a gasping voice:

"Popper! How dare you! Popper!"

Pop looked round. He beat the drum as if in salute to the Head, and turned the horse towards him. The gallop slackened to a canter; and as he drew near the majestic Beak Pop suddenly flew off the horse's back and came towards the Head in a series of somersaults. The Head watched him, transfixed.

Pop reached him, right end uppermost, and faced him cheerfully.

"Yes, sir!" he said. "Did you call me, sir?"

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Chopper for Popper!

"**P**OPPER!"

The Head seemed hardly able to articulate.

"Popper! Bless my soul!"

What—what—what—"

Mr. Quelch came panting up. His face was crimson and streaked with perspiration. Mr. Quelch was feeling the effect of his unaccustomed gymnastics.

"Sir!" he stuttered. "Sir! This boy—this—this young rascal—this—this young reprobate—"

"Unheard of!" boomed Prout. "Unparalleled! The conduct of boys in the Lower Fourth is—is—is—"

Words failed Prout.

"Popper!" the Head managed to

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articulate. "Popper! What—what do you mean by this?"

"Didn't you like the show, sir?" asked Pop innocently.

"Like the show?" repeated Dr. Locke dazedly.

"It was considered rather a good turn at Walker's World-Famous, sir," said Pop. "I can tell you, sir, it got me the 'ands!"

"Are you—are you insane, boy?" spluttered Mr. Quelch.

"I 'ope not, sir!" said Pop. "Are you, sir?"

"What? What?"

"Gosling!" The school porter came up; he had been gazing on the scene open-eyed. "Gosling, secure that—that horse, and—and take it away, Gosling."

"Yessir!" said Gosling.

"Boy!" thundered the Head, fixing his eyes on Pop as the horse was led away. "Boy! This—this outrageous conduct—"

"Oh my!" said Pop.

"The—the wretched boy must leave Greyfriars, sir!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "It is impossible that he should remain!"

"I agree with you, sir," said the Head. "I have been reluctant to take a severe course; but after this, of course, I am left no choice in the matter. The boy must go."

"Popper! I shall not flog you for this outrageous conduct—"

"Thank you, sir!" said Pop meekly.

"I shall expel you from the school!"

"Oh, sir!" said Pop. "Not really, sir?"

"Do you expect anything else?" gasped the Head. "Do you imagine, for one moment, that you can be allowed to remain here after playing such a—a—a prank?"

Pop did not reply. Certainly he had not imagined that he would be allowed to remain at Greyfriars after playing such a prank. That, indeed, was why he had played it.

"Mr. Quelch! Take this boy away! I will telephone to Sir Hilton Popper immediately. The boy must be removed from the school without delay. He shall not pass another night here! Bless my soul! Take him away, Mr. Quelch."

"Certainly, sir."

The Remove master's hand dropped on Pop's shoulder.

"Come!" he said.

"Sittingly, sir!" said Pop.

Mr. Quelch's grasp on his shoulder was like iron. Mr. Quelch's face was like iron. His voice was like iron. He led Pop into the House, and to his study. There he released him.

"Remain here!" he said.

"Yessir!"

"But for the fact that you will be leaving the school to-day, Popper, I would chastise you with the utmost severity."

"Oh, sir!" murmured Pop.

"As you are going, and going without delay, I will administer no other punishment," said Mr. Quelch, breathing hard. "Remain here—until your guardian arrives to take you away. If you leave this room before I return—"

"I'll 'ang on 'ere, sir," said Pop. "I'm sorry I've put your blessed back up, sir—"

"Silence!"

Mr. Quelch left the study and closed the door. Pop winked at the door, after Mr. Quelch was gone.

Then he sat down in Mr. Quelch's armchair to wait. It was the sack at last, and Pop looked very cheerful.

Mr. Quelch returned to his Form-room. He found it buzzing with excitement. Every fellow in the Remove was

talking, or laughing, or both. Mr. Quelch glared at his hopeful pupils with a baleful eye.

"Is this how order is kept in this Form-room during my temporary absence?" he hooted.

The juniors rushed to their places.

"Wharton! You are head boy of this Form! Is this how you keep order in my absence?"

"H'm!"

"You will take a hundred lines, Wharton." Mr. Quelch glared round. "Another word, another whisper, and the whole Form will be detained!"

There was not another word or another whisper. Mr. Quelch was not in a mood for trifling. The Removites had enjoyed the interlude; but it was obvious that their Form master had not.

The Remove was a very quiet Form while lessons went on. But they were very, very glad when the time came to dismiss.

They were wondering where Pop was. As to what was going to happen to Pop, there could not be any doubt. The fellow who wanted to be sacked had done about ten times enough to be sacked for. The most lenient headmaster could not possibly have overlooked such a terrific offence. It was the chopper for Popper, short and sharp.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes his nibs!" murmured Bob Cherry, as a car hooted on the drive.

In the car sat Sir Hilton Popper, very upright, his grim face looking grimmer than ever. The Greyfriars fellows looked curiously at the lord of Popper Court. Evidently he had been summoned on the telephone, and there could be no doubt why he had come.

"It's good-bye to Popper!" said Bob Cherry. "My hat! The old bean looks waxy! He doesn't seem to be pleased at the prospect of getting that jolly nephew home again."

Sir Hilton's eyes were glinting under his knitted, grizzled brows. The lord of Popper Court never looked very good-tempered. He looked frightfully bad-tempered now.

He descended from the car and strode into the House. Mr. Quelch met him, looking almost as grim as Sir Hilton himself.

"Sir Hilton! The boy is in my study—"

Grunt!

"His box is packed—"

"I must see the Head!"

"Kindly come with me."

Sir Hilton went with Mr. Quelch—but not, to judge by his expression, kindly. Outside the House, a buzzing crowd of Greyfriars fellows waited, to see Pop of the Circus off when he went.

But Pop of the Circus was not gone yet! Betwixt cup and lip there is many a slip!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Alas!

"**N**ONSENSE!"

Sir Hilton Popper fairly hooted.

Dr. Locke coloured.

"Sir!"

"Sir!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

Sir Hilton Popper snorted. But he strove to control his temper. He was in a record wax; and when Sir Hilton Popper was in a wax, he was rather accustomed to letting himself go. But even Sir Hilton realised that he could not talk to the Head of Greyfriars as if that gentleman were one of the footmen at Popper Court.



Pop suddenly flew off the horse's back and came towards Dr. Locke in a series of somersaults. The Head watched him, transfixed!

"Excuse me!" he said ungraciously. "I am disturbed—greatly disturbed and put out! Nevertheless——"

"It is obvious that the boy must leave!" said the Head tartly. "After such unheard-of conduct——"

"After such unparalleled conduct!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Such outrageous performances——"

"Such unheard-of insolence——"

"Such disgraceful proceedings——"

"Such ruffianly recklessness——"

Sir Hilton looked goaded. The two masters were going it, strophe and anti-strophe as it were, like a chorus.

"Allow me a word!" hooted Sir Hilton. "I am not defending the conduct of my nephew! It is unspeakable! Were he at present in my charge, I would wear out a riding-whip on him, by gad! The young scoundrel! The young blackguard! The disgraceful young ruffian! Flog him! Lock him up in the punishment-room! Then flog him again! But——"

"He must go——"

"He must leave——"

"Allow me a word!" roared Sir Hilton, purple in the face. "One word, if you please! You are being deceived—made use of—by this young rascal! You desire to expel him! You are playing into his hands! He desires nothing more, sir, than to be expelled from this school!"

"Wha-a-a-t?" stuttered the Head.

"Wha-a-a-t?" spluttered Mr. Quelch.

The two masters gazed at the baronet. They had agreed on the very severest punishment for the culprit. Naturally it was rather startling to be informed that the culprit welcomed it. They wondered whether insanity ran in the Popper family.

"Let me speak!" said Sir Hilton.

"Let me make myself clear! This boy spent his early youth in a—a—a circus!

He still has a hankering after his early associations, his blackguardly associates! Nothing would please him more than to be expelled from Greyfriars! Where could I send him, sir, after he had been expelled from this school? No-where! He knows that! Do you imagine that he did not know what the penalty was, when he acted in the outrageous manner you have described to me? Of course he knew! He was playing for it—deliberately playing for it! It was his object! He sees in this a chance to get back to the circus! That is his game!"

"Bless my soul!" said the Head, faintly.

"Several times, sir, he ran away from Popper Court—once he actually re-joined the circus, and I had to fetch him back personally! I cannot have the boy permanently on my hands! He knows that! He is a designing young rascal, sir—he has aimed at this, plotted it, schemed it, sir—and you have played into his hands by expelling him! You speak of punishment! Pah! You are not punishing him! You are gratifying him—rewarding him!"

"Bless my soul!" repeated the Head.

"Rewarding him, sir!" hooted Sir Hilton. "If you desire to reward the boy, send him away from Greyfriars! That is what he wants."

"Bless my soul!" said the Head, for the third time.

There was a short silence in the study. Mr. Quelch's jaw squared, and set hard. His eyes glinted. He was the first to speak.

"I understand!" he said.

Dr. Locke looked helplessly at the Remove master.

"Is—is this possible?" he stuttered.

"Is—is—is this—this—imaginable? Bless my soul! This is very—very ex-

traordinary! Quite out of my experience! My dear Quelch, what do you think?"

"I think Sir Hilton is right, sir!" said Mr. Quelch. "I think I see the matter clearly enough! I am afraid, sir, that this—this extraordinary boy has deliberately led us to take this step——"

"Bless my soul!" said the Head feebly.

"I agree with Sir Hilton, sir, that the boy should not be allowed to succeed in this—this scheme!" said the Remove master, his eyes glinting. "He desires to be sent away from Greyfriars! There are other punishments that he does not desire! I recommend them, sir."

"But—but any repetition of such actions—it is impossible to contemplate——"

"I think, sir, that there will be no danger of any repetition of such actions, when I have dealt with Popper."

Sir Hilton gave a grunt of assent. Mr. Quelch was speaking like a man after his own heart.

"I—I leave the matter in your hands, then, Mr. Quelch," said the Head. "The boy is in your Form—I trust to your judgment! I leave the matter entirely in your hands!"

Pop, standing at the window of Mr. Quelch's study, was looking out at the car, wondering how long it would be before he was called on to take his seat in it with his guardian.

He whistled cheerily as he waited.

But he ceased to whistle, and looked uneasy, as he saw Sir Hilton stride out of the House, take his seat in the car, and drive away.

(Continued on page 28.)

MOST VIVID STORY OF TEST MATCH THRILLS EVER PENNED!

THE TEST MATCH HOPE!

By
**JOHN
BREARLEY.**



"Smiling" Bill Murray!

BILL had had nearly three days rest. But what was more important still, James Barr had whirled him off to Harley Street on the Sunday, where a famous surgeon had laid slender, skilful fingers on his damaged shoulder and worked wonders.

Guarded like a prince, both by his own friends and by certain other watchful and quietly-dressed gentlemen, Bill had been kept free also from any further attempts on the part of the Weasel. Thus, when the time came on Tuesday morning for the final attack on the Australians, "smiling" Bill Murray felt serene again. As he swung his arm round in his first over, he knew that, properly handled, he would last the day all right.

And Chapman nursed him perfectly. All through the play, England's skipper watched the young star, never allowing him to tire. At the nursery end, the fast bowlers slammed away fiercely, while at the other, sturdy Jack White of Somerset held the fort while Bill was resting. But it was the boy from Severnshire who swerved and spun his way past the Australian bats and finally carried England to victory.

At lunch-time, the colonials, with two wickets down for 92, looked to have a chance of saving the game. An hour after the interval, Woodfull alone stood between her and defeat. For Bill had "gone mad" again.

A superb leg-break bowled Jackson neck and crop, and a fast out-swerve saw Kippax brilliantly caught at first slip. Then Tate bowled Bradman for 2, and, returning to the fray, the young slow bowler lured McCabe and Fairfax into his leg trap and disaster.

Yet Woodfull, grave-faced, lynx-eyed, still fought on for his side.

For nearly an hour the English bowlers fell back baffled by that marvellous straight bat, while at the other end, Oldfield backed his captain up manfully. Runs didn't matter; no one heeded them. It was the clock that was the enemy now.

Chapman nodded to Bill again.

"One last effort, my son!" he smiled cheerily, although his eyes were anxious. And Bill grinned in reply.

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His first three balls were impossible. Each curled fantastically towards the men crouching almost at Woodfull's side, and the batsman played them with great care. Then came the fourth—"the glorious fourth" as someone called it afterwards.

It was a straight ball, a top-spinner. It dipped, hissed viciously off the turf at lightning speed—and streaked through Woodfull's guard like a rapier thrust!

Before the frantic, delirious clapping had died away, Bill's next had been hit blindly into the air by Hurwood. Chapman jumped, and his hands closed over the ball in a grateful, all-embracing

60 runs wanted—and twenty minutes to go!

Can England hope for victory in the Fourth Test?

grip. A second later came a mighty shout and the pounding of many feet—

England and Australia were level again.

That evening, Alec Murray, trotting joyfully back from Desford with a paper beneath his arm, saw a gamekeeper striding down the road from the Hunter woods that surrounded the village. He had known all the local keepers for years, but this one was a stranger, tall and alert. And as they passed each other, he could have sworn the man winked at him quickly.

Captain Monty Sinclair's warning came back to him in a flash. He walked on in silence without looking round. But his heart leapt with a sudden thrill.

A Quarrel and a Plot!

TO Bill and Alec Murray, the next few weeks sped past like the wind. The Third Test at Leeds came along—and for the whole four days the players stood in the pavilion, watching the rain drive down in solid sheets. But Bill was amongst them all right, and another of James Barr's cheques had been added to the two already in the Severn City bank.

There was a further reason for cheeriness, too, within the little cottage in Desford. Whether Weasel Joe Necker had spotted the constant watch Captain Sinclair's men were keeping over the boys, no one could say definitely; but certainly something seemed to have put a kink in the little crook's campaign. Since the affair at Nottingham, he had not made a move.

The captain himself was puzzled, but serene. Bill saw quite a lot of him these days, for he was constantly dropping into the Severnshire pavilion with James Barr.

The players had become used to Sinclair always trailing behind the breezy millionaire, and Nickalls & Co. pulled his leg mercilessly. He took whatever chaff was going with lazy good humour; but now and again he would get Bill skilfully to one side for a few crisp words that made the youngster thrill. Things were beginning to hum!

To Bill's surprise, too, he found that James Barr was apparently right in the thick of the mystery, like the old war-horse he was. He told the lad so in his usual explosive style.

"Yes, my son!" he snorted. "I'm out for Lu—for someone's blood. When I was in business in Africa four years ago, I caught a bad cold over those dud

notes sent out from England; and now I've retired, by the great horn spoon, I'll get the man or men who did me down. You bet! I gave this—this lounge-lizard his first clue, and I'm sticking around to see he doesn't slack on the job! Hey?"

It was James Barr, also, who came forward with the startling proposal that John Murray should be operated on right away—at his expense.

But Captain Sinclair wouldn't agree.

"I know it sounds callous, Bill," he said gently, "but your father's not in any pain. Can't we leave him as he is for—well, a little while, anyway? It might spoil things otherwise. We've got to do things off our own bat now, and quickly—because once it gets known that John Murray is being operated on, we can say good-bye to the Weasel and—whoever's behind him. They'll scot like blazes!"

After he had thought it over for a full day, Bill reluctantly agreed. He was anxious to get even with his father's enemies.

Meanwhile, neither Luke Thurston nor Joe Necker had the slightest intention of bolting.

There were times when the financier, rendered panicky by Bill's constant success and fear of the Weasel, thought longingly of the Argentine; but the lure of money-making held him in strong chains; while as for his little ally—he was "The Weasel" and like his blood-thirsty namesake, never gave up a victim.

Nor was it the police watch over the two boys that kept him quiet. He had expected as much after Nottingham, and only sneered when he found out.

Such a net didn't worry him, as he meant to prove pretty soon. It was the purest accident that had put the Weasel on the shelf—for a time.

Two days after their return from Nottingham, he and Hogan had drifted down from quiet Severn City to the busier and rougher port of Severn-mouth, in search of pleasure and profit. In a back room near the docks, the two had joined in a game of poker with some very hilarious sailors, and all had been well until one of the tars spotted something wrong with the Weasel's dealing.

After that, events had gone with a bang. The table went one way, chairs the other. Jerry Hogan fought his way out eventually and ran; but a bottle squarely over the head laid the Weasel out cold in the first ten seconds.

He awoke hours later to find himself in bed and forced to stay there for many weary days. Not until the day before the Fourth Test at Manchester was he able to slink back to his old haunts in Severn City, red-eyed with rage and baffled hate, and ready for violent action.

That night, as soon as darkness fell, he went sidling up to Thurston's house—the first time for weeks. The familiar knock brought the financier to his feet in a flash, and he flung open the window. The two stared at each other for a long minute in silence.

The Weasel looked thin and weak after his illness, but Luke Thurston was too sick and nervous himself to worry about others. His florid face was white and puffy, and great dark circles ringed his eyes. Grabbing the Weasel by the collar, he yanked him savagely over the window-sill and hurled him across the room.

"Where have you been, you dog?" he whispered madly. "You hound! You boasting cur! You, to stop Bill Murray's cricket career, you bungling fool! Where have you been hiding?"

Regaining his feet, the Weasel spat like an angry cat.

"What's biting you, Luke Thurston!" he hissed. "Don't give me that stuff!"

"You scum! You— Oh, take that! And that!"

Blows showered on the Weasel's head and shoulders as the hysterical man jumped at him. The two rogues closed on each other, snarling, and fought for several moments like wild beasts.

Overborne by superior weight, The Weasel went reeling backwards. Following up, Thurston threw him against the wall, turned, and then jumped for a heavy decanter. His foot caught in the ruffled hearthrug, and down he went with a crash.

When he scrambled to his feet, he saw the Weasel with an open clasp knife in his hand and murder in his eyes.

"Move an inch and I'll put this clean through you!"

Thurston's rage died swiftly. Whimpering, he crumpled suddenly into an untidy heap and began to moan pitifully. Four years of power and easy living had sapped his nerve completely.

Necker eyed him hatefully until he saw he had nothing more to fear, whereupon he walked over and stirred his stricken ally with a contemptuous boot.

"Come on; snap out of it!" he growled. "What's been eating you?"

The other raised a drawn, white face.

"Joe! Where have you been since Nottingham? By Heaven, I've nearly gone crazy! I—I thought you'd been caught and—"

"And the police were coming any minute for little Lukey!" sneered the Weasel wickedly. "Well, I haven't. And you haven't the spine of a rabbit, you fool. That for the police!"

He snapped his fingers, and as Thurston crawled slowly into an armchair, told him briefly what had happened in Severn-mouth.

The financier seemed to swell with relief. But fear came back to his eyes quickly, and he clutched the Weasel's arm.

"But, Joe, what about Bill Murray all this time? Don't you realise he's earned three of that old fool's cheques? Next he'll get the fourth. And soon the Fifth!"

"Hold yer row! I've tried to stop him, haven't I? I've been ill, I tell yer! And let me tell yer this, too; it's going to be more difficult still now! The 'splits' are watching him everywhere!"

"A-ah!"

"That's right, faint agin!" grunted

INTRODUCTION.

Owing to his amazing bowling feats "Smiling" Bill Murray, a Severnshire County colt, is hailed on all sides as the hope of England in the coming Tests and is promised fifty pounds for every Test he plays in by a millionaire named Barr. Bill is highly elated at his success, for his one aim is to pay for an operation to cure his paralysed father who, when a detective in his younger days, was "outed" when about to expose a coinng gang, and has been unable to speak since. Fearing the possible consequences should John Murray regain his memory, Luke Thurston and the Weasel, who were Murray's assailants, cripple Bill midway through the first Test, with the result that the "Aussies" win by the very narrowest of margins. Bill is determined to bring his enemy to book, and in this respect he is assisted by Captain Sinclair, of Scotland Yard. Although Bill's injury lets him down badly in the second Test, England weigh in nobly, and eventually declare with a lead of three hundred runs.

(Now read on.)

Necker. "After Nottingham, the police naturally tumbled someone was after him. I bet they don't know why, though—that's one comfort! Grand, ain't it?"

"Then—then we're finished!"

"Shut up! Finished! Have you ever known a tee that could stop me from getting near enough to hit anyone I wanted to? Finished!"

The Weasel snapped his fingers again.

"That for 'em!"

Leaning forward, he shook Thurston's knee vindictively.

"Now, listen, you! You're all in—and all because you're too windy to live. It's too late to stop Murray playing to-morrow; all right, let him! But, by thunder, we'll get him next week—and thoroughly. You've got to help! It's one big effort—or bust! See? Success or a lifer—all at one go!"

He leaned back and surveyed his cringing companion truculently.

"How's that for a gamble?" he gloated.

Thurston's whole body trembled with nerves. He reached feebly for the decanter.

"Wha-what's your scheme now, curse you?" he blazed with sudden viciousness.

The Weasel sneered disdainfully.

"Yah! Well, first of all, get rid of all your servants. I'll get you two we can trust! See? And after that—" His voice sank to a whisper. "I've finished with 'accidents', Luke—they're too much of a chance. We're going to make a clean sweep of those young pups!"

"You mean—"

"Never mind what I mean!" growled Necker roughly. "That's what I say! Because it's now or never, Luke—Fill Murray—or Dartmoor! Are ye going to listen?"

With a limp wave of his hands the financier gave in. The Weasel came closer, whispering.

When he slid down the ivy half an hour later he left behind a man who sweated with fear, yet whose eyes held a faint gleam of hope in their depths.

England's New Batsman!

"THAT'S middle and leg! Five to come!"

Duckworth of Lancashire, England's last man in, tapped his blockhole firmly, then gave it another pat for luck. Then he nodded calmly down the wicket to where Tim Wall, the Australian fast bowler, waited eagerly.

At the other end Bill Murray, not out 26, poised himself ready to run, while Chester, the umpire, stood aside.

Slinging his bronzed, muscular arm upwards, the South Australian burst into explosive action.

Like a whirlwind in white he came leaping up to the crease, smacked his left boot down with a bang, and let go a short-pitched thunderbolt straight for Duckworth's shoulder.

It was quite unintentional, however, and left the little Lancastrian only one thing to do—duck!

And duck he did, right speedily!

Not quickly enough, though! The ball thumped heavily into his ribs, staggered him slightly, and went skipping away towards fine leg. Then—

"Run!"

"Smiling" Bill Murray's excited bellow echoed round the packed Old Trafford ground. Duckworth ran.

"You bet!" he grunted as he raced

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past Bill, and just beat Jackson's throw-in to the wicket by inches.

Tim Wall came up quickly. "Hurt you, old son?" he asked anxiously. "I'm awfully sorry!"

Duckworth shook his head, and turned to answer Bill's breathless grin. A smack in the ribs more or less was nothing to the tough little man who had to keep wicket to his own fast bowler—Macdonald—every day!

A roar of laughter at the cheeky run rewarded him, for Duckworth was a prime favourite with all Lancashire crowds. And it seemed as though everyone in the Red Rose county had turned up to see the third day of the fourth England v. Australian Test match!

Australia 326. England 312 for nine. The match was as good as drawn, of course, with only one day remaining for two innings; but everyone wanted to see England get a lead on the first knock.

Bill got ready for the next ball. He had the typically crouching style of a big hitter, and it was a fact that, try how they liked, no one yet had been able to teach him how to play with a straight bat.

Bill's idea of batting was simple. He had a bat in his hands, and there was the ball to be hit. And when he did hit it—

Wall's next ball was another short one. Straight and nasty, it kicked off the pitch, singing merrily. Bill's eyes timed it all the way, though, and at the last moment he swayed backwards shortened his bat, and let drive.

Smack! Every head in Old Trafford turned mechanically to follow the red dot. On the boundary, Bradman ran into position, watched the ball with longing eyes, then dropped his hands resignedly. Ten yards above his head the ball flew past gaily, and dropped amidst the crowd far into the stand.

Chester raised his hands on high. That was Bill's second six, and the Lancashire crowd roared their delight.

"Well hit, laad!" "Good old Sovensheer!" The leather was retrieved, and Wall came again—this time a perfect length snorter on the off-stump. Bill got his left shoulder aggressively forward, shot out his leg, and so put all his weight into a scorching slash—the most gorgeous punch in cricket.

At cover-point, Vic Richardson, Australia's star fieldman, saw it coming—for a second. He dived gallantly, arms outflung! Not a hope! Before his falling body hit the turf the ball had hissed along the carpet and over the white line.

The scoreboard clicked: 322 for 9! Tim Wall looked grim as he lined up for his fifth attempt. The effort he put into it drew a grunt of exertion out of him, yet no one heard it, for Bill, jumping out of his crease, went right down on one knee, swung recklessly, and swished the bat up with a real old rustic swipe.

His drive met the ball sweetly. "O-o-o-o-over!" The long-drawn cry changed in a second to a laughing, rolling cheer. Straight and clean into the pavilion balcony the ball had disappeared, scattering the onlookers to right and left.

England led on the first innings by 2 runs.

"Some hitting, William!" murmured Oldfield, with his quiet, friendly smile. Bill chuckled.

Amid a cheery, boisterous hum Wall bowled his last ball.

Bill swung again happily, but this time he missed!

His leg stump sang past Oldfield's head, his middle stump went flat, whilst both bails flew spinning through the slips.

Oldfield dug him in the ribs. "You're out!" he observed dryly.

Dizzily Bill surveyed the wreckage. "Perhaps you're right!" he grinned; then, glancing over his shoulder, he grabbed his bat and ran.

Bill beat the crowd to the pavilion by a short head. The ovation he received as he trotted up the pavilion steps nearly took his breath away.

It had been a great game up to now. Batting first, the Australian batsmen had given a wonderful display. A patient century by Woodfull had paved the way to dashing knocks by Bradman and Kippax, and although Jackson had been run-out cheaply, the tail had "wagged" with a vengeance.

For the first time in the campaign the English bowlers had been tamed. Bill had taken 5 wickets and kept the batsmen quiet—which was all. Not even he had been able to break through

STILL THEY COME!

"Don't put off until to-morrow what you can do to-day!" says Albert Offord, of 25, Devonshire Place, Brighton, Sussex. He's sent in the following Greyfriars Limerick and has won a POCKET WALLET for his trouble!

Said Bunter to Todd in disgust:
"Since dinner I've not had a crust."
And Toddy replied:
"If in your inside
You stuff any more, you will bust!"

See what you can do now. It's as easy as it's fascinating!

Woodfull's defence this time, or cope with Bradman's dazzling array of strokes.

However, the English batsmen soon had something to say. Following a typical Test partnership by Hobbs and Sutcliffe, Ernest Tyldesley, playing on his own ground, had delighted the crowd with a beautiful hundred, and afterwards Hammond and Hendren had hit all round the ring.

Chapman and Tate had gone for fairly small scores, but Larwood mended matters. Then had come Bill Murray's mad and merry 42.

Players and crowd alike were in contented mood to face the fourth and last day.

The play next morning began sensationally, for Bill, pitching a ball almost on to Jackson's toes, made it break back prettily, to knock the young batsman's off-stump out.

To Australia the blow was a bad one, for they had every intention of camping-out and giving England a field day. There was not the slightest chance of a victory for either side; the match would be left drawn. And then—the Oval!

This same thought seemed to have been in every player's mind—at the start of play. Jackson's quick dismissal and the fact that the Old Traf-

ford wicket was obviously in favour of the bowlers, abruptly changed their ideas.

Kippax was next man in, and he and his skipper batted stolidly for a while. At 35 for 1 Bill put up a plain ball, spinless and without swerve, but a little higher and a little slower than usual. At the same time, he followed up hard.

Carefully studying the ball, Kippax raised his bat briskly and let drive. It was a fine shot, but not perfectly timed—Bill had seen to that. Like a red streak, the ball skimmed down the wicket a few inches above the turf. Bill knelt quickly, hands cupped and ready. Next moment he was up again, flinging the ball high into the air, while Kippax shook his head resignedly and turned away.

"My hat!" murmured Tate. "We've got 'em groggy, Bill!"

A tremendous wave of confidence suddenly thrilled the English team. During the next hour or so it was a glorious sight to watch Tate and Larwood at their best and fastest, arms whirling, jaws determined.

The great Sussex bowler ran swiftly into a shattering streak of form, Larwood pelted away grimly, and Bill kept pecking and thrusting at the batsmen's defences. With the coming of lunch, five wickets had fallen for 60 runs.

Even Woodfull looked slightly worried when he came out with Bradman for the afternoon's play. The England team settled down to it with the brisk efficiency of men who realised they had a great chance of snatching a last-minute win.

Chapman, like a good skipper, started with his most overwhelming attack. Tate at one end, Larwood or Clarke at the other, whipped down their most dangerous stuff, while the fieldsmen backed them up on tiptoe.

Nothing was given away, the men covering each other like parts in a well-oiled machine.

A glorious catch at point sent the Australian skipper back to the pavilion—one of Larwood's fastest kicked McCabe's off-stump fifteen yards.

The Australian tail-enders, with Bradman still in to stiffen them up, hit back sternly. "The Boy," as usual, was playing a great fighting game for his side, wriggling cleverly out of Bill's numerous traps, and beating back the faster bowlers with a flashing bat that was always just right.

The end came just before tea, when Bill flicked a leg-break past Clarrion Grimmett's bat, and Australia were all out, Bradman carrying his bat for 104. And while the crowd rose to the gallant youngster, they had a special cheer for England's magnificent bowlers.

The Mother Country needed just 200 to win—and they had two hours in which to do it!

Chapman's orders were to hit. A brisk start by Hobbs and Sutcliffe set faces beaming around the ropes, but both were out trying to clump balls into the road. Then gloom descended swiftly in the disastrous half-hour that followed.

In rapid succession Hammond, Leyland, and Hendren all shared the same fate. The Australians were hanging on doggedly.

In this crisis Percy Chapman, England's cheery skipper, rose to the occasion. Attacking from the first ball, his flailing bat swept the ball to all parts of the ring, while at the other end Tyldesley scored fast and soundly.

Click!

A great ball from Fairfax took the Lancastrian by surprise. As he came panting into the pavilion he called Bill over quickly.

"You follow the next moment, old son, and hit like blazes!"

The words set the youngster's blood tingling. Turning, he made a dive for his gear and began to buckle on his pads with fingers that trembled. He was no sooner ready than a deep groan of disappointment floated through the window and made him glare out feverishly. Out on the field, McCabe was chucking the ball up joyously, while Tate was coming slowly back with down-cast face.

"Oh, help!"

Down the stairs Bill went, passing Maurice at the gate.

"Good luck, boy! Give 'em socks!"

A warm burst of clapping greeted Bill's appearance, but he scarcely noticed it. He glanced at the score-board, then at the clock—60 runs wanted—twenty minutes to go!

Fairfax was bowling, and bowling well. Bill saw the ball jump towards him through a sort of mist, hit it, and started to run. A roar and Chapman's beaming smile made him look up to see it sailing clear to the boundary.

After that things became hazy. Again and again the red pill kept popping up, and Bill smashed at it furiously—anywhere, anyhow. He watched someone bowl to Chapman, who hit like fury, and they ran and ran. There was cheering—waves of sound as though the world had gone mad. Faces around were blurred—figures in white seemed to dash up and then mysteriously disappear. And all the time the ball was there, and Bill kept hitting—hitting—hitting.

He was breathless, grim-faced, and wild-eyed with concentrated excitement. Smack! Another ball. Smack! More cheering. More running. Woodfull's face white and stern, Fairfax bowling like a demon.

"Last over!"

The umpire's voice cut through the din like a knife. For the second time Bill glanced dazedly at the score-board. The figures made his heart leap.

Ten runs wanted!

"Gosh!"

Tim Wall had the ball. His first two expresses were unplayable, the third Bill slammed, and he and Chapman crossed twice.

Eight!

A terrific long hop jumped past the wicket head-high. Bill's bat came round in a wristy gleaming circle, Woodfull jumped—and missed.

Four!

The fifth ball was impossible. Old-field took it and threw it back amid a ghostly silence.

Four to get—one ball to do it! To Bill's delight, the last ball of the match was a half-volley. He danced forward, slung up his bat, and hit with all the power of his big shoulders and steel wrists.

"Got it—got it! Oh-cooh!"

For Vic Richardson, hurling himself along the turf like a man possessed, had got a desperate outstretched hand to the ball—and stopped it!

Quietly and deliberately the umpires removed the bails. The game was over. Australia had saved the day on the stroke of time.

"Wait till we get you at the Oval, Bill!" murmured Bradman, as the teams won their way into the pavilion at last.

And the two young cricket stars grinned at each other grimly.

A Swift Raid!

"COULD ye spare some baccy, boss?"

Sprawling untidily against a milestone, just outside Desford village, a dingy old tramp peered hungrily from under the brim of his battered hat, as a stalwart game-keeper, gun on shoulder, strode homewards through the gathering dusk.

A long summer day had drawn to its close at last. Back in the village, lighted windows twinkled cheerfully round the green, but out here in the shadow of rustling woods and the silent hills beyond, the road was dark and lonely. Only a solitary gleam from a cottage farther up shone through the trees: the rest of the world was lost in purple shadow.

At the sound of the whining voice, the keeper halted, staring keenly down at the vague figure by the wayside. His hand, after a slight pause, slid slowly into his velveteens.

"Baccy!" he growled good-naturedly. "Iuh! Here y'are, then! Look slippy!"

With a mumble of thanks the old man scrambled up eagerly and began to fill a reeking clay.

"Thanky, boss! Gorra light?"

A match flared in the dusk, lighting the keeper's smooth face and the tangled beard of the vagabond. The eyes of the two men met in a brief stare. A cloud of smoke drifted into the night.

"All O. K.?"

"Yes. They're just having supper."

"Seen anyone?"

"Not a soul. Be glad when this job's over!"

"M. Will be—to-night!"

The keeper grunted.

"To-night's the night, isn't it? Who's watching Woodside?"

"Monty himself! Everything's set. S'long!"

"Be good!"

Their hasty whispering ceased. The tramp's voice rose huskily.

"Thank ye, boss! Thank ye kindly!" he cried, and, stuffing his pouch away, the keeper marched on with a careless nod.

Left to himself, the knight of the road hooked a bundle from the grass, and went shambling away in the opposite direction. Passing the cottage, he glanced quickly in through the open window, smiling quietly at the sight of Bill and his brother Alec, talking ninteen to the dozen over the supper-table. Bill Murray, he knew, had only arrived back from Manchester that day, and had plenty of news for his brother's eager ears.

Still with the same shuffling step, he passed on until he came to a stile in the hedge, where a bridle path climbed steeply up through the woods and into the hills.

Fifty yards up the path, the trees began, and there on the edge, he tossed his pack among the roots of an oak, and sat down with a grunt of satisfaction.

It was a fine position. From where he lay he could look right down into the cottage and its little garden, the fields beyond, and the main road running to right and left.

No one was in sight; darkness covered the country-side. Pitching his dirty old hat on to his bundle, he stretched comfortably and began to fill his pipe afresh.

"Last night out in the open. Ted, me lad!" he murmured to himself. "Wish I was up at Woodside, though. Wonder how Monty's getting—a-ah!"

(Continued on page 28.)

THE COME-BACK OF CAESAR!

(Continued from page 25.)

"Ho, ho, ho! You a Latin scholar! If that's not the limit!" gurgled Julius Caesar. "All I can say is, if you're a Latin scholar—yaroooooh!"

The limit of Mr. Crossley's patience had at last been reached. With a sudden movement he reached forward and gave Julius Caesar's prominent nose a savage tweak, and the remarks of the celebrated Roman ended up in a wild yell.

The next instant, Mr. Crossley was yelling, too, as Caesar's short sword began to tickle his waistcoat.

"Ow! Grooogh! Keepimoff!"

"Here, Cacsar, ease up with that prodding bizney, old chap!" urged Hal Smiles, rather anxiously. "Won't be anything left of him in a minute!"

"Silence, boy!" roared Caesar. "There certainly won't be anything left of him by the time I've finished with him. But it's going to take me a long time to finish with him; you see, I'm going to make a galley-slave of him!"

"Oh, great pip!"

"Help! Save me!" howled Mr. Crossley, hardly knowing what to do. "Fetch a policeman, somebody, and have this maniac arrested!"

"By Mars! I'd like to see the policeman that could arrest Julius Caesar!" chuckled the ancient Roman leader. "Shout as much as you like, old chap; nothing can save you from slavery on a Roman warship for the rest of your natural! Seize him, soldiers!"

A dozen brawny Romans rushed to obey the order, and Mr. Crossley was whirled into the air.

Then, before anything else could happen came a second explosion just like the one which had heralded Caesar's approach.

An instant later, with startling suddenness, Julius Caesar and his legions vanished into thin air! The five minutes' time limit in Hal's wish was up, and our cheery hero felt rather glad now that he had made it only five minutes. With ten minutes at his disposal there was no telling what Caesar would have done!

As it was, Mr. Crossley, deprived of the support of the Roman soldiers, felt himself descend to the floor of the Form-room with a fearful concussion.

Bump!

"Yoooooop! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the unsympathetic Fourth.

Hal Smiles went out to the front of the class and helped the Form-master to his feet again.

"It's all right now, sir," he said. "They've all gone, and I don't think they'll come back!"

"Ow! Thank goodness!" gasped Mr. Crossley, wiping the perspiration from his brow. "The whole thing has been most disturbing, Smiles. I suppose we must all have been victims of an extraordinary mirage or other visual phenomenon. Ow! You may return to your place, now!"

"And shall I carry on construing Caesar?" asked Hal, innocently.

Mr. Crossley shuddered.

"No, Smiles. Put away your Latin books; I don't want to hear any more of Julius Caesar to-day, and I don't think I shall want to hear so much of him in the future. We will take English literature, instead!"

So Mr. Crossley was cured of his exaggerated regard for ancient Rome. And Hal Smiles felt, as he put his Latin books into his desk, that there had been at least one good result from the amazing Come-back of Caesar!

THE END.

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THE TEST MATCH HOPE!

(Continued from page 27.)

Hills, road and cottage dissolved suddenly into a mad explosion of scarlet light; a dull, terrible pain wrenched the base of his skull. Then blackness. He fell forward limply, his body sliding grotesquely down the slope into a bush. His arm twitched curiously, and afterwards, he was still.

Club in hand, a dark figure stole from behind the tree and bent over him cautiously. There was a short, spiteful laugh, followed by queer rustlings amid the undergrowth. One by one, in quick succession, three other men came swiftly from the shadows.

"Lamme interduce ye, boys! Mr. Ted Locker, o' Scotland Yard! The big stiff!"

In silence, the others knelt down. When they rose again, their faces wore admiring grins.

"You're a wonder, Joe!" whispered one. "He's sleeping like a babe, and never knew what hit him!"

"Yah! He was easy!" gloated the Weasel. "Rope him up, Tom! Go on, Jerry—cut loose!"

"Right, Joe!"

Jerry Hogan threw back his head, and the mournful hoot of an owl went throbbing through the darkness. Faint, but clear, from the fields behind the cottage came an answer. The Weasel rubbed his hands softly.

"Now then, Mr. Bill Murray!" he whispered. "Ready, Tom? Then come on!"

Silent as ghosts, the dark figures moved down the path towards the road. Hogan hooted again when they reached the stile. The reply came almost at once.

The Weasel's net was closing in!

Bill Murray leaned back luxuriously. In the glow of the lamplight the parlour looked very bright and cosy. And the boys' faces were bright, too. Four of James Barr's cheques stood to their credit in the city paw, besides what Bill had saved out of his Severnshire pay.

The Murrays were prospering. Bill's eyes, as usual, turned towards his father at the thought.

John Murray sat in his chair fully clothed, save for collar and tie.

"Time we got dad to bed," he observed lazily.

Alec pushed back his chair.

"Yes, I'll do it," he said quickly. "Sit—"

He stopped; both youngsters stared. Although the window was open, neither had heard a step on the path.

Yet someone was tapping gently at the door.

"Who the dickens—?"

Quickly Alec stopped across the room and turned the handle. He peered outside; the garden path was empty. Bill watched him look round in perplexity, saw him put his head out farther. He heard a thud and a faint gasp, then to his horror saw Alec throw up his hands and buckle weakly at the knees.

Next moment the lad fell back into the parlour senseless, and in a trice the room was full of men.

The attack was swift and deadly. Bill only had time for one fierce shout of rage, then the men were upon him.

Snatching up his chair, he dropped Hogan in his tracks; but the others swarmed over him before he could raise the chair again. The light snapped out; a sinewy hand throttled his cries for help. Other men came quickly through the back door and fell on him. Alec stayed where he had fallen.

In thirty seconds Bill was pinned beneath a pile of heavy bodies. Five minutes more, and both boys lay gagged and tightly bound.

A faint sound made one of the men glance quickly through the window. He turned at once.

"Car's here, Joe!"

The leader grunted complacently. "Right! Get 'em out, boys!"

Rough hands grabbed Bill and Alec and whisked them down to the gate, where Luke Thurston stood white-faced beside his car, having just come from his offices in Severnmouth. Alec still did not move, while Bill could only glare and writhe in futile desperation. They were flung into the car, and the men crowded in after them.

Alone in the cottage the Weasel looked round, smiling a quiet, slow grin of triumph.

His eyes travelled at last to the helpless man at the bureau, and he rubbed his hands in evil anticipation. His smile deepened by degrees until his face was hideous in its rat-like cruelty. Very deliberately he closed the cottage door, and sidled over towards his old enemy.

(What's the Weasel going to do to John Murray now that he's got him at his mercy? Boys, don't fail to read the final instalment of this powerful serial next week—every line will grip you!)

WAKING UP GREYFRIARS!

(Continued from page 23.)

Pop's face lengthened.

"Oh my!" he murmured.

He could see the surprised looks on the faces of a crowd of fellows outside. They were amazed to see Sir Hilton depart without his nephew.

But the baronet was gone—alone! Pop waited uneasily for what was to follow.

The study door opened, and Mr. Quelch came in.

Pop turned to him.

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

"Ye-e-es, sir!" faltered Pop. His uneasiness was growing. Something, it seemed, had gone wrong, when success seemed a certainty.

"You will not be expelled!"

"Oh!" gasped Pop.

He could not hide the dismay in his face. If Mr. Quelch wanted any proof of Sir Hilton's assertions, he had it now. His face grew grimmer and grimmer.

"The Head has left the matter in my hands, Popper! You will be flogged."

"Oh!"

"On any repetition of your offence, the flogging will be repeated."

"Oh!"

"But in no case will you be sent away from Greyfriars."

"Oh!"

There was a hitch in Mr. Quelch's hand. He had thoughtfully brought it to the study with him.

"And now, Popper, you will bend over that chair!"

"Oh!"

The scene that followed was painful—very painful! Let us, as a novelist would say, draw a veil!

Harry Wharton and Co. found Pop in Study No. 1 later. His look would have touched the hardest heart.

"Not gone?" said Harry.

Pop only groaned.

"Not going?"

Another groan.

Pop was not gone—and he was not going! Pop of the Circus was still Pop of Greyfriars!

THE END.

(Whatever you do, chums, don't miss the concluding yarn in this series, entitled: "THE CALL OF THE CIRCUS!", It's the best yet!)

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The COME-BACK of CAESAR!

CAESAR AND HIS LEGIONS!

BANG!
"Take that, you dog!"
"And hands up, Cowboy Joe!"
"I'm the Sheriff of Two-Gun Gulch!"

"Good old sheriff!" yelled Hal Smiles and Fred Larking, the cheery chums of the Fourth at Cayningham.

The scene was Hal's study, at Cayningham, England; it was also a respectable balloon in Arizona, U.S.A.

The explanation of that somewhat contradictory state of affairs was that Hal's study was being used for the purpose of projecting a talking-picture dealing with the wild and woolly West!

"Talkies" in a Cayningham study, were rather an innovation. Hal's useful little magic ring had made them possible. With the aid of the ring, Hal achieved the first wish he happened to express every day, and as this was a wet and dismal evening, he had wished for "Talkies."

Ali Gasoomph, the obliging Slave of the Ring, had responded immediately with a self-operating projector and a screen. Result: Hal and his pal were now watching a first-rate programme in their own little den!

Properly speaking, of course, our lucky old heroes should have been grinding at their prep. Mr. Crossley, the master of the Fourth, had kindly given his Form a large slice of the celebrated works of Julius Caesar to prepare that night. But strange to relate, Hal and Fred preferred Cowboy Joe and the Sheriff of Two-Gun Gulch to Julius Caesar and all his works. It showed lamentable lack of taste on their part; but Fourth-Formers usually do show lack of taste in such things, don't they?

Hal and Fred watched the triumph of the sheriff over Cowboy Joe with tremendous enthusiasm. Then they had a few merry ha-has over the antics of Dicky the Grouse, and a good, long roar over a super-talkie featuring Buster Beasem.

"My giddy aunt! Bed-time!" exclaimed Fred Larking, looking up at the study clock at the end of that picture. "So it is!" said Hal Smiles with a start. "Better call that the end, then. What about prep?"

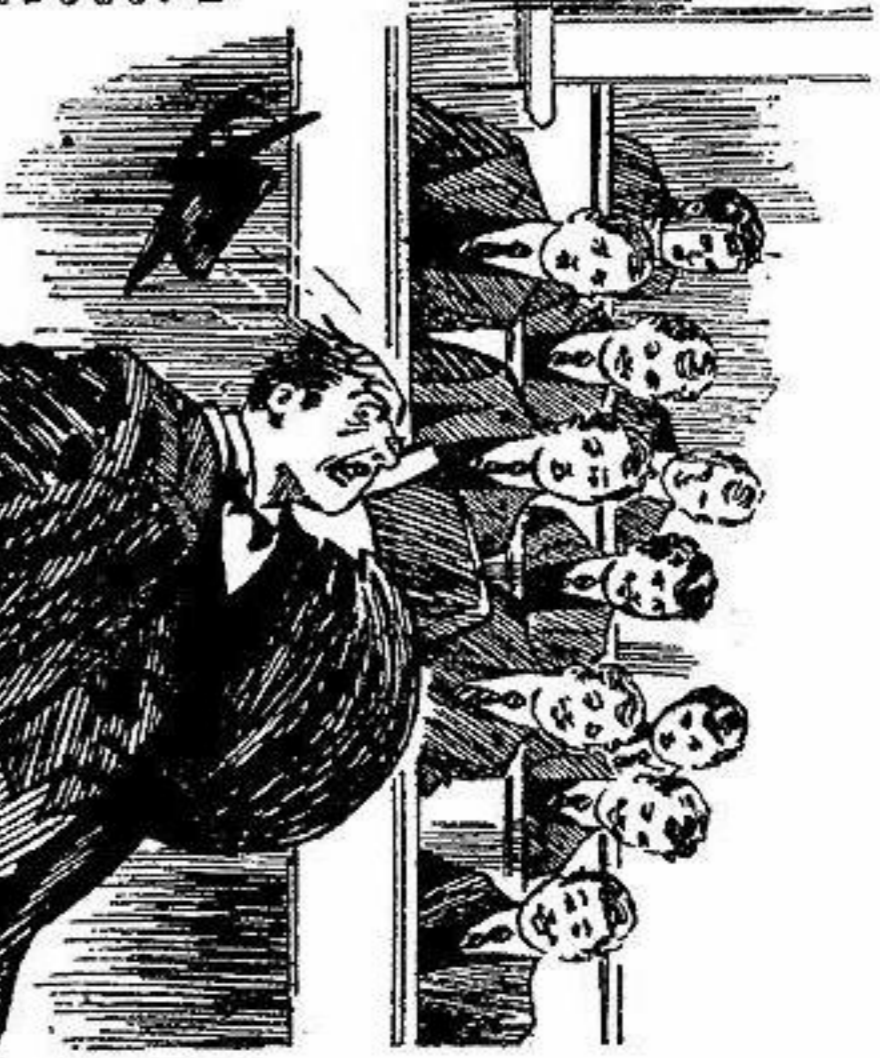
"Ain't going to be no prep, by the look of things!" grinned Fred Larking. "Crossley will be waxy in the morning."

"Won't be the first time!" chuckled Hal. "Well, there's that!" chuckled Hal. "Still, prep's prep, and you know how fond he is of old Julius Smeaser! I can see trouble looming ahead in large quantities when he finds out how much we've done!"

In which forecast Hal Smiles proved to be perfectly correct. Morning dawned bright and sunny after the rain, as all respectable mornings should be. Hal and Smiles felt bright and sunny in sympathy. Mr. Crossley didn't; Mr. Crossley never did!

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One rub of Hal Smiles' ring—a wh, and—
Hey, presto!—Julius Caesar comes back to Earth!



The master of the Fourth had kidneys and bacon for breakfast. That was a bad sign. Kidneys and bacon meant dyspepsia, heartburn, and liver trouble for Mr. Crossley, all at once. And any one of those complaints was sufficient to make him love Julius Caesar more than ever, and love his pupils considerably less!

Mr. Crossley plunged into Julius Caesar with a zest, as soon as the Fourth had assembled. The Fourth waited after him without any zest whatever.

One by one, the unhappy juniors were called on to stand up and construe. Some performed the task moderately well, others very badly. But whether they construed moderately well or very badly indeed, they all knew something about it.

With two exceptions!

Those two exceptions were Hal Smiles and Fred Larking. If one fact stood out plainly that morning, it was the fact that our cheery heroes knew absolutely nothing whatever about that slice of the works of Julius Caesar which they were supposed to have studied the evening before.

After hearing Fred's construe for one minute, two bright-red spots appeared on the face of Mr. Crossley. After listening to Hal for ten seconds, Mr. Crossley's eyes began to glint.

Ten seconds after that, his ears began to twitch. Ten seconds more, and his hair was standing up on end. Another ten seconds, and he seemed in grave danger of throwing an apopleptic fit.

"Stop!" he shouted at last, clapping his hands to the sides of his head, as though Hal and Fred had given him in fact! Your construe is a disgrace, Smiles; likewise, yours, Larking! They're both utterly disgraceful, I say!"

"Oh, sir!" chorused Hal and Fred meekly.

"Such abysmal ignorance I have never encountered before!" raved the irate Form master. "It is lamentable—dreadful—appalling—monstrous; it is beyond words, in fact."

"My hat!" exclaimed Hal, involuntarily. "All the same, sir, you seem to have found one or two words to fit in!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" roared Mr. Crossley. "The matter, boys, is not one for laughter; rather is it a matter for grief. It grieves me deeply to realise that pupils of mine are so unappreciative of Caesar as to neglect the study of his works. Julius Caesar, as I have repeatedly told you, was one of the greatest characters of ancient times."

"Good old Julius!" murmured Fred Larking.



And Hal Smiles realised that it had happened!

"Oh, ye gods!" he muttered. "That's done it!"

Almost immediately, there was a steady tramp, tramp sound, as of an army on the march, from the passages outside the Form-room. After a few seconds, a sharp command rang out, and it ceased. Then the door of the Form-room was flung

open, and a strange figure, clad in the toga and sandals and helmet of an ancient Roman soldier, marched in, followed by what looked like an army of other ancients similarly clad.

"Julius Caesar!" yelled Mr. Crossley. "And his giddy legions!" added Hal Smiles.

"M-m-my hat!"

Hal Smiles grinned.

"Doubt it, sir! I expect if he were here, Caesar would be jolly annoyed to find that his one remaining claim to fame was that he regularly got schoolboys camed!"

"Wore Caesar here, Smiles, he would tell you that only by hard work, such as studying his books, does man achieve success."

"Hear, hear!"

"And another is that he's always getting me into rows and canings! Can't expect me to love a man who's always getting me into rows, can you?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" roared Mr. Crossley again. "Wore Caesar here, Smiles, he would tell you that only by hard work, such as studying his books, does man achieve success."

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"Hear, hear!"

"And another is that he's always getting me into rows and canings! Can't expect me to love a man who's always getting me into rows, can you?"

"Salve, magister!"

"Eh?"

"Salve, magister! But perhaps," said Caesar, lapsing into English, "you do not speak da Latin, so I speaks English instead, hey?"

"How dare you suggest that I do not speak Latin!" roared Mr. Crossley. "Why, I am one of the leading Latin scholars of the day!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a roar from the Fourth. For Julius Caesar, the celebrated Roman general, to come to the conclusion that Mr. Crossley did not speak Latin struck them as distinctly funny. Mr. Crossley, however, evidently did not regard it as funny. He glared.

Julius Caesar ignored him and turned to the class. "Friends, Romans, countrymen—I mean, gentlemen, cheps and fellows of Britain!" he

corrected hastily, "Julius Caesar greets you!"

"How do, Caesar!" yelled back the Fourth, cheerfully, quite relieved to find that Caesar could speak good English after all. Most of them, being still in ignorance of the existence of Hal Smiles' magic ring, naturally didn't believe that it really was Julius Caesar come back to earth; but whether he was Julius Caesar or not, they much preferred him to Caesar's celebrated works.

Caesar surveyed the Fourth for a moment with a slight smile. Then he went on:

"Boys! I've turned up with the object of dispelling myself. Quite a lot of the young men here are told about me and all wrong, you know. For instance, that one about the assassination, when I was supposed to turn round and exclaim, 'And thou, Brutus?' The fact is, Brutus wasn't there at all. What I did say when they bashed me was 'Ow! You brutes! The whole yarn arose from that. Savvy?'"

"Great pip!" murmured the Fourth, greatly surprised.

"Then there's that other hoary old fable about my wife being above suspicion," went on Caesar. "Dead wrong, boys, believe me. She was always under suspicion as far as I was concerned. Several times I suspected her of poisoning my porridge, and I know for a fact she put a pin on my seat one time when I was presiding over the senate!"

"My hat!" exclaimed Hal Smiles. "Looks as if we shall have to revise our ideas of Roman history, chaps!"

"All this talk of rendering unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's is very misleading, too!" pursued Julius Caesar, with a shake of his helmeted head. "But the only things I got out of my campaigns were a presentation set of needles from Cleopatra and a free season ticket to the circus at Rome! I ask you, boys, was it worth it?"

"Well, hardly!" grinned Hal Smiles.

Julius Caesar snorted.

"Boys! If any of you ever feel tempted to conquer the world, take the advice of one who conquered Gaul, Britain, Africa and a lot of other places whose names I've forgotten, don't! The game isn't worth the candle!"

Mr. Crossley thought it was about time he stepped in.

"Look here, sir," he interposed. "I am Julius Caesar!"

"Utter nonsense, my dear sir!" cried the master of the Fourth. "Julius Caesar has been dead for two thousand years!"

"Well, he's come back to earth and stands before you now! And by the way, who are you to doubt the word of a Caesar?"

"I am Mr. Crossley, master of the Fourth at Cayningham, and a celebrated Latin scholar!"

"What you? You a Latin scholar and you didn't even recognise the Latin equivalent of 'How's your father?'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here—" began Mr. Crossley.

(Continued on page 27.)

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